

# 20 years 9-11-2001

## We Remember



*A Special Supplement to The Cleveland Daily Banner*



# A timeline of the morning of September 11, 2001

(MCC) — On the morning of September 11, 2001, 19 terrorists hijacked four commercial airplanes bound for California.

The planes departed from airports in Boston; Newark, NJ; and Washington, D.C. September 11 would become an infamous date in American and world history, and the events of that day would forever change the world.

As the world commemorates the 20th anniversary of 9/11, the following timeline, courtesy of the National September 11 Memorial & Museum, can help people fully understand how events unfolded on that late-summer morning two decades ago.

• **5:45 a.m.:** Two of the hijackers pass through security at Portland International Airport in Maine. The men will take a short flight to Boston Logan International Airport, where they will join three other hijackers and board American Airlines Flight 11.

• **6 a.m.:** Two of the hijacked planes, American Airlines Flight 11 and United Airlines Flight 175, will eventually crash into the North and South Towers of the World Trade Center complex in New York City. The day was a significant one on the New York City political calendar, as polling stations opened at 6 a.m. for primary elections.

• **7:59 a.m.:** American Airlines Flight 11 takes off from Boston with 11 crew members, 76 passengers and five hijackers on board. The plane, which will eventually crash into the North tower at the World Trade Center, is filled with more than 76,000 pounds of fuel.

• **8:15 a.m.:** United Airlines Flight 175 takes off from Boston with nine crew members, 51 passengers, and five hijackers on board. This flight also is loaded with 76,000 pounds of fuel.

• **8:19 a.m.:** American Airlines ground personnel are alerted by flight attendant Betty Ann Ong that Flight 11 is being hijacked. This call lasts roughly 25 minutes and Ong reports that the cockpit is unreachable. In the moments before Ong's call, one of the hijackers stabbed Daniel M. Lewin, who was sitting in front of him in first class. Lewin is likely the first person killed in the 9/11 attacks.

• **8:20 a.m.:** American Airlines Flight 77 takes off from



**THE BALL OF fire** shows the impact of Flight 175 as it plunges into the South Tower of the World Trade Center. The North Tower had been hit by Flight 11 at 8:46 a.m.

Washington Dulles International Airport. The flight has 49,900 pounds of fuel and is carrying six crew members, 53 passengers and five hijackers.

• **8:21 a.m.:** The transponder on Flight 11 is turned off. This device is meant to allow air traffic controllers to identify and monitor the flight path of a plane.

• **8:24 a.m.:** One of the hijackers of Flight 11 unwittingly broadcasts a message to air traffic controllers alerting them to the attacks. The hijacker was attempting to communicate with passengers and crew within the cabin.

• **8:30 a.m.:** Around this time, roughly 80 people have already begun gathering on the 106th floor of the North Tower of the World Trade Center for a financial technology conference. The conference is one of many events on the Trade Center schedule that day.

• **8:37 a.m.:** The Boston Air Traffic Control Center alerts the military that a hijacking is under way.

• **8:42 a.m.:** United Airlines Flight 93 takes off from Newark International Airport. The flight was due to take off at roughly the same time as the

other hijacked planes, but was delayed due to routine traffic. Seven crew members, 33 passengers and four hijackers are on board. The flight is filled with 48,700 pounds of fuel.

• **8:46 a.m.:** Five hijackers crash Flight 11 into floors 93 through 99 of the North Tower of the World Trade Center. Hundreds, including everyone on board the flight, are killed instantly. The crash severs all three emergency stairwells, trapping hundreds of people above the 91st floor.

• **8:46 a.m.:** Police, paramedics and firefighters are sent to the North Tower.

• **8:50 a.m.:** While visiting an elementary school in Florida, U.S. President George W. Bush is notified that a small plane has hit the North Tower.

• **8:52 a.m.:** A flight attendant aboard Flight 175 reaches a United Airlines operator in San Francisco and reports the flight is being hijacked. By 9 a.m., various passengers on Flight 175 have called family members.

• **8:55 a.m.:** The Port Authority informs people inside the South Tower via a public address system that the building is secure and there is no

need to evacuate.

• **8:59 a.m.:** The Port Authority Police Department orders both towers evacuated. One minute later Captain Anthony Whitaker expands the order to include all civilians in the entire World Trade Center complex.

• **9:02 a.m.:** An evacuation order is broadcast in the South Tower.

• **9:03 a.m.:** Five hijackers crash Flight 175 into floors 77 through 85 of the South Tower. All onboard the flight are killed, as are an unknown number of people inside the building. Two of the three emergency stairwells are impassable and most elevator cables are severed, trapping many people above the impact zone and inside elevator cars.

• **9:03 a.m.:** A second call for mobilization brings the total number of New York City Police Department officers responding to the scene to roughly 2,000. In addition, the FDNY issues a fifth alarm and deploys several hundred additional firefighters to the scene.

• **9:05 a.m.:** President Bush is informed that a second plane has crashed into the World Trade Center.

• **9:12 a.m.:** Flight attendant Renée A. May calls her mother and tells her that hijackers have seized control of Flight 77. When May's call is disconnected, she calls American Airlines.

• **9:30 a.m.:** Amidst reports of additional hijacked planes, the Mayor's Office of Emergency Management at 7 World Trade Center is evacuated.

• **9:37 a.m.:** Hijackers crash Flight 77 into the Pentagon. All 53 passengers and six crew members perish, and 125 military and civilian personnel on the ground are killed in the fire caused by the crash.

• **9:42 a.m.:** The Federal Aviation Administration grounds all flights, ordering all civilian planes in United States airspace to land. Departures also are prohibited.

• **9:45 a.m.:** Evacuations at the White House and the U.S. Capitol begin. Both the House of Representatives and Senate are in session at the time the evacuation begins.

• **9:58 a.m.:** Flight 93 is flying so low to the ground that passenger Edward P. Felt is able to reach an emergency 911 operator in Westmoreland County, Pennsylvania.

• **9:59 a.m.:** The South Tower collapses after burning for 56 minutes. The tower collapses in just 10 seconds.

• **9:59 a.m.:** Continuity-of-government procedures are implemented for the first known time in American history.

• **10:03 a.m.:** Four hijackers crash Flight 93 into a field near the town of Shanksville, Pennsylvania. All 33 passengers and seven crew members on board perish. Passengers and crew had stormed the cockpit, and the plane ultimately crashes just 20 minutes' flying time from Washington, D.C.

• **10:15 a.m.:** The E Ring of the Pentagon collapses.

• **10:28 a.m.:** The North Tower collapses after burning for 102 minutes. More than 1,600 people are killed as a result of the attack on the North Tower.

