



Frontline

U.S. Customs and Border Protection ★ Volume 4, Issue 3

SPECIAL 9/11 EDITION



In Memoriam



*In honor of CBP employees
who have died in the line of duty*

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George DeBates
Jeremy Wilson
- 2003** James P. Epling



*For a historic listing honoring federal personnel who gave their lives
while securing U.S. borders, please visit CBP.gov*

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photo by Jim Tourtellotte



★ ON THE COVER

A flag stands sentry amid the rubble of 6 World Trade Center, the New York Custom House, following the tragic events on Sept. 11, 2001.

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CBP REMEMBERS 9/11: A DECADE OF CHALLENGE AND CHANGE



Welcome to this commemorative issue of Frontline, a look back at the tragic events of Sept. 11, 2001, and the decade of reflection and response that followed.

In the following pages you will be reminded of the experiences of that day and the days that followed. You will read personal stories of what was seen and heard and felt that day. You also will learn about gaps revealed by the attacks and how CBP has filled them. Framing all of this will be a timeline of events over the past decade.

I hope you will appreciate what I have come to believe to my core: that our country is stronger and more secure today because of the vigilance, determination, ingenuity and selflessness of the CBP workforce, acting in concert with Americans across many sectors and every walk of life. Each of us at CBP takes the 9/11 tragedies personally, as we should, because the attacks of a decade ago breached our borders and redefined our duties and responsibilities in ways that we could not have imagined just the day before.

Throughout history, tragic events have served to magnify vulnerabilities with glaring clarity. The 9/11 attacks painfully revealed fragmented and disjointed border management in the U.S. CBP was born in 2003 as part of the Department of Homeland Security to fill these gaps by creating a single, unified command agency focused on the security of our nation's borders. CBP today embodies what had previously been four enterprises housed in three agencies now integrated into one structure geared to keeping dangerous people and dangerous things out of our homeland.

From today's perspective, a unified approach to border management and security seems obvious and logical. But, as happens, history had trumped logic. With roots that go back to the administration of President George Washington, U.S. border management has accommodated revenue generation, immigration control, agricultural safeguards, trade administration and control of contraband. These imperatives became apparent at different times and yielded different, and largely disjointed, organizational and operational responses. CBP has elevated border management by pioneering a unified approach, one that border agencies around the world are studying with interest.

Our unified approach has revolutionized how we secure America and expedite legitimate trade and international travel. Here are a few of the advancements that all Americans should be aware of:

Our border protection mission is executed globally: In today's world, we cannot allow for danger to arrive at our doorstep. CBP today knows who and what is coming to America typically before departure from a foreign country. Through partnerships with foreign nations as well as private enterprises, CBP has created layer upon layer of information, inspections, technological scans, global intelligence sharing and law enforcement know-how to create a security protocol inconceivable a decade ago.

Real-time global information access is our most powerful new weapon: During a typical day 1.35 billion electronic messages are exchanged between CBP and other government agencies, passenger carriers and cargo brokers and traders. This information, managed by our National Targeting Centers, is an important and growing national asset crucial to securing our borders. By using this information only for the purpose for which it was intended, and by maintaining confidentiality, CBP is building the trust necessary to provide instantaneous risk assessment information to CBP personnel at crucial decision points.



Situational awareness of our homeland has been greatly increased: Working with other agencies, such as the military's Northern Command, CBP's Air and Marine Operations Center in Riverside, Calif., serves as our country's eyes in the sky, monitoring our airspace and optimizing the deployment of CBP's aerial assets. CBP's unmanned aircraft systems in recent years have adapted military drone technologies for use on our northern, southern and southeast coastal environments, greatly increasing our surveillance capacity. CBP now deploys the largest non-military air force in the world.

Southwest Border security has been dramatically enhanced: I believe a 20-year struggle to restore the rule of law to our southern border is being won. We have been able to more than double the number of Border Patrol agents in the four Southwest Border states during the last decade. Construction of fencing, barriers and access roads and the deployment of surveillance technologies have yielded real dividends. We have seen massive reductions in illegal immigration across the border over the past decade and we are building strongly on that foundation through the ongoing enforcement surge in Arizona.

Relations and cooperation with our neighbors to the north and south have never been stronger: Building cooperative partnerships with our many friends around the world is imperative, and no relationships are more important than with Canada and Mexico. Our degree of collaboration on areas of common interest with our two neighbors is very strong and is producing significant benefits in stemming illegal activity while securing the heightened flow of legitimate travel and trade.

Despite our progress along our nation's northern and southern borders, our job is not finished, not by a long shot. We will not make the classic mistake of re-fighting the battle we've just come out of but instead will continue to build capacity to confront tomorrow's threats. We will use the information, intelligence, human capital, global partnerships and the support and ingenuity of the American people to overcome the next challenge before it takes hold. We will embrace a model where our nearly 60,000 employees are blended in ways that best meet the needs of the mission. And we will focus on opportunities to contribute to both security and economic vitality by modernizing our international trade protocols to enhance U.S. competitiveness in the global economy.

Perhaps most importantly, despite the dramatic changes and stresses of the past decade, America is still a welcoming nation, still a leader in the world community, and still the land of a free, brave and proud people — the ultimate tribute to those who lost their lives on 9/11 by those who vow never to forget.

Alan D. Bersin
Commissioner
U.S. Customs and Border Protection

A DAY LIKE

An aerial photograph of Lower Manhattan on September 11, 2001. The World Trade Center towers are the central focus, with thick plumes of white smoke and dust billowing from their upper sections. The surrounding city buildings are visible, some partially obscured by the haze. The sky is filled with large, billowing clouds of smoke and dust, creating a dramatic and somber atmosphere. The overall color palette is dominated by the greys and whites of the smoke and dust, contrasted against the blue and grey of the city buildings and the sky.

EMPLOYEES RESPOND TO ATTACKS,

NO OTHER

BY JAY MAYFIELD

“IT WAS A DAY THAT STARTED LIKE ANY OTHER...”

The phrase has become a truism when describing the otherwise unremarkable early hours of Sept. 11, 2001. For employees of the U.S. Customs Service, U.S. Border Patrol, Immigration and Naturalization Service and U.S. Department of Agriculture, it was very much like any other Tuesday.

In the years prior, of course, terrorism had made its presence felt. Eight years earlier, attackers had detonated 1,500 pounds of explosives beneath the World Trade Center in the heart of lower Manhattan, and ever since, Customs employees—just steps away in 6 World Trade Center, the New York Custom House—had diligently practiced evacuation drills in the event of some unknowable disaster.

Indeed, the role of the nation's frontline against terrorists was not unfamiliar, as just 20 months earlier on the other side of the country, a bomber with explosives in his car and a plan to blow up Los Angeles International Airport was plucked by an inspector from a ferry arriving in Port Angeles, Wash.

Still, for dedicated federal employees from one end of America to the other, it was just another Tuesday.

...

The explosion and the shaking at 8:46 Eastern Time that morning instantly reminded John Martuge of that day in 1993,



Photo by James Bourke/RedUX

★ U.S. Customs Service employees view the ruins of the New York Custom House after the World Trade Center attack.

but it was another noise that told him things were different this time.

“I heard my secretary scream,” said Martuge, then director of field operations for U.S. Customs in New York. “She had raced to the window and looked out and saw some of

the damage done. By the time I ... got to the window and looked down, I saw the body of what appeared to be a woman on the sidewalk outside. A man had gone to try to assist her, but she was obviously already dead.”

As employees began to evacuate—a drill they had rehearsed so often in the years since the 1993 attack—Martuge made a call to Customs headquarters in Washington to be sure they were aware of the situation. On his way out, he came across two special agents, who were redirecting traffic from the usual route. They advised him that there were bodies and falling debris making the normal path too dangerous.

...

As the world's attention pivoted squarely to New York and the Federal Aviation Administration restricted take-offs of planes nationwide, a third hijacked plane was bearing down on the nation's capital. It struck the Pentagon at 9:37 a.m., opening another front on the attack on America and bringing chaos to the Washington area.

DISPLAYING UNSHAKEABLE RESOLVE



SEPTMBER 11, 2001: AMERICA ATTACKED, A TIMELINE

THE ATTACK ON AMERICA ON SEPT. 11, 2001, REDEFINED BORDER SECURITY FOR THE U.S. AND LED TO THE CREATION OF CUSTOMS AND BORDER PROTECTION.

PERSONNEL IN AGENCIES THAT MAKE UP TODAY'S CBP WERE IMPACTED DIRECTLY AND INDIRECTLY BY THE EVENTS IN NEW YORK CITY, AT THE PENTAGON AND IN SHANKSVILLE, PA. THE U.S. CUSTOM HOUSE WAS HOUSED IN THE NEW YORK WORLD TRADE CENTER, OR WTC, IN BUILDING 6, WHICH STOOD IN THE SHADOW OF THE WTC NORTH TOWER. THE ATTACK ON THE PENTAGON CAME JUST ACROSS THE POTOMAC RIVER—LESS THAN FOUR MILES—FROM WHAT WAS THEN THE CUSTOMS SERVICE AND IS NOW CBP HEADQUARTERS.

THE FOLLOWING ABBREVIATED TIMELINE SHOWS SIGNIFICANT ACTIVITIES RELATED TO THE ATTACKS AND BORDER SECURITY. THE FULL TIMELINE CAN BE FOUND ON CBP.GOV.

1972

...THE NORTH, LEFT, AND SOUTH TOWERS NEAR COMPLETION IN 1972. THE EIGHT-STORY CUSTOM HOUSE IS LEFT OF THE NORTH TOWER AT THE CORNER OF WEST AND VESEY STREETS.



While it was technically possible for every plane to land, the realities of emptying the skies were daunting.



photo by USFV Tech Sgt. Cedric H. Rudisill

At the time of the attacks, Robert Bonner was awaiting confirmation as commissioner of the U.S. Customs Service. When the plane struck the Pentagon, the Treasury Department—along with federal buildings across the Washington area—was evacuated, and Bonner joined other personnel in a Secret Service command center.

It was from there, at 10:05 a.m., working in conjunction with acting personnel at Customs headquarters and colleagues from the Immigration and Naturalization Service, which then housed the U.S. Border Patrol, that the order was given to move the ports of entry to Alert Level 1.

One step short of closing the borders completely, the move meant total inspection of all vehicles, people and cargo. The massive increase in security led to huge backups at the land ports of entry as confusion grew about other possible points of attack.

★ **Damage to the west side of the Pentagon from the Sept. 11 crash of American Airlines Flight 77.**

As officials in Washington scrambled to respond to the attacks and understand their scope, the FAA took a step without precedent in the history of American aviation, ordering no further flights to take off, followed by an order for all planes in U.S. airspace to land immediately.

Unfortunately, there was one plane that would not heed the order to land. United Airlines Flight 93, which also had been hijacked, crashed in a field in rural Pennsylvania about 20 minutes later. The plane, believed to be headed for downtown Washington, was reclaimed by passengers who prevented the terrorists on board from accomplishing their mission.

That order to land every single plane flying in U.S. airspace was, like so many other events that day, unheard of. While the plan to clear the skies during an emergency had existed for decades, few air traffic controllers thought it would ever actually happen. Though it was technically possible, the realities of emptying the skies were daunting.

The U.S. Customs Air and Marine Interdiction Center in Riverside, Calif.,

THE U.S. CUSTOM HOUSE, LOOKING NORTH FROM WEST ST.; A RED ALEXANDER CALDER SCULPTURE IS ONE OF MANY ORIGINAL ARTWORKS COMMISSIONED FOR THE WTC.



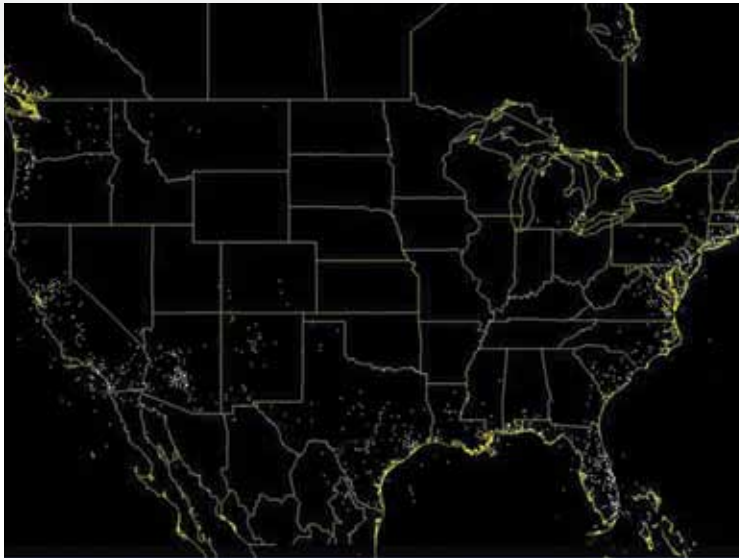
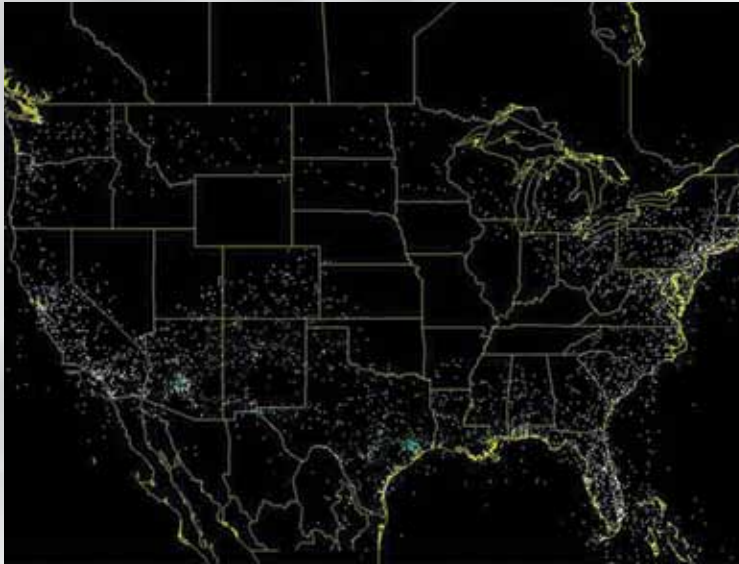
2001 SEPTEMBER 11

7:59 A.M. LOGAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, BOSTON: AMERICAN AIRLINES FLIGHT 11 DEPARTS FOR LOS ANGELES. AT 8:19 A.M. A FLIGHT ATTENDANT TELLS THE AIRLINE THAT THE PLANE HAS BEEN HIJACKED.

8:14 A.M. LOGAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, BOSTON: UNITED AIRLINES FLIGHT 175 DEPARTS FOR LOS ANGELES. AT 8:52 A.M. A FLIGHT ATTENDANT TELLS THE AIRLINE THAT THE PLANE HAS BEEN HIJACKED.

8:20 A.M. DULLES INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, CHANTILLY, VA.: AMERICAN AIRLINES FLIGHT 77 DEPARTS FOR LOS ANGELES.

★ In images from the U.S. Customs Air and Marine Interdiction Center, each white dot represents an aircraft in flight. The top image displays 4,500 aircraft flying at 9 a.m. on Sept. 11. The bottom image shows how, by 3 p.m. that day, AMIC personnel had overseen the grounding of all flights except for patrolling military aircraft.



served as a national hub to monitor U.S. airspace for flights that might be related to smuggling drugs or other contraband. On a normal day, it would rely on powerful radar installations to bring illegal flights to the attention of law enforcement agencies nationwide. On Sept. 11 though, the center's unique capabilities put it at the heart of the effort to ensure that planes across the country were grounded.

Over the course of the morning and early afternoon, AMIC personnel watched as radar screens once filled with more than 4,500 aircraft slowed to just a few military and law enforcement planes patrolling major metropolitan areas. Those working that day provided guidance to controllers across the country in directing flights toward airports that could accommodate them. At the same time, their role in searching for flights that didn't belong in the U.S. became more important than ever.

