NYC 9/11 Public Portal Document

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Life of Service

Fallen officers' heroism remembered — and work goes on

By Leonard Levitt
STAFF WRITER

John Perry of the 40th Precinct in the Bronx went to police headquarters Tuesday morning to file his retirement papers. Hearing the explosion at the World Trade Center, he raced to the site to help, never to return.

His name was on the Police Department list Commissioner Bernard Kerik released Friday of 23 officers missing and presumed dead — news that officers met with appreciation for the ironies and tragedy of the stories behind it.

Already the story of Perry's fate has begun to filter into legend at One Police Plaza.

Another officer missing and presumed dead, Joseph Vigiano of the Special Operations Division, had been shot previously on three separate occasions and survived. His brother, a firefighter, also died in the World Trade Center attack.

Families of the missing came together Friday at Police Plaza for consolation. Later, a Mass was held for them in the second-floor auditorium.

Police commanders presented a stoic face, saying they were prepared to soldier on. "This is the New York City Police Department," said a chief, who asked not to be identified. "We are doing our jobs. The chart [the scheduled tours of duty] has been suspended. All days off have been canceled. Cops are working 12 hours on and 12 hours off. Fifteen thousand officers are on duty at any one time and the only ones exempted are the sick, the injured and those on vacation or out of town.

"What has been overwhelming," said the chief, "is the response from out-of-town officers and from retired officers. To tell you the truth, we do not need them now."

In a message to all commands to be read at roll calls throughout the city, Kerik said, "I wanted to take a moment to express the pride and gratitude for what you have done over the past two days . . . It is going to take a few days and perhaps even weeks to know the full magnitude of this cowardly and despicable act."

Referring to the missing officers, he said, "We are all praying for them and for their families, and I promise you that we are doing everything to get them out."

He added: "This is an unimaginable period for you and for your families, but this city will survive and we are the ones who will make it happen."

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Photo by Salmiah Ali

NYPD and other workers catch their breath after fleeing ground zero when officials sounded the warning of a possible building collapse.

Kerik: 23 Missing from NYPD

To all commands

Hello, this is Police Department Commissioner Bernard Kerik. I wanted to take a moment to express the pride and gratitude I feel for what you have done over the past two days and give you some information on what is happening at the World Trade Center. The city of New York, the New York Police Department and our brothers and sisters in the city have suffered a tremendous loss. Our nation has never been hit harder and it is going to take days and perhaps even weeks to know the full magnitude of this cowardly and despicable act. I know you are concerned about the heroes that went into the attack site and still haven't been found. I don't know all the answers yet but I can tell you that a total of 23 members of the New York Police Department remain missing from the attack. The names are:



Bernard Kerik

Personnel bureau:
P.O. Glenn Pettit, Police Academy
Transit bureau, Manhattan:
P.O. Mark Ellis
P.O. Ramon Suarez
Patrol Services bureau, Manhattan South.
P.O. James Leahy, Sixth Precinct
P.O. Moria Smith, 13th Precinct
P.O. Robert Fazio, 13th Precinct
Patrol Services bureau, the Bronx:
P.O. John Perry, 40th Precinct
Special Operations division, Emergency Services unit:
Sgt. Rodney Gillis
Sgt. Michael Curtin
Sgt. John Coughlin
Det. Claude Richards
Det. Joseph Vigiano
P.O. Walter Weaver
P.O. Vincent Danz
P.O. Jerome Dominguez
P.O. John Dallara
P.O. Thomas Langone
P.O. Ronald Kloepfer
P.O. Santos Valentin
P.O. Stephen Driscoll
P.O. Paul Talty
P.O. Brian McDonnell
Traffic Control Division:
Sgt. Timothy Roy

We are praying for them and for their families and I promise you that we are doing everything to get them out. There are thousands of people contributing to the rescue effort and we will utilize every federal, state and local resource and the best emergency response people in the NYPD and in the United States to find our brothers and sisters.

My second promise to you is that I will get you facts as soon as I have them.

This is an unimaginable period for you and for your families, but this city will survive and we will be the ones who make it happen.

You are all heroes and I have never been prouder to be a member of the NYPD than I am right now.

Be careful, rest when you get a chance, and stay strong.

God bless you. God bless America and God bless the NYPD.

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