• **11:02 a.m.:** New York City Mayor Rudolph Giuliani urges the evacuation of lower Manhattan.

• **12:16 p.m.:** The last flight still in the air above the continental United Stateslands. Within two and a half hours, U.S. airspace has been cleared of roughly 4,500 commercial and general aviation planes.

## A day we cannot forget

By **KAITLIN GEBBY**  
Staff Writer

Twenty years later, one imagines an American community as quieter, self-assured, maybe safer before the morning of Tuesday, Sept. 11, 2001.

Clevelanders were at their jobs, in school, taking care of children and commuting through their daily life before a plane hit the World Trade Center. It appeared to be a tragic accident. Then another hit the second tower. Then reports of a plane hitting the Pentagon came in, followed by a plane crash in Shanksville, Pennsylvania.

The country was brought to a screeching halt.

Four commercial airliners headed for California were hijacked mid-flight by 19 terrorists, who flew a plane into the North Tower of the World Trade Center complex in Lower Manhattan at 8:46 a.m. At 9:03 a.m., a second plane hit the South Tower. Within an hour and 42 minutes, both buildings had collapsed. At 9:37 a.m., a plane crashed into the Pentagon. The fourth flight, which investigators determined was either destined for the White House or the Capitol Building, crashed in a field near Shanksville after passengers fought hijackers.

It remains the deadliest terrorist attack in history, killing 2,977 people and resulting in over 25,000 injuries as well as long-term health effects. It is also the deadliest event for first responders, killing 340 firefighters and 72 law enforcement officers.

The Cleveland Daily Banner asked readers online where they were on that day.

• Jason Gibson was stationed at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, D.C. He was

supposed to have the day off.

"I was at my house in Maryland when the news broke. The phone lines were not working between our hospital and the Army community hospital at Fort Meade, but I could reach both and acted as messenger between the facilities," he said. "It was a strange site to be between three major airports and not see a cloud in the sky; the only sound you could hear was fire engines headed south on Interstate 95 toward the Pentagon. Life for almost all of us in the service changed on that one day."

• Ginnie Valiton was in Pennsylvania, "close enough to where Flight 93 went down." A nurse with a nursing and rehabilitation home, she was placed on call in case the hospital across the street became full and need their open beds.

"The only thing known at the time was a large plane with many passengers went down close by. Our facility had some empty beds. So if the hospital became full, our beds were available," she said. "I hung up the phone and turned on the TV."

• Eddie Tucker was leaving New York that day.

"It was the only time I made that drive and the interstates seemed empty," he said.

• In schools across Bradley County, teachers and students watched together as news of the first Tower broke.

Some teachers shed tears alongside their students as they watched the news. Others tried to shield their kids from the news, or offer a moment of reprieve in the afternoon after a morning of anxiety. Most everyone just wanted to hold their loved ones close.

"I was teaching first grade at Charleston Elementary," said

Regina Trotter Smith.

"It was so hard to teach that afternoon knowing what had happened. I had to not let it show on my face because I didn't want my first-grade babies to know what was going on. My son was in preschool at First Baptist. All I wanted to do was go get him and hold him."

• Heath Pendergraft said "awkward" high school bells rang but "everyone was glued to the TV."

"People walked around in the hall only to see if everyone was watching," Pendergraft said.

• Rebekah Pierce, a sixth-grade student at the time, said her Ocoee Middle School class insisted their teacher let them watch. "We weren't missing history," she said.

• Students at Black Fox Elementary School bowed their heads in a moment of silence after an announcement on the PA system.

"At 7 years old, you don't really understand what is happening by words," said Lydia Scoggins. "But when we heard on the broadcast, we all knew what we were praying for. A day I will never forget."

• Another mother, Tina McGinnis Belau, was in a lab waiting for a pregnancy test.

"That 'baby' turned 19 in May," she said.

The aftermath of the attacks on Sept. 11 inspired some to join the Armed Forces.

• James Roland Burnett was 10 years old at the time and enlisted when he was old enough. He was killed in action on Nov. 16, 2011.

"Little did I know the aftermath of that day would lead my then 10 year old nephew to join



See **FACEBOOK, Page C4**

## Mayor Davis recalls 'unbelievable' events

By **AUTUMN HUGHES**  
Staff Writer

For Bradley County Mayor D. Gary Davis, his morning on Sept. 11, 2001, began with stopping in at a community event.

"I was attending the Chamber Coffee [event] which was at Panera Bread that morning," he said.

Davis' assistant at the time was also in attendance, and told him about the first airplane hitting the World Trade Center.

"I immediately got in my car and went back to the office," Davis said. "I had a

TV at the office at the time, and turned on the TV right as the second plane was going into the World Trade Center.

"The rest of the day was consumed by everybody watching the TV and eventually watching the building come down," he said. He added it was "an unbelievable time — everybody was just in disbelief."

And once it became clear it was a terror attack, Davis said emergency management agencies across the country "started being on alert, watching for what's going to happen next."

Davis added "emergency management's always been in place for things, but I don't know that they'd ever

planned on something like this being a possibility, so FEMA became a real big thing all across the country at that point."

Recalling the first anniversary of 9/11, Davis said there was a large community event and many attended. Over the years the local events re-

mained open to the public but have mainly been sponsored by churches and other organizations.

He noted there is also a monument to 9/11 at the Courthouse Plaza, sponsored by Ralph Buck-

ner Funeral Home. "That's one of the commemorations that was done in Bradley County for 9/11," Davis said.

Reflecting on how much has changed in the world over the last 20 years, Davis said the country's follow-up to the events of 9/11 led to positive changes.

"We're a much safer county than we were before 9/11 because it brought [terrorism and the need for increased security] to our attention," Davis said.

Speaking on more recent events, specifically the Taliban taking over power in Afghanistan, Davis said "another 9/11 can happen very easily if we're not awfully careful."



**Mayor Davis**

# Aftermath of 9/11: Red Cross volunteer Rod Davis responded to NYC

By ALLEN MINCEY  
Banner Correspondent

Though he was there a few weeks after 9/11, Rod Davis remembered well the devastation the terrorist attack on New York City caused, and the dedication of those who helped the city following the tragic event.

“Even today talking about it, it still affects me because I mean this, this is nothing like TV,” Davis said in an interview with the Cleveland Daily Banner. “TV did it no justice because me actually being there, seeing the buildings, seeing them still smoking and smoldering ... it’s hard to forget.”

Davis was a volunteer with the American Red Cross out of Cleveland. He also served with the Bradley County Volunteer Fire Department, as it was known in 2001. He did not hesitate to go to NYC when asked to help, actually getting to the city in late October to help with the aftermath of the attack.

