

## Reflections 10 years later

*Mike Dorsey, former Naval Criminal Investigative Service (NCIS) Special Agent:*

"I don't think I would ever forget the Cole and how it affected me personally and professionally for the rest of my life. I can't imagine that. I don't know if it was an era of politics that got in the way; I don't know what kept decision-makers from responding. But the facts are, there was no response to the USS Cole, and history I think bears that out."

*Robert McFadden, NCIS Special Agent:*

"Professionally, if not personally, it's difficult. For example, some of the key Yemeni cell members escaped not once but twice from prison. Those things are very, very frustrating and disappointing on any given day for me. I can't even begin to imagine what it's like for the family members."

*Ronald Francis, retired Navy Chief and father of Mess Specialist Seaman Lakeina Monique Francis:*

"My daughter died on the USS Cole, October 12, 2000. Hopefully, one day, justice will prevail. But that's just a low part because nothing is going to bring back the 17 sailors that made the ultimate sacrifice for their ship."

*Christopher Adolph, survivor of the Cole bombing:*

"I am proud to be a survivor of the bombing on October 12, 2000. Post-traumatic stress disorder affects people differently. For me, I still I have lot of mood swings... something happens and I am crying and whatever... it could be even some stupid song on the radio. It's angering because it seems like we just got forgotten. I could walk up to 10 people on the street and be like, "Yeah, I was on the Cole and was bombed" or whatever. And they would be like, "Huh?" Most people don't have any clue. It's like my friends never existed. They died for no reason."

*Keesha Stidham, survivor of the Cole bombing:*

"I was wounded on the USS Cole. A lot of my stress now 10 years later after it's happened has got a lot to do with it. It would be nice to see the person who orchestrated the whole deal get punishment. But I have cried enough over it. I would rather spend that time playing with my son and tickle him and do anything else I can do."

*Susan Czoscjke, Chief Foreign Officer:*

"Ten years ago, I was Chief Personnelman Susan Pears. You have a lot of survivor guilt because you feel like you were left on this earth for some reason and you don't know what it is. The masterminds are still out there. It angers me that they haven't been held accountable. It angers me that my shipmates that were lost and those families don't have closure. I just want the people that were responsible for this event."

*Kirk Lippold, retired US Navy Commander:*

"The nation reacted to 9/11. But before 9/11, there was 10/12. I feel that USS Cole in many ways has always been treated as the stepchild in the war on terrorism because nobody was ever really held accountable. To date, no one has been truly held accountable for the attack on the ship. The crew and the families feel in many ways that they were ignored."

For me, I remember it every single day. The way I remember is every morning when I get up, and I can pull this out, put onto crucifix. The next thing I put on is a set of my dog tags that I was wearing that day. There is now a special dog tag that has the names of all the crewmembers that were lost that day. I remember each and every one of them – 17 of the finest sailors in the world that paid the ultimate sacrifice to defend the freedoms we enjoy today."