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3RD LD: New York marks 6th anniversary of Sept. 11 terrorist attacks+

NEW YORK, Sept. 11-(Kyodo), (EDS: ADDING NEW COMMENTS FROM CEREMONY)

New York marked the sixth anniversary of the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on U.S. soil in somber ceremonies under rainy skies near Ground Zero on Tuesday morning.

The ceremony began at 8:40 a.m. and for the first time was held at Zuccotti Park, which is adjacent to Ground Zero. It began just minutes before the first hijacked plane struck the North Tower of the World Trade Center, which eventually killed 2,750 people.

The name of a female victim who survived the towers' collapse but died five months later of lung disease was the latest addition to the official death toll.

In addition to the New York ceremony where several thousand people attended, people across the country offered their prayers to the victims of the terror attacks which claimed 2,974 lives in New York, Washington and Pennsylvania -- 2,750 at the World Trade Center, 40 in Pennsylvania and 184 at the Pentagon.

Eleven people representing six families from Japan, whose kin were killed, also were in attendance at the solemn remembrance as rain drizzled for the first time in six years and fell on the same day.

"My son's soul is still here," said Tasuku Nakamura, 66, who lost his son Takuya, who was a banker at age 30. Nakamura's wife, Kiyomi, 65, brought from Japan a sketch of a rose tree that Takuya gave her.

Virginia McDermott, who lost her firefighter father, was joined by some 20 other relatives as they stood outside for the nearly three-and-a-half-hour ceremony to hear the names of all victims read aloud by rescue workers.

The gathering at the park was a source of controversy for some who were disappointed the ceremony did not take place as it had in the past on what they consider sacred ground, although they were allowed to descend down a ramp to the lowest level at Ground Zero to offer flowers.

Although the 54-year-old father's remains were recovered, McDermott was sympathetic to others who wished to keep returning to the area despite the construction now underway on a memorial, the new Freedom Tower and other buildings.

"I understand it, my father was returned, but for others they have no place to go," she said.

For 43-year-old David Jones, who wore an image of his older brother Tyler May on a t-shirt in memory of him, he was clearly distraught by the change of venue, yet resigned to the fact that the "powers that be" had made the decisions.

"Yes, I'm upset that the ceremony is taking place at the park because my brother's spirit is there," he said, pointing to empty space that once housed the Department of Finance and Taxation where Tyler May worked. Although Jones still feels "jittery," he admits that he must carry on and "stay strong." Still for others, such as Carmen Cubaro, a former maintenance worker at Morgan Stanley Dean Witter in 2 World Trade Center, the aftereffects remain with her – causing nightmares and impacting her quality of life. After having lost 24 co-workers and acquaintances that day, she also lost her job and suffers from health problems.

"The government didn't help too much," the 43-year-old said. "I am angry -- I lost my job, now I have many problems. I'm sick, I'm not working."

For some 81 percent of Americans recently telephone polled by Zogby International, they described the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks as the most significant historical event of their lives. Meanwhile, 91 percent believed they would be attacked by terrorists again on American soil.

Besides the grieving family members, others, like Steve Mizell, annually comes to pay his respects from San Diego and plans to continue doing so until the new tower is completed.

He was in New York on Sept. 11, 2001 to celebrate his wedding anniversary and in a panic drove away from Manhattan only to turn around hours later with his wife to offer his services as a volunteer. As a professional chef he wound up cooking meals for rescue workers and did so frequently in the fall of that year.

Yoshiaki Tokumitsu, 64, who is involved in publishing a bilingual illustrated book based on an anonymous poem that was read aloud at the first anniversary, he hoped to give copies of "A Thousand Winds" to 9/11 children who had lost their parents.

Tokumitsu is set to present 50 copies to Tuesday's Children, a nonprofit organization that is geared towards helping the children in their recovery, on Wednesday.

On Tuesday, U.S. President George W. Bush attended a private 7:30 a.m. prayer service at St. John's Episcopal Church and held a moment of silence on the South Lawn of the White House.

At the Pentagon, Secretary of Defense Robert Gates told grieving family members the military will continue to pursue and defeat America's enemies, especially terrorist organizations such as al-Qaida, which instigated the attacks.

"Today the entire nation joins with you," Gates said. "You have never been and never will be alone in your sorrow."

In New York, presidential hopefuls, Republican Rudolph Giuliani and Democratic Sen. Hillary Clinton joined the victims' families.

Meanwhile, late last year, the U.S. death toll since the beginning of the Iraq war topped the number of people killed in the Sept. 11 attacks.