“I was in a group in a van with about 12 other responders,” he recollected. “We got in that night and the next morning, got to see Ground Zero. When we got there, all we could see was smoke.”

“Then we saw all the firemen on top of the rubble, and I remember looking at everybody and seeing the tears flow out of their eyes and our team members crying ... and then my emotions took over and before I knew it, tears were flowing. Emotions took over and I was thinking that these planes took down all these buildings, not just the Trade Center.”

Davis was stationed at a nearby university, which was being used as a central location. His room was near Central Park while he was in New York City.

“I was over issuing emergency equipment to all the first responders,” he said. “I also had to make sure all first responder were fed, if they needed any kind of equipment or anything. They most likely went through me, and I would issue it out.”

“We had a lot of companies that were donating different emergency

equipment and different stuff that they needed — clothing, boots, suits, whatever they needed to go in and they went through me.”

That was Davis’ initial job when he got to New York City. He eventually was in charge of sending out emergency vehicles that delivered food to the communities. Davis’ job was to also make sure the emergency vehicles were running properly.

“OK. And so that was my first job for a while. And then my second job was, I was, I was over all the emergency HERBS. The HERBS is a mercy vehicle that actually sends out food into the community and feeds people. OK, so I was over the HERBS in inspecting those to make sure they run properly. Make sure all the emergency stuff was actually working properly.”

He said his experience with the American Red Cross and with the Bradley

County Volunteer Fire Department



Contributed photo

**WEARING THE JACKET** from one of the agencies he helped, the New York Police Department, Rod Davis’ somber expression was one mirrored by many first responders who traveled to the city to help following the 9/11 attack on the World Trade Center.



Contributed photo

**SEVERAL BUILDINGS SUSTAINED** damage from the 9/11 incident in New York City. Rod Davis took this photograph of buildings near Ground Zero that were damaged.

helped him in being able to withstand the pressures in New York City.

“I had many roles, and what prepared me for all these roles was not just American Red Cross, but being on fire and rescue for all those many years, being a first responder, then on the search and rescue team,” Davis said. “Being a part of the dive team and being part of the Swift Water team helped. I mean, all of those functions came into one, the knowledge, all of that helped me to prepare myself.”

Still, the destruction of that part of the city did take its toll. Davis remembered getting sick while there and having to stay in his hotel room, per orders, for a time period. He said he believed it was a combination of noxious fumes and not eating much as contributing to his illness.

“It was just like we were in a war zone, like one of those you’d see in the Terminator movies. I just couldn’t believe it,” he said.

His reference to a movie scenario was interesting, as he also had a brief

meeting while there with a well-known actor.

“Probably the best highlight of my time I was there was when I was walking through a part of the city on my phone, talking to my daughter. I walked right into a movie scene being shot with Ben Stiller,” Davis said. He remembered Stiller asked who he was talking to, and Davis told him it was his daughter, and Stiller took the phone and said hello to her.

Davis admitted his daughter didn’t know who Ben Stiller was until he mentioned “Meet the Parents.”

There were other times that Davis remembered as less stressful times, but he said that regardless, he would never forget his time in that city after 9/11.

“I got really mad that for all that America does for people, that the United States does for people all over the world, and for them to come here and bomb us like they did. I was very angry, and then at the same time very sad, because a lot of people lost their lives.”



Banner photo, ALLEN MINCEY

**ROD DAVIS** holds a panoramic view of New York City that were given to first responders who traveled to the city to help in the aftermath of the 9/11 plane crashes into the Twin Towers. He also is wearing the helmet he wore when there, which includes several stickers from emergency agencies in that city.

# Spence: Sept. 11 attacks showed need for preparedness

By AUTUMN HUGHES  
Staff Writer

In the aftermath of the terror attacks on the United States on Sept. 11, 2001, the importance of training to protect against future such events came to the forefront.

According to Troy Spence, director of the Cleveland-Bradley County Emergency Management Agency, that focus on training led to increased access to resources through the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

Spence, who was working full-time as an engineer at Maytag and also volunteering with Bradley County Rescue, recalls watching the events of 9/11 unfold on television. “Everybody was watching in disbelief,” he said. “9/11 was one of those things that took everybody by surprise.”



And although Maytag didn’t halt production that day, businesses began closing around the community out of concern for additional attacks, and local rescue groups began taking donations for supplies in the event something happened here, “just to be ready on our end,” Spence



Spence

said. “We wanted to protect us first and then we wanted to reach out to other counties to see if we could build a team and send a team from the local area

to New York to assist them,” he said. “We were gathering together and trying to pool our resources.”

Spence said about five months after 9/11, he came to work at the EMA as fixed nuclear facility planner — there was a lot of discussion at the time about safety of TVA facilities like the Sequoyah and Watts Bar nuclear plants.

“There was a lot of talk about making sure security was what it needed to be,” he said.

While the local team was never called up to help in any of the terror attack locations that day, the incidents of 9/11 immediately showed the need to increase preparedness.

Spence said afterward “a lot of things got changed” so mutual aid can be called up more quickly.

One of those things that changed was the formation of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and districts in each state. Bradley County is in a 10-county region called District

3, which also includes Bledsoe, Grundy, Hamilton, Marion, McMinn, Meigs, Polk, Rhea and Sequatchie counties.

Spence said when putting the team together, the goal was to put resources with those per-

sonnel so they would have the supplies to support the group in the event it was called to action.

“It’s a lot of logistics that you need to think about before you take off and go,” he said, adding if the disaster site “doesn’t

have the resources then you’re just part of a bigger problem.”

Speaking on training, Spence said those protocols are even better today than 20 years ago

See SPENCE, Page C4

9-11-2001

# 20 years

Remembering  
Those Who Lost Their Lives  
And the Loved Ones They Left Behind

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# Rowlands visited Ground Zero, Pentagon with other mayors

By ALLEN MINCEY  
Banner Correspondent

He learned about it through several phone calls, and he spoke with several who had witnessed the devastation on 9/11, but former Cleveland Mayor Tom Rowland didn't realize the scope of the damage until actually visiting the sites where terrorism occurred on that September day.

Rowland, who was Cleveland's mayor when the event occurred in 2001, was invited, along with several other mayors across the country, to tour the sites in Washington, D.C., and New York City.

"I was in Nashville at

a meeting, and had not watched TV," Rowland said. "I went across the street to get breakfast and Sandra (his wife) called me and said that something's happening at the World Trade Center.

"So I went back to the Capitol, where my meeting was, and there was so much talk going on about what was happening," he continued. "I was getting phone calls to come home, and the meeting was stopped, so I was able to come back to Cleveland."

