

# WORLD TRADE CENTER STEEL COMES TO YARMOUTH

By Christine Legere



WEST YARMOUTH-- 03/21/13-- A steel beam from the World Trade Center displayed at the Yarmouth Police Station. The department recently went to New York to pick up the steel which will be on permanent display soon at the station on Higgins Crowell Road. Cape Cod Times/Steve Heasl 032113sh06

WEST YARMOUTH — Most of the mangled steel from the World Trade Center has been scattered far from New York City, exhibited in museums or incorporated into 9/11 memorials across the country and even beyond American shores.

The cavernous Hangar 17 at New York's John F. Kennedy International Airport, its 80,000 square feet once chock-full of debris from the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, now echoes with emptiness. But that didn't diminish the excitement of four Yarmouth police officers who journeyed there last week to pick up a 3-foot scrap of twisted steel that will serve as centerpiece for a planned memorial garden at the police station.

"As I walked into the hangar, I felt so much pride as an American yet so much sadness for what happened to those innocent people that day," Yarmouth Deputy Police Chief Steven Xiarhos said. "Then the anger kicked in as I thought about all that destruction."

Xiarhos feels a personal connection to 9/11. "My son Nicholas was 13 in 2001," Xiarhos said. "That's why he wanted to be a Marine."

Nicholas enlisted in the Marine Corps days after graduating from high school. He lost his life in Afghanistan in July 2009.

"I lost a son, but I also feel for the guys who made it home, not just with physical wounds but emotional wounds," Xiarhos said. "The 2001 terrorist attack led to it all."

Xiarhos contacted the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey last fall with his request for a trade center artifact. Although the distribution program is winding down, the agency approved the request.

After the 2001 terrorist attacks, debris from the twin towers was taken to the hangar at JFK Airport for storage, according to Port Authority spokesman Steve Coleman, with the thought that it might one day contribute to a memorial.

Some of the larger items, such as crushed vehicles, went to the New York State Museum in Albany and similar facilities, Coleman said.

Several artifacts, of all sizes and types, were set aside for the 9/11 memorial museum planned for the twin tower site.

"After the museum staff made their selections, other items, mostly steel, were made available," Coleman said.

"The program was for four groups primarily: police departments, fire departments, municipal governments and community groups," Coleman said. The Port Authority stipulated the artifacts must be publicly displayed and requests for the items had to be accompanied by plans for their use. "There were about 2,000 requests we tried to fill," Coleman said. "Now that we're at the end of the program, we're down to the remaining handful of pieces."

Fellow Yarmouth police Officers Albert Sprague, Nicholas Giammarco and Michael Bryant made the New York run with Xiarhos last week.

Sprague's two sons have served in the U.S. Army. Christopher recently was discharged after being seriously wounded in Afghanistan in 2011. Stephen, a medic who like his brother previously served in Iraq, is scheduled to ship out to Afghanistan.

"I'm very proud of my sons protecting our freedom," Sprague said. "To me, picking up the steel was exciting. It's a piece of history."

Sprague brought along an American flag that was a gift from his sons and had flown in Iraq. It was briefly raised over ground zero last week, then draped over the steel beam for its trip to Yarmouth.

Although the Yarmouth Police Department has some ideas for the local 9/11 memorial garden, it is hoping for suggestions, as well as help, from the public. Those interested in this effort may contact Sprague by email at [asprague@yarmouth.ma.us](mailto:asprague@yarmouth.ma.us) or by phone at 508-775-0445, ext. 2136.