



Stephen and Joanne Galvin, of Wolcott, have designed this flag in honor of the victims of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks and the rescue workers. Two blue panels border the black one in the middle. There are two white stars, representing the World Trade Center's Twin Towers; a blue one, representing the Pentagon; and a red one, representing Flight 93 that crashed into a field in Pennsylvania.

Couple designs 9/11 flag

By **BRENDA PITTMAN**
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WOLCOTT — Three days after the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks, Stephen Galvin was still preoccupied with the horror as he was driving home from work.

Galvin, a heavy equipment operator for Elderlee Inc. in Oaks Corners, remembers many thoughts racing through his mind when he noticed a POW/MIA flag on a flagpole. As he always does when he sees one, Galvin said a "quick prayer" for all the unaccounted for prisoners of war and others missing in action.

And then an idea came to him — all those whose lives were lost Sept. 11 should be remembered on a flag as well. He started to visualize what it could look like, and when he got home, he shared the idea with his wife, Joanne, who agreed it was a good one.

Soon they were looking at some 1,700 known flag designs on the Internet to see if there was anything like what Stephen had in mind.

Seeing none, Galvin and Joanne roughly sketched out a design, with each color, star and emblem representing various aspects of the unforgettable day America was attacked on its home soil.

The background of the flag, which they call the "National Remembrance Flag," is separated into three color panels: two blue and one black. Blue represents the state colors of New York, Virginia and Pennsylvania, where planes went down. The black center

panels represent the sorrow felt for the innocent lives lost in the tragedy — those on the planes, those in the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, and the rescue workers who died trying to save others.

The four stars, which are joined to each other at two points, represent the four planes, which crashed and the lives lost in them and in the buildings they hit. The fact that the stars are touching each other, as well as the state colors, represents the unity the tragedy brought to the nation.

A blue star represents the Pentagon, American Airlines Flight 77, which crashed into it and innocent lives lost in the building and on the plane.

Two white stars represent each of the Twin Towers and American Airlines Flight 11 and United Airlines Flight 175, which crashed into them.

A red star represents United Airlines Flight 93 that crashed into a field in Shanksville, Pa., and those who sacrificed their lives and tried to stop the terrorists onboard so that other lives would be spared.

The first thing the Galvins did was copyright the flag's design and have one made. Bobbi Chilson, of Waterloo, volunteered to make the first flag. They also had 4-by-7-inch color decals of the flag printed.

Because the primary purpose for their flag — like the POW/MIA flag that includes the words "You Are Not Forgotten" — is to help people remember what happened Sept.

11, the Galvins have been working to gain exposure for their flag.

"We've had so many positive comments about it," Stephen Galvin said.

They've appeared on several area news broadcasts, and they recently set up a display in the Irondequoit Mall to gauge reaction to it. Before that, they took it to Ground Zero in New York. They tried to get on NBC's "Today Show," on Dec. 12, but couldn't. They were told by a cameraman that if they had come the day before — the three-month anniversary of the tragic events — their chances would've been better.

Joanne Galvin noted that some families with children in the military have seen news reports about the flag and have called her in hopes of getting one.

They also have turned to Assemblyman Robert Oaks, R-128 of Macedon, for additional help. Oaks said he applauds the Galvins' efforts "to try to honor victims appropriately and for coming up with an attractive and respectful design that does so effectively."

He also is helping them determine how the flag and decals might be best used.

Oaks didn't know protocol for how a non-military government flag could receive any sort of official designation, but he forwarded copies of it to Gov. Pataki and to Congressman Tom Reynolds. As of Dec. 28, he'd heard nothing back, but he said he plans on following up.

The other reason the Galvins

wanted to make a flag is to raise money to give to victims' families or to charities that support them. They are arranging to have a flag company make the flags. The first ones will be 3-by-5-foot.

Stephen Galvin said more than 20 people at Irondequoit Mall alone expressed interest in purchasing a flag when they became available, and many purchased decals. The decals sell for \$2.50 and the couple hopes schools and organizations will sell them as a fundraiser.

"We decided not to go through a marketing company so that most of the money can go for relief and to organizations that also are trying to raise money for a good cause," Stephen Galvin said.

For every decal sold by a school or organization, 50 cents will go to the organization and \$1 will go to victim relief. Each school or organization selling them can designate which charity they want the proceeds to go to.

Because of reports that victims' families have not yet received much money from some of the larger charitable organizations even though millions have been donated, the Galvins are hoping they can link up with victims' family members — or a group of them — so that money raised from the sale of decals and flags can be given directly to them.

It is also the Galvins' hope that they can get a flag to each of the victims' families.

For more information about flags or stickers, e-mail the Galvins at jmgalvin@zlink.net or call them at 594-9274.