

Power concedes nothing without a struggle. It never has, and it never will. -- Frederick Douglass

LOCAL 100

Express

www.twu-100.org

The Official Publication of TWU Local 100 Volume 1, No 8 October, 2001



THE MISSION:

Rescue, Recover, Remember



At Ground Zero: Local 100 members worked shoulder to shoulder with the uniformed services in the ruins where victims were still trapped. Cleaners outfitted in tyvek suits were part of a massive effort to make the area habitable for rescuers.



Local 100's Trackworkers and other maintenance workers take a break outside the ruins of the Century 21 Department Store. A Bus Operator wearing a respirator prepares to transport Firefighters. A Track Specialist driving a Bob-Cat lifts smashed cars to clear ground for rescuers.

INSIDE FERRER IN RUNOFF

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As Disaster Struck, TWU-ers Mobilized



"Low-Boy" driver Trackworker Specialist Robert Torres with daughter Yvette.

Without the New York City Transit Authority's heavy rigs, there could have been no rescue effort at ground zero. From the very start — the collapse of 1 World Trade Center — the men who run the TA's Tractor-Trailers, Low-Boys, Payloaders, Gradalls and Bob-Cats, and the heavy crane operators who work alongside them, were mobilized. They moved their machines into place and grabbed at and pulled away the steel and rubble that covered the bodies of heroic rescuers and victims alike. They were not relieved by private contractors until Friday, September 14 — three days after the tragic fall of the Twin Towers.

Thousands of TWU Local 100 members, from Infrastructure and Track to OA and Car Equipment — operators, drivers, welders, bus and train maintainers and others — went to work and did not let up. Infrastructure was cutting steel. Track was driving heavy vehicles and special equipment, operating the Payloaders and Bob-Cats. The supercrane at the site — a 140-ton Grove — was operated by Southern Crane, which generally lifts sections of railroad track. Union members from Westchester drove down to the site in vans to operate rigs which were trucked in by TWU Local 100 Low-Boy operators.

Gulf War veteran, Army reservist, and Trackworker Specialist Robert Torres drives a Low-Boy and tractor-trailers for New York City Transit — the crucial vehicles that carry the heaviest equipment and debris. He recalled what happened:

"We were in the yard hooking up to our regular jobs, and we all got beeped at 9AM: Stop what you're doing. I was told to hook up to the Low-Boy and that we would be taking special equipment to Pier 3 on the Brooklyn waterfront. We began taking Payloaders, Bob-Cats, and other rigs to Pier 3, where we met Fire, Police, and Sanitation. From there I went to Westchester with a crew. We brought three Low-Boys there and picked up front loaders, Payloaders, and a Gradall. I was told to bring them down to 2nd Avenue and Houston. By this time it was 7PM. Then Steve Donohue at the Command Center told me to bring the rigs down to Chambers and Broadway.

"When we got to Chambers, an official from the Mayor's Office told us to unload the vehicles and we went to Ground Zero. It was devastation. Fire trucks were burned and crushed. I saw the destruction of the Republican Guard in Kuwait during the Gulf War, and I have seen a town completely

destroyed by artillery fire, but this was worse.

"We staged the Low-Boys and started working at the site. We stayed there until the next day, about 10AM, when we were relieved by guys from the Linden Shop, and they told us to get back at 8PM that night. We came back and worked another 25 hours around the clock, hauling debris in tractor-trailers to Staten Island, each truck carrying 80,000 pounds each trip. We continued working mandated 12-hour shifts, but most of us put in 17 or 18 ours on each tour."

Robert Torres saw people rescued and bodies removed, but he didn't think to record what he saw until the last day. "I finally brought a camera on Friday, but when the President came, they told us they were handing the job over to the private sector, and because we were part of the emergency response we had to get out of there. So we took our equipment back. It was midnight Friday when the last loader left the scene."

