

180 Walkers Remember Victims of 9-11 at Maryland Event

By Darrell Neily

On Saturday, September 7, the Freestate Happy Wanderers held its annual 9-11 Memorial Walk to remember the victims at the Pentagon and Shanksville, Pennsylvania. Each walker was offered a lanyard to wear with the identity of a person killed in the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001. Walkers passed a “remembrance circle” of American flags and commemorative signs near the beginning of the trail.

The Start/Finish was at the Montpelier Arts Center on the grounds of the historic Montpelier Mansion in Laurel, Maryland. The Montpelier Mansion was built in 1781-83 by Major Richard Snowden, and had been the centerpiece of a 9,000-acre plantation. The mansion was closed this year for repairs. However, the beautiful exterior was on display for all walkers to see, and was once described by Abigail Adams as a "large, handsome, elegant house, where I was received with what we might term true English Hospitality."

In addition to the remembrance circle and Montpelier Mansion and Arts Center, the trail passed another mansion, the stately Oaklands Manor, and the Laurel Dinosaur Park. During the afternoon, a paleontologist at the Dinosaur Park presented a workshop describing the excavations at this site and the dinosaurs discovered there.

A good turnout of 180 walkers may have been due in part to the wonderful weather (temperature in the 70s and mostly sunny). Additionally several walkers said they were attracted to the event through announcements on Facebook (American Volkssport Association Group), Meetup.com (Maryland Walkers Group), and the revamped Freestate club website (www.mdvolks.org/freestate). The social media sites also provided valuable feedback after the walk. On Facebook, one commented “Many thanks to the Freestate Happy Wanderers Club for hosting this memorial walk to the victims of 9/11.” On Meetup.com, comments included: “My daughter and I felt very welcomed and it was a great walk. Thank you all,” “Loved it. My group did the 10K and found everything excellently done,” “This was a great walk! Thanks to all the organizers!” and “Fantastic turnout!”

Another measure of success of the event was the sale of 16 AVA New Walkers Packets (NWP). The Freestate Happy Wanderers has paid special attention to promoting the NWPs to get more new walkers involved in volkssports.



Caption for photo: A walker wears a lanyard showing the damaged Pentagon on the front and identifying an individual victim on the reverse.