Any unexpected blip on the screen was a source of grave concern, as planes themselves had just become the most deadly weapons of terror ever used on U.S. soil. On Sept. 11, and in the days that followed, AMIC personnel worked around the clock, identifying unknown aircraft, tracking their flight paths, and alerting law enforcement personnel and the Secret Service of their presence so the pilots could be questioned.

Whereas AMIC was once focused solely on the nation's borders, it had become a sentinel, watching the skies over all of America.

■ ■ ■

2001

SEPTEMBER 11 (CONT.)

8:42 A.M. NEWARK INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT:
UNITED AIRLINES FLIGHT 93 DEPARTS 42 MINUTES
LATE FOR SAN FRANCISCO.

8:46 A.M. AMERICAN AIRLINES FLIGHT 11 CRASHES
INTO FLOORS 94 TO 98 OF WTC NORTH TOWER.

TWO MILITARY JETS SCRAMBLE TO THE NEW YORK
AREA FROM CAPE COD, MASS.

THE NEW YORK CITY FIRE DEPARTMENT, OR FDNY,
RECEIVES THE FIRST REPORT OF AN AIRCRAFT
CRASHING INTO THE NORTH TOWER AND RUSHES
TO THE WTC.



Back in Washington, activity at both U.S. Customs headquarters in the Ronald Reagan Building and at Border Patrol headquarters was reaching a fever pitch. Outside of Border Patrol headquarters, agents stood guard and tightened access to the facility. In the Reagan building, the Situation Room became a hub of frantic activity—first to understand the nature of the attack and then to be a clearinghouse for information amid the massive communication issues created across the country.

As the sun set on that historic day, there were more questions than answers, more needs than resources, and the only thing that was sure was that for the guardians of America's borders—not yet unified, but moving to act in unison—a new mission was set before them.

■ ■ ■

The effects of moving to Alert Level 1, combined with diverted flights leaving citizens stranded on the opposite side of the border from their respective homes, quickly led to massive lines of traffic waiting to enter the country. The lines were particularly pronounced along the northern border. Lines to enter the country via Detroit's Ambassador Bridge peaked at 12-hour waits on Sept. 12.

Within hours of the delays taking place, Customs reassigned inspectors from airports along the northern border to the nearest land port, since international flights were grounded in the days following the attacks. Customs aircraft, allowed to fly because of



photo by James Tourtellotte



photo by James Tourtellotte

★ Fire and rescue vehicles that responded to the World Trade Center call were destroyed by the towers' collapse and ended their service in New York's Fresh Kills Landfill.

EVACUATION OF THE NORTH AND SOUTH TOWERS, THE U.S. CUSTOM HOUSE AND ALL THE OTHER WTC BUILDINGS BEGINS IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE NORTH TOWER IMPACT. THE CUSTOMS BUILDING EMPTIES IN 12 MINUTES WITH NO LOSS OF LIFE.

9:03 A.M. UNITED AIRLINES FLIGHT 175 CRASHES INTO FLOORS 78 TO 84 OF WTC SOUTH TOWER.

9:15 A.M. BRIDGES AND TUNNELS IN NEW YORK BEGIN TO CLOSE TO ALL BUT EMERGENCY VEHICLES AND PEDESTRIANS.

9:25 A.M. THE FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION ORDERS THE FIRST-EVER NATIONWIDE SHUTDOWN OF U.S. AIR SPACE, PROHIBITING THE DEPARTURE OF ALL COMMERCIAL,

PASSENGER AND PRIVATE FLIGHTS. NORTHEAST AIR DEFENSE SECTOR JETS ESTABLISH COMBAT AIR PATROL OVER MANHATTAN.

9:37 A.M. AMERICAN AIRLINES FLIGHT 77 CRASHES INTO THE PENTAGON IN ARLINGTON, VA.

9:40 A.M. THE FAA ORDERS ALL 4,546 AIRCRAFT IN NORTH AMERICAN AIRSPACE TO LAND IMMEDIATELY AT THE NEAREST AIRPORT.





photo by James Tourtellate

★ **The New York Custom House at 6 World Trade Center was destroyed by the terrorist attack on Sept. 11, 2001.**

their law enforcement status, ferried staff to and from the Ambassador Bridge to work. In addition, National Guardsmen were activated by governors across the northern border to assist at the ports of entry.

The effects of the delay were significant, with auto plants in the U.S. that relied on just-in-time deliveries shutting down due to parts being stuck in the massive lines. In what was a precursor to the groundbreaking industry partnerships that would be created in the months ahead, Customs officials in Detroit and Washington worked with the auto industry to ensure the passage of vital cargo while maintaining the high level of security needed in those early days.

To avoid traffic on the bridges, a local barge operator was contracted to bring auto parts across the border by water for 18 hours each day, and to ease the flow of traffic, extra lanes were opened in whichever direction (into or out of the country) had the largest backup.

The extra effort and manpower ultimately paid off, with wait times returning to pre-9/11 levels by Sept. 17, while full security screening was still under way.

◆◆◆

In New York, the operations of the massive New York Field Office were relocated to John F. Kennedy International Airport in Queens, N.Y. On the day of

2001

SEPTEMBER 11 (CONT.)

9:45 A.M. EVACUATIONS UNDER WAY AT THE U.S. CAPITOL, THE WHITE HOUSE, THE EMPIRE STATE BUILDING, THE UNITED NATIONS, THE KENNEDY SPACE CENTER, DISNEY WORLD AND OTHER SITES NATIONWIDE.

9:59 A.M. FIFTY-SIX MINUTES AFTER BEING STRUCK BY THE PLANE, THE WTC SOUTH TOWER COLLAPSES IN 9 SECONDS.



10:03 A.M. UNITED AIRLINES FLIGHT 93 CRASHES IN A FIELD IN SHANKSVILLE, PA., AFTER THE PASSENGERS ON BOARD REALIZE THE PLANE IS EN ROUTE TO WASHINGTON, D.C., AND FORCE IT TO CRASH, KILLING ALL 44 PEOPLE ON BOARD.



the attacks, and as the week continued, it was clear the field office's resources would be vital in the recovery process in and around Ground Zero in lower Manhattan.

In the days following the attacks, Customs personnel stood guard over the site of the custom house at the World Trade Center, protecting the Customs vault that

was still buried beneath the rubble. Others worked almost nonstop at the Fresh Kills landfill, where debris from the site was transported and searched. Along with staff from the New York Field Office, personnel from across the country began traveling to New York to assist in recovery efforts.

■ ■ ■

★ **Ground Zero debris removal was first estimated to take a year, but cleanup ended May 2002. Three years later, in February 2005, the New York City Medical Examiner's office finished identifying human remains from the site.**



photo by James Tourtelotte

10:28 A.M. ONE HOUR AND 42 MINUTES AFTER IMPACT, THE WTC NORTH TOWER COLLAPSES IN 11 SECONDS. WTC BUILDING 6, THE U.S. CUSTOM HOUSE, IS DESTROYED BY FALLING DEBRIS AND SUBSEQUENT FIRE.

5:20 P.M. THE 47-STORY WTC BUILDING 7, ACROSS VESEY STREET FROM THE U.S. CUSTOM HOUSE, COLLAPSES.



IT TOOK SEVEN YEARS TO BUILD THE WORLD TRADE CENTER TOWERS AND TWO HOURS AND 22 MINUTES TO DESTROY THEM.

The diligent work of these employees ultimately proved key to the agency's ability to resume its work in the New York area quickly.

While the nation's attention was focused on New York and Washington, though, a group of Customs employees in Indianapolis faced a particularly daunting logistical challenge: finding a new home for the massive number of displaced Customs personnel in New York.

Within hours of the attack, staffers reached out to property management companies in the New York area seeking sufficient space to relocate operations and establish a technology infrastructure to resume operations quickly.



Less than a week after the attack, new space had been secured in two buildings in Manhattan, including at One Penn Plaza, which is still the home of the New York Field Office. One of the great feats by the staff in Indianapolis was finding adequate laboratory space for scientific teams to conduct their work. Fortuitously, a Food and Drug Administration facility recently had been finished, and it contained substantial extra lab space that was immediately available.

The diligent work of these employees ultimately proved key to the agency's ability to

resume its work in the New York area quickly.

Across the country, as eerily quiet airports began springing back to life once flight restrictions were lifted, increased security became a national mandate, bringing Border Patrol and Customs personnel side by side in a new environment for each: providing security for domestic air flights.

Under the auspices of Operation Safe Passage, hundreds of Border Patrol agents were relocated to airports across the country, while Customs agents were stationed throughout airports where they once only served in international flight areas. Along with the National Guard and U.S. Marshals, the federal role in airports of all sizes—from the smallest commercial airports with a flight or two each day to the nation's busiest hubs—began to focus on keeping potential terrorists off flights.

The eventual creation of the Transportation Security Administration would take the place of this ad-hoc federal security role at the nation's airports, but the side-by-side role of Border Patrol and Customs agents provided a glimpse of the future.



photo by James Tourtellotte

AMERICA RESPONDS 2001



IN AN EFFORT NOT SEEN SINCE WORLD WAR II, THE NATION COMES TOGETHER TO SECURE AND PROTECT THE HOMELAND.

ALERT LEVEL ONE U.S. CUSTOMS SERVICE AND IMMIGRATION AND NATURALIZATION SERVICE ORDER ALL PORTS OF ENTRY AND THE NORTHERN AND SOUTHERN INTERNATIONAL BORDERS TO ALERT LEVEL ONE STATUS—

THE HIGHEST SECURITY ALERT LEVEL SHORT OF SHUTTING THE BORDER.

THE TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT GROUNDS ALL PRIVATE AIRCRAFT THROUGHOUT THE U.S. EVERY AVAILABLE CUSTOMS SPECIAL AGENT, ANALYST, AND INSPECTOR AT HEADQUARTERS IS ON CALL FOR THE SITUATION ROOM, WHERE DATA IS ARRIVING FROM FIELD OFFICES, INCLUDING THE CUSTOMS AIR AND MARINE INTERDICTION COORDINATION CENTER IN RIVERSIDE, CALIF.

WITHIN HOURS, INS SETS UP THE PREVENT DEPARTURE UNIT, RESPONSIBLE FOR THE RAPID DISSEMINATION OF PREVENT DEPARTURE LISTS BASED ON FBI WATCH LISTS.

WITH THE INCREASED SECURITY, CROSS-BORDER TRAFFIC BEGINS TO BUILD, CAUSING LONG DELAYS.



ADDITIONAL CUSTOMS, INS AND BORDER PATROL EMPLOYEES DEPLOY, WORKING 24/7 TO KEEP THE LAND PORTS OF ENTRY OPERATIONAL AND SECURE.

THE FBI LAUNCHES THE LARGEST CRIMINAL INQUIRY IN U.S. HISTORY—CODE-NAMED PENTTBOM FOR THE PENTAGON-TWIN TOWERS BOMBING—INVOLVING 7,000 OF THE FBI'S 11,000 SPECIAL AGENTS. INS COMMITS ALMOST 1,000 SPECIAL AGENTS TO SUPPORT PENTTBOM.

THE U.S. COAST GUARD MOBILIZES MORE THAN 2,000 RESERVISTS IN ITS LARGEST HOMELAND DEFENSE AND PORT SECURITY OPERATION SINCE WORLD WAR II.

THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE BEGINS COMBAT AIR PATROLS OVER MAJOR U.S. CITIES.

THE FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT ADMINISTRATION DEPLOYS A NATIONAL URBAN SEARCH AND RESCUE RESPONSE TEAM.

SEPT. 12

THE FAA ALLOWS FLIGHTS DIVERTED ON SEPT. 11 TO CONTINUE TO ORIGINAL DESTINATIONS.

12:30 P.M. THE LAST WTC SURVIVOR IS RESCUED.

SEPT. 13

THE DEPARTMENTS OF THE TREASURY AND JUSTICE DEPLOY PERSONNEL FROM CUSTOMS, BORDER PATROL AND MARSHALS SERVICE TO U.S. AIRPORTS TO AUGMENT LAW ENFORCEMENT AS AIRPORTS REOPEN.



photo by Bruce Saunders

2001

OPERATION SAFE PASSAGE LAUNCHES AND 317 U.S. BORDER PATROL AGENTS DEPLOY TO NINE INTERNATIONAL AIRPORTS TO HEIGHTEN SECURITY.

SEPT. 14

PRESIDENT GEORGE W. BUSH DECLARES A NATIONAL EMERGENCY.

TO PROTECT THE U.S. FROM FURTHER AIRBORNE AGGRESSION, CONGRESS ENACTS OPERATION NOBLE EAGLE, MANAGED BY THE NORTH AMERICAN AEROSPACE COMMAND AND INCLUDING FEDERAL AGENCIES SUCH AS CUSTOMS, THE COAST GUARD, AND THE FAA.

INS ACTIVATES THE NATIONAL SECURITY UNIT TO COORDINATE THE INVESTIGATION AND POSSIBLE DETENTION OF PEOPLE OF INTEREST TO OTHER LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES.

THE FBI RELEASES A LIST OF 19 SUSPECTED TERRORISTS INVOLVED IN THE SEPT. 11 ATTACKS.

SEPT. 2001 - JULY 2002

A RECOVERY OPERATION IS ESTABLISHED AT THE FRESH KILLS LANDFILL ON STATEN ISLAND TO RECOVER HUMAN REMAINS, PERSONAL OBJECTS AND EVIDENCE FROM THE SEVEN WTC BUILDINGS' WRECKAGE.

March 1, 2003, marked a distinct point of transition as agencies from across the **government joined together** to form the Department of Homeland Security.

...

For those who were graduating from training academies in Georgia, South Carolina and New Mexico in the weeks following Sept. 11, there was a stark realization that the nature of the jobs for which they were training had changed before their very eyes. In some cases, Customs personnel left their training at the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center in Glynco, Ga., and immediately began service in New York, providing security for the attack site or helping with the process of sorting through debris.

Border Patrol agents, including some whose academy graduation was interrupted on Sept. 11 with news of the attacks, entered duty at a time when the threats they faced on behalf of the nation were so grave that the

★ **Along with One World Trade Center, pictured here under construction, the new World Trade Center site will feature three other high-rise office buildings and the National September 11 Memorial & Museum.**

stakes could not be any higher. Many would join newly formed or enhanced units and task forces designed to partner with other agencies—federal, state, local and tribal—to improve information and intelligence sharing.

...

At Customs headquarters in Washington in the months following the attack, the agency became fully engaged with the process of shifting its primary focus to a mission of anti-terrorism. New offices and programs were put in place, including the establishment of the National Targeting Center in November 2001 and an effort to track down and cut off terrorist finances called Operation Green Quest, among others.

It quickly became apparent that in order to secure the borders effectively while still maintaining the country's vital flow of trade, private industry would need to be engaged as a partner in anti-terrorism efforts. Announced in November 2001, the Customs-Trade Partnership Against Terrorism officially began in April 2002 and remains a signature anti-terror program.

...

The evolution that took place from the frantic and harried response in the minutes, hours and days after Sept. 11, 2001, into the transformative months and years that followed represents nothing less than a sea change in how our nation protects its borders. The stories from New York and Washington at the center of the attacks alongside places nationwide, from Riverside to Indianapolis to Detroit, are emblematic of the ways, large and small, that people and organizations responded to make America a more secure nation.

March 1, 2003, marked a distinct point of transition as agencies from across the government joined together to form the Department of Homeland Security. Since that time, innovation, dedication and passion have been shown again and again, but the moments that led to that coming together tell a story of personal courage and professional commitment in the face of unprecedented challenge.

And so it was that a day that started like any other has changed every day since for the men and women of what is now U.S. Customs and Border Protection. ■

MORE THAN 300 PEOPLE ARE IDENTIFIED FROM THE REMAINS BROUGHT TO FRESH KILLS. ITEMS RETRIEVED INCLUDE: APPROXIMATELY 4,000 PERSONAL PHOTOGRAPHS, 54,000 PERSONAL ITEMS, AND 1,358 VEHICLES, INCLUDING FIRE AND POLICE VEHICLES.