He was eventually invited to come to Washington, D.C. with a group of mayors, where he met with President George W. Bush, Homeland

Security Secretary Tom Ridge and others.

"We were then loaded up and taken from Washington to New York on Amtrak," the former mayor said. This was done as part of the United States Conference of Mayors in January 2002.

In New York City, Rowland met then Mayor Rudy Giuliani and Mayor-to-Be Mike Bloomberg, and many of the firefighters and other first responders who actually helped save lives at the Twin Towers.

"We went to Ground Zero and Mayor Giuliani told everyone who was working at all the buildings, to silence all of the equipment," Rowland remembered. "He said to be respectful of this site because it's holy land, holy ground, and there were still a lot of people buried under that site."

Rowland said he had always heard residents in New York City were rude and mean to visitors, "but it turned out that New York was probably one of the most gracious places I've ever been. Everybody was nice. Everybody was gracious. Everybody was friendly, but all of the people wanted to see those responsible brought to justice, too."

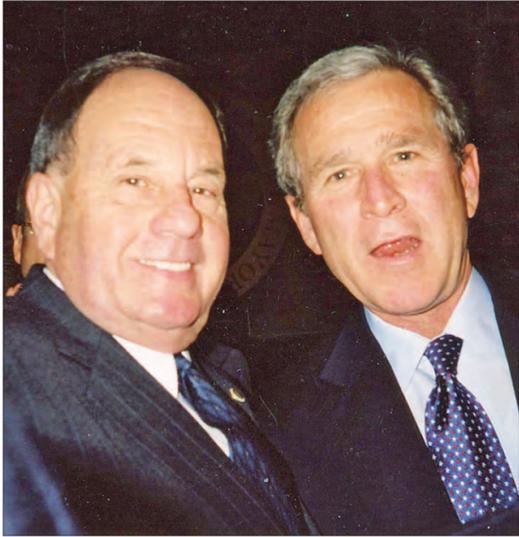
The Cleveland Mayor Emeritus said he wanted to see those responsible brought to justice, as he noted "I just felt a sense of anger and was anxious for these people to be brought to justice, however, that can be done."

"President Bush told



Contributed photo

**SANDRA ROWLAND** holds Flat Stanley, who went to New York City with Rowland and her husband, Tom, and was visiting that city from Oak Grove Elementary School.



Contributed photo

**PRESIDENT GEORGE W. BUSH** met with Cleveland Mayor Tom Rowland in January 2002 to discuss the United States' response to the terrorist acts against the country. Bush spoke at the United States Conference of Mayors.

us that these people will pay and will be brought to justice. He was very somber, when he talked to us and didn't add a whole lot, but just stuck to the facts," Rowland continued.

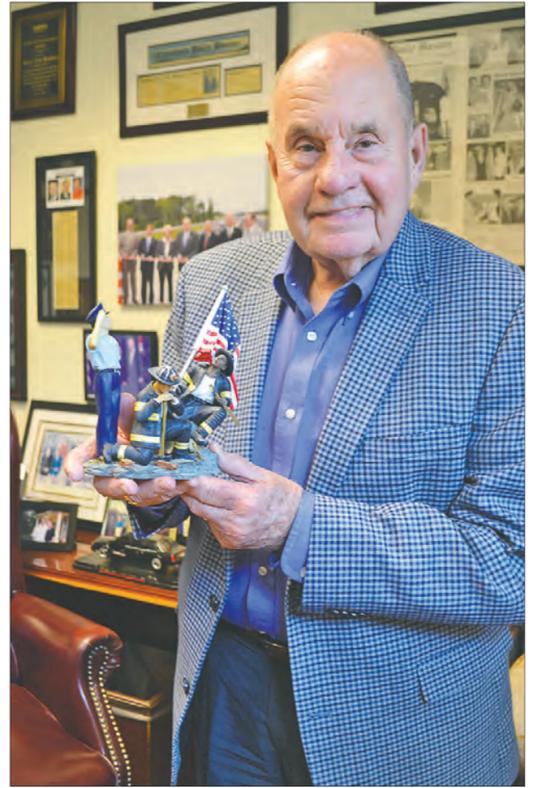
Rowland said he and his wife took along a special friend from Cleveland on their visit to New York City: Flat Stanley.

"Flat Stanley, from Oak Grove School. Really, we carried him up there," Rowland smiled.

The former mayor said he hopes everyone will take time on Saturday to reflect on what happened on Sept. 11, 2001, on this 20th anniversary of the terrorist attacks in our country.

"We had been attacked on our own shore. Yes, there was Pearl Harbor which was part of the United States but this was in the continental United States," Rowland said. "We never thought it could happen, and it did."

"Let's not forget what happened that day, and stay vigilant, and remember those who made the ultimate sacrifice to save those they could in these tragic events," he added.



Banner photo, ALLEN MINCEY

**MAYOR EMERITUS** Tom Rowland shows one of the many artifacts in his replica office at the Museum Center at 5ive Points. He said that this helps him in remembering those who gave up their lives in efforts to save others in the 2001 terrorist attacks.



AP Photo/Richard Cohen

**FIREMEN WALK** through a dust and debris covered street in lower Manhattan Sept. 11, 2001, after a terrorist attack at the World Trade Center. Two jet planes crashed into the twin towers, collapsing them and covering the area with the debris.

## SPENCE: Preparedness need

FROM PAGE C3

— Homeland Security grants have helped. Local personnel are now offered a lot of training for "acts of terrorism, bioterrorism ... just everything — it was just one of those things we hadn't done."

"Most of that planning was on the federal level, not on the local level," Spence said. "We rely on these guys — we work a lot together ... it's only made us better."

"I'm proud of the work that we've put in to be a lot more prepared, moving forward," he added.

"The federal government started these grants and the grants were able to train us [and] way better to equip us," he said.

Spence added that formation of districts and planning "to have things in place prior to a disaster helps us as a local community respond much better to each other's needs better than we thought it ever would."

"We look out for each other — and that's a good thing in today's world," he said.

## FACEBOOK: A day we cannot forget

FROM PAGE C2

the Army," said Robyn Metcalf Horth. "James's death led me to my dream of living in the Tennessee Valley and the mountains where we spent time together as family."

Louise Hannah did not join after the attacks, but was reminded the day after she enlisted in the Marine Corps why she signed up.

"I decided to join the Marine Corps and on September 10, 2001," she wrote. "I was in a paper gown when a nurse walked in and turned on the 13-inch TV in the corner and said a plane hit the World Trade Center. Less than five minutes later the second plane hit. Two years later I was in Iraq with the greatest brother and sisterhood that I've ever had the privilege to be a part of."

