



PLUMBERS AND GASFITTERS LOCAL UNION NO. 1
OF THE
UNITED ASSOCIATION OF JOURNEYMEN AND APPRENTICES OF THE PLUMBING
AND PIPE FITTING INDUSTRY OF THE UNITED STATES AND CANADA
NEW YORK CITY

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UA September 11th Speech

It's hard to believe that 25 years ago on September 11th I was on a job site in Brooklyn marveling at how beautiful the blue skies were. The view from the site was what seemed like a pin straight line to these iconic towers. Little did I know this would be the last time I would see them standing.

Our entire crew stood on the shoreline of Brooklyn trying to contact loved ones, all while witnessing the destruction. We listened to the news, and the information made it clear that America was under attack.

How could this be happening on American soil?

The videos and still photos on the news that evening showed not only the attacks on the Towers but also the Pentagon and the Flight 93 crash.

As I closed my eyes that night, I knew that life would never be the same.

Members of Local 1, 638, and the Building Trades immediately joined as volunteers for the next few days, weeks and months. Many of those heroes are Officers or in this delegation today.

The site which was now known as Ground Zero was now the attention of thousands of workers.

We used our skill and expertise on the recovery mission. We showed grit and determination for all the world to see. We handled duties like handing out food and drinks to first responders, we were on the bucket brigade or used gas torches cutting out steel and debris to be removed.

The Military fly overs of the site added a sense of safety to all of us.

Workers draped the American flag throughout the site as a sign of the country's resolve.

Close to the site Local 1 Officers set up a location for volunteers to sign in and sign out. Little did we know how important that list of names was going to be needed, for years to come this was proof after many became ill or passed.

As the days and nights passed we were all reminded of the hazards.

The shifting of the wind created concerns, as well as the news that the infrastructure of the surrounding buildings was compromised. First responders and building trades members working shoulder to shoulder frantically against the clock.

On that day 4 coordinated attacks were carried out.

2,977 people from 90 nations perished.

2,753 in New York

184 at the Pentagon in Arlington, Virginia.

40 on Flight 93 near Shanksville Pennsylvania.

61 of the fatalities were members of the NYC Building Trades Unions, of which 3 were our UA Brothers from Local 638, Arturo Sereno, Felix Calixte and Thomas Kelly.

On behalf of our members, whether in this delegation or at home, to our Brothers and Sisters from 638, WE WILL NEVER FORGET.

We remember the role our neighbors from the North played. After the American airspace was closed, Canada opened their homes, churches, and schools to thousands of stranded travelers.

Most of the entire world was in mourning. For the next few years cleanup work continued.

Then in April 2006, the world watched as construction began. On Tower 1, now known as THE FREEDOM TOWER. Many wondered how anything could be built on this site. And if anything is rebuilt, how would it be done, all while showing respect to those that were lost and allow for a place of mourning. This was now sacred ground.

In 2010, a few years into construction of the Freedom Tower, I was honored to serve as the Business Agent for lower Manhattan. Hundreds of workers helped build this beautiful 1,776 ft tower floor by floor. Inscribed on the pipe displayed throughout the floors it says:

WE WILL NEVER FORGET 9-11-01

As the years passed the entire site progressed with the building of Towers 3 and 4 and also the 9/11 Memorial. These beautiful reflecting pools sit on the footprints of the North and South Towers. A continuous flow of water drowns out the noise of the hustle and bustle of the city. The names of the deceased glisten in the bronze coping.

Our UA Brothers and Sisters continue to work on these iconic projects, all while representing resilience...remembrance.....and commitment to this country. They connect the present to the history of the WTC site and Sept 11th. They are now a part of history.

On July 9th of this year, the official groundbreaking ceremony for Tower 2 was held.

This beautiful building will be the final piece of the original 16-acre campus.

One quote that stood out the most at the ceremony was “we can list the height of the building and the amount of union construction workers needed but what this project means to lower Manhattan is actually immeasurable.”

2 WTC will stand as a monument to New York City’s comeback from its darkest days.

WE WILL NEVER FORGET.

On Sept 11th the names of all that passed on that day will be read off with a ringing bell sounding in between and as dusk appears the 2 beautiful light beams replicating the towers will appear for

miles in the sky. When we take that moment to remember, we will also remember all that have passed or fallen sick due to the exposure of toxins at the site.

I was asked to speak about my personal experiences about this horrific event. I was in NYC and remember the smell, the taste...like it was yesterday.

However, the attacks on the Pentagon and the bravery shown by those young men on Flight 93 should never be in any shadow.

I cannot speak to those from a personal level, but all of the world shared in that pain.

Country singer Alan Jackson sang "Where were you when the world stopped turning?"

We all have different answers to that question. But we all know that... We this delegation and... We, the UA... WILL NEVER FORGET

God bless all that were lost, all that were left to mourn, all that are living with illness or have passed due to illness because of this tragedy.

God Bless our Military

and God Bless America!!!