..... SOUVENIR FROM "TOP OF THE WORLD - WORLD TRADE CENTER" WAS RETRIEVED FROM THE FRESH KILLS RECOVERY SITE.



SEPT. 19

U.S. CUSTOMS OFFICE OF INVESTIGATIONS ESTABLISHES A TERRORISM RESPONSE TASK FORCE TO COORDINATE ALL INVESTIGATIVE LEADS AND INTELLIGENCE.

SEPT. 24

ROBERT C. BONNER IS SWORN IN AS THE 17TH, AND LAST, U.S. CUSTOMS SERVICE COMMISSIONER.

OCT. 7

THE U.S. LAUNCHES OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM IN AFGHANISTAN AGAINST AL-QAIDA AND ITS LEADER, OSAMA BIN LADEN.

Collective Memory

*Employees' 9/11 remembrances
deepen CBP's history*

2001

OCT. 8

PRESIDENT BUSH ESTABLISHES THE OFFICE OF HOMELAND SECURITY AND THE HOMELAND SECURITY COUNCIL. PENNSYLVANIA GOV. TOM RIDGE BECOMES THE ASSISTANT TO THE PRESIDENT FOR HOMELAND SECURITY.

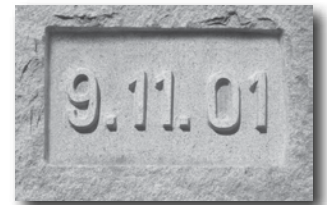
OCT. 18

INS, CUSTOMS AND THE STATE DEPARTMENT MEET WITH CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION CANADA AND ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE AND AGREE ON ACTIONS TO IMPROVE REGIONAL SECURITY ON THE U.S.-CANADA BORDER.



Memory plays a complementary role to history by reuniting personal feelings with the account and strengthening the resolve to learn from history.

The personal accounts of the 9/11 events and their aftermath, excerpted in this edition of Frontline, provide highly individual points of view. They convey the emotions on the day of the attacks as well as those sentiments that later developed. These stories represent a collective memory of 9/11 that also will revive memories and emotions among readers.



These first-person accounts emphasize the essential elements of humanity that rose above the tragedies of 9/11. Throughout these stories, themes recur:

- ★ Coming together as one in spite of differing points of view;
- ★ Compassion for those who were hurt or who suffered loss;
- ★ Willingness to help and make sacrifices for others;
- ★ Commitment to the rule of law even when faced with unlawful acts;
- ★ Resolve to respond in accordance with our national values;
- ★ Vigilance to ensure that terrorism is thwarted within and without our borders.

CBP was created in response to the 9/11 attacks and we strive to bring the best of ourselves to serve the nation. This is a lesson learned from history and maintained in the collective memory of those who remember 9/11 and now work together as one CBP.

—David D. McKinney, Ph.D., Chief Historian

Stories edited by Susan Holliday and Dorie Chassin
The full, unedited stories are available at CBP.gov.

OCT. 21

THE NATIONAL TARGETING CENTER LAUNCHES WITHIN CUSTOMS OFFICE OF FIELD OPERATIONS AS THE COORDINATION POINT FOR ALL CUSTOMS ANTI-TERRORISM EFFORTS.

OCT. 25

OPERATION GREEN QUEST BEGINS. LED BY CUSTOMS AND SUPPORTED BY THE IRS, SECRET SERVICE, FBI, AND OTHER TREASURY AND JUSTICE AGENCIES, IT TARGETS TERRORIST FUNDING SOURCES.

OCT. 25

OPERATION NORTHERN SHIELD AND OPERATION NORTHERN PASSAGE DEPLOY 110 U.S. BORDER PATROL AGENTS TO NORTHERN PORTS OF ENTRY TO ASSIST WITH IMMIGRATION INSPECTIONS AND PORT SECURITY.

OCT. 29

PRESIDENT BUSH ESTABLISHES THE FOREIGN TERRORIST TRACKING TASK FORCE TO INCREASE IMMIGRATION VIGILANCE.

NOV. 8

PRESIDENT BUSH CREATES THE PRESIDENTIAL TASK FORCE ON CITIZEN PREPAREDNESS IN THE WAR AGAINST TERRORISM TO PREPARE AND PROTECT AMERICANS FROM THE POTENTIAL CONSEQUENCES OF TERRORIST ATTACKS.

‘I was there when it died’

John J. Martuge was the director of field operations for the U.S. Customs Service in New York on Sept. 11. He is now retired.

I still have very vivid nightmares of the horrors seen in New York then.

I was at my desk in the seventh floor executive suite of World Trade Center 6, working on some emails, when, at approximately 8:45 a.m., I heard and felt a tremendous explosion. The whole building seemed to shake for an instant.

That experience brought back memories of an earlier explosion that I felt in February 1993 when terrorists planted explosives in vehicles in the garage under the World Trade Center complex and caused tremendous damage. Fortunately, at that time there were relatively few people killed, but many were injured and Customs operations were interrupted at the trade center facility for a number of days until it was deemed safe to return to “normal” operations. However, as bad an experience as it was, it led us to plan and prepare as best we could for future situations.

On this morning in 2001, I heard my secretary scream. She had raced to the window and saw some of the damage. By the time I got to the window and looked down, I saw the body of what appeared to be a woman on the sidewalk outside. A man had

gone to assist her, but she was obviously dead. He took his jacket off and placed it over her body.

As I looked around, I saw that the revolving door entrance to the North Tower had been blown out and smoke was pouring into the street. Assuming that it was another bombing, I returned to my desk and hit autodial on my telephone. My call was answered instantly by George Heavey, a close associate of mine and one of Assistant Commissioner Bonni Tischler’s assistants in the Office of Field Operations. I told George that I thought that we had been hit again with another bombing and asked that he make higher-level authorities in Washington aware. I also advised him that based upon protocol we had established after the earlier attack, we would evacuate the building and that I would follow up with further details as they developed. To my knowledge, that was the first time that headquarters learned that some serious damage may have been done to the New York office or that there had been another serious incident in New York City.

I ensured that the evacuation alarm had been set into motion. I really did not have to tell anyone in my office what to do or advise

anyone in the building—the procedures had been laid out years earlier and we had practiced evacuations at least twice a year. Our staff was well trained and followed procedures to the letter.

Looking back, it seems almost surreal, almost ludicrous, but the last thing I did when leaving the office myself was to lock the exit door. I made a quick walk around the seventh floor of building 6 to ensure that everyone had indeed left their offices. I really didn’t have to do that; the floor was vacant already. I would hazard a guess that all of this took less than 10 minutes, maybe 15 at the outside.

As I took the emergency exit stairwell from our floor, I came across two Customs special agents stationed at the ground floor. I wish that I could remember their names, but age has taken a toll on what used to be a fairly good memory. They advised me not to take the usually designated evacuation route, which extended between building 6 and the

2001

NOV. 25

INS LAUNCHES OPERATION TARMAC TO ENSURE THAT COMPANIES COMPLY WITH EMPLOYMENT REQUIREMENTS TO SECURE AIRPORT FACILITIES.

NOV. 26

IN OPERATION NORTHERN SENTINEL, BORDER PATROL AND COAST GUARD COORDINATE TO INCREASE GREAT LAKES REGIONAL SAFETY AND SECURITY.

DEC. 1

ABOUT 125 CUSTOMS SPECIAL AGENTS SUPPORT THE NEW FAA FEDERAL AIR MARSHAL PROGRAM UNTIL SUFFICIENT AIR MARSHALS CAN BE TRAINED.

DEC. 3

INS ESTABLISHES IMMIGRATION CONTROL OFFICERS TO OPERATE IN SOURCE AND TRANSIT COUNTRIES WORLDWIDE, COORDINATING INVESTIGATIONS AND ENFORCEMENT WITH HOST COUNTRIES.

DEC. 5

INS ANNOUNCES THE ALIEN ABSCONDER INITIATIVE, WHICH ADDS THE NAMES OF ALIEN FUGITIVES INTO THE FBI’S NATIONAL CRIME INFORMATION CENTER DATABASE.

DEC. 10

OPERATION SHIELD AMERICA BEGINS, PREVENTING TERRORISTS FROM OBTAINING SENSITIVE U.S. TECHNOLOGY, WEAPONS, AND EQUIPMENT.

North Tower. They said at least a couple of horribly mangled bodies were along that path and that extensive debris was still falling.

It was they who advised me that it was not a bomb, but an aircraft that had hit the North Tower. They pointed up and, as I followed their direction, I saw a huge gaping hole on the north side of that tower, and there was a great deal of debris and smoke and flames coming out. The aircraft had hit directly above building 6, which was no more than 20 or 25 feet north and slightly west of the North Tower. We assumed that it was a horrible accident. It was not unusual to see quite a bit of air traffic coming up and down the river at all times. An accident did not seem improbable.

I walked west of building 6 and across a rather large bridge that connected the trade center complex to the World Financial

Center. As I exited that bridge towards the river, I came across a number of Customs employees who had come from different offices across the country to attend a trade seminar. They mingled with a number of New York employees. They were obviously upset and were asking me whether or not they might be able to get back into building 6 that day to get their personal belongings. I advised them that upon seeing the serious damage done to the trade center, it was very unlikely and that they should return to their hotels and call our 800 number the following morning to get further instructions. This was about 9:15 a.m.

At about that time, I heard the gathered throng, probably in the thousands by then, scream almost in unison. As I looked back toward the trade center, the second aircraft flew into the South Tower. By then,

all of us knew that this was no accident and that the U.S. was under direct attack.

One thing sticks in my memory, and probably will for whatever time I have left on earth. As I looked back at the trade center complex when the second plane hit, a number of people fell or, more likely, jumped from the upper floors of the North Tower. I distinctly recall seeing two people holding hands as they descended. I could not tell if it was a man and a woman, or two women, but they remained holding hands all the way down. Fortunately the height of the intervening buildings prevented me and those around me from seeing their impact. Of all the things I saw that day, that sight still haunts me and causes nightmares.

After the second plane hit, I tried to call headquarters from my cell phone, but communications were disrupted. However, I was able to contact our JFK Airport office and spoke with Area Director Susan Mitchell. I asked her to try to communicate with headquarters from her facility and to let them know what had transpired up to that point. It was also quite clear that Customs operations from the World Trade Center site were no longer feasible. I also advised Susan that I would attempt to get to JFK to establish a new, temporary, New York field operations command center.

As I walked hurriedly north from the World Financial Center toward a New

‘The courage, the bravery and the dedication to duty that those people exhibited that day should be forever recounted and celebrated for as long as this nation stands.’

DEC. 12

CANADA AND THE U.S. SIGN THE SMART BORDER DECLARATION TO IMPROVE SECURITY AND EFFICIENCY ALONG THE U.S.-CANADA BORDER.

DEC. 22

BRITISH CITIZEN RICHARD REID ATTEMPTS TO BLOW UP A FLIGHT FROM PARIS TO MIAMI BY TRYING TO IGNITE PLASTIC EXPLOSIVES IN HIS SHOES. THIS ALERTS A FLIGHT ATTENDANT AND PASSENGERS, WHO



WRESTLE REID INTO SUBMISSION. REID LATER BECOMES KNOWN AS THE "SHOE BOMBER," IS INDICTED ON TERRORISM CHARGES AND SENTENCED TO LIFE IN PRISON.

2002

JAN. 10

PRESIDENT BUSH SIGNS A \$2.9 BILLION BIOTERRORISM APPROPRIATIONS BILL.

JAN. 14

OPERATION NORTHERN VIGILANCE DEPLOYS 100 BORDER PATROL AGENTS AMONG ALL NORTHERN BORDER SECTORS TO INCREASE DETECTION, DETERRENCE, AND PREVENTION.

COLLECTIVE MEMORY

York City subway station, I recall seeing hundreds, maybe thousands, of New York City firemen and police officers rushing south toward the World Trade Center. I vividly remember thinking how incongruous it all seemed. I was running out of harm's way and they were running directly into it. The courage, the bravery and the dedication to duty that those people exhibited that day should be forever recounted and celebrated for as long as this nation stands. I remain certain that many of those I saw then were among those killed that day.

I was able to get on what may very well have been the last subway train heading north that day from that lower Manhattan site. As I got to Penn Station, I

checked the schedule board and raced to get on the first train that indicated Jamaica, N.Y., [the station closest to JFK Airport] as a destination. Once again, as luck or fate would have it, that train may also have been among the very last to leave before all service was halted. As my train came out of the tunnel from Manhattan to Queens, N.Y., someone screamed as he saw the South Tower of the World Trade Center collapse. All that we could see from our train was a huge cloud of smoke and debris.

When I got to the Jamaica station, I was met by a couple of Susan's supervisory officers in a marked vehicle to take me to JFK. At that time, they advised me that the North Tower had also collapsed. I just

could not believe it. At the time of the 1993 bombing, engineers and architects from the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey advised Customs managers that the facility was just too solidly designed and built to be destroyed by any terrorist group.

As a young Customs officer, I watched the World Trade Center being built, from a hole in the ground to the completion of a magnificent edifice. I even helped to design some of the interior building 6 office space that Customs used. Compared to what we had before, it was magnificent! Then, horror of horrors, I was there when it died! When I was able to get back there, about a week or so later, building 6 was just a burned out hollow shell. It was a devastating sight. ■

Arthur Fay now works as a training liaison in CBP's Office of Information and Technology in Springfield, Va. On Sept. 11 he was a trainer for a tech company in Herndon, Va., not far from Dulles International Airport and very close to one of its flight paths.

'Silence was deafening'

One of the most memorable things that stands out 10 years later is the utter quiet in the skies. Almost immediately, the noise of the Dulles take-offs and landings, which had become so commonplace, disappeared. The silence was deafening.

The impact of just that lack of noise hit me very hard and made me realize the seriousness of the situation. The reports on television and radio could be turned off, but the silence in the skies was what made it all so real. ■

2002

JAN. 17

CUSTOMS COMMISSIONER BONNER PROPOSES THE CONTAINER SECURITY INITIATIVE

TO IDENTIFY HIGH-RISK CONTAINERS AND PRESCREEN THEM PRIOR TO SHIPMENT.



JAN. 17-18

BORDER PATROL AND OTHER INS OFFICIALS MEET WITH NATIVE AMERICAN LEADERS TO STRENGTHEN NORTH AMERICAN BORDER SECURITY.

JAN. 29

BORDER PATROL AND ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE HOST PROJECT NORTHSTAR MEETING TO DISCUSS ADDITIONAL INTEGRATED BORDER ENFORCEMENT TEAMS FOR THE U.S.-CANADA BORDER. WITHIN FIVE YEARS THE PROGRAM EXPANDS TO 24 TEAMS IN 15 REGIONS.

FEB. 1

BORDER PATROL DEPLOYS 262 AGENTS TO UTAH FOR THE 2002 WINTER OLYMPICS FOR 24/7 OUTER PERIMETER SECURITY.

'As essential as the next person'

I flew from the Rio Grande Valley to Border Patrol Central Region Office in Dallas on Sept. 10 on a two-week detail to help alleviate some of the mounting paperwork and reported to work early on the morning of Sept. 11. While I was being introduced to staff we became aware of the attacks.

My temporary assignment was scrubbed. I vividly remember our chief ordering all “non-essentials” to vacate the building and to return home till further notice. There was a dash for the elevators. Being fairly new to federal employment, I wasn’t accustomed to phrases like “non-essential.” In my mind, I was as essential as the next person. So I stayed to assist in whatever way I could.

I went to work immediately, volunteering to work the graveyard shift at the makeshift command center. My two-week detail kept getting extended. Despite missing my family, I didn’t want to leave those other folks behind. They were missing their families just as much as I was.

