



ABOVE
Units of Battalion 58 prepare to move in at this all-hands fire in a one-story taxpayer at Brooklyn box 2208, 9418 Church Avenue. The fire occurred at 1530 hours on February 27. Photo by Michael Martinelli

FRONT COVER
This fifth-alarm fire at Manhattan box 165 involved a six-story, class 3 warehouse. The November 4, 1992, fire started on a lower floor and quickly spread to the upper floors and cockloft via shafts and voids. The box was transmitted at 1814 hours. Photo by Fr. John Strandberg

BACK COVER
The quarters of Engine 33 and Ladder 9 were rendered in watercolor by self-taught artist Anna L. Schermerhorn. Anna is a curatorial assistant at the American Museum of Natural History.

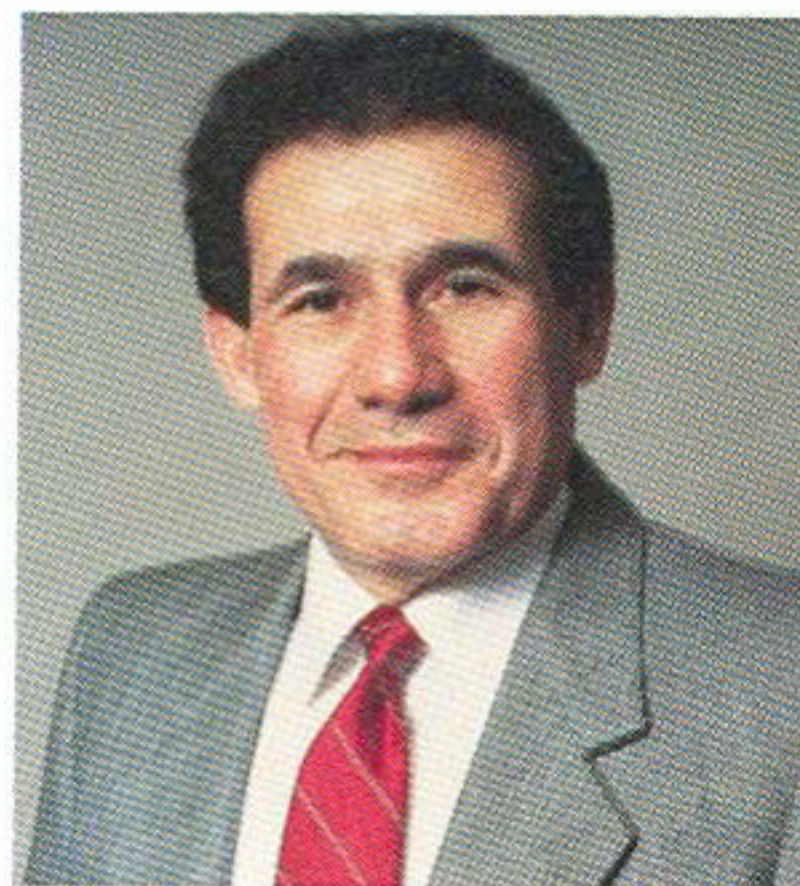
At 1218 hours on February 26, 1993, the Manhattan Central Office received the first of more than 1,000 calls reporting the explosion and fire at the World Trade Center. For days afterward, the story of the Trade Center bombing monopolized the media, not only in New York City but throughout the nation. The attack on this towering symbol of America's wealth and prestige provided journalists with seemingly inexhaustible story lines.

The Fire Department, of course, received a share of media attention during the operation. But as so often happens, the focus quickly shifted from the event itself to other aspects of the story—the international intrigue and malevolent terrorists.

This shifting focus unfortunately left untold a large part of this Department's story. The response to the Trade Center fire and explosion was the largest single response in the history of the FDNY. At the height of the operation, there were 148 Fire Department units and more than 750 officers and firefighters at the scene. We maintained units on scene until 1800 hours on March 24, 1993, to ensure safety

during the extensive post-incident investigation activities. Members of this Department spent hundreds of hours working with Port Authority personnel and others to expedite the restoration and testing of fire safety systems so that the buildings could safely be reoccupied in the shortest possible time.

The Trade Center bombing and



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its aftermath challenged this Department at every level. It tested our capacity to respond to such an unparalleled incident while still maintaining fire protection throughout the city. We did

this, even while two multiple-alarm fires were occurring in other boroughs during the height of this massive incident.

It tested our ability to respond to the continuing post-incident problems attendant to a disaster of this magnitude. We worked very closely with the Port Authority and various law enforcement agencies and accomplished their often divergent goals of a slow and thorough site investigation and a rapid reoccupancy of the Twin Towers.

The Trade Center explosion taught us many lessons. Some of these will lead to changes in our operations and procedures. Others will lead to changes in city codes and in our enforcement power in buildings exempt from New York City codes.

The most important lesson, however, is not one newly learned, but one reinforced: the lesson that the men and women of this Department are not only New York's Bravest but its most reliable, resourceful, and resolute public servants. Whatever else this city learns from the Trade Center tragedy, that lesson is one that all New Yorkers will always remember.