The Scone Below Ground

Train Operator Hector Ramirez was traveling from Brooklyn to Manhattan on the 0812 R Train on Tuesday, September 11th. Here



Train Operator Hector Ramirez

is his account of what transpired:

"I was approaching Whitehall Street via the Montague Street tube, and I heard an R Train ahead, yelling 12-1, which means, 'clear the air.' I heard people shouting behind him,

it sounded like a fight, then I thought that he had a man under. He keyed the mike again, and he was saying that people were telling him that a plane had hit the World Trade Center. I stopped my train in the tunnel, because there's a switch there where they can turn me back to Brooklyn if they want to.

"When I had a break on the air, I let Command Center know where I was. They said, continue, but by bypass Cortland and shut off the air comfort. The Train Operator ahead of me said that the station was filling up with smoke and that there were a lot of people coming in. Command told him, shut off air comfort, and get those people out of there.

"We let the customers know that we would be bypassing Cortland/World Trade Center. As I approached the station, I started beeping the horn; but as I hit the edge of the platform, I saw a lot of people covering up their faces, waving at me, and these people looked truly scared. At that point I knew a plane had hit the World Trade Center. I was thinking a Piper Cub, small aircraft.

"I got on the radio, and I told Command Center I would be making a station stop because there were so many people in the station. My Conductor, Joseph Murray, agreed, and so did Command Center. I let the customers know that I was picking up people, that we had an emergency, and not to get off the train. Before the Conductor opened up I had my head out the window, and only one person tried to get off the train as those on the platform crowded in. We got everybody on and we were out of there. Customers were thanking us for stopping and picking them up. I noticed a lot of dust, which looked like smoke but didn't smell like smoke.

"We continued in service. When I got to the end of the line, I beeped my wife, who works in downtown Manhattan, and I then heard that a second plane had hit the World Trade Center, and that the first tower was collapsing. I couldn't reach my wife because all of the circuits were busy, but I later found out that she was OK. I just picked up people. That's my job."

Recovery at Ground Zero

Conductor Jimmy Willis started the day on assignment from the Union campaigning for TWU Local 100's choice in the Astoria City Council race, labor leader Arthur Cheliot. About an hour after he started leafleting, he heard a report that a plane had

hit the World Trade Center. He knew that New York City firefighters, including his mother's cousin, FDNY Chief of the Special Operations Command Ray Downey, would be on scene directing rescue efforts. He didn't know yet that he would become one of those rescuers. "When we heard the reports of the tower collapsing, the campaign quickly became secondary to everyone," Willis remembers. "I wasn't able to contact my wife, who works for Madison Square Garden as a payroll coordinator. We heard that targets of opportunity were also being evacuated including Penn Station. I had to get back to Brooklyn to get our daughter from school, so I headed in, and it turned into a six hour trip because so many roads were being closed and traffic re-routed. My immediate family was OK, but Ray Downey was not. Missing as well was another FDNY relative, my first cousin Michael Roberts, who worked out of Ladder 35 just around the corner from the TWU Union Hall.

"The next day I went down to volunteer, and I have never been so proud of the people I work with. We had hundreds and hundreds of our TA workers at Ground Zero: all of our iron workers, our track gangs, our heavy equipment operators, our welders. Girders and huge pieces of concrete couldn't be lifted until the debris had been cleared, and that was our job. We took car lids and trees and twisted pieces of metal and moved them so the bulldozers could come in. We'd clear five yards at a time.

"I ended up working with two other TA guys like a team; LeRoy Bright helped clear and Rich Handibode, a Trackworker, was operating a Bob-Cat. It was hard to see anything over the smoke and the fire. You had a small area in your field of vision and the rest of it was obscured.

"There were things that stuck in my mind. In front of what used to be Building 5, where Borders Books was, there was a bicycle rack. On it were six bikes, almost untouched, only ten feet away from twisted 20-ton girders, and thousands of pieces of fist sized, jagged glass. We couldn't get the smell at the scene out of our noses; it permeated everything.

"The front of the Century 21 Building and the Millennium Hilton looked like they had been hit by artillery pieces. Girders from the World Trade Center had been shot through the walls. Some of those girders also came down and punctured the 1 and 9 IRT subway tunnel between Rector and Cortland Streets.