After three months, one night at the command center a senior patrol agent discovered that I was not an agent. He

asked how I had been able to secure the assignment. Embarrassing as it was, I confessed to not knowing what the term “non-essential” meant and that I had stayed behind due to ignorance. We all had a good laugh and I was sent home soon afterward.

A week later I learned that I had earned a superior accomplishment award. It was presented to me by my sector chief and is proudly displayed in my office. ■



photo by Victor M. Pena

Carlos Jesus Gonzalez now is a mission support assistant in the CBP Office of Information and Technology in McAllen, Texas. He also served as a mission support assistant on Sept. 11.

MAR. 1

CUSTOMS ANNOUNCES A PLAN TO WORK WITH AIR CARRIERS TO GAIN PASSENGER AND CREW INFORMATION PRIOR TO U.S. ARRIVALS OF FOREIGN FLIGHTS.

MAR. 12

PRESIDENT BUSH ISSUES DIRECTIVE ESTABLISHING THE HOMELAND SECURITY ADVISORY SYSTEM, THE COLOR-CODED ALERT SYSTEM.

MAR. 22

MEXICO AND THE U.S. SIGN A SMART BORDER DECLARATION TO IMPROVE SECURITY AND EFFICIENCY ON THE U.S.-MEXICO BORDER.

APRIL 8

INS CHANGES RULES GOVERNING AN ALIEN'S ABILITY TO BEGIN A COURSE OF STUDY DURING A PERMITTED VISIT TO THE U.S.

APRIL 16

CUSTOMS LAUNCHES THE CUSTOMS-TRADE PARTNERSHIP AGAINST TERRORISM, OR C-TPAT, TO STRENGTHEN U.S. BORDERS AND OVERALL INTERNATIONAL SUPPLY CHAIN SECURITY.



‘No planes, no sounds, no contrails’

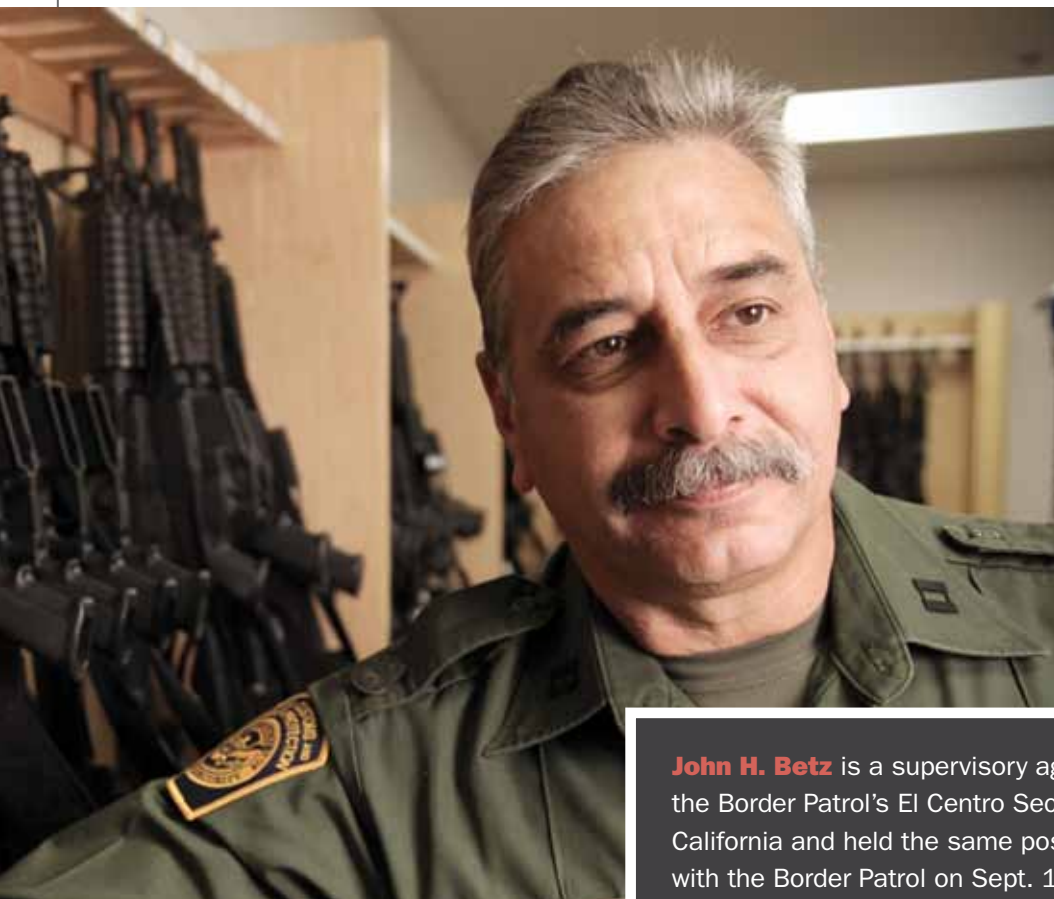


photo by Kenneth Padilla

John H. Betz is a supervisory agent at the Border Patrol’s El Centro Sector in California and held the same position with the Border Patrol on Sept. 11.

What struck me the most was the eerie quietness of the sky on that day.

Imperial County/El Centro is home to the El Centro Naval Air Station and is a major airline corridor for Los Angeles International Airport, San Diego’s Lindbergh Field, and John Wayne Airport in Orange County. It is common to see dozens upon dozens of airliners leaving contrails in our clear blue skies, criss-crossing each other, heading east or west, north or south to reach their final destinations.

The distinct sound of the jet engines three, four miles high and planes making their final approach to San Diego is a distinguishable sound and a daily occurrence, but on that day and a couple afterward, the skies were like a ghost town. There were no planes, no sounds, no contrails. The only planes in our sky were military fighter aircraft. ■

2002

MAY 6

INS BEGINS OPERATION GLOWWORM, VERIFYING EMPLOYMENT COMPLIANCE AT NUCLEAR FACILITIES TO ENSURE NATIONAL SECURITY.

MAY 14

PRESIDENT BUSH SIGNS THE ENHANCED BORDER SECURITY AND VISA ENTRY REFORM ACT.

JUNE

INS INITIATES THE NATIONAL SECURITY ENTRY EXIT REGISTRATION SYSTEM REQUIRING FOREIGN VISITORS FROM 25 COUNTRIES TO REGISTER IN

PERSON WITH THE INS IF THEY STAY IN THE US FOR MORE THAN 30 DAYS.

JULY

THE JUSTICE DEPARTMENT ESTABLISHES THE NATIONAL JOINT TERRORISM TASK FORCE WITH 40 AGENCY MEMBERS TO SHARE INFORMATION AND MANAGE LARGE-SCALE PROJECTS.

JULY 3

PRESIDENT BUSH EXPEDITES THE NATURALIZATION OF ALIENS ON ACTIVE-DUTY MILITARY SERVICE.

‘Quiet heroism’

It was the second day of high school for my son. We had not quite gotten our new routine down. The plan was that my wife Susan would drive past JFK International Airport—where she was the area director for the U.S. Customs Service—and drop my son off at his high school on Long Island. I would drive directly to the airport, where I worked for the Customs Office of Information and Technology, to start work early so I could pick him up in the afternoon.

Almost immediately after the towers collapsed, I received a call from my son's high school on my cell phone that I should pick him up immediately because the school was closing for the day. As I turned to leave my office the phone rang. I answered the phone with an abrupt, “I can't talk now,” but before I could slam the phone down I heard the calming voice of my wife Susan, who said she received a similar call from the high school.

We agreed that I would get our son and then I told her I loved her. She responded by saying she loved me and asked me to call her when Kyle and I got home so she knew we were safe. As we both hung up I knew she was already in the process of activating JFK's continuity of operation plan and that she and her senior management team were making

every effort to contact 6 World Trade Center to render whatever assistance they could while preparing to relocate the New York Field Office to the JFK location.

As I left the parking lot to pick up my son, I thought of my wife, an extraordinary professional who understood her duty and responsibility to fulfill the oath of office she had taken in January 1978. “Customs couples” were not uncommon, and CBP couples still are not uncommon. Many Customs couples would meet their family and professional responsibilities that day with quiet heroism.

My son and I arrived home safely at about 2 p.m. followed many hours later by an extremely exhausted Customs area director. But when she came through the door she was simply Kyle's mom and my wife.

Many New York Customs employees lost relatives or friends in the attacks. We found out that while Sue was doing her duty, her firefighter cousin, Daniel O'Callaghan, lost his life trying to help others evacuate from the towers. Perhaps the saddest Customs story was that of an import specialist whose youngest son lost his life in the towers. ■

Michael Mitchell today is the director of the trade operations division in CBP's Office of Field Operations. His wife, Susan Mitchell, is the deputy assistant commissioner for CBP's Office of Intelligence and Investigative Liaison.

‘Many Customs couples would meet their family and professional responsibilities that day with quiet heroism.’

JULY 7

THE OFFICE OF HOMELAND SECURITY ISSUES THE FIRST NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR HOMELAND SECURITY.



AUG. 21

PRESIDENT BUSH ORDERS FURTHER SAFEGUARDS FOR U.S. VESSELS, HARBORS, PORTS AND WATERFRONT FACILITIES.

OCT. 3

OPERATION IRONCLAD DEPLOYS TEMPORARY BORDER PATROL CHECKPOINTS NEAR THE CANADIAN BORDER. OPERATION EXPANDS TO COASTAL AND SOUTHWEST BORDER SECTORS IN MARCH 2003.

OCT. 25

PRESIDENT BUSH SIGNS THE DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY ACT. TOM RIDGE IS THE DHS SECRETARY-DESIGNATE.



‘Everything stopped’



photo by Eric Blum

The morning after the attack, the entire German military stood in formation and listened to a statement by the German defense minister, expressing the country’s sympathy for the senseless act and support for the U.S. All military personnel observed one minute of silence at attention. The chancellor spoke to the nation later that day and called for two minutes of silence the following day. Whether you were at the grocery store or school, everything stopped for two minutes—cars stopped on the autobahn and factories halted their assembly lines.

Over the next few weeks in Germany, every city hall had displays of candles, flowers, American flags, pictures, sympathy cards and a condolence letter people could sign. More than half of the population of

Brad Benson is a public affairs specialist at CBP headquarters. On Sept. 11 he was serving as an Air National Guard member in Germany near the Danish border.

Germany signed the letters, which their ambassador later presented to President Bush.

In Berlin, 200,000 people gathered to express their sympathy and support for their American friends. Germans use two words for friend. The first translates to acquaintance and the second translates to friend. Germans have considered the U.S. a friend since post-World War II reconstruction and the Berlin airlift.

Since no one knew when or where the next attack might occur, security in the country was immediately increased. Police carrying automatic weapons patrolled airports, train stations and town squares. By the end of the week, police had arrested a cell of terrorists in Hamburg. There was a feeling of uncertainty. Would there be more attacks? Would the world be plunged into war? Against whom? How would President Bush react to the attack? Strangers on the street asked me what I thought would happen next.

I first considered working for CBP after serving as an Air Guard member in Operation Jump Start, which sent National Guard troops to the border. During my work with the Border Patrol in Arizona, I gained a new respect for the hard work our agents do and the professionalism with which they perform their duties.

The most inspiring part of working for CBP is the sense of mission evident in the organization, from the commissioner down to the frontline officers and agents. ■

2002

DEC. 16

A NEW CARGO SECURITY PROGRAM, FREE AND SECURE TRADE, OR FAST, IS ANNOUNCED TO EXPEDITE PROCESSING OF PARTICIPANTS’ QUALIFYING TRUCK CARGO AT NORTHERN AND SOUTHERN U.S. LAND PORTS.



2003

MAR. 1

BUREAU OF CUSTOMS AND BORDER PROTECTION IS ESTABLISHED IN DHS AND INCLUDES: THE CUSTOMS SERVICE, TRANSFERRED FROM THE TREASURY DEPARTMENT; THE IMMIGRATION INSPECTION AND ENFORCEMENT FUNCTIONS OF INS, INCLUDING THE BORDER PATROL; THE PLANT PROTECTION AND QUARANTINE INSPECTION PROGRAMS FROM THE ANIMAL AND PLANT HEALTH INSPECTION SERVICE, DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE. ROBERT BONNER BECOMES THE FIRST CBP COMMISSIONER.

'No planes crossed our borders'

On Sept. 11, **Robert Bowles** was a member of the U.S. Customs Office of Investigations, Air and Marine Interdiction Coordination Center in Riverside, Calif., which later became the CBP Air and Marine Operations Center. He now serves as a program manager for training at that facility.

Not too long after we started manning the operations floor, the second World Trade building was hit, and a following report came to the floor that the Pentagon had been hit. It only seemed like minutes later when we got the word that the Federal Aviation Administration had ordered all aircraft to land immediately. We started calling all of our airborne assets and advising them to land at the nearest airport.

Our base was locked down and information technology personnel worked furiously to set up a crisis response center complete with extensive communications and radar coverage.

As the morning progressed, the radar scopes became darker and darker as all the other aircraft either landed or diverted to other countries for landing.

Looking at Michigan, I observed a target departing the Upper Peninsula and heading south. It started to angle for Chicago as I noticed a military aircraft in southern Michigan head northeast. I figured that air defense would spot the target and intercept it, but after a few minutes the military aircraft was still on the northeast heading. I called on the hotline to report the target. When the sector answered, the noise sounded like pure chaos in that room, with radios blasting and people shouting. After I reported the target the interceptor took an abrupt heading toward the target. The fighter flew tight circles around the target until the target disappeared off the scope, forced to land.

No planes crossed our borders. I observed aircraft heading from Europe to Mexico, which would normally fly over Florida, circle completely around the U.S. to stay out of the air defense identification zone. ■

'It only seemed like minutes later when we got the word that the Federal Aviation Administration had ordered all aircraft to land immediately.'



MAR. 5

U.S. BORDER PATROL CHIEF GUSTAVO DE LA VIÑA FORMALLY TRANSFERS THE BORDER PATROL FLAG TO CBP. FROM LEFT, CBP COMMISSIONER ROBERT BONNER; DE LA VIÑA AND ICE COMMISSIONER MICHAEL GARCIA.

MAR. 17

DHS IMPLEMENTS OPERATION LIBERTY SHIELD, A COMPREHENSIVE, COORDINATED RESPONSE AMONG FEDERAL, STATE, AND LOCAL AUTHORITIES TO PROTECT AMERICANS DURING HEIGHTENED RISK PERIODS.

Raymond Eckert

works as a criminal enforcement and fraud prevention officer in CBP's Advanced Targeting Unit at the port of Buffalo, N.Y. On Sept. 11, he served as an INS senior inspector in intelligence in Niagara Falls, N.Y.



photo by Thomas J. Robert

'Personal motivation'

When I got to a television at the port, I saw that both towers had been hit. I called my sister Karen and she confirmed that my brother-in-law, Sean Rooney, was at work in one of the towers. She had already spoken to my sister Beverly Eckert (Sean's wife) by phone in Stamford, Conn. I remember leaving work and checking in on my elderly mother and then repeatedly talking to my sister Karen.

I learned that Bev and Sean were talking on the phone until the moment the building collapsed. They had been together since high school in the late 1960s and were truly soul mates. I later learned more of their final conversation: that Sean was extremely brave in the face of death and that one of his final statements to Beverly was to "get the bastards that did this." That statement alone has been a great source of personal motivation since the attack.

Beverly's friends drove her from Stamford to Buffalo so she could be with family. The Eckert and Rooney families gathered together in Buffalo that evening to console Beverly. About a week later, we had a memorial for Sean in my sister Susan's backyard—the same spot where Sean and Bev were married. So

many people attended and I marveled at the strength of my sister Beverly.

Not too long after the attack, Bev focused her energies for change and co-chaired an organization called Voices of September 11th that helped 9/11 family members. She also advocated for victims' compensation, airline security, skyscraper safety, memorials and the recovery of victims' remains.

