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WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

BATTALION CHIEF ROBERT INGRAM

Interview Date: December 7, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

BATTALION CHIEF BURNS: Today is the 7th of December 2001. The time is 1:25 p.m. I'm

Battalion Chief Robert Burns, the Safety

Battalion, New York City Fire Department.

- Q. I'm conducting an interview with?
- A. Battalion Chief Bob Ingram, acting Chief of hazmat operations now. At the time of September 11 I was working in headquarters as an executive manager for special operations.
- Q. Okay. Maybe you could tell me about what you saw and did on the day of the Trade Center tragedy.
- A. On the day of the event, I was in my office in operations, 7th floor of headquarters, when I heard a commotion outside. I looked outside. Several people were viewing out the window of Chief Ganci's office. I went to see what was going on and we were able to see the north tower on fire. We got the report that a plane had crashed into it.

Along with Chief Ganci, Chief Nigro, Chief
Turi, Chief Burns, myself, we all went down to the
garage, got into our vehicles and responded to the
World Trade towers over the Brooklyn Bridge. On the
way through the streets of Manhattan we passed hundreds
of civilians fleeing. We got on to West Side Highway

down by West Street, parked my vehicle along with Chief Ganci's and Chief Nigro's on West Street. It was just north about 50 feet, 40 feet of the north pedestrian bridge.

We got outside and we were viewing the building, height of the smoke and flame that were visible. We decided to set up a command post on the outside in the side street on the west side of West Street over by the financial building. As we were out there trying to notify units, we had radioed to position, we heard the second plane come in and observed it hit the second building, south tower.

Prior to that and during that impact of the second plane, we were discussing getting in contact with the control towers at the airports to find out if this was indeed an accident or if it was an intentional hit. As soon as we knew the second one was hitting, we knew that it was intentional and we were looking to contact Office of Emergency Management to start to get air support.

We set up the command post at the guard house at the underground garage entrance on the west side just south of the Shearson Lehman building, in between the two pedestrian bridges, one north and one south.

At the command post was Chief Ganci, myself, Chief
Nigro, for a period of time. He left later on to go
towards the building or into the buildings. Chief Turi
was there for a period of time.

During the process there before and during and shortly after the first tower came down, Chief Downey had reported in there and operated there for a few minutes. Captain Fuentes reported there and worked there for a few minutes. Field comm.'s mobile van was parked in the driveway there. We proceeded to start to stage Engine and Ladder companies on the down ramp into the underground garage as a means of protecting them from glass that was falling from the building.

During this time we observed the civilians coming down from the upper floors of the buildings, whether they were jumped or pushed. The Father was there also, my mind is a blank on his name right now, but he was there for a while before he went over to the north tower. Had the Police Department, emergency service sergeant and two officers clear the garage for secondary devices. Chief Ganci called for their third fifth alarm to be staged over on the Brooklyn side. We started to discuss setting the staging area two blocks north of the buildings, mainly because of the falling

debris.

The first building came down. We all evacuated the command post into the parking garage.

Took us about a good 15 minutes to get out of the parking garage once we were able to determine where we were and what was going on. It had become pitch black, pretty well debris filled on the entrance. Several of us had lights. We were able to find an exit, made our way out. Chief Downey, Captain Fuentes, myself, Chief Ganci and probably 20, 30, 40 other members of the Department. I don't know the identities of the ladders and engines that were being staged there that was being monitored by the officer of the command post.

Captain Fuentes took a team, did the secondary search down below in the underground parking garage to make sure everybody that was down there made it out. Chief Downey sometime during that time afterward made it out. Made his way towards the building that had collapsed, the south tower, to see what can be done over there. Chief Ganci and myself were out on the street, trying to size up what was going on. Telling units coming in to stage two blocks north, sending people to that location, get them out of this collapse zone.

Continued at that location on that entrance to the underground parking garage, trying to coordinate units coming in. Trying to contact units on the inside, reestablishing the command post.

Second building came down. Most of us ran either south or north. I ran north back underneath the north pedestrian bridge, made it to the intersection, at which time as the debris from the second building started to overtake me, I dove under a Tower Ladder that was parked on West Street, covered up, waited for the debris to pass and once it was cleared, we all got out, waited for the debris to lighten up, see where everybody was, what was going on.

We proceeded to start to reorganize there at the intersection, trying to establish water supplies, trying to establish Chief officers on the scene, coordinate activities. Other members of SOC that were there at the time that I'm remembering now, Jack, of SOC was there, one of the firemen that worked in the office, works in the decon support unit, but he is alive and his last name escapes me right now. I can't recall anybody else being present at that time whose name stays with me that is not with us.

Continued to operate at that intersection and

on the scene probably for somewhere between 35 and 40 hours. Eventually leaving to set up the SOC base camp on Chambers Street with the research and rescue equipment and teams, trying to organize the search units and giving them the special equipment that was needed. Worked on establishing the water connection during that time also with the second fire boat on the scene, getting the large supply hose down Vesey Street from the marine unit to a manifold at the intersection of West and Vesey. Worked with Chief Cruthers at that location.

Going back to the beginning. After we arrived on the scene, shortly thereafter, right after the second plane hit, I did have contact with hazmat company one. They arrived on the scene and I met them and gave them orders to go to the first building with radiological and chemical equipment to see if there was any other secondary hazards involved with that plane.

They went in, they proceeded to the first tower, north tower, and I believe they reported in there, based on information I received later on from 3 additional hazmat members who had responded from the medical office, Bob Hunter being one of them, Armen Koroghlian. They told me later on they had made it

R. INGRAM

out. They were told that the lobby command post at hazmat was somewhere between the 10th and 30th floor.

Starting to monitor conditions there.

Members who I recall working on hazmat one that day, I did see and speak to Captain Waters, Captain Moody,

Lieutenant Crisci and all of the other 6 firefighters working the tour. A 7th Firefighter Anthony Castagna had resource that day. He is the only member of the unit that is still alive. Resource man's position is to maintain position with the apparatus.

When the second building came down, I met additional hazmat people, Lieutenant Rybak, Firefighter McArdle, Firefighter Borkowski, Firefighter Tralli, Firefighter Gimbl, and one or two other members of squad units. I had them search out SOC units, apparatus that was still on the scene, where they could get chemical and radiological equipment, had them do a perimeter search around both towers to see if there was any radiological or any chemical agents that were in the area. All the reports came back negative. Had them continue to monitor for several hours.

During that time, I heard from Lieutenant

Rybak that Chief Fanning had responded to the scene,

parked his car on Vesey I believe, on the east side of

the West Side Highway. I didn't see Chief Fanning myself, but I understood that he went into the lobby of one of the buildings. I don't know which one, reported in there. I assume he reported into the lobby of tower one, the north tower, because that is where hazmat was, so I'm assuming he would go there to communicate with them.

I don't know how much you want.

- Q. Let me just ask one question. You talked about the underground parking garage where you guys were staged. What was the exact location of that, was that next to the Trade Center or across the street?
- A. It was across the street. It was a two bay parking garage with a concrete median in between the up ramp and down ramp where the guard post was. That is where we set up the command post and the mobile command board from the small field comm. van and it was in between the north and south pedestrian bridges or overpasses. It was probably in the area of the Merrill Lynch building, 2 World Financial Center, I believe is where the parking garage was.

BATTALION CHIEF BURNS: Okay. Thank you very much. That's the end of the interview. The time is 1:40 p.m.