

9/11 Responders Participating In June 16, 2005 Effort in Washington to Save \$125 Million in 9/11 Aid

(Compiled by the Office of Congresswoman Carolyn B. Maloney)

Marvin Bethea

NYC Paramedic
Kew Garden Hills, NY

As a paramedic, Mr. Bethea was dispatched to Ground Zero on September 11 by a New York City Fire Department dispatcher. He was a block away when the first tower fell and was buried in a nearby bank, but got out and helped get other people out and to medical attention. Still working as the second building started to come down, he picked up an older lady who had fallen and carried her into the Hilton Millennium, which got covered in the debris of the second collapse.

Mr. Bethea went back on September 14th to continue giving medical assistance for any survivors or injured responders. Five weeks later he suffered a stroke attributed to the stress of 9/11. He lost use of his right arm and leg, but he went back to work after three months of physical therapy. In May of 2003, Mr. Bethea was diagnosed with asthma and 9/11 related depression. He has been seeing a psychologist since July of 2003.

His 9/11 workers compensation claim remains controverted and is still under investigation. Even though he was awarded for heroic service on 9/11, the workers compensation system has questioned whether he was at the site. His prescription medicine, received through a pharmacy that provides support until a workers compensation claim is approved, has now stopped.

Mike McCormick

Medic - Specialist in Collapsed Infrastructure Rescue
Ridge, NY

Mr. McCormick arrived at Ground Zero approximately three hours after both towers fell to the ground. He worked for the entire first phase of the rescue effort, until it changed from search and recovery to recovery only. He has been a medic for 26 years with a speciality in biochemical emergency services and collapsed infrastructure rescue.

Mr. McCormick found the flag at Ground Zero that has been shipped across the country to the World Series and the Olympics. He has a letter from the President thanking him for finding the flag, a Congressional Certificate for his efforts, and a commendation from Governor Pataki.

He was denied a prior workers compensation claim on the grounds that a person who responded to 9/11 must not be injured. He did not apply for workers compensation for 9/11 injuries because he did not know or understand if it was available to him given his prior denied claim. He was denied from the Victim Compensation Fund. Mr. McCormick explains that he suffers from PTSD and respiratory illness, esophageal reflux, multiple internal problems, and vision

problems as a result of 9/11 work.

Jon Sferazo

Structural Iron Worker
Huntington Station, NY

Mr. Sferazo, a structural iron worker, arrived at Ground Zero the morning of September 12th before sunrise. He immediately helped to remove all crushed vehicles using flat bed trailers to allow emergency vehicles greater movement on site. He has burns all over his legs from fires burning underneath him that night. On the nights of the 12th and 13th, he also worked with a police officer and dog on search and rescue. When oxygen and acetylene tanks arrived on site, he started burning iron to get to lower areas of the pile to find survivors. He worked burning through the pile for more than 30 days.

As a result, Mr. Sferazo has lost 31% of breathing and lung capacity from 9/11 work at Ground Zero, as verified by the Mount Sinai Center for Occupational and Environmental Medicine. He has not worked since August 1, 2004 because of 9/11 injuries. After years of struggle, which began in February 2002, and after being challenged on his claim, his workers compensation was finally settled on May 31, 2005. It is unclear whether his claim or others like it were accounted for when the determination was made that federal aid for 9/11 workers compensation should be rescinded. Mr. Sferazo will continue to require help from the health treatment program through Mt. Sinai, which still receives no federal funds.

John Seal

Supervisor for Construction Workers
Nesconset, Long Island

Mr. Seal arrived at Ground Zero on September 12th and worked until September 17th as a supervisor for demolition/construction recovery workers until his foot was crushed on site. He was then hospitalized for 2 months; his foot developed gangreen and half his foot was amputated. He has since had more than a dozen surgeries.

Mr. Seal continues to cope with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and respiratory problems, as well as struggling with medical costs. While he received a small workers compensation award after his claim was challenged, these funds were not nearly enough to cover his medical expenses. He was denied by the Victim Compensation Fund on the technicality that anyone hurt after 96 hours was not eligible.

Rich Mulhern

Electrician
Croton on Hudson, NY

On September 11, 2001, Mr. Mulhern was working with fiber optic cables at 40 Wall Street, near Pine Street, in lower-Manhattan and witnessed paper flying and people running. He then ran to the site and witnessed the burning tower. Standing in front of Century 21, at Cortland and

Church Streets, the second plane crashed into the second tower. Mr. Mulhern caught debris in his eye causing temporary loss of sight. After getting medical treatment for the eye, he was returning to the site to continue helping the recovery when he slipped on a debris-covered man hole and cracked his right knee cap.

He spent the next year and a half working around the Ground Zero site, restructuring electrical lines. Finally, his right knee debilitated his ability to walk. He also has been diagnosed with severe shortness of breath, blockage in the lungs, and recurring nightmares from the attack.

While his workers compensation claim was approved, he was denied the Victim Compensation Fund on grounds that he was never directly on the pile and that he did not seek medical help within three days after the disaster. He continues to struggle with ongoing expenses as a result of job loss and injury from 9/11.

Chris Bauman

NYC Police Officer
Lindenhurst, NY

Mr. Bauman was in his patrol car near the WTC site on 9/11. He cleared the streets outside the towers and assisted with the recovery until the collapse of tower 2, when he was blown three feet from the dust cloud and injured his back. He continued working until ordered to go to a triage center where the doctor told him he could not continue working as a result of the serious nature of his injuries.

The next morning, he realized he had loss of sight from chemical burns in his eyes, as well as a head injury. In May 2005, he finally received disability compensation. The total aid he has received does not nearly match his potential earnings, had he not suffered job loss from 9/11 injuries. His family's medical expenses have also increased as a result.

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