Bev and a group of 12 surviving family members became the 9/11 Family Steering Committee. For nearly three years after 9/11, she lobbied and testified before Congress. Her group was a major influence in getting the 9/11 Commission investigation that resulted in reforms that are in effect today.

After the 9/11 Commission report was released and its recommendations began to be implemented, Beverly settled into a more "normal" life. In later years, Bev became involved in many types of volunteer work for groups like Habitat for Humanity, much of it in honor of Sean. In late 2008, Bev again took up her citizen activist role and began to champion some of her favorite causes, but on Feb. 12, 2009, while en route to Buffalo from Newark to award an annual scholarship set up in Sean's name, Beverly was killed in a plane crash. ■

2003

MAR. 20

START OF THE IRAQ WAR, OR OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM, WITH THE U.S. BOMBING OF BAGHDAD.

MAR. 27

CBP COMMISSIONER BONNER ANNOUNCES THE 24-HOUR RULE REQUIRING ADVANCE CARGO MANIFESTS FROM SEA CARRIERS.

APRIL 10

THE AGENCY WEBSITE, WWW.CBP.GOV, LAUNCHES.

AUG. 19

DHS SECRETARY TOM RIDGE UNVEILS THE OFFICIAL DHS SEAL.



‘The condolences kept coming’

Edward Schack currently serves as a program manager for the Office of Training and Development at CBP headquarters in Washington, D.C. He was a Customs inspector on detail with the Department of State on Sept. 11.

‘Armenians came to the front of the embassy all day, laying flowers in front of the building and signing a book of condolences.’

I landed in Yerevan, Armenia, just as the first plane hit the tower in New York. My embassy handlers hurried me through the terminal where I saw what I thought was a scene from a disaster movie on a lounge TV. My handlers told me my luggage would be delivered later and drove me quickly to my hotel and told me to stay there.

The U.S. embassy reopened after a day, so I was able to attend my planned

meetings there. Armenians came to the front of the embassy all day, laying flowers in front of the building and signing a book of condolences. Everyone I met expressed sympathy for me and my country. I spent most of the week attending an FBI training program for the Armenian police that my office sponsored and the condolences kept coming. I couldn't get a flight home from Europe so continued my mission in Kiev, Ukraine. The embassy there was festooned

with flowers and everyone who knew I was from the U.S. shook or held my hand and shared our grief.

After another week I finally got a flight home out of Frankfurt. When I returned to my office on Navy Hill across from Main State, my colleague told me how he had watched from the office next to mine as the plane struck the Pentagon. That's the view I, too, would have had from my office. ■

2004

SEPT. 10

RENOVATED CBP OFFICE SPACE FOR APPROXIMATELY 350 FORMER WTC CUSTOMS PERSONNEL OPENS IN NEWARK, N.J.

DEC. 5

CBP PUBLISHES TRADE ACT OF 2002 REGULATIONS THAT REQUIRE ADVANCE ELECTRONIC TRANSMISSION OF INFORMATION ON ALL ARRIVING AND DEPARTING CARGO.

JAN. 5

DHS DEPLOYS US-VISIT TO COLLECT BIOMETRIC AND BIOGRAPHIC INFORMATION FROM FOREIGN VISITORS AT U.S. VISA-ISSUING POSTS AND UPON THEIR U.S. ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE.

OCT. 21

COMMISSIONER BONNER DEDICATES THE NEW BORDER PATROL ACADEMY IN ARTESIA, N.M., FOR THE FIRST TIME CONSOLIDATING ALL BORDER PATROL TRAINING AT ONE FACILITY.





photo by Kristoffer Croghan

Yvonne Ziemba serves as a CBP paralegal specialist at the port of Detroit. She was an INS immigration inspector working the Detroit-Canada border during the morning rush on Sept. 11.

‘Love and concern’

Each person’s face was grief stricken as they arrived at the port of entry from Canada. The car radios were on and they kept telling me that planes were heading into the World Trade Center towers in New York City. I thought they were trying to evade inspections, but each person who came through was crying and one commuter had the radio on for me to hear that the second plane had hit the second tower.

Even though most of the commuters were Canadian, each cried in disbelief as the radio continued to express the horror that was happening. Each Canadian commuter showed love and concern. ■

‘Each Canadian commuter showed love and concern.’

2004

OCT. 25

OPERATION STONEGARDEN BEGINS, ALLOWING GRANTS TO STATES, TRIBES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS TO FUND ENHANCED BORDER SECURITY OPERATIONS.

OCT. 31

CUSTOMS SERVICE AIR AND MARINE OPERATIONS TRANSFER FROM ICE TO CBP.

2005

JAN. 28

THE FIRST THREE BORDER SUPPORT TEAMS LAUNCH TO ASSIST BORDER CONTROL IN IRAQ.

MAR. 25

DHS LAUNCHES THE ARIZONA BORDER CONTROL INITIATIVE. ALL DHS AGENCIES IN ARIZONA COLLABORATE TO DETER, DETECT, ARREST AND PROSECUTE ALL ILLICIT CROSS-BORDER TRAFFIC.

DEC. 6

OPERATION STREAMLINE BEGINS, EFFECTING IMMEDIATE PROSECUTION OF ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS APPREHENDED IN SPECIFIC ENFORCEMENT ZONES.

'We trekked cross-country and bonded'

On Sept. 12, sector headquarters was abuzz getting agents mobilized for a relief effort at Ground Zero. Occasionally, someone from sector training would tell us that they were trying to get us a military flight or charter to the Border Patrol Academy at the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center in Georgia, but with each passing hour, it seemed less likely. Finally, near the end of the day, we were told that our class was going to be canceled until further notice. To make things worse, since the next classes had already been slotted, we would be in a holding pattern for at least three more classes.

For me, this was simply not an option. I had waited patiently through a 13-month hiring process for this job offer and I refused to wait another three months. We gathered a quick consensus among the class and told sector headquarters that we were willing to rent cars with our own money and drive across the country to Georgia if we could keep our academy slots.

A few hours later, the instructors told us that if we were willing to travel by bus from San Diego to Georgia, picking up classmates on our

way, they would allow us to keep our current academy schedule. They wouldn't have time to charter a bus for us for a few more days, so we'd have to complete the first leg of the trip by Greyhound bus. We didn't care. By 5 a.m. the next day, we were on our way.

At first, the bus ride was a bit of a novelty. In El Centro, we added eight more classmates to our crew and then proceeded to El Paso, Texas, stopping at every Greyhound stop on the way. By the time we hit Texas, we were more than ready for that chartered bus.

A lot of fast new friendships were formed as we trekked cross country and bonded through our shared discomfort. We made the 2,500 mile trek over three days, stopping only for gas, fast food, and for a few hours on the side of the road while our driver rigged up the fan belt with a bungee cord. I think that the time we spent on that bus enabled us to form the roots of a team that would help us to make it through the academy together.

We arrived at the academy in Glynco, Ga., a week later than originally scheduled. We had to work longer days than the normal academy class and we worked through our

Supervisory Border Patrol Agent **Paul Metts** now serves in San Diego Sector and is an officer in the California Army National Guard. He and seven classmates began their pre-academy Border Patrol training in San Diego on Sept. 9, 2001.

first two weekends in order to make up for the days that we had missed. When we settled into the normal academy schedule, it seemed like a piece of cake compared to what we had just been through.

For me, Sept. 11 made what I was training for much more real and important. In the classroom, we received all of the same training as any other Border Patrol Academy session, but always with the caveat that "all of this will probably change now that 9/11 has happened."

Border Patrol Academy Class 484 began with 37 American citizens and ended with 34 Border Patrol agents. As we approach our 10-year anniversary, 30 are still agents. A few have moved on to other agencies and a few have just moved on. I credit Sept. 11 to some degree for our success and for our commitment to the patrol.

To this day, when I tell someone my class number, I often hear, "You weren't that class that bussed to the academy, were you?" I can't help but feel a bit of pride as I answer, "Yes." ■

2006

JAN. 17

CBP'S AIR AND MARINE OPERATIONS, SEPARATE OFFICES UNTIL NOW, ARE COMBINED UNDER THE OFFICE OF AIR AND MARINE.



JUNE 15

OPERATION JUMP START ACTIVATES 6,000 NATIONAL GUARD TROOPS TO ASSIST THE BORDER PATROL ALONG THE U.S. SOUTHWEST BORDER.

JULY 11

CARIBBEAN BORDER INTERAGENCY GROUP FORMS TO INTEGRATE ANTI-TERRORISM AND BORDER ENFORCEMENT EFFORTS BY ALL DHS AND JUSTICE DEPARTMENT AGENCIES IN THE CARIBBEAN.

NOV. 17

W. RALPH BASHAM, THE SECOND CBP COMMISSIONER, JOINS WITH LEADERS FROM ICE, THE COAST GUARD, THE CANADA BORDER SERVICES AGENCY AND ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE TO ESTABLISH INTEGRATED BORDER ENFORCEMENT TEAMS BETWEEN THE U.S. AND CANADA.

‘Working 16 hours per day’

William Curtis Stewart, a CBP canine officer at the Pharr port of entry in Texas, was serving as a U.S. Customs canine enforcement officer at the Progreso port of entry in south Texas on Sept. 11.

As the days went on after Sept. 11, staffing of officers went from working eight-hour shifts to consecutive double shifts working 16 hours per day. The only family time the officers had was on scheduled days off. Then all officers would again start the 16 hour per day regimen till their next day off.

At that time I lived in McAllen, Texas, approximately 45 miles away from Progreso. My daily commute to and from the port took about two hours. By the time I would get off work, get home, relax and fall asleep it was time to get up and go to work. I was averaging about four hours of sleep a day. My fellow officers

were all doing their share even though they were exhausted. After a couple of weeks I questioned myself whether I could continue to function at this rate. We didn't know how long we would be expected to work at this pace and the fatigue was starting to set in.

Fortunately, I owned a travel trailer. I started to check the trailer parks close to the port of entry, asking if they would allow me to move my trailer in during the time of our country's need. Most of the trailer parks would not allow me to stay because I was not 50 years old. I only found one trailer park that would let me park my trailer there. I truly appreciated their willingness to help. From there my commute was only about five minutes to the port of entry. I was finally able to get the rest my body needed.

I also offered my fellow officers with the same kind of commute to stay in my trailer if they needed. This lifestyle went on for almost a month and a half before the port operations started to return to normal. If it had not been for the trailer park and my family's support it would have been almost impossible for me to function during this time.

I am very proud to be part of Customs and Border Protection. It gives me the same pride as when I served our country in the Army. ■



photo by Felix Gerza

2007

SEPT. 30

SPECIAL OPERATIONS GROUP LAUNCHES TO ENABLE BORDER PATROL TEAMS TO RESPOND RAPIDLY WITH SPECIAL TACTICS AND TECHNIQUES, SEARCH AND RESCUE, AND MEDICAL RESPONSE CAPABILITIES.

2009

DEC. 25

NIGERIAN UMAR FAROUK ABDULMUTALLAB TRIES AND FAILS TO DETONATE PLASTIC EXPLOSIVES HIDDEN IN HIS UNDERWEAR ON NORTHWEST AIRLINES FLIGHT 253 FROM AMSTERDAM TO DETROIT.

2010

MAY 1

ATTEMPTED CAR BOMBING IN NEW YORK'S TIMES SQUARE BY FAISAL SHAHZAD, A PAKISTANI-BORN U.S. CITIZEN. QUICK CBP ACTION LED TO SHAHZAD'S CAPTURE AS HE BOARDED A FLIGHT AT JFK AIRPORT TO DUBAI, UNITED ARAB EMIRATES.

OCT. 29

PACKAGE BOMBS FOUND ON U.S.-BOUND CARGO PLANES IN ENGLAND AND DUBAI.

'True professionals'

Two days after 9/11 at around 9:45 p.m., I received a very unusual phone call from the New York Times—calling to find out if I had survived the attack on the trade center. I asked why, out of all the thousands of people who worked there, would they be calling me?

The reporter told me that a lady living in Brooklyn found a ruling letter that I had signed in her backyard the day after 9/11. It was singed around the edges and looked official. When the North Tower went down it created such a strong air current that it took the ruling letter over the East River and into Brooklyn.

After finding the letter the lady was so upset that she called the Times to report what she found and asked if they could find out if I had survived. She was relieved to hear that I was OK. The story appeared in the Times the next day.

The next several weeks resulted in several amazing accomplishments through the coordinated efforts of various offices in the Customs Service. Our new location at One Penn Plaza was up and running in record time. While our temporary space initially looked more like a warehouse than an office, it was wired for computer

access and stocked with computers, supplies and telephones.

On Oct. 9, the employees were contacted and told to report to work at One Penn Plaza. While many of my employees were eligible to retire, no one did. They all returned.

I'll never forget the pure joy of seeing everyone again in our temporary conference room. It was one of the happiest days of my near-40-year career. Despite losing all their national commodity files, records and resource materials, my employees were ready to get back to work. As true professionals it took very little time before they had all our office functions and programs back and running smoothly.

I'll always remember the dedication my employees had to their jobs and to the Customs Service in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks. ■



Robert Swierupski on Sept. 11 was in 6 World Trade Center as the director of the National Commodity Specialist Division for the Customs Service. He continues in that position today for CBP in the Office of International Trade in New York City.

2011

FEB. 3

ALAN D. BERSIN, THE THIRD CBP COMMISSIONER, ESTABLISHES THE CBP JOINT FIELD COMMAND IN ARIZONA TO INTEGRATE BORDER SECURITY, COMMERCIAL ENFORCEMENT AND TRADE FACILITATION.

MAY 1

PRESIDENT OBAMA ANNOUNCES THAT NAVY SEALS KILLED OSAMA BIN LADEN DURING A RAID ON A RESIDENTIAL COMPOUND WHERE HE AND HIS FAMILY WERE LIVING ABOUT 35 MILES OUTSIDE OF ISLAMABAD, PAKISTAN.



PREPARED BY ANNE SABA

'Lessons of self-sacrifice, service'

The trainees sat in the front of the auditorium, followed by their families and a large portion of the instructor cadre. I was proud of the trainees for enduring the arduous 19-week program. The graduation ceremonies, in many ways, were as important to the staff as they were to the trainees.

Presiding over the morning's events was the Border Patrol Academy's Chief Patrol Agent Thomas J. Walters. A short time into his remarks, Chief Walters was interrupted by a staff member who whispered something

Richard M. Hudson is the patrol agent in charge at the Border Patrol station in Las Cruces, N.M. On Sept. 11, he was a supervisory Border Patrol agent/course development instructor at the Border Patrol Academy in Charleston, S.C. That morning he was assisting with the graduation ceremony of Border Patrol Class 472.

in his ear. Those of us who had been around a while knew this was something serious, perhaps a serious training injury or maybe an emergency telephone call from Border Patrol headquarters. Chief Walters excused himself and asked that we remain seated until his return.

What seemed like only minutes passed and Chief Walters re-entered the room. In my experience, Chief Walters was a serious man, but he was always ready with a smile when he greeted you. This time there was no smile. He explained that there had been a significant event in New York City that did not appear to be an accident. He apologized and asked to suspend the ceremony for 30 minutes to gather more information and coordinate with headquarters in Washington, D.C. As he left, the instructor cadre immediately went to the nearest break room to monitor the television news reports.

As we gathered back in the auditorium, Chief Walters stoically entered the room and stated what he understood to be the facts surrounding the events in New York. He reminded us to stay focused on our mission and that the best course of action was to continue with our lives, to be vigilant and focus our collective efforts. He stated that additional information would be forthcoming and that some of us, including the trainees, could be called into action in the very near future. We all remained for the graduation and though the mood was tempered, the chief had set the path forward.

As graduation broke up, we said our goodbyes to our trainees from Class 472, knowing now that the world had turned and the threat they would potentially face in the field had changed. As a result it is even more important that we teach lessons of self-sacrifice, service and humanity to our leaders of tomorrow. ■

'He reminded us to stay focused on our mission and that the best course of action was to continue with our lives, to be vigilant and focus our collective efforts.'



photo by Melissa Marie Mari

‘Are body bags dutiable?’

