NYC 9/11 Public Portal Document

Joy Amid Ruins at Command Center

By Joshua Robin
STAFF WRITER

After 37 days, the families of the lost still are coming by the hundreds to the Family Center at Pier 94: Wednesday was the second-busiest there since the center opened after the World Trade Center catastrophe.

But amid the families' sorrow, yesterday there was joy at the nearby Command Center, as Mayor Rudolph Giuliani officiated at the wedding of a Ground Zero rescue worker to the woman he had first proposed to 37 years ago.

With hundreds of employees at the West Side building as their wedding guests, retired Marine Corps Maj. Bill Lochridge married Kirsten Hansen. American Red Cross workers poured champagne and punch. The Department of Sanitation donated the flowers.

"It purifies the whole place," Giuliani said after presiding over the wedding. "To have a wedding here is really, really beautiful."

Lochridge, 58, who serves in the state's naval militia, also works for the Office of Emergency Management. He met his best man at Ground Zero shortly after the attacks. A bagpiper, like the many who have played at scores of funerals and memorial services for firefighters and police officers since Sept. 11, followed the bride to the altar.

"It's nice to see something good come t of something so tragic," said Dario oslovich, a Department of Probation supervisor from Hicksville who has worked intermittently at the Command Center since it opened, taking supplies to Ground Zero and accompanying families there.



AP Photo

Mayor Rudolph Giuliani officiates at the wedding of Kirsten Hansen and retired Marine Corps Maj. Bill Lochridge yesterday at the Command Center near Ground Zero.

A week ago today, Giuliani moved back to City Hall to try to resume a more normal mode of operations, said a City Hall aide. Most of his meetings and news briefings this past week have been there. But he has kept one staffer at a satellite office in the Command Center, and the dais where Giuliani has given news briefings remains in place.

"At least we're prepared if we need to be," the aide said.

Giuliani said he moved his office because city government's work is no longer devoted solely to the recovery.

"This command center is to manage the actual removal and recovery effort," the mayor said. Mapping, coordination of DNA analysis to identify the lost and law enforcement operations still are run from the center.

The Family Center at Pier 94 has not moved, and is still busy with people looking for information and for the opportunity to visit Ground Zero. The mayor's office said yesterday that the toll from the disaster was 4,514 missing and 458 confirmed dead, of whom 408 have been identified.

Lochridge first met Hansen, 58, a native of Germany, through his cousin in 1964. He proposed, but she was homesick and wanted to return. He served in Vietnam and they both ended up marrying other people.

"Time went along. Thirty-seven years go by," he said. "I get divorced, she gets divorced."

They reunited last year at a family reunion in San Francisco; soon after, he proposed. They live in Chappaqua.

Lochridge said he chose the command center for the couple's wedding because "I wanted to be able to share it with the people who are here because we've been through quite a bit since Day One."

"I just wanted to share the joy — get a little spark going," he said.

The newlyweds considered honeymooning at Lake Placid, but decided after the attacks to stick closer to home: New York City.

"We're here to support the city," Lochridge said.

NEWSDAY, FRIDAY, OCTOBER 19, 2001

CITY_21MC100_01183130 6

NYC-WTC_000413629