NYC 9/11 Public Portal Document

DAILY NEWS, MONDAY, OCTOBER 22, 2001

Bodies of 5 Bravest pulled from rubble

Memorial planned at the site

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The remains of at least five firefighters were discovered in the rubble of the World Trade Center yesterday as the city announced plans for a major memorial service at Ground Zero.

Workers uncovered the corpses after spotting a firefighter's helmet in the rubble of 1 World Trade Center.

"They were in the bottom of a stairwell in the north tower," said Joseph Lucchese, a worker for Seasons Construction.

An ironworker, who requested anonymity, said the bodies appeared to be "somewhat intact" and were quickly covered with American flags by firefighters working at the site. The firefighters saluted as their fallen colleagues were taken away.

"They also found some other bodies nearby," the ironworker said.

Some 343 of New York's Bravest were killed in the Sept. 11 attacks. The city's official tally remained at 461 people confirmed dead and 4,470 missing.

Ground Zero visit aids grieving

Meanwhile, Mayor Giuliani announced the city would hold a nondenominational memorial service at Ground Zero next Sunday for the families of the thousands still buried in the rubble.

"I was just there and met a group of families, and each one of them told me that it was very comforting in a strange way to actually be there and see the place where their loved one died and maybe is buried," Giuliani said yesterday. "We'll try to get everybody there at once. We'll suspend operations for a period of time."

Afterward, the families will be given a sad souvenir to remember what happened there Sept. 11: an urn containing earth from the sacred site.

Giuliani did not discuss in detail how the city plans to get thousands of people in and out of the site.

But construction workers toiling at Ground Zero yesterday said they were ready to move mountains of rubble so all the families can visit the site.

"People need to see what happened here," said city sanitation worker Dan Bruscella, 21, of Staten Island. "It's going to be tough to get thousands of people in the area with some spots still burning, but it's worth the effort."

Mike Bonilla, a Con Edison worker cleaning out electrical vaults at Ground Zero, agreed.

"Even if they have to stop work for the day, I think it's a good idea," said Bonilla, 36. "It will give the families some closure to be down here, be together and see the actual devastation."

There have been several small memorial services at the site, including one marking the one-month anniversary of the attack. In recent weeks, dignitaries ranging from President Bush to Prince Andrew have toured the devastation. Some families of the victims also have visited Ground Zero.

Building reopening postponed

As lower Manhattan continued to lurch back to life, the city announced that today's much-anticipated reopening of 1 Liberty Plaza, which sits directly across from the Trade Center site, has been postponed.

"There were a few things that we weren't totally satisfied with," said Richard Sheirer, director of the mayor's Office of Emergency Management. "As soon as those areas are cleaned up and we're sure that [the city Department of Environmental Protection] and the other agencies are satisfied that the building's ready to open, we'll let it open as quickly as we can."

The 53-story building houses the administrative offices of the Nasdaq Stock Market and the offices of financial giants such as Goldman Sachs. After the attacks, the city used the building as a base for emergency operations.

Meanwhile, there was bad news for the drug dealers who may have thought they got a break when the evidence collected by the federal Drug Enforcement Administration was buried in the rubble of 6 World Trade Center.

Drugs, cash stash recovered

On Saturday, the feds finally reached the vaults where millions of dollars worth of powder and crack cocaine, heroin, Ecstasy and other narcotics were stashed — along with millions in ill-gotten cash.

"They knew it was there and wanted to get it out," said Richard Ricciardi, 45, a heavy-equipment operator for Seasons Construction. "The face of the building was blown off and they asked us to remove the piles of debris around it. There were big boxes and bags of evidence."

Lucchese, 40, of the Bronx, said the feds filled a truck with loot and drugs.

"The stuff had DEA evidence tags on it," he said. "They said it was a DEA vault."

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