Holly Middleton is a CBP officer in Champlain, N.Y. On Sept. 11 she was serving as a U.S. Customs Service inspector at the Champlain port of entry.

The port of Champlain, N.Y., is on the main thoroughfare between Montreal and New York City. We had to search every car, truck and bus coming into and leaving the country. I don't remember how many weeks or months we were on alert and most of it is still a blur.

A few days after 9/11, I answered a phone call at work. The caller identified himself as a manufacturer in the Montreal area who needed to make an entry of goods through our port. He stated he was shipping body bags to New York City and asked me, “Are body bags dutiable?”

I felt like I had been kicked in the stomach and I wanted to cry. I took a deep breath and replied, “Not today, sir, not today.” Even though our port is about 350 miles from Ground Zero, that call made it seem a lot closer.

While we were still on alert and doing outbound searches of all vehicles, another officer from our port, now retired, told me a tractor trailer stopped for inspection. When the officer asked the driver what he was carrying in his trailer, the driver said his trailer was empty—he'd brought a load of coffins to Ground Zero. The officer waved him on.

Every work night since 9/11, when I get home at midnight, I stop and look up at the sky. Even if it is cloudy, I look up at stars I can't see and give thanks that my little corner of the world is safe for one more night. ■



photo by Thomas J. Riser

‘Doing everything that I could’

Melissa Grabish is a CBP officer at the Command Center in Blaine, Wash. On Sept. 11, she was living with her new husband in Langley, British Columbia, and commuting to her U.S. job as a brokerage clerk/junior customer service representative for an express shipping company.

For the next several weeks, I would spend three to five hours in the line at the Lynden port of entry to make it to work. I'd roll up to pre-primary and, still sitting two to three cars back, I would turn off my engine, pop the trunk and hood and await my turn at the booth. I remember thanking the officers, no longer taking them for granted.

On Sept. 13, for a national candlelight vigil, the people in my office gathered out front, just 25 feet from Canada. While travelers watched and cried with us from the travel lanes, we lit four candles, one for each plane.

In the days that followed I began to sense that I was not doing everything that

I could to serve my country. I asked one of the cargo inspectors if Customs was hiring. He informed me that the application process was to happen the week of Sept. 17.

Out of the 5,000 who applied I became one of the 1,250 who completed the process to become a Customs inspector, and on June 28, 2002, I was called with the job offer of a lifetime.

On Sept. 17, 2002, I graduated from the academy. On Sept. 19, I began my first day as a Customs inspector at the port of Blaine, Wash., and have never regretted my decision to serve the people of this country. ■

‘What if I admit a terrorist?’

Annette Coppola today is a chief CBP officer at Miami International Airport in Florida. On Sept. 11 she worked the midnight to 8 a.m. shift at JFK International Airport in New York City as an immigration inspector with the Immigration and Naturalization Service.

A unified command center was set up at JFK Airport—a joint task force convening all the federal agencies and local law enforcement at the airport. It was massive.

I was filled with the fear that someone would tell me that I had admitted one of those deceased hijackers. Did all of the immigration inspectors who had admitted

thousands of passengers from the Middle East walk around secretly filled with this fear? We didn’t talk about our fears and anxiety. If after 9/11 the planes in the sky looked all wrong to me and for a few seconds I could not breathe, I didn’t tell anyone.

On Long Island where I lived, the streets were filled with mourners at churches for weeks. Fire trucks would park on each side of the street with the ladders extended into the sky. A giant U.S. flag would be suspended between the ladders. The cry of the bagpipes filled the air. Dead cops and firefighters were everywhere.

At work, when certain flights resumed, new anxiety hit me. What if I admit a terrorist? It was up to us, the immigration inspectors, to determine in minutes if something was potentially “wrong” with the person who was asking to enter the U.S.

We all applied an increased level of scrutiny. We became even closer as co-workers—we shared a deep level of camaraderie, taking care of each other as our work became more stressful. The pressure to change our focus was immediate and urgent and we took our mission seriously.

Now 10 years have passed. I continued as a Customs and Border Protection officer and we New Yorkers bounced back. The twin towers were a part of our landscape. There were nights when I almost got lost driving around Manhattan and I would use the towers to help me navigate back downtown toward the Williamsburg Bridge. All these years later, I hold onto that image, in the peaceful darkness, those majestic pillars of shimmering brightness.

I have never gone back to the World Trade Center site. People say that they need to go there to help them understand what happened that day. I don’t need that to understand. I don’t want to see that empty space. I am a New Yorker, and there will always be an empty, heartbroken space inside of me. ■



photo by Migdalia Trains

‘Joining CBP was a natural fit’

In Sept. 2001 I was a senior at Canisius College in Buffalo, N.Y. I was on course to graduate with a B.A. in history and begin studies for an advanced degree en route to a professional career in this field.

However, after I saw the attacks on Sept. 11, I decided that service to my country should come before personal and professional advancement. I spoke with military recruiters and enlisted in the U.S. Army for five years of active service. By August 2002 I was in basic training and airborne school.

As I'd hoped, I deployed to Afghanistan as part of Operation Enduring Freedom in 2003 to combat America's enemies directly. In 2005 and 2006 I deployed to Iraq with Operation Iraqi Freedom and remained in the Middle East until my separation from the Army in 2007. Fighting in the Middle East and Afghanistan gave me a singular appreciation for American freedom and ideals.

After leaving the Army in 2007, service to the country remained a top priority for me. Joining CBP was a natural fit—being able to protect America while remaining in America. ■

Paul Lacapruccia
is a CBP officer
in Buffalo, N.Y.



photo by Thomas J. Rusert

‘We as a nation are willing to help’

Today **Sean M. Coppens** serves as the acting senior detection enforcement officer at CBP's Air and Marine Operations Center in Riverside, Calif. On 9/11, he was an Air Force air traffic controller at Travis Air Force Base in Northern California.

We air traffic controllers were working to get a C-5 Galaxy airborne on the morning of Sept. 11. It was carrying food, water and other relief items to Peru to help the nearly 35,000 victims of the magnitude 8.4 earthquake that had occurred on June 23, 2001.

During the tragedies we were experiencing at our homeland that devastating morning, it was quite a challenge for us and the Federal Aviation Administration

to get the largest aircraft in the Air Force inventory airborne, especially because all the aircraft in U.S. airspace were grounded.

It shows how we as a nation are willing to help, even during times of significant tragedy. ■

‘A calling to help’

I lost my job in 2001 when the metallurgy company I was working for closed. I was collecting unemployment, trying to find a job, and at same time I was a volunteer fire fighter in East Brunswick, N.J.

Early morning of 9/11, I was home and my fire pager went off. I drove my truck to the firehouse and three other firefighters were waiting. I could hear radio messages from New York firefighters.

We were called to take a firetruck to Middlesex County Fire Academy. A lot of first responders were there. They stated that New York was attacked and needed our assistance. A long line of emergency responders drove on the New Jersey Turnpike to New York. You could see the smoke from the towers. I knew I had a calling to help.

We arrived at a firehouse near the towers and waited for orders. Most firefighters in New York went to help at the towers. There was smoke and papers in the air all around us. We were then diverted to assist other firefighters on their fire calls in Flatbush, Brooklyn. I wanted to help with the tower rescue, but we have to stick together and obey command orders.

We did New York City fire calls for three days. During that time, firefighters came back from the towers to the firehouse. We tried to listen to them and help them. They came back exhausted after hearing or seeing their fellow firefighters dead and people from the towers dead. We were all one family, brothers doing a cause. We all worked as one team to help New York at this sad time.

When I came back to New Jersey I received a plaque for helping out on 9/11. I also found out that my unemployment benefits got canceled because I did not call on the day I was supposed to be looking for work. I had to get a letter from my fire chief saying that I'd been assisting New York in its time of need. I later got my unemployment benefits back.

I had a bad cough afterwards, but it went away after a few months. I also had a piece of burnt paper from the towers that was flying in the air—I gave it to my firehouse to remember 9/11. ■

Frank J. Clementi now works as a CBP officer at Dulles International Airport in Northern Virginia.

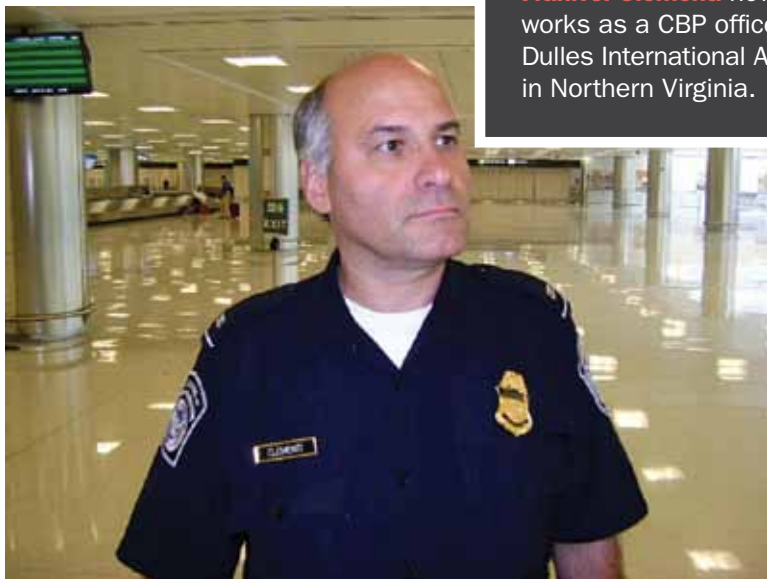


photo by Chris Downing

Anna Labbate was a U.S. Customs supervisory customs liquidator in 6 World Trade Center on Sept. 11. Her office relocated to Newark, N.J., after the custom house was destroyed. The following is excerpted from her essay originally written and published in U.S. Customs Today in June 2002. She is now retired and living on Staten Island, N.Y.

‘What can I do to help?’

We learned a lot about ourselves and the strength of the Customs Service on Sept. 11 and the weeks following.

Our thoughts were to reach out to our co-workers—just to hear their voices and know they were safe. Tears came to our eyes the moment they picked up the phone and we knew they'd gotten out. The phone

didn't stop ringing for weeks with calls from friends and colleagues asking, "Are you OK? What can I do to help?" Upon meeting in the hallway we embraced each other and wept unashamedly.

Our Customs friends from all over the country sent us "care packages," including treasured mementos that they knew had perished that day. ■

‘Visions of Pearl Harbor’

My first priority was making sure everyone in the command was safe. Unfortunately, because it was only 6 a.m. in California, most people were still coming to work. The only way to reach the North Island Naval Air Station is to go over the two-mile-long Coronado Bay Bridge. After the 9/11 attacks the base shut down, which left thousands stuck on the bridge, including all of the squadron’s leadership. It didn’t dawn on security or the San Diego Police that all of those cars were sitting ducks for another attack. After several hours and the realization that the bridge was a potential target, the police frantically cleared it by compacting cars on either side of the bridge.

Every ship at the 32nd Street Naval Station pulled out of port. Visions of Pearl Harbor haunted our minds.

I was trying to communicate with my leadership via land line and cell phone, but all the airwaves were jammed. I was directed by our wing commander to launch one helicopter to the USS John C. Stennis. The ship remained out of port and became the afloat command center. My helicopters were the only means of transportation anywhere, so every commanding officer and the Pacific Fleet admirals were flown out to the carrier for an emergency meeting.

After 9/11 and weapons training, we deployed on the USS John C. Stennis. Once we got a radio call from the flight deck that a French helicopter was coming in for fuel. My flight deck coordinator met the helicopter crew as they landed and gave them what we had. As payment, the French pilot removed his Velcro patch depicting our twin towers and handed it to my flight deck coordinator, saying, “We are with you in this fight.” It was the simplest, yet most heartfelt, admission of the solidarity that the world was feeling.

Before 9/11, during a presentation to a group of sailors, I spoke about the trust we all have with each other—that

we would lay down our lives for our shipmates. One sailor told me that there was no way that he would do such a thing, that he would have to be paid a whole lot more to actually die for anyone outside of his family.

On the first day of our mission after 9/11, that young sailor came to me and said to me with tears in his eyes, “Senior Chief, I get it now.” ■

Julie L. Ybarra currently works as the staff assistant for CBP’s Payroll Branch in Indianapolis, Ind. At the time of the attacks she was the maintenance control chief for the U.S. Navy Helicopter Anti-Submarine Squadron-Eight on North Island, Calif.

‘Before 9/11, during a presentation to a group of sailors, I spoke about the trust we all have with each other—that we would lay down our lives...’



photo by Jerome Brewster

Claire Lemme serves as a general attorney in CBP's Miami Office of Associate Chief Counsel.



photo by Norma Morla

'To serve the public'

Two years out of law school, I had left private immigration practice to serve as a law clerk in the Superior Court of Clayton County, Ga. On this particular morning, I was reviewing civil motions while the chamber's sound system relayed the trial taking place in the courtroom. A distressed transcriptionist burst into chambers and told the judge's assistant that a plane had crashed in New York City and it was "bad."

The judge called a short recess. All the court personnel gathered in the tiny office of one of the court reporters who kept a portable TV at her desk to watch the soaps during lunch. Everyone huddled together with eyes fixed on the news reports on this little black-and-white screen. The judge went back on the bench to calmly explain the situation and reset the trial. There would be phone calls to make, family and friends in New York and D.C. to check on, loved ones to hug.

That night I was in my apartment watching the news when my brother called. My 91-year-old grandfather, retired Treasury Auditor Norman Floyd Lemme, had been in the comfort of his Midwest living room, in front of his own TV, when his heart failed.

I will never know if the questions of the day or the memories of wars past were too much for that dear man to endure. I do know he had spent his entire career in federal service and he loved his country deeply.

It grieves me that he did not see the way we persevered in the weeks and years that followed, the way we came together, worked harder. Some of us, including me, found a vocation: A new agency where I could combine the versatility of a law clerk with the expertise of an immigration lawyer to serve the public, like my grandfather before me. I think it would make him proud, I really do. ■

'Never again and never forget'

Someone had started a rumor that terrorists were going to bomb Randall's Island. The building we were in had to be locked down. I decided to get back to the

Christopher Trivino, a CBP officer in Providence, R.I., was a manager with the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation on Sept. 11 and lived in the Bronx. He was in a meeting on Randall's Island in New York City when the attacks happened.

Bronx and see what I could do to help. When I arrived at Bronx Parks headquarters, I was told by the chief of operations to report to Van Cortland Park's gas stations and only allow emergency vehicles to gas up.

The rest of Sept. 11 was spent "guarding" the city gas pumps, listening to the radio and the combat aircraft enforcing the no-fly zone around the city.

Each day I would report to the Parks and Recreation Maintenance and Operation garage in Bronx Park, waiting to be called to help at Ground Zero. We had heavy equipment and able-bodied people ready to help, wanting to help, and no one called.

When I was not able to help, it really upset me. I was born and raised in New York City.

Since I was a boy, my grandfather, a World War II veteran, instilled in me that community service is important. I decided at that moment that I would be in a position to help, to serve.

In July 2002, I entered the New York City Police Academy, the first class after the department lost 23 of its own on Sept. 11, to serve and protect my city. In January 2003, I graduated with 2,500 recruits at Madison Square Garden. I never felt such pride.

I joined CBP with the same thought in mind: How can I best protect my country and city? I now volunteer to work on teams whose primary mission is the fight against terror, such as CBP's counter-terrorism response teams. Every day always thinking: Never again and never forget. ■

‘A sort of bravery’

As Border Patrol agents, we are trained to be discreet when we board planes armed and on official travel. Generally this is an easy task to accomplish. Not that day. With the 9/11 lockdown of all air travel having just been lifted, combined with the building fear throughout the country about an imminent attack, every single person in that security line watched us with eagle eyes as we approached the security rope. It seemed to be a sign that they understood exactly who we were and why we were there, even though we were just going home to our families.

