

Reflections of 9/11

Lt. Kathryn Negron: You never know, when it's going to hit you, that those feelings or the memories come flooding in and you get emotional.

Chief Alfred Moscola: You don't know when you're going to be called upon or for what you're going to be called upon.

Chief Joseph Baccellieri: In crisis, that's when you find out how strong brotherhood, or sisterhood is.

Lt. Edwin Kennedy: It was never a fear about the buildings coming down, it was about us going here to help. We're going to the World Trade Center to help.

Major Andrew Wender: We made our way over there not really realizing at the time what was going on.

Captain Tyree Bacon: We knew we were on a mission. You know we were just trying to get in to help. As we crossed the street, I remember Tommy making the sign of the cross, and I followed suit and I did the same. I remember getting off the train at the Canal Street subway station. It was a beautiful day. I had signed out my portable radio, I was in a locker room having my cup of tea, and we heard the first airplane fly by, really low. It actually caught our attention.

Lt. Edwin Kennedy: Then two, three seconds later, you heard a big explosion, and it was newspaper, just paper everywhere.

Chief Joseph Baccellieri: We didn't see any plane debris; we saw what looked like confetti floating around in the air and we just couldn't figure out what it was. And so, we're trained in first aid, and the first inclination is let's go down there and see how we can help.

Captain Tyree Bacon: They were gathering medical bags, oxygen.

Lt. Kathryn Negron: We grabbed rubber gloves, face shields, in case we had to do CPR.

Lt. Edwin Kennedy: Harry Thompson was giving out the blue nitrile gloves.

Chief Joseph Baccellieri: We were literally fighting our way through the streets to get to the tower.

Major Andrew Wender: One thing I do remember clearly was when we got there, it looked a lot worse in the lobby than I thought it would. There were some signs that were hanging down. There was water that was coming down from the sprinklers. You could smell the jet fuel, chaos, as far as people coming in and out.

SCO Elayne Kittel: Just debris everywhere. And then the people jumping out of the buildings. And then I lost sight of Harry and anyone else from the academy actually. But I never saw Harry again.

Lt. Kathryn Negron: We were in front of the building, and we were helping direct people to come out.

Lt. Edwin Kennedy: So we were just grabbing the people, waving them on across the street to where they had set up a triage.

Captain Tyree Bacon: Somebody was carrying out a woman who had a leg injury, actually turned out to be burns, and Mitch, without skipping a beat got on his hands and knees and started treating her.

SCO Andrew Scagnelli: There were two people, an old lady who's having a hard time getting the block [inaudible 00:18:16], and another gentleman. So, I grabbed them both. I put them behind the pillar, I took my shirt off, put it on all of our heads.

Chief Joseph Baccellieri: So we made the decision that we're going to start to ascend the staircase. See if we could do floor by floor searches and help anywhere we can. Our little band of brothers, the three of us, decided that whatever floor we went to and we did a search, we did whatever we had to do, we would not leave the floor without the three of us being together again.

Major Andrew Wender: I remember the staircases being narrower than I thought they would be. It was actually difficult to get up because so many people were trying to get out so quickly.

Captain Tyree Bacon: We threw the medical equipment in there, the stair chair, the tech bag, there was an O2 case, oxygen. And we just started running. So now it's me, Tommy, Harry, and Mitch. We made our way down the stairs all the way to the bottom. There was a female, a young female, Hispanic female, wearing pink with her arms standing out. A burn victim. Her hair was singed. And I turned around and said, well, she's a critical patient. I'll take her.

Lt. Kathryn Negron: And then all of a sudden you know; it was like a rumble.

Lt. Edwin Kennedy: It was a woop, woop, woop. It's like metal vibrating.

Chief Alfred Moscola: But we made it up, clearing the floors to 51 and the 51st floor. And then we got thrown down the stairs and we didn't know what had happened.

Captain Tyree Bacon: I got blown to the ground and literally shot across the floor. I'm estimating probably about 100 feet.

Lt. Edwin Kennedy: We hear on our radio, "Help." I think that was the last time I heard Tommy Jurgens calling for help.

Chief Joseph Baccellieri: All of a sudden, the building started to shake violently. Lights started to dim, and it was at that point we started to hear the radios blasting to vacate the building. Evacuate.

Major Andrew Wender: Just imagine the rubble from the first tower that collapsed, so certainly no easy decision to run out. But then you realize that after a couple of minutes, trying to figure out what to do.

Chief Joseph Baccellieri: As we started to make our way out of the building, you started to hear, it was like a hissing sound almost. I remember looking up and seeing a window starting to explode as the building started to pancake down.

Major Andrew Wender: I remember seeing the shadow of the tower falling and I'm thinking, this is it.

Lt. Kathryn Negron: And we just kept running. And then the next thing you know, it's darkness. And I was thrown up in the air sort of dark, and I remember thinking, I can't believe that I'm going to die.

Chief Joseph Baccellieri: And I recall on the ground gasping for air screaming, Al, Andrew, where are you? Al, Andrew, where are you? And I hear on return somebody scream out to me, "If you hear my voice, come to it." It's totally black. I'm telling you it was as dark as you could imagine, even though it was a bright, sunny day. I crawled to this voice. And in a second I feel somebody grab me, the air clears, and I find myself in a bagel shop, grabbed by a firefighter, brought to the back of the bagel shop, where we cleaned my airway, hosed me down, and then I kept going outside trying to find Al and Andrew and anybody else I could find in the room.

SCO Elayne Kittel: There's a wrought iron fence around that church. And you literally could not see one centimeter in front of your face. So I grabbed onto the wrought iron fence, and that's how I got myself up that street, up to Broadway. Bar by bar.

SCO Andrew Scagnelli: The blocks were littered with purses and high heels. Bigger overcoats that people just wanted to shed to get moving.

Chief Joseph Baccellieri: The community affairs officer walked over at me and asked our name. I told him my name. He said, where were you? I told him we were on the 51st on the North Tower. He took a step back and he says, "You know you're lucky you're alive?" And I says, "I do." He goes, "We have no patients here. Nobody survived." I started to get pieces of uniforms from members of the staff who were covered in debris because I knew we had to preserve this as a historical article. So, I put this stuff in a trash bag, wrapped it up, I put it in a cardboard box, and I've opened the box twice since 9/11. It's all covered in World Trade Center dust. When you open it, not only do you see the dust, but the smell brings you right back to that thing. It's horrible, which is why I'm reluctant to open it. But it's important for people to see the uniform of a New York State Court officer. We lost three court officers that day. But scores of court officers responded to that scene. You want them to be acknowledged. And so, I feel

obligated to tell our story so that people know that court officers, just like every other first responder, right? Did their part on that horrific day.

Captain Tyree Bacon: I do want to say Tommy, Harry, and Mitch are not heroes because they died. They're heroes because the way they lived. And the memories I have of them were them treating people right up to their very last moments. And that's what made them heroes.