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Fort Hood marks massacre anniversary

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Until Friday, there was only one outward symbol at Fort Hood of the [chaos and carnage that erupted there](#) on Nov. 5, 2009. The wreaths of ribbons and flowers hung on a fence surrounding Building 42003 at the massive Army post in Texas. They were placed there by a wife who became a widow that day.

Now there is a 6-foot-tall granite memorial, unveiled at a ceremony on the one-year anniversary of the massacre, the worst at a U.S. military installation. Inscribed with the names of the 13 slain when a soldier opened fire as they waited to do paperwork before a deployment, the marker has taken its place near the post's memorials to those killed in war - more than 500 in the past five years.

"Our home was attacked . . . not in a distant battlefield but right here . . . and American heroes sacrificed their lives," Gen. William Grimsley, Fort Hood's commanding general, told about 1,000 people gathered Friday morning for the ceremony, according to the Associated Press.

Grimsley and Army Secretary [John M. McHugh](#) presented awards to more than 50 soldiers and civilians - some of whom had been shot themselves - who rushed to aid the wounded. Some [recently relived the horror](#), when they testified at a hearing for Maj. Nidal Malik Hasan, who is charged with multiple counts of murder. Some spent much of the past year in Afghanistan and Iraq, returning a few weeks ago.

"It's a chapter in this Army that no matter how many tears may fall, [they] will never, ever be washed away and will be part of our history forever," McHugh said, the wire service reported.

While military officials kept their remarks focused on sacrifice and resilience, others used the shooting anniversary to renew their criticism of a Defense Department they say still is not adequately alert to extremists developing in its ranks.

Hasan, 40, an Army psychiatrist, alarmed colleagues with talk of whether his patients could be prosecuted for war crimes. He sent more than a dozen e-mails in the months before the shooting to radical Muslim cleric Anwar al-Aulaqi, an American citizen now targeted by the United States for assassination.

The department "still refuses to even use the words 'radical Islam' in their report on the attack or recommendations on how to prevent future attacks," said [Rep. John Carter](#), the Texas Republican whose district includes Fort Hood. "That does not instill confidence in Congress that the DoD is taking the necessary steps to protect our troops."

And [Sens. Joseph I. Lieberman](#) (I-Conn.) and [Susan Collins](#) (R-Maine), who head the Senate Homeland Security Committee, said Thursday in a statement that "the attack could have been prevented if the government acted on information in its possession." The two headed a lengthy probe that included interviews with FBI and military investigators about what was known, or should have been known, about Hasan. They expect to issue a final report as soon as administration and committee officials agree on what portions must remain classified. "Our report will show that our domestic intelligence system must be strengthened in order to counter the threat of homegrown terrorism, and that our military must have zero tolerance for the expression of violent Islamist extremism in its ranks," the senators said.

The military recently began requiring soldiers to report behavior by comrades that might indicate extremist or terrorist sympathies. The Army's head of counterintelligence will maintain a database of those reports.

At Fort Hood, commanders are now directed to ask soldiers about what private weapons they own and to encourage them to register off-post weapons with officials on post. Soldiers who live on the post already are required to register their firearms with the Army. Soldiers are not allowed to carry their personal weapons in garrison or in combat theaters.

And Building 42003, the always bustling center where soldiers went to fill out their forms and check medical records before deploying, remains closed. The fence, adorned with handmade wreaths, keeps it closed off as a crime scene.