My partner and I chose a three-seat row near the wing and sat with one seat open between us. We were strapped in when they announced general boarding for the rest of the passengers. The first passenger on board was a petite, middle-aged woman, a mother as it turned out, who was visibly shaken as she entered the doorway of the almost empty

cabin. She looked straight at us, walked right up and asked, “Can I please sit here between you guys? I’m so scared and it would really help me out, do you mind?”

I can’t forget the pleading in her voice. That emotion summed up the mood of the entire airport, if not the country. I think for that woman, that mother who was flying home just like we were, there was a sort of bravery involved. She was forcing herself to overcome the fear and go airborne in what she probably thought was a death trap.

Of course, we invited her to sit and we spent the flight talking about the Border Patrol, the country, our families and anything that would help distract us from the fear. We all made it home safely to our families that day. Normally, getting home was a relief but not a life-affirming accomplishment like it was that day for me, my partner and that little, brave mother who was so sincere and so grateful. ■



photo by William L. Brooks

Brent E. Johnson is a field operations supervisor at the Border Patrol station in Alpine, Texas. On Sept. 11, he was a supervisory Border Patrol agent on detail in Tucson sector with his partner from his home station in El Cajon, Calif. He was deployed after the attacks in and around the Douglas, Ariz., port of entry.

‘Searching through the rubble’

While stationed in southern Italy in the U.S. Air Force, I purchased my first bike, a red Bianchi. That red bike traveled all over with me while I was in the military and Secret Service.

While working in New York City for the U.N. General Assembly in 2001, I rode in Central Park nearly every morning and stored my bike in the Secret Service motorcade garage in the fourth-level basement of the World Trade Center One tower before heading to work.

Following the attacks and the collapse of the towers, I assumed my bike was a total loss. Six weeks later, when I returned to New York as the communications coordinator for the next U.N. General Assembly session, I was notified by Secret Service agents who had been searching

Ric Klenner serves as branch director of wireless technology projects for CBP’s Office of Information and Technology. On Sept. 11, Ric was working as the communications coordinator with the U.S. Secret Service, handling IT and wireless communications for the United Nations General Assembly.

through the rubble of Ground Zero that they had recovered my red bike.

I ride my red bike still. And each day, that red bike reminds me of all that was lost in the attacks of 9/11 and all that we continue to do to keep our citizens safe. ■



photo by Eric Blum

‘The world for me stood still’

Andrea A. Aguilar was a full-time college student on 9/11, living in Tucson with her mother and father, Bea and David V. Aguilar, who at the time served as chief patrol agent of the Border Patrol’s Tucson sector. Andrea Aguilar today is a mission support specialist for CBP’s Use of Force Policy Division in Harper’s Ferry, W. Va. David Aguilar is CBP’s deputy commissioner.

Sept. 11 was my generation’s Pearl Harbor. I woke to my mom shaking me. I thought I was late for class. “Andy, wake up, something’s happened!” I had not heard fear in my mom’s voice like that before. She was shaking and had tears in her eyes. I ran to my parent’s bedroom. There stood the man that I have known as my protector—the man that gave every day to protecting my family and the U.S.—watching the television. Freshly shined black boots, white V-neck undershirt tucked in, gripping his belt keepers and staring at the television with a look I had not witnessed before.

At 6:03 a.m., the world for me stood still. It was 9:03 a.m. in New York. I stood next to my parents and witnessed the

second plane hit the twin towers. The silence was broken when my father ran to his closet and grabbed his shirt off the hanger, yelling, “We’re under attack!” and ran out the door. I stood in shock next to my mom, whose tears had begun to run down her cheeks.

I now have a 5-year-old daughter who, by my side, witnessed the capture of Osama bin Laden on television. My motherly instincts quickly questioned, “Should I allow her to see this?” My American instincts made the decision for me. She now knows that a bad man hurt a lot of good people. Was that meaningful for her? I can only hope so, and continue to pray every day that her generation will never see such a day in infamy as Sept. 11, 2001. ■



photo by Eric Blum

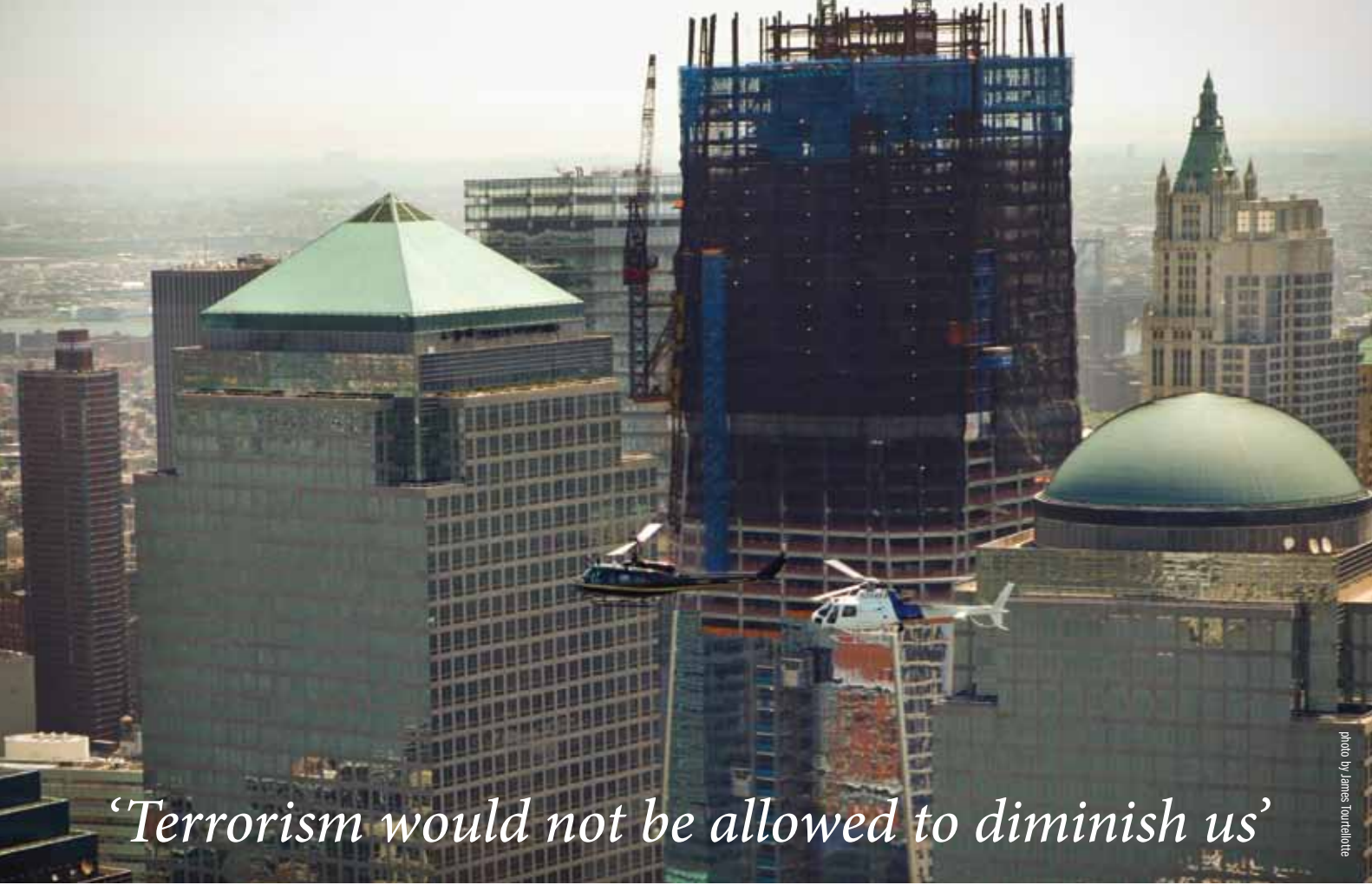


photo by James Touraille

‘Terrorism would not be allowed to diminish us’

SHOCK OF ATTACKS REINVENTS U.S. BORDER SECURITY

BY ERIC BLUM

It did not take a blue-ribbon panel or a congressional investigation to determine what changed for America on Sept. 11, 2001. Before the final embers had cooled at the World Trade Center, Pentagon and Pennsylvania crash sites, it was widely understood that the U.S. faced a new enemy that wore no uniforms, represented no nation, and



★ **CBP Commissioner Alan D. Bersin testifies before the U.S. Senate on improving security and facilitating commerce at northern border ports.**

could and would strike from anywhere at anytime.

History and distance no longer would be all the protection the nation needed. U.S. borders, which historically had been seen as a passageway to prosperity, now were feared as open doors to terror. “The attacks of 9/11 fundamentally changed how America looks at its borders,” CBP Commissioner Alan D. Bersin said recently. “The attacks created the notion of an American homeland that had to be secured from individuals intent on doing it harm.”

Many feared the U.S. was defenseless against such a driven enemy; they believed the terrorists had the upper hand. Bersin said the challenge posed was, “Could the U.S. build new border security mechanisms that provided needed safeguards without stifling global economic vitality? U.S. Customs and Border Protection was born to answer that question in a positive and definitive manner. Terrorism would not be allowed to diminish us.”

The fight to secure America started immediately, as many components of what was to become CBP began to fill the gaps revealed that day, building the capacities, partnerships and policies that are today’s foundations of security.

Defining the Challenge

A daunting list of shortcomings

A blue-ribbon panel was convened, the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States, known more commonly as the 9/11 Commission. It called 8:46 a.m. Sept. 11, 2001, the moment the U.S. became a “nation transformed,” and the attacks “a shock, not a surprise.” The panel listed “failures of imagination, policy, capabilities and management.”

There were shortcomings throughout intelligence, defense and security systems, the report said, including “permeable borders and immigration controls.”

As evidence, the report pointed out:

“There were opportunities for intelligence and law enforcement to exploit al-Qaida travel vulnerabilities. Considered collectively, the 9/11 hijackers:

- Included known al-Qaeda operatives who could have been watch listed;
- Presented passports manipulated in a fraudulent manner;
- Presented passports with suspicious indicators of extremism;

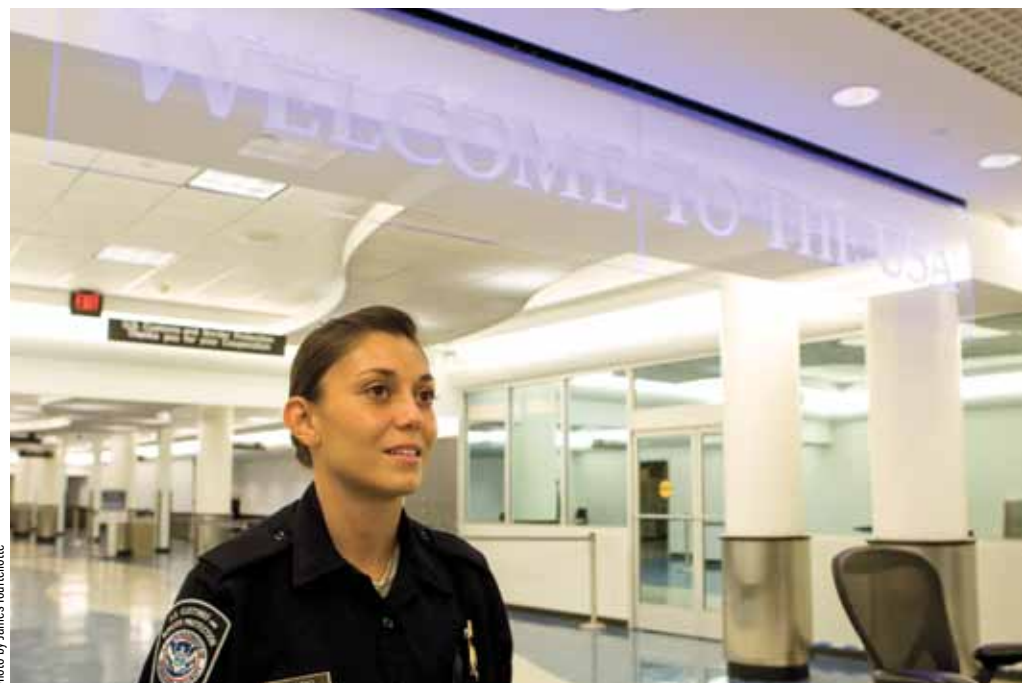
- Made detectable false statements on visa applications;
- Made false statements to border officials to gain entry into the United States; and
- Violated immigration laws while in the United States.”

Almost immediately, conventional wisdom called for U.S. borders to be reinvented through coordinated and unified management that prioritized its anti-terrorism mission. In March 2003 CBP was born and became the entity that merged all border administrative and enforcement functions.

While the final commission report was generous with recommendations, it was thin on strategies for success beyond emphasizing the need for coordination and information sharing throughout the government. The report did admit that building a new border and transportation security systems was akin to “changing the engine while flying.” The goal was relatively modest: reduce the risk of further attacks on U.S. soil.

Joining the fight

Pre-9/11, U.S. border administration was a patchwork of revenue collectors from the Department of Treasury, immigration inspectors and Border Patrol agents from the Justice Department’s Immigration and Naturalization Service, as



★ **CBP officers welcome nearly a million visitors into the U.S. each day.**



★ President Barack Obama tours the cargo port of entry in El Paso, Texas, on May 10, 2011, with DHS Secretary Janet Napolitano and CBP Commissioner Alan Bersin.

well as food and plant inspectors from the Department of Agriculture. Their efforts were related but separate, supportive but largely uncoordinated.

It did not take an act of Congress to change that. On the day of the attack, at the more than 300 legal entry points in the U.S.—air, land and sea ports—fear and confusion reigned as Alert Level 1 was declared, meaning all people, vehicles and goods were to be fully inspected before entering the country. Customs, immigration and agriculture personnel assumed the role of homeland security officers to complete these inspections and thaw what initially were nearly frozen borders.

Almost reflexively, the components of what would become the integrated CBP had joined the fight. A year and a half later it was made official as part of the launch of the Department of Homeland Security.

Building the layers

Prior to the attacks, border security was something that largely happened face-to-face when uniformed personnel encountered someone seeking entry into the U.S., either legitimately through ports of entry or often illegally between them. In the new reality of terrorism, this scheme was recognized as too little, too late.

What would be the new standard for security was more than daunting: The U.S. would have to know about and assess every

traveler as well as every piece of cargo coming to this country, preferably before they left from overseas. This new standard stretched the imagination. A million people each day entered the U.S., about a third of whom were not U.S. citizens, as well as almost 40,000 sea, rail and truck containers. This would be a Herculean effort, even beyond the sheer volume, as there was a lack of processes, technology, partnerships and authority.

And there was recognition that no magic bullet would win this battle. No one innovation, no single strategy, no personnel upgrade or training scheme, no legal authority could both secure the borders and keep them open to tourism and trade.

So it was generally agreed that an interdependent strategy that would provide new and at times redundant “layers” of security, including:

- Use of advance information on who and what was coming to the U.S., an effort to push U.S. borders out across the globe;
- Real-time sharing of the latest intelligence and analysis for risk, using new and existing terrorist watch lists and an array of databases and submissions;
- Partnerships within U.S. law enforcement, international governments and private companies to share information, knowledge and security protocols;
- Enhanced, standardized, machine-readable, tamper-proof identification documents;

- More, highly trained and better-equipped uniformed personnel, suited for a homeland security environment;
- Adoption of technology to extend the ability to “see” into containers and baggage and to detect radiation and potential weapons.

Layered. Risk-based. Intelligence and technology driven. Collaborative. That was the game plan.

Almost a decade later, an inventory of what has been built is difficult as looking at one layer outside the whole may be misleading. And there is no illusion that the job is done. In fact, the tempo of change and challenge goes on unabated. As many in CBP like to say, “We need to be right more than a million times a day. The terrorists need to be right just once.”

The starting point

Commissioner Bersin says it a lot: “CBP is its people.”

