

Dragon, Karen E. (CDC/NIOSH/EID)

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To: NIOSH Docket Office (CDC)
Cc: Chen, Jihong (Jane) (CDC/NIOSH/EID) (CTR)
Subject: 226 - Implementation of the James Zadroga 9/11 Health and Compensation Act of 2010 (Pub. L 111-347) Comments

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Comments

The following statement is on file with the FDNY and has been documented to be true by the official 911 tapes we were asked to give in the months following the attack.

The FDNY's Research and Development Unit comprised of the following members. Firefighter Paul Stein, Firefighter Bill Johnson, Lieutenant Larry Monachelli and Lt. Mike Stein on duty that day responded to the WTC after receiving a call from our Special Operations Command reporting a plane hitting the north tower. We were instructed to bring as many lifesaving ropes & harnesses as we could fit into our vehicle along with other special tools such as hydraulic rebar cutters and portable lighting.

As we responded via the L.I.E through the midtown tunnel we witnessed the second plane crash into the south tower and we realized at this point this would be an extraordinary operation. Heading south on Lexington Ave. and coming to 21st St. we advised our driver to proceed east to the FDR Drive inadvertently he turned right and headed west to Broadway. As we proceeded south on Broadway the scene on the street resembled a clip from an old Godzilla movie with civilians running in the street for their lives, making it extremely difficult to navigate our way downtown. Upon arrival at the corner of Church & Vessey St. (This is the north east corner of the

WTC) we were confronted with the horrific scene of people leaping from the raging towers to their deaths in the street. The heat from the fire could be felt immediately as we made our way out of the vehicle to head to the FD Command Post. After approximately 3 minutes after we parked our vehicle and started to unload our equipment we heard a crashing sound and looked up to see all the windows on an entire upper floor of the south tower explode out of the building and the building proceeded to drop floor by floor raining glass and debris on top of us. We immediately retreated east down Vesey Street 50' seeking shelter from the debris in doorways and under vehicles. After the conclusion of the south tower collapsing the particles of dust were so thick in the air it created an eerie silence making you think you were the only one left alive. Within a few minutes as the concrete dust began to settle the members of R&D regrouped and made a human chain to direct people into safe buildings. We returned to our response vehicle to find it severely damaged. Donning our SCBA and other protective equipment we preceded to the north tower when we met up with Firefighters from Division # 1 carrying the lifeless body of Father Mycal

Judge. We began to assist with administering first aid when suddenly we

heard that same deafening crashing sound once again this time we didn't even stop to look back as we retreated as far as Broadway and Vessey. The debris from the collapsing north tower was far worse than the south tower due to the fact that it stirred up the dust particles that had just settled. The tremendous cloud encapsulated us and this time having our SCBA we took turns sharing with police officers and civilians. As the dust powder began to settle we came upon Deputy Chief Haring Division 6 who was just arriving on the scene.

Under his command we set up a Command Post and helped to organize all arriving units. We assembled search teams and sent them out to assist the injured and make an assessment on the stability of the surrounding structures. With the integrity of the unit now in tact we again returned to our vehicle this time to find it crushed and on fire. As we looked across the street at 5 WTC and saw 5 of its 7 stories fully involved in fire and no water pressure in any of the hydrants a feeling of helplessness came over us. We then proceeded to search the surrounding areas to try and assist any survivors. We assisted in the removal of an EMS Lieutenant from the basement of the Marriott Hotel and carried him to a Police boat that removed him to a tri-age center set up on Liberty Island. The field of twisted steel and debris was so large you didn't know where to start; all we could do was search any opening we found.

With our eyes swollen shut from the powdery dust we were fortunate to find an indoor pool atrium on the west side promenade and submerged our entire heads in this makeshift oasis, flushing our eyes rejuvenated us enough to continue our search up till 2200 hours when we finally reached a state of exhaustion. We reported to an EMS trauma center set up on West street where we received Oxygen. We then proceeded to St. Vincents Hospital to be treated and released. In the days following September 11th the R & D Unit was given the responsibility of applying a cooling agent to the super heated steel. With the assistance of multiple vendors we worked round the clock cooling the massive steel columns as they were pulled from the pile of rubble. The support this department received from vendors of firefighting equipment was overwhelming they did not hesitate in supplying us with whatever we needed and bringing it to us. On the night of September 12th we were instructed by FD headquarters to go to LaGuardia Airport at 11:30pm wait on runway 5A north. The silence at this normally busy airport was peculiar and was broken only by the low hum of a sleek Learjet which seemed to swoop down out of the sky and pulled right up to our FDNY vehicle and unloaded 25 Thermal imaging cameras for use at Ground Zero. The pilot instructed us on how to use them, got back into the jet and headed back from where ever it was he came from. Through out the rest of the winter The R & D Unit was at Ground Zero everyday to evaluate and assist wherever it was necessary. I hope the following statement makes some impact on this hearing as of now it has fallen upon deaf ears even after almost 10 years after it was written.

To this Day I have been told by as many as 3 ENT specialist " Ill Just have to learn to live with my Breathing, swallowing and PTSD Problems...I'm sure there are many fellow firefighters & Police Officers who are just as frustrated as I am . Won't you just give us some glimmer of hope and let us Go where we think we might be able to fix our selves rather than have you dictate how and where to go to treat our own body. You should just Give us the funds directly and let us seek our own health proxy.

Larry Monachelli