

## Ambassador pitches in wherever and whenever needed

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Flight 93 Ambassador Dawna Bates, an American Red Cross volunteer, started her work at the Flight 93 crash site the day after Sept. 11, 2001.

And in retirement she remains dedicated to the memorial site.

Bates, a retired school teacher in Latrobe, has dedicated countless hours to the Flight 93 National Memorial.

“Dawna is really a jack of all trades when it comes to volunteering,” said Friends of Flight 93 National Memorial Executive Director Henry Scully. “Fortunately she says yes to every request without hesitation, which is awesome.”

Bates was a teacher in Latrobe, where she lived in 2001. Sixteen years ago she received a telephone call asking for help because officials believed they may have to land planes at the Arnold Palmer Regional Airport and that they may need to aid in sheltering and feeding people.

“We received a message later on that we could stand down, however they needed people at the site if anyone was available,” she said.

Red Cross representatives talked to her superintendent asking if she could take a leave from her teaching duties to help in Shanksville.

“The next morning I went up with a few other people from the Chestnut Ridge chapter to give help,” she said. “And that’s how I got started. I was there the day after the plane went down.”

After she returned to school, she knew she wanted to give back more to the site. Bates retired from teaching in 2006.

“I decided when I retired I would be there somehow to help out,” she said. “I felt this was important that the people continue to get the story of what happened there. The kids make decisions every day. They really need to stop and think about those decisions, not knowing where their life may lead.”

Scully said Bates helps at the memorial.

“You name it, I’ve done it,” Bates said.

She started by giving her oral history as an American Red Cross volunteer.

“I gave them my story and (Kathie Shaffer) mentioned to me things that needed to be done. So I started out working at the Somerset office,” she said. “I started out transcribing oral histories, working on newspaper articles and clipping them and keep them together.”

Then Bates decided that she wanted to be a greeter at the site.

“I continued to later on becoming an ambassador,” she said. “I do continue my work in the office by doing odds and ends, scanning comment cards, wherever they need my help.”

Bates said she tries to help in any way she can. For the 10th anniversary she sewed a drape the National Park Service used to cover the Walls of Names for its unveiling.

“You can just count on it getting done,” Scully said. “The great thing is so wonderful to work with. She always greets you with a smile and is a welcoming face for our National Park Service. We don’t have enough Dawna Bates in the world.”