

# Press Release



## Battle Ground Public Schools

Director of Communications: Gregg Herrington, (360) 885-5337

PO Box 200 • Battle Ground, WA 98604-0200 • Office Location: 11104 NE 149th Street • Brush Prairie, WA  
District Switchboard: (360) 885-5300

Sept. 9, 2011

### Ex-Army chemical officer who responded to Ground Zero to speak at middle school

A retired U.S. Army captain who virtually lived at Ground Zero for several days after 9/11 will speak to students at Pleasant Valley Middle School in the Battle Ground district Monday morning. The assembly will begin about 8:25 a.m. at the school, 14320 NE 50<sup>th</sup> Ave., in the Salmon Creek area. The media is welcome.

Liam Clancy was an Army chemical officer between duty stations and staying at his parents' home in south Connecticut the morning of Sept. 11, 2001. Within minutes of learning about the attack on the World Trade Center he was in his Jeep headed to New York City to help deal with the possibility that chemical or biological weapons were involved. They weren't, but he was at the scene around the clock much of the next several days helping in rescue efforts.

Clancy, who has a daughter at Pleasant Valley Middle and a son at Pleasant Valley Primary, will speak and present a PowerPoint for about 30 minutes and take questions from the students another 15 minutes.

Clancy says there are two moments that first leap to mind when he recalls that horrific episode:

After driving into the city, parking and walking up Liberty Street toward the World Trade Center about noon, "the day turned into night with so much ash in the air," he said. "It was almost too surreal to grasp. It brought to mind Dante's 'Seven layers of hell'."

The other of his two most-searing moments came a few days later during the search through the rubble. Clancy and New York firefighters were hoping to find some sign of Battalion Chief Ray Downey, the NYFD's special operations commander. ([www.chiefraydowney.com/aboutus.php](http://www.chiefraydowney.com/aboutus.php)).

"We found his radio, but not Ray," Clancy said, his voice trailing off.

Clancy said he doesn't intend to talk only about the horrific scenes at Ground Zero to the students, who were pre-schoolers at the time. "There is so much tragedy associated with 9/11," he said. "I don't focus entirely on it. I talk about how it has shaped our history and our lives."

**More information:**

Pleasant Valley Middle School Principal Ward Holcomb, (360) 885-5500.  
Liam Clancy, (360) 314-2935



The Battle Ground School District provides equal opportunity in programs and employment and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin/language, creed/religion, sex, sexual orientation-including gender identity, disability, or the use of a service animal by a person with a disability, age, marital status, honorably discharged veteran or military status and HIV/Hepatitis C status. Diana Gilsinger, Marcia Christian and Jane Mercier are designated to handle questions and complaints of alleged discrimination. They can be reached as follows: Maria Christian, Title IX Sexual Harassment Coordinator, 360-885-5415, [christian.marcia@bgsd.k12.wa.us](mailto:christian.marcia@bgsd.k12.wa.us); Diana Gilsinger, Deputy Superintendent, 360.885.5338, [gilsinger.diana@bgsd.k12.wa.us](mailto:gilsinger.diana@bgsd.k12.wa.us); Jane Mercier, Section 504/ADA Coordinator 360.885.5318, [mercier.jane@bgsd.k12.wa.us](mailto:mercier.jane@bgsd.k12.wa.us); or a letter may be submitted to the designated coordinator at the Battle Ground School District, PO Box 200, Battle Ground, WA 98604.