The attacks redefined air travel

and what it meant to be an American. Citizens of 78 countries were killed in the attacks in New York, Washington, D.C., and Pennsylvania, and the world mourned together.

Whether they were in classrooms, restaurants, coffee shops or business offices, watching as Americans or in other countries, grief unified people, not unlike the COVID-19 pandemic. People offered their support for the nation with flags flying from front porches, ribbons pinned to lapels, and a surge of patriotism created a shortage of American flags and the like.

Now 20 years later, the country continues to take a moment of silence and share where we were, what we saw, what we heard and felt, to both reflect and teach the next generation about a day we can never forget.

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# Challenges of covering 9/11 tragedy

By **LARRY C. BOWERS**  
Former editor

It's been more than a year since I left the Cleveland Banner newsroom.

During my semi-retirement, I've been able to reflect on my long career in journalism, including a horrific morning in mid-September, 2001, when the world changed and America realized that terrorism is a threat to the freedom every American enjoys.

It was a somewhat normal morning for the Banner's staff ... until the world turned upside down.

As editor, I arrived ahead of the rest of our newsroom staff, as was my norm. I made preliminary plans for that day's newspaper, as we had several important stories, a couple that were not what you would call "good news."

Three people from the surrounding community had been killed in separate traffic accidents, and we had coverage from a funeral in Chattanooga for a Hamilton County deputy who had been gunned down while standing by his patrol car.

Several from Cleveland and Bradley County law enforcement attended the funeral procession.

A "good news" article was a guest column by Miss Tennessee Stephanie Culberson.

The Lee University senior from West Knoxville was providing us with a first-person account of her experiences in the national competition. She eventually went on to be the second runner-up to Miss America, and Banner readers were able to take the journey with her.

These stories were edited and placed on the front page of the Tuesday publication as the newsroom clock approached 9 a.m. But this was soon to change.

The first hint that something unusual was happening was an URGENT by the Associated Press just before 9 a.m.

We then received a Bulletin that an airplane had flown into one of the towers of the World Trade Center in New York City.

As the newsroom reporters and other Banner staff crowded into the office of former publisher Stephen Crass to watch the update on television, it became apparent it was not just a terrible accident.

News reports were received that a second plane was also approaching the twin towers.

As the second airliner struck the World Trade Center there was a tremendous explosion with fire and smoke, witnessed by millions of television viewers across the nation and around the world.

The Banner staff stepped up to the challenge, even as a third airliner was crashing into a helicopter pad and a portion of the Pentagon. There was also the report of a fourth airliner circling in rural Pennsylvania, with the possibility it might be targeting the U.S. Capitol.

Heroric passengers challenged the terrorists on that fourth plane and it plunged into a pasture killing all aboard.

The Banner's Tuesday edition, with the remade front page, was distributed to our readers shortly after noon. Our morning schedule and afternoon delivery enabled us to distribute the news throughout the Cleveland community quickly.

The Banner was later recognized by the Associated Press and others for the design of that day's newspaper, getting the news to our readers as quickly as possible, and the headline "A Day of Horror in America."

Ironically, it was the third national tragedy I had been involved with, while working at daily news-

papers in Tennessee.

The first was the assassination of President John F. Kennedy on Nov. 22, 1963, when I was a cub reporter at the Maryville-Alcoa Daily Times.

My second tragedy was the Oklahoma City bombing while I was executive editor of the Morristown Tribune. The Tribune was the only newspaper in the state to publish the notice on the same day it happened. We also published the controversial (and terribly sad) photo of the Oklahoma City fireman carrying a small infant from the debris.

Although the Banner staff met the challenge on 9/11/2001, there was much to follow.

There were several interviews of local residents who were in New York on that fateful day. Others had family members in New York.

Despite the shock that raced through the community, across the nation, and around the world, there were also thought-provoking comments. Many thoughts came from my veteran friends, most of them no longer with us.

The late Charlie Fletcher told me the disaster reminded him of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, which caused him to enlist in the U.S. Army. Charlie was much decorated, while serving in Europe. He was at the Battle of the Bulge, and lost much of both feet from frostbite.

In late life, Fletcher published several books on his growing-up years in Western Carolina.

Just before his death, he asked me to complete his final book, which was to be about his war experiences. I passed on the suggestion, but now wish I had embraced his wish.

There's one comment Charlie made, I'll always remember. Talking about his World War II experiencing fighting against the Nazis, when we attended the 75th anniversary of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, he said, "All wars are hell, wherever and whenever they be."

I believed Charlie would agree the same could be said about 9/11/2001.



Ed Ramsey



Lisa Geren

## Urgent bulletin changed direction of radio programs

By **TIM SINIARD**  
Staff Writer

WALV radio hosts Ed Ramsey and Mike Lee were wrapping up their morning radio program duties when a colleague, Corky Whitlock, informed them of an urgent bulletin that just flashed on the newswires.

"Hey guys, I think something is going on," he said.

It was shortly before 9 a.m., Sept. 11, 2001.

Whitlock hosted a morning program on WALV's sister station, WBAC, from a studio next door.

The upper floors of the World Trade Center's North tower were burning, billowing plumes of black smoke from gaping holes caused from what was later learned to be a passenger jet hijacked by terrorists.

What followed that first news flash was a quick succession of horrific events: at 9:03 a.m., a second passenger jet was deliberately flown into WTC's South tower; at 9:37 a.m., another

passenger jet slammed into the Pentagon; at 10:03 a.m., hijackers on a fourth jet plunged the aircraft into a field outside Shanksville, Pa., after the passengers led a revolt and stormed the cockpit.

The South and North WTC towers, their superstructures weakened from the two crashed hijacked planes, as well as from the intense fires that raged within, collapsed at 9:59 a.m. and 10:28 a.m., respectively.

Prior to the attacks, Ramsey said the morning had been uneventful. He was mulling over what to get to eat. Lunch came early when work began at 4 a.m.

But those plans fell by the wayside as Ramsey and Lee remained on the air to report each grisly event.

"We stayed frozen in place," Ramsey said. "We put out as much information as we could."

But as the events unfolded, Ramsey said he and Lee began to feel a

See RADIO, Page C6

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# Surviving was 'first piece of the journey'

By JENNIFER PELTZ  
Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Trapped deep in the wreckage of the World Trade Center, Will Jimeno lived through the unthinkable. Twenty years later, he's still living with it.

A brace and a quarter-sized divot on his left leg reflect the injuries that ended his police career, a lifetime dream. He has post-traumatic stress disorder. He keeps shelves of mementoes, including a cross and miniature twin towers fashioned from trade center steel. He was portrayed in a movie and wrote two books about enduring the ordeal.

"It never goes away, for those of us that were there that day," he says.