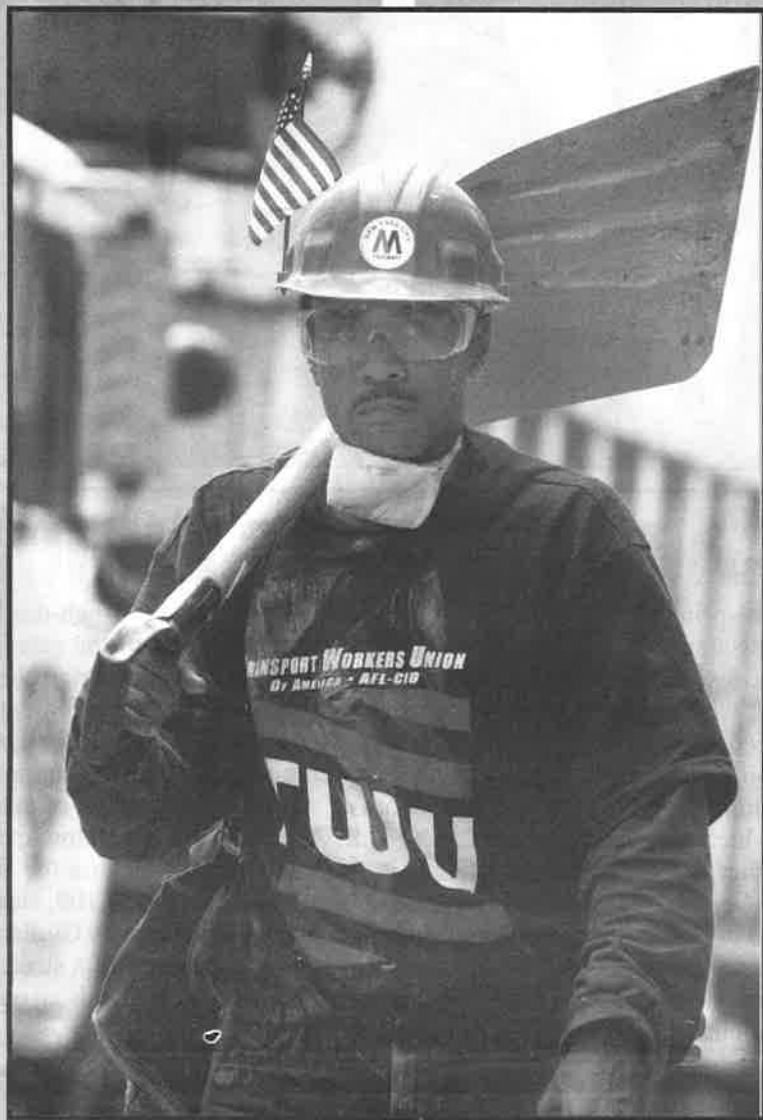
"The Union's Command Center was staged at Chambers and Church to give relief, changes of clothes, masks, gloves, hard hats, and goggles. I went back on Friday, and again worked my way up to the pit. I had hope on Wednesday night, but when I went back Friday, it looked like the gates of hell, like Dresden or Hiroshima, and I thought, I'm not going to see my cousins again.

"I feel so much gratitude to the people I worked with, some of whom were there for 30 hours, went back, rested, and did another 16 hours. We all need to know just how much the people we work with on the job contributed, trying to save lives.

"I don't want to see another World Trade Center. This is hallowed ground, and it should be a memorial, or a park. We can find other space for office buildings. Too many people passed there for us to do anything more than commemorate them."



Conductor Jimmy Willis hands out campaign literature with Arthur Cheliot on the morning of September 11, 2001. At the same time, terrorists were in the air.



