

More steps taken on the long road back

Hijacking survivor Jackie Pflug returns to the scene of the terrorist attack 20 years later to thank the people who saved her life

By John Molene

From hundreds of speeches, interviews and gatherings, to meetings with presidents and pop stars, there's few bases that motivational speaker, author and airline hijacking survivor Jackie Pflug hasn't tagged on her way home.

Except, perhaps, finding some closure to the terrorism incident that completely and forever changed her life 20 years ago. That final closure may never come, but Pflug took some giant steps in that direction this winter.

"I went back," Pflug said. "For the 20th anniversary in November."

In the two decades since being shot in an airline terrorism attack and left for dead on a Maltese tarmac, Pflug has crisscrossed the



PHOTO BY JOHN MOLENE

country, speaking to thousands about her ordeal and triumph, and the life lessons she's learned.

She's made small talk with Ronald Reagan in the Oval Office and swapped stories – not once, but twice – with Oprah. She's written a book, been interviewed dozens of times and basically made a career of helping people overcome the obstacles in their lives.

But in November, for the first time since the attack, which left her with a permanent brain injury, severe vision impairment,

short-term memory loss and epilepsy, Pflug returned to that Maltese tarmac.

"I went back to honor the 20th anniversary, and to thank the people who saved my life," Pflug said. "My husband and I felt it was time."

Pflug spoke with diplomats, soldiers, policemen, doctors and nurses, all of whom had a role in her rescue and healing, either then, or now, or both.

"I was ready to go back and be

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Life is good for Jackie Pflug, but it's taken the Eden Prairie resident a challenging 20-year trek back to get to the place she is today.