Nearly 3,000 people were killed when hijackers in Osama bin Laden's al-Qaida terror network rammed four commercial jets into the trade center, the Pentagon and a Pennsylvania field on Sept. 11, 2001. Yet an estimated 33,000 or more people successfully evacuated the stricken buildings.

They navigated mountains of smoky stairs in the World Trade Center's twin towers or streamed out of a flaming Pentagon. Some fled an otherworldly dust cloud at ground zero. Others willed their way out of pitch-dark rubble.

Sept. 11 survivors bear scars and the weight of unanswerable questions. Some grapple with their place in a tragedy defined by an enormous loss of life. They get told to "get over" 9/11. But they also say they have gained resilience, purpose, appreciation and resolve.

"One of the things that I learned," Jimeno says, "is to never give up."

## 'IT'S ALMOST LIKE YOU'RE REBORN'

It wasn't Bruce Stephan's first incredibly close call.

In 1989, his car got perilously wedged on the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge when the Loma Pri-

eta earthquake hit and the upper deck collapsed while he was driving across.

Twelve years later, the engineer and lawyer was settling into his workday on the 65th floor of the trade center's north tower when one of the planes crashed about 30 stories above.

Only after his roughly hourlong walk down the crowded stairs did Stephan learn that another plane had hit the south tower — the building where his wife, Joan, also an attorney, worked on the 91st floor. Above the impact zone.

Unable to reach her by cell phone, Bruce Stephan dashed to a payphone and called her relatives, who told him she'd gotten out.

Then the south tower fell, and Stephan's fear spiked anew. Had Joan been caught in the collapse? Hours later, he finally learned that she was OK. (At least one other couple, elevator operators Arturo and Carmen Griffith, also survived; their story inspired a recent film, "Lovebirds of the Twin Towers.")

"My experience from the first disaster was that it's a strangely happy moment when you know that you've survived," Bruce Stephan says. "It's almost like you're reborn... to know that you're alive and that you still have a shot at life, and here's your chance to do something."

"When it happened a second time, it's just like, 'Oh, my God.'"

After the earthquake, the New York City natives resolved to change their workaholic lives. After 9/11, they did.

Within two months, the couple moved to Essex, a northern New York town of roughly 700 people.

While telecommuting and sometimes actually commuting, they made time for other things — church, a book club, amateur theater, gardening, zoning meetings, a local newsletter. They cherished a newfound sense of community.

But a work opportunity



AP Photo/Wong Maye-E

**RETIRED NYPD** Officer Mark DeMarco, is seen in a reflection off a display cabinet where he keeps memorabilia from 9/11 including the small flashlight which he used to help him navigate his way out of the rubble of the fallen skyscrapers, in his home in the Staten Island borough of New York on Aug. 3. He worries that the public memory of the attacks is fading, that the passage of time has created a false sense of security. "Have fun with life. Don't be afraid," he says.

pulled them back to San Francisco in 2009. They loved it, until the pandemic made them rethink their lives again.

"One of the things that we discovered as a result of the disasters was that being in a community ... is maybe the biggest reward you can have," Stephan, 65, says from their front porch in Essex. They moved back last year.

## 'I WAS A WALKING ZOMBIE'

Désirée Bouchat pauses by one of the inscribed names on the 9/11 memorial: James Patrick Berger. She last saw him on the 101st floor of the trade center's south tower.

"Some days, it feels like it happened yesterday," she says. At first, people figured the plane crash at the north tower was accidental. There was no immediate evacuation order for the south tower. But Berger ushered Bouchat and other Aon Corp. colleagues to the elevators, then turned back to check for

more people.

Just as Bouchat exited the south tower, another plane slammed into it. Nearly 180 Aon workers perished, including Berger.

For a while, Bouchat told everyone, including herself: "I'm fine. I'm alive."

But "I was a walking zombie," she says now.

She couldn't multitask anymore. Remarks that used to bother her stirred no reaction. She was functioning, but through a fog that took more than a year to lift.

Bouchat eventually felt that she needed to talk about 9/11. The Springfield, New Jersey, resident has now led about 500 tours for the 9/11 Tribute Museum (it's separate from the larger National September 11 Memorial & Museum).

Bruce Powers has traveled from Alexandria, Virginia, to lead Tribute Museum tours, too. And every Sept. 11, the 82-year-old repeats his seven-mile (11 km) walk home from the Pentagon after the attack that killed 184 people, 10 of whom he knew.

The walk, the tours and hearing other guides' personal stories "serve well in helping me deal with what happened," says Powers, a now-retired Navy aviation planner.

The public hasn't fully recognized the losses survivors felt, says Mary Fetchet, a social worker who lost her son Brad on 9/11 and founded Voices Center for Resilience, a support and advocacy group for victims' families, first responders and survivors. "Although they are still living, they're living in a very different way."

## 'I COULDN'T FIGURE OUT HOW I GOT OUT OF THERE ALIVE'

For a time after 9/11, Police Department Officer Mark DeMarco replayed the what-ifs in his mind. If he'd gone right instead of left. A bit earlier. Or later.

See **SURVIVORS**, Page C7

# RADIO: Changes

FROM PAGE C5

sense of dread.

"Both of us began to get this sick feeling," he said.

But their spirits were buoyed by the immediate response of local residents who flocked to local blood donation centers.

"They had a line of people standing in the parking lot wanting to give blood," he said.

Although the internet had been in existence for several years, smart phones were nonexistent, resulting in television, radio and news websites providing updates on each terrifying new development.

"It was my worst day in radio," Ramsey said. "It was like Pearl Harbor to me."

Soon, on-air calls from grief-stricken listeners poured in.

"They were in shock," Ramsey said. "Many asked for everyone to pray for their country. People also wanted to know what they could do."

Although the nation has faced several challenges since 9-11, Ramsey, who left radio in 2007 and now resides in Lenoir City, said he has positive thoughts about the future.

"This is America. It's the greatest country on earth," he said. "We go through our ups, we go through our downs."

Lisa Geren, who hosted another morning program on WCLE alongside Bill Burkett, had left the studio booth early to attend a Cleveland/Bradley Chamber of Commerce coffee at Panera Bread. She was driving back to the station when she heard Burkett announce a plane had crashed into the World Trade Center.

Until that moment, she said it had been a "normal news day."

At first, she and Burkett had assumed a pilot had been in distress resulting in crashing into the skyscraper. But when the second plane hit, Geren said they soon realized what they were witnessing on the studio's television was "a lot worse than a plane being off course."

"From that moment, it got crazy," she said. "Nobody had any idea it was going to turn out to be the worst terrorist attack on U.S. soil."