With a current workforce of more than 58,000, CBP is Homeland Security’s largest and most complex organization. With more than 20,000 port security officers, more than 20,000 Border Patrol agents, and more than 2,400 Air and Marine agents, CBP is the nation’s largest federal law enforcement organization. While its home turf is U.S. borders and 330 ports of entry, its presence is international.

“It is an extraordinary group,” Bersin said. “This is a group that is dedicated, selfless and excited to do the job. They show great skill, knowledge and bravery. Their response to the challenges posed by 9/11 has been remarkable.”

Bersin also praised the mission support and policy analysis components that have elevated the training, intelligence sharing, information technology deployment, trade administration and outreach, and international relations capacity. “Our human capital is the key to the agency,” Bersin said.

It also is a flexible and changing force as half of CBP employees have joined the agency in just the last five years, the commissioner said.

Bersin also praised the leadership and vision of CBP’s first two commissioners, Robert C. Bonner, whose appointment was confirmed just days after the attacks, and W. Ralph Basham, who served between 2006 and 2008. Bersin was appointed in the spring of 2010.

Protecting Against Dangerous Things

A partnership against terror

With a dedicated and motivated workforce, the layers of security started to build soon after the attack. In the manic days following a tragedy, ideas, cooperation, approvals and implementation came in waves. Commissioner Bonner set a determined and steady course forward, and the layers began to take shape.

One sticky issue was dealing with private industry—the major retailers, shippers and brokers that serve as custodians of the huge influx of cargo America counted on for food, raw materials and products, from toys to Toyotas. There was no clear way to secure the global supply chain without the cooperation of the private sector. But there was no precedent for what needed to be done, no authority to compel the type of cooperation and information CBP sought.

And then the solution presented itself. Representatives from major importing companies came to Bonner and asked, “How can we help?” The result was the Customs-Trade Partnership Against Terrorism, the most vibrant and ambitious public-private pact to come out of 9/11.



Seven major companies—BP America, Sara Lee, Target, Chrysler, Ford, General Motors and Motorola—became founding members of an effort to bring security best practices to companies around the globe. Today more than 10,000 companies participate, voluntarily subjecting their security protocols for CBP certification and sharing information on what is being shipped and who is shipping it.



photo by James Tourtelotte

★ **Hi-tech scanning equipment, such as this mobile scanner, allows CBP officers to “look” inside containers, tractor-trailers and personal vehicles entering the U.S., a capacity that was built following the terrorist attacks of 2001.**

The impact of this partnership cannot be overstated. It has provided the world with supply-chain security protocols. It has invented the concept of a known shipper or authorized economic operator, where enhanced information and levels of cooperation earn shippers faster treatment at ports of entry. This allows CBP to concentrate more resources on shipments it knows little about or on which it has derogatory information. It has pioneered the concept of standardized “smart” containers and seals, making tampered shipments more evident.

Today half the value of U.S. imports enters via partnership members. Best practices continue to be built, on-site inspections of security operations continue, mutual recognition of other nation’s programs has begun and benefits for members continue to grow as the partnership’s first decade concludes.

Extending the zone of security

As strong as this customs-trade partnership would become, it was not designed to be universal. Beyond the benefits of the partnership, CBP still needed to know what cargo was heading to U.S. shores, and ideally be able to take a look at shipments that caused uncertainty or concern.

Because of these challenges, the Container Security Initiative was born. It was a demanding undertaking conceived shortly after 9/11 as the key component to the concept of extending the U.S. zone

of security internationally. The idea was to forge a cooperative arrangement with foreign governments, particularly governments that host major shipping ports, to allow joint targeting of containers that could potentially hold weapons to permit inspection before they set sail.



From the original 20 key ports, the Container Security Initiative has grown to 58 sites. Teams of CBP inspectors have been deployed overseas and are able to prescreen 80 percent of the containers bound for the U.S.

Enabling this activity is CBP’s National Targeting Center-Cargo, which receives, analyzes and distributes electronic information on shipments. This enterprise, as well as its co-enterprise the National Targeting Center-Passenger, is staffed largely by CBP officers and liaisons representing important partner organizations such as Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Drug Enforcement Agency, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Transportation Security Administration and others.

As technology increasingly allows, the cargo targeting activity can remotely scan cargo leaving foreign ports, streamlining the process and greatly enhancing the ability to quickly and non-intrusively “see” inside containers of concern.

New tools, new capacity

Technology has played a major role in upgrading CBP's capacity to spot and deter dangerous things throughout the new, extended border. Highly advanced scanning and radiation detection equipment has been deployed at all ports domestically and at key ports throughout the world. They are a major, although sometimes invisible, enhancement of the inspection process at U.S. ports and Border Patrol checkpoints.

Scanning equipment ranges from huge fixed and mobile vehicle and cargo inspection systems to small hand-held detectors. Nuclear and radiation detection monitors have been deployed throughout the country, and no vehicle enters the U.S. through a port of entry without being monitored for radiation.

Implementation of scanning, monitoring and communications technology, combined with landmark partnerships with foreign governments, global trade organizations and private enterprise have built an unprecedented array of tools and practices that not only have helped protect the U.S., they have led the way to greater supply chain and trade security globally.

Protecting Against Dangerous People

Better information sooner

Along with the launch of efforts to secure cargo and global trade, components of CBP undertook an equally ambitious reinvention of international travel policies. A similar layered, risk-based approach, plus a need to drive the decision points earlier and further away from the U.S., were identified. And again, the components of the solution had to be built, brick by brick.

It started with a simple enough concept, the Advance Passenger Information System, a protocol that requires transportation carriers

to provide identification information—name, date of birth, passport number, citizenship—for all passengers before departure. CBP could then, for the first time, compare this passenger roster to law enforcement lookout lists, terrorist watch lists and others. It was a logistical challenge, a technological challenge and a cultural challenge, but it was seen as a necessary enhancement to international travel security.

But closer to home there was another challenge, one the 9/11 Commission called unacceptable. Citizens arriving from neighboring Canada or the Caribbean were able to present almost any form of identification at the border, and authentication and access to databases to verify identity or risk were limited. For U.S. citizens a mere oral declaration of citizenship was all that was required.

The commission recommended standardizing and modernizing travel documents, which led to a landmark border security measure, the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative. The idea was to specify a limited number of acceptable travel identification documents and assure they were modernized to speed access to information at the inspection booth.



So following a multi-year implementation, residents of the U.S., Canada, Mexico and the Caribbean now must present one of several compliant forms of identification, such as a passport, a passport card, an enhanced driver's license, a frequent traveler card, or a few other cards for special populations when entering the U.S. Not only would these new documents allow instantaneous searches through government databases, they were tamperproof and technology-enabled to make the inspection process faster.

Before these standards went into effect, just 17 percent of documents presented at land borders could be authenticated. That jumped to 68 percent in less than two years. Incidents of imposters presenting themselves with fake documents have been dramatically reduced. And with

standardized identification documents, law enforcement queries have gone from about 5 percent to 97 percent. Hits from these queries have led to hundreds of wanted criminals being arrested each year while attempting to enter the U.S.

Further from shore, our closest allies in Europe, Asia and Australia traditionally had been able to arrive in the U.S. as tourists without the aid of a visa. This required the U.S. to often make the determination of admissibility on our soil, an unnecessary risk, the 9/11 Commission reported, and a costly inconvenience for air carriers and passengers.

In 2008 the agency launched the Electronic System for Travel Authorization, or ESTA, requiring residents of the now 36 visa-waiver countries to apply for travel authorization before departing. This Web-based tool allows the traveler to provide his or her identification information, details about their travel plans and answers to questions

★ **Border Patrol agent apprehends as man suspected of attempting to bring drugs into the country.**



photo by Gerry Nino

that had been provided on paper in flight on the I-94W form. Upon submission the traveler either is provided authorization or must obtain a visa prior to travel.



The enhanced information from these two programs travels back and forth to the National Targeting Center-Passenger, which queries databases and provides the inspecting officer a risk assessment in near real time. The fact that the ESTA system is user-friendly, the response is quick, and confidence is added for the traveler as well as CBP has made this new process a success.

These traveler and trade targeting systems have turned CBP into a voracious consumer of information, Bersin said. He called information technology professionals “our unsung heroes...CBP IT systems handle more than a billion messages each day, and they carry the key information our officers and agents need to do their job.”

Protecting Open Spaces

Patrolling U.S. borders

It has always been a difficult job, securing the 6,000 miles of land border shared with Canada and Mexico as well as 2,000 miles of coastal border around Florida and Puerto Rico. But after 9/11, the Border Patrol was asked to up its game significantly to prevent the introduction of terrorists or their weapons between our secured ports of entry.

The traditional Border Patrol mission had been to “secure and protect the external boundaries of the United States to prevent, detect, apprehend and interdict illegal aliens, smugglers, contraband and violators of other laws.” Within hours of 9/11, the priority focus shifted to terrorism and the Border Patrol was ramped up to meet all its challenges.

To meet the expanded mission, CBP sought to increase Border Patrol personnel,



photo by James Bourdette

★ A Border Patrol agent searches the Rio Grande River in Texas for illegal activity.

infrastructure such as roads, fences and other barriers, and improve the use of technology. Upgrades occurred in nearly all Border Patrol tools: communications, computers, sensors, cameras, infrared and GPS-connected tracking devices, all-terrain vehicles and basic and ongoing training.

It also consolidated air and marine assets to support Border Patrol operations.

Staffing has more than doubled since 2001, to more than 20,000 today, and agents have increasingly deterred illegal entries, particularly on the southwest border. An indicator of success for the Border Patrol is the deterrence of illegal entries and it is measured by encounters with individuals seeking to enter the country illegally. That number has dropped by 70 percent since 2000. As illegal entries have dropped, Border Patrol has managed to dramatically increase drug seizures, seeing a 33 percent rise in the past three years. CBP-wide, almost six tons of drugs are seized each day.

Security from above

Air and marine support for Border Patrol and port security operations has always been a key ingredient in a variety of enforcement operations and particularly in spotting and tracking suspected illegal activity as it approaches U.S. borders.

Exactly how these assets fit in the CBP strategy was not immediately answered

following 9/11. But by 2005 what is now CBP’s Office of Air and Marine was officially launched, combining assets from several agencies and offices into one coordinating operation.

The pace of advancement within Air and Marine has been impressive. Five new branch offices were opened on the northern border to complement the existing southern border locations. A modern aviation advanced training center was opened in Oklahoma City in 2007.

And during the last five years, CBP has pioneered the use of military-type unmanned aircraft to enhance surveillance activities across the northern and southern borders as well as maritime environments. These high-tech aircraft feature the latest in tracking and communications equipment, can travel long distances and stay in the air for extended periods, and do not subject CBP personnel to dangerous circumstances. Currently seven such aircraft are in use, and CBP expects delivery of two more within the year.

The office has also undertaken an across-the-board upgrade in all aircraft and sea vessels, greatly enhancing reach and capacity. CBP Air and Marine not only supports the agency and other components of Homeland Security, it supports other federal, state and local law enforcement operations and provides unique situational awareness during disasters and special events such as large sporting events or political conventions.

On to the next challenges

Despite all that has been built, the job is not done. After all, the agency is less than 10 years old and still has much growing to do. “And the nature of our fight is that our enemies are always adjusting to our moves, looking for vulnerability,” Bersin said. “We need to continue to grow, continue to adjust, continue to out-think our adversaries.”

Bersin has in many ways set a new course for the agency. He emphasizes that security and trade and travel facilitation are not competing goals but should be complementary. He has emphasized the benefits of known shipper and traveler programs and wants to see their membership grow. This includes Global Entry, which streamlines the process of

entering the U.S. for eligible American citizens and residents and those from certain other nations, and has been enthusiastically received.

“We must segment risk so that we may streamline the process for those who prove trustworthy, which will enable us to focus our resources on those passengers and shipments we know little about, or we have questions about,” Bersin said.

Today economic security is a national challenge and Bersin believes CBP can improve U.S. economic competitiveness by reducing transaction costs and time at the border. He also is seeking to enhance CBP’s ability to administer all trade responsibilities, including upgrading import safety and enforcing intellectual property protection.

Bersin also has prioritized mission

integration and securing the southwest border. Both priorities are being brought to the Arizona corridor, a target area for criminal activity. Bersin has established a field command that oversees all CBP personnel and assets in Arizona to better coordinate enforcement activities. He also has established better working relations with the government of Mexico to collaborate on security initiatives.

“We have accomplished much since 9/11,” Bersin said. “But each accomplishment opens the door to another challenge. Can we do this safer, better, smarter, cheaper, faster? I don’t think the job of protecting the American people will ever be complete.”

Story produced with research assistance by the Frontline staff, Dorie Chassin, Gina Gray and Kathleen Franklin. ■



★ A CBP unmanned aircraft patrols the southwest U.S. The remotely piloted craft has the latest optics, tracking technology and extended range.

COMING TOGETHER TO REMEMBER 9/11

For a generation of Americans, 9/11 represents a national tragedy. Whether they were at an attack site or at a distant locale, all Americans experienced the 9/11 events on a deeply personal level. A decade later, their memories of this day have become part of their individual histories. Most remember where they were and what they were doing on Sept. 11, 2001. These memories bind us together as a nation through shared experiences and continue to influence our actions.

This is especially true of the people of CBP, who work to protect the nation and the public against terrorists and instruments of terror. The memories and the stories associated with 9/11 are constant reminders of the necessity of our work and the need for vigilance, integrity and professionalism in the exercise of CBP's responsibilities.

This year's commemoration of Sept. 11, 2001, is more than marking an important anniversary for CBP. It is the process of coming together to share memories, honor the sacrifice and loss of fellow Americans and ensure that history records the human stories and emotions associated with the events and aftermath of 9/11.

These goals are captured in the term "commemoration." The word is derived from the combination of Latin terms that mean to come together, to observe and record. Throughout 2011, the people of CBP have joined together to identify and preserve first-hand accounts that describe the American experience on Sept. 11, 2001.

CBP has also identified objects that represent these stories and events. These tangible objects anchor the first-hand accounts and memories to people, times and places. From the twisted steel remnants of the World Trade Center to personal objects, these artifacts remind us that 9/11 was both a national and personal tragedy.

Through this edition of Frontline, postings on the CBP website, exhibitions and programs, CBP has begun sharing the stories and artifacts that represent our collective experience and memories of this watershed moment in American history. The compiling of individual stories provides an overall picture with multiple perspectives, and it is only by examining 9/11 from all perspectives that the magnitude of this moment in history can be fully appreciated.

Among these varied accounts, there is a central theme of unity. President Barack Obama has articulated this theme. He noted that on 9/11, "We stood as one people, united in our common humanity and shared sorrow."

The ensuing ten years have not lessened these emotions associated with the attacks. And to commemorate 9/11 is for many to relive the pain and suffering associated with the events and their aftermath. This is part of the healing process.

Moreover, the retelling of 9/11 stories and revisiting the images of destruction are not just about the past. They are a means to keep alive the patriotism and acts of heroism that occurred in reaction to these attacks on America. They ensure that future generations will understand the depth of sacrifice and loss.

They also fuel the resolve of the nation to thwart acts of terrorism. They demonstrate how America continues "to meet violence with patient justice." This pledge, made shortly after 9/11 by former President George W. Bush, has been honored by President Obama, who ordered the strike against Osama bin Laden's compound.

This resolve is further exemplified by CBP and its mission to be guardians of the border. As demonstrated in the 9/11 stories published in this edition of Frontline, the predecessor organizations to CBP responded together on that day and have redoubled their efforts as they came together to form one CBP. For the Agriculture Department and Immigration and Naturalization Service inspectors, Border Patrol personnel and the staff of U.S. Customs Service, the creation of CBP was another instance of coming together—bringing with them proud traditions and establishing a unified determination to remember and to serve.



photo by Jocelyn Augustino/FEMA

★ Firefighters and military personnel unfurl the American flag in anticipation of a visit to the Pentagon crash site by President George W. Bush.

David D. McKinney, Ph.D.
Chief Historian





CBP

