

'We Really Enjoyed Collaborating'

VFW brings the local community together to recognize those who sacrificed in response to 9/11

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Nestled about a two-hour drive from New York City is the village of Brewster, the principal settlement of the town of Southeast, New York, and home to VFW Post 672. Last September, the Post and community came together to honor those who answered the call of duty after the Sept. 11, 2001, terror attacks.

Post 672 has held yearly 9/11 commemorations at Southeast Veteran's Park in Brewster, where they also have held annual Veterans Day and Memorial Day ceremonies. However, this year, to get the local community involved in the commemoration, the ceremony was held at the Brewster Fire Department, where a 9/11 memorial is open to the public.

"The significance of this year's 9/11 ceremony was really all about teaming up and collaborating with our community," said VFW Post 672 Commander Ron Whitehead. "Brewster is a small town in Putnam County, New York, and we often work together to support one another."

The ceremony was organized and led by VFW Post 672 Chaplain Andrew DeStefano, a retired New York City police officer who often takes the lead role at many of the events Post 672 holds.

Along with collaborating with Brewster firefighters and police officers to help set up the event, the departments were honored during the ceremony — both to recognize their continued service to the Brewster community, and to recognize the efforts of the New York City police and fire departments who responded to the attacks on the World Trade Center.

"It was an easy decision to team up with our local fire and police departments," Whitehead said. "Every year, they help run and support our Veterans Day and Memorial Day ceremonies."

A JROTC color guard from Brewster High School also was invited to attend the ceremony.

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“We really enjoyed collaborating with the Brewster High School [JROTC], and we know they have an excellent program there,” Whitehead said. “The students told us that they were honored to be a part of the ceremony and that they hope they can be a part of it every year.”

THE LAST PIECE OF STEEL

Placed between two support beams designed to resemble the Twin Towers at the Brewster Fire Department 9/11 Memorial is an original piece of steel from the World Trade Center. Obtained from the New York and New Jersey Port Authority, this relic was one of the last available pieces of steel from the World Trade Center to be given out, with more than 1,200 pieces having been dispersed in the United States since 2008.

“The piece of steel represents a great many things to our Post membership,” Whitehead said. “Several of our Post members signed up just after 9/11 and served in Iraq and Afghanistan. It also stands as a reminder that our freedom is not free and we are lucky to live in such a great country.”

Andrew Gordon, a local Eagle Scout, designed and built the 9/11 memorial in 2013, which included a reflection garden alongside the Twin Towers replica.

Whitehead, along with the rest of Post 672, invites other VFW members to visit the Brewster Fire Department 9/11 Memorial the next time they’re in New York.

This article is featured in the 2025 September/October issue of [VFW magazine](#), and was written by [Danny Cook](#), senior writer for VFW magazine.