Geren and Burkett monitored feeds from national news organizations to ensure they were reporting each new event accurately.

The morning's frenzy of news bulletins made that a challenge.

"Just as we were trying to understand the news, another event happened," she said.

And then the twin towers collapsed, killing thousands.

"It was devastating," she said, her voice breaking. "It was very emotional."

Listeners called into the radio show seeking consolation, while others sought advice.

"What are we supposed to do?" Geren recalled some asking.

Geren said she and Burkett were also in shock and attempting to keep their heads above water while trying to understand the reality of what was taking place minute by minute.

"We didn't know what to do either," she said. "We were watching it unfold like everyone else."

For weeks after the attacks, Geren said the station broadcasted updates from the White House and the Pentagon, along with news reports from ABC and Fox News.

"We didn't play any music, except for 'God Bless America' and the 'National Anthem,'" she said.

After much discussion by station management, Geren said it was decided WCLE would gradually return to its normal music format.

"We tried to take a break from the gruesome reality," she said.

Geren worked at the station from 1998 to 2012.

Now a regional vice president at the Better Business Bureau, Geren still shudders when she thinks about the victims of 9-11.

"Their lives, their families' lives, their friends lives were changed forever," she said.

But Geren also remembers when the American people were united in the days and months after the attacks.

"There was a spark of patriotism I feel we could use in today's world," she said.



AP Photo/Mark Lennihan

**DÉSIRÉE BOUCHAT**, a survivor of the 9/11 attacks on the World Trade Center, looks at photos of those who perished, in a display at the 9/11 Tribute Museum, Aug. 6, in New York. While Sept. 11 was a day of carnage, it also was a story of survival: Nearly 3,000 people were killed, but an estimated 33,000 or more people evacuated the World Trade Center and Pentagon.

September 11, 2001

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AP Photo/Richard Cohen

**FIREMEN WALK** through a dust and debris covered street in lower Manhattan Sept. 11, 2001, after a terrorist attack at the World Trade Center. Two jet planes were crashed into the twin towers, collapsing them and covering the area with the debris.

## Local first responders remember Sept. 11, 2001

By ALLEN MINCEY  
Banner Correspondent

When terrorists struck the Twin Towers 20 years ago, the entire country went through a myriad of emotions — surprise, fear, sadness, anger. Local first responders, though they may have tried to hide them, had those same emotions.

Former Cleveland Fire Department Chief Bob Gaylor remembered the day well.

“I was in my office and there were some firemen in the kitchen,” he recalled. “They called me to come look at the TV. We saw a plane flying into the Trade Center. We thought it was an accident and were in shock. A few minutes later they showed a second plane flying into to other building, by this time we knew it was not an accident.”

Fellow CFD fireman David McAmis, who was training coordinator for the department at the time, said his group was preparing to start hose testing when the towers were struck.

“I was making preparations to go to Tinsley Park to lay the hose out which could be up to 1500 feet, when Fire-fighter Jeremy Greenleaf came into my office and told me a plane had just hit the World Trade Center.”

McAmis said that while they suspected terrorism, it had not been confirmed by the time training was to start, so rather than postpone “hose testing that morning and watch the developing news, I felt hose testing was essential for the safety of the public and firefighters.” He said the firefighters learned while testing of the second plane hitting the towers.

“Like all firemen, we will never forget,” he said. “343 NYFD firefighters lost their lives that day.”

Leon Dixon said he and fellow CFD fireman Steve Clayton were in the kitchen at Station 1 when they heard of the first plane crash. “I thought it was an accident until the second one was hit and then my mind went from accident to disbelief and after that, I went from being careful to being very careful.”

Donnie Sullivan, a longtime member of the Cleveland Fire Department, was in arson school at UT Martin when the towers were struck.

“It shocked me. There were TVs in every class, and we all began watching what was happening in Memphis, then back to their respective departments, but continued the school program.”

David Sink was working for the Bradley County Emergency Medical Service at the time. He recounted that he was at a doctor’s office when he learned of the first building being struck.

“We had permission to take the ambulance out of service to (be there). As I’m sitting there, my pager goes off. It was a news release saying a plane had hit one of the Twin Towers. I’m thinking it must have been a Cessna or something similar,” Sink remembered.

“After she removed the stint, my pager goes off again saying a second plane had hit the second tower.”

Sink said he and Larry Spence, working with him that day, went to their BCEMS station and turned on the television and got everyone there to come watch what was unfolding.

“Tears rolled down my face as we saw the carnage,” he said. “A short time later, the director of the Tennessee EMS issued an order that we could not respond to New York without a request from them.”

Sink said many began calling local businesses to see if they might provide some resources to New York City, and he said that M&M Mars came through with a truckload of gifts.

“We had an ER doctor who responded on her own and was immediately put to work when she arrived,” he added. “As horrific as the event was, we could easily see how great it is to be an American.”

Though not a first responder, Daniel Koob remembered the events of 9/11 as not only a veteran, but as a U.S. civil servant.

“I was at the Cleveland Post Office. We were casing our mail, and one of our co-workers went into the break room

and he saw that a plane had hit the Twin Towers,” Koob recollected. “We all thought it was an accident, so we were thinking ‘oh, what a tragedy’; but when the second one hit, us veterans immediately knew that it was an attack. There was no doubt in our minds.”

Koob said instead of anger, his fellow postal veterans were “frustrated that we couldn’t do anything ... then the Pentagon got hit and Shanksville (Pa.) got hit, and we were being told that the state department got hit and the U.S. Capitol got hit, which wasn’t true, but we went on our routes thinking the whole country was under attack.

“We still had our job to do, and we went out on our routes not knowing what was happening,” Koob said.

Koob is actually helping coordinate a 9/11 special ceremony at the Cleveland Elks Lodge on Sept. 11, which will begin at 10 a.m.

Chip Bryant was working at the Bradley County Sheriff’s Department when the attack occurred. He remembered having a sense of it being a planned attack after the second plane struck, and even suggested at the time that Osama Bin Laden was most likely behind the event.

“In the following hours, Cleveland became heavy with sadness,” Bryant said. “My son was out to sea on the Louisiana ballistic missile submarine. We were worried about him and wanted so badly to hear from him.” He said there was no way to contact his son or him to contact his family, so the terrorist attack became even more personal.

Bryant was asked to represent a prayer service at First Baptist Church the day after the incident. He said the building was packed. He later was involved in a prayer meeting at his church, Big Spring Baptist Church.

“I pray for our community, nation, the people of New York and my son,” he said.

Pete Van Dusen of the Cleveland Fire Department said he learned of the attack while on vacation with family at Disneyworld. He said he received a call from a fellow firefighter about the first plane crash, then watched the second on television, and his heart sank thinking about his fellow first responders.

