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THE ITHACA

JOURNAL



SEPTEMBER 11 25 YEARS LATER

THE 9/11 SKY

NYPD PILOT CAPTURES 2001 ATTACKS FROM ONE OF THE ONLY AIRCRAFT OVER NEW YORK CITY

Chris McKenna New York State Team | USA TODAY NETWORK

Twenty-five years after 9/11, Greg Semendinger’s aerial photos still transport him back to that fateful day. ● Semendinger, a detective and helicopter pilot for the New York City police, had been dispatched to the World Trade Center right after the first plane attack that morning in 2001. As his chopper approached, he could see the giant gash where an airliner had sliced through seven floors near the top of the north tower and black smoke was billowing out. ● Semendinger wasn’t an official photographer for the NYPD, but he always carried a camera to document his squad’s rescues and had one in the chopper that morning as an unthinkable horror unfolded before him. ● He grabbed it and started snapping captured over the next 90 among the only aerial they burned and then other. With his co-pilot at above, Semendinger trained his lens as the second tower vaporized in a plunging cascade of debris, and an immense grey cloud mushroomed across Lower Manhattan. ● Some of the photos he took 25 years ago have emerged into public view in various ways: appropriated by other people for their books; displayed in news articles in 2010; mounted in the 9/11 museum at Ground Zero with his permission. But many have remained unseen until recently, when he shared his trove with the USA TODAY Network for 9/11 anniversary coverage.

In memoriam
See the names of the 2,977 victims of the attacks on Sept. 11, 2001. **5A**

away. ● The images he minutes were astonishing, photos of the twin towers as collapsed, one after the the controls and hovering

See PILOT, Page 3A

The World Trade Center billows with smoke after hijackers crashed planes into the north and south towers in New York City on Sept. 11, 2001. The towers would later collapse, killing thousands. USA TODAY

Pentagon worker still feeling 9/11’s effects

Karissa Waddick
USA TODAY

For mental health resources and support, call, text or chat with the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline or visit 988lifeline.org for 24/7 access to free and confidential services.

Black soot coated the hallway’s linoleum tiles, so thick Susan Lukas could see her footprints.

Her throat burned, and hot, stinging tears rimmed her eyes. She wiped away the dust and debris blanketing her desk, sat down and began to work. By lunchtime, her head throbbed. On the opposite side of the Pentagon, emergency responders searched through rubble for victims and fought smoldering, jet fuel-flamed infernos.

It was Sept. 12, 2001.

Though American Airlines Flight 77 had killed all 64 people onboard and 125 inside, Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld said at the complex on Sept. 11 that the Pentagon would be “back in business” the next day.

Rumsfeld said it was “not possible to give guarantees,” on safety but commended Pentagon workers for being “brave people.”

Lukas’ two children begged her on Sept. 12 not to go back. But as a major in

See EFFECTS, Page 4A

Trump gives Medal of Freedom to 9/11 hero

Crowther known as the Man in the Red Bandanna

Nancy Cutler
Rockland/Westchester Journal News
USA TODAY NETWORK

WASHINGTON – Welles Crowther, the Man in the Red Bandanna who is credited with saving as many as 18 people during the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, has been posthumously awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom. Crowther died at the World Trade Center when the south tower collapsed.

President Donald Trump presented the medal to Welles’ mother, Alison Crowther, of Upper Nyack, New York, on Sept. 8 at the White House, where Trump was hosting the Tunnel to Towers Foundation’s Steel Across America tour, which features a steel beam recovered from the south tower of the World Trade Center site.

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