From the Heart of Ground Zero

(IN LOVING MEMORY)

"This is the first war of the 21st Century" from the Oval Office of the White House, a somber and saddened President Bush spoke, As from our dream of naive innocence we sadly, on September 11, 2001, awoke. Shattered by the thundering sounds of exploding airplanes in the sky, watching in total disbelief as our countrymen, friends and loved ones in horror had to needlessly die. Looking at our once beautiful towering skyline as the acrid smoke of black and white clouds above us loomed, Thinking of the helplessly trapped and frightened thousands that were instantly buried and horribly doomed. We turned to one another as our hearts cringed, frozen in anguish and pain, Speechless in our sorrow, to the mind-boggling numbing of our brain. Knowing in the choked-backed swollen rivers of our tears, life would never be the same, When an act of hatred filled our lives the day the terrorists came. Struggling in hope, together with the spirit, of whom by God's grace we truly are, the guiding ray of light for Freedom in the World, "America the Shining Star." Never to be forgotten in our endless solemn grieving, your love will never die, When we watched from heaven the Dear Angels in our lives falling hopelessly from the darkened sky. Let no cowardly men of despicable evil actions think by the brazen and callous deeds now done and through, That they destroyed through intimidation the Divine Spirit of Humanity that lives in me and you. For all the wanton destruction they believe they have brought to us, Only makes us stronger in our resolve for in truth as Americans, **"IN GOD WE TRUST."** In this dark and horrific moment in our Nation's history as we hold tenderly each other in candlelight vigils throughout the night, Knowing in our heart of hearts wrong will never triumph over what is just and right. We stand together United in faith with the knowledge that our buildings will rise again to the sky, For the eternal love of God is in all that we do and the Spirit can never die. *Peace and blessings, my dear ones, be with you now and forever more. GOD BLESS AMERICA —Bus Operator Richard D. Kydd, Fresh Pond Depot*

Memorandum

NYTA New York City Transit

Date September 17, 2001
To R. Toussaint, President, Transport Workers Local 100
From J. Perez, Jr., MS-I, Coney Island Pneumatic Shop
Re **A LETTER OF APPRECIATION**

I would like to take a moment to thank you and your union men personally for their help, guidance and generosity during this time of need.

On Saturday morning, September 15, 2001, some of my employees from the Pneumatic Shop and I went to the disaster site to volunteer and help. On the way there, we saw a TWU van and we asked the men where we can go. He instructed us where to go, what gear to bring, and what to do once we got there. He then sent one of his men with us to the site, where we were put on clean up and on a bucket brigade on the South tower collapse. The van was there for us all day in case we needed help or safety equipment or just a place to sit and rest.

Being a supervisor in the Transit, I was and will be proud to see that Local 100 was there to help anyone, including management, at this time of need. You and your union have demonstrated to me that we can all work together when a crisis is thrown upon this great city. With your continued dedication and assistance, we will stand triumphant when all is said and done.

Please take a moment to thank the men who were with the van on that day as I did not get a chance to get their names. Please tell them that I thank them personally from the bottom of my heart.

Sincerely,

Juan Perez, Jr.
Juan Perez, Jr.

cc: N. Persaud, V.P.
R. Rivera, Chairperson, C.I.



REPORT FROM THE PILE OF RUBBLE

"Today I was back at the human anthill at the pile of rubble at ground zero. I was on a bucket brigade carrying and digging debris out of the pit. Some people were found alive today and a few more bodies. We dig and pull bits of metal and boards, and when you find a crevice you get the flashlights out and look for signs of life or bodies. There is white dust everywhere and piles of paper and bits of files, phones, and computers. There are people here from everywhere on the East Coast. Red Cross and the Salvation Army are giving out food and water. While we are digging every once in a while they yell for quiet and all the big machines and arc welders are turned off and everyone goes silent to hear if anyone is under the rubble. The Army and National Guard has everything below 14th Street blocked, but residents can get into Canal Street. We had a couple of panic times when we had to run off the pile and go a few blocks away because they are afraid that a 55-story building right next to WTC is going to collapse. It is very tiring, and we are working 12-hour shifts but with rest periods...There are a lot of men and women of all nationalities working in this rubble trying to save anyone who might be alive. Pray that we can find some more."

— Pete Foley, Div. Chairman, Line Equipment Signals