“I remember watching in horror as the towers collapsed. I knew that many of my brothers had just lost their lives trying to evacuate the buildings,” Van Dusen said. “I will always remember the sounds immediately following the collapse. Many civilians wouldn’t understand the significance of the chirping sound that filled all of the on-scene footage. That sound was the personal alert safety device each firefighter wears on their gear with their breathing apparatus.

“I was sick as I watched these videos from the scene knowing those sounds indicated firefighters who were hurt or had been killed,” he continued.

The next day, Van Dusen said he, wearing his CFD T-shirt) and his family were eating breakfast when the waitress came up and told him that his bill had been taken care of, because he was a firefighter.

“This kind act brought a surge of emotion and conflicting thoughts within me,” he said. “On one hand, I was proud to be associated with the bravery and selflessness from the day before. On the other, I felt unworthy because I had done nothing to deserve this recognition.”

Many first responders have said they would have done the same thing that others in New York and other sites did, without thinking of themselves but the safety and well-being of those in danger. “Those who choose to go down this road will not hesitate to lay their lives down for a perfect stranger. The events of Sept. 11 served as proof of this dedication,” Van Dusen said. “The 343 firefighters who made that sacrifice, and other first responders, will always serve as an example to the rest of us who have answered this calling. They have set the bar high regarding our responsibility to the public we serve. We will never forget.”

## SURVIVORS: ‘First piece

FROM PAGE C3

“I couldn’t figure out how I got out of there alive,” he says.

After helping evacuate the north tower, the Emergency Service Unit officer was surrounded by a maze of debris when parts of the skyscraper tumbled onto a smaller building where he’d been directed. Some officers with him were killed.

Barely able to see his own boots with a small flashlight, DeMarco inched through the ruins with two officers behind him.

Then he took a step and felt nothing underfoot. He looked below and saw utter darkness.

Only later — after the officers turned around and eventually clambered through shattered windows to safety — did DeMarco realize he’d nearly tumbled into a crater carved by the collapse.

Now 68 and retired, DeMarco still wears a wristband with the names of the 14 ESU members killed that day. He worries that the public memory of the attacks is fading, that the passage of time has created a false sense of security.

“Have fun with life. Don’t be afraid,” he says. “But be mindful.”



AP Photo/Richard Drew

**WILL JIMENO**, the former Port Authority police officer who was rescued from the rubble of the attacks at the World Trade Center, shows how he crossed his arms with the signs for “I Love You,” during an interview in his home in Chester, N.J., Aug. 2. It was to be a sign to his family if he died in the rubble.

### ‘SURVIVING IS ONLY THE FIRST PIECE OF THE JOURNEY’

Breathing through an oxygen mask in a hospital bed, Wendy Lanski told herself: “If Osama bin Laden didn’t kill me, I’m not dying of COVID.”

Nearly two decades earlier, the health insurance manager escaped the north tower’s 29th floor and ran, barefoot, through the dust cloud from the south tower’s collapse. Eleven of her Empire Blue Cross Blue Shield colleagues died.

“The only good thing about surviving a tragedy or a catastrophe of any kind is: It definitely makes you more resilient,” says Lanski, who was hospitalized with the coronavirus — as was her husband — for two touch-and-go-weeks in spring 2020.

But “surviving is only the first piece of the journey,” says Lanski, 51, of West Orange, New Jersey.

She has the twin towers, “9/11/01” and “survivor” tattooed on her ankle. But the attacks also left other marks, ones she didn’t choose.

Images and sounds of falling people and panes of glass lodged in her memory. She was diagnosed in 2006 with sarcoidosis, she said; the federal government has concluded the inflammatory disease may be linked to trade center dust. And she has asked herself: “Why am I here and 3,000 people are not?”

Over time, she accepted not knowing. “But while I’m here, I’ve got to make it count,” says Lanski, who has spoken at schools and traveled to conferences about terror victims. “I’ve got to make up for 3,000 people who lost their voice.”

### ‘IT MOTIVATES ME TO LIVE A BETTER LIFE’

Buried in darkness and 20 feet (6 meters) or more of rubble from both towers, Will Jimeno was ready to die.

The Port Authority of New York and New Jersey Police Department rookie was in searing pain from a fallen wall pinning his left side. Fellow officer Dominick Pezzulo had died next to him. Flaming debris had fallen on Jimeno’s arm and heated the cramped area enough that Pezzulo’s gun fired, sending a flurry of bullets past Jimeno’s head. He had yelled for help for hours. He was terribly thirsty.

“If I die today,” he remembers thinking, “at least I died trying to help people.”

Then Jimeno, who is Catholic, had what he describes as a vision of a robed man walking toward him, a bottle of water in his hand.

We’re going to get out, he told Sgt. John McLoughlin, who was trapped with him.

It was hours — of pushing back pain, thinking of rescues in past disasters, talking to keep alert — before they were found and gruelingly extricated by former U.S. Marines, NYPD officers, a onetime paramedic and firefighters as blazes flared and debris shifted and fell.

Jimeno was freed around 11 p.m., McLoughlin the next morning.

Sept. 11 “motivates me to live a better life,” says Jimeno, 53, of Chester, New Jersey. “The way I can honor those we lost and those that were injured is to live a fruitful life. To be an example to others that Sept. 11 did not destroy us.”

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AP Photo/Gulnara Samoilova

**PEOPLE MAKE** their way amid debris near the World Trade Center in New York Sept. 11, 2001. In one of the most horrifying attacks ever against the United States, terrorists crashed two airliners into the World Trade Center in a deadly series of blows that brought down the twin 110-story towers.



AP Photo/Gene J. Puskar

**YACHIYO KUGE** touches her son's name, at the Wall of Names following the September 11th Flight 93 Memorial Service at the Flight 93 National Memorial in Shanksville, Pa., Sept. 11, 2019, the 18th anniversary of the attacks. Toshiya Kuge was one of the 40 passengers and crew who were killed on Flight 93.



AP Photo/Steve Helber

**DAMAGE TO** the outer ring of the Pentagon is shown Sept. 11, 2001, after a hijacked airliner crashed into the building.



AP Photo/Heesoon Yim, File

**IN THIS SEPT. 11, 2001** file photo, a helicopter flies over the Pentagon in Washington as smoke billows over the building. Partial remains of several 9/11 victims were incinerated by a military contractor and sent to a landfill, a government report said Feb. 28, 2012, in the latest of a series of revelations about the Pentagon's main mortuary for the war dead. The terrorist-hijacked airliner that slammed into the west side of the Pentagon killed 184 people.



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