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WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER KENNETH ROGERS

Interview Date: December 10, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

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BATTALION CHIEF KENAHAN: December 10, 2001.

The time is 10:48 a.m. This is Battalion Chief Dennis Kenahan of the Safety Battalion of the New York City Fire Department. I'm conducting an interview with Kenny Rogers, Firefighter first from Ladder 16 in the quarters of Ladder 16.

Q. All right Kenny, please give me any information you have regarding the events of September 11.

A. At about a quarter to nine, high rise, Engine 39 responded to the first plane crash into the World Trade Center. We turned on the TV and we were watching because it was newsworthy and we saw the second plane hit and almost immediately, we were told to respond down there. We had trouble getting out of quarters and we were delayed a bit and 13 and 22 in the Battalion were ahead of us, got ahead of us. I saw them pass us on the corner. We wound up following them down, downtown. Wound up on West Street going south and we followed them for as far as we could. We got down further than I thought we did, because we passed a lot of rigs and eventually we couldn't go any further.

There we disembarked and we walked south. We went down to West Street, to the command post, and then

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we passed in front of 2 World Financial Center, by a garage bay. We were just standing there and 13 and 22 were there, a big group were sent in ahead of us. We should have been in their place but because we arrived a step behind them, they went in ahead of us. We just stood by and waited. I think we were waiting for another truck company to fill us out. We were going to get the next assignment. We sort of had the nod but we didn't have the wave yet.

Watching the building, mostly the south tower. There were people jumping, someone said we are going to go a long way up, let's take off some of our gear. At first I didn't, but after a while I thought he was probably right because it was getting heavy. So I took off some stuff and he took off some stuff. Some other guys did.

Meanwhile we were standing there with about five companies and we were just waiting for our assignment and then there was an explosion in the south tower, which according to this map, this exposure just blew out in flames. A lot of guys left at that point. I kept watching. Floor after floor after floor. One floor under another after another and when it hit about the fifth floor, I figured it was a bomb, because it

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looked like a synchronized deliberate kind of thing. I was there in '93.

I went down to the garage bay. Most guys were down already. The Lieutenant had been yelling at the command post, run, run, run. The only person I saw come in with us was a Chief and the rest of them didn't come in. The companies just scattered everywhere. I think we had maybe nine people with us and there had to be four in the beginning. All these other companies just scattered. We didn't know where they were. They didn't come down with us. We had two people, I think, from other companies, different companies. One guy was from a truck. I think the other another guy was Steve Wright. An injured person with us, a big fat guy and I found an ambulance cot at the bottom of that ramp.

We put him on that. We moved a truck away from the loading bay, because it had the key in it. We put him up on the loading dock and then we put him into a freight elevator, but the Lieutenant said I don't want everyone on that elevator. We don't know how well it works. He turned out to be right. Because it didn't -- it malfunctioned. It went down instead of up and the guys were lucky to get off it. Steve Wright was on that elevator. Two people were on it, the guy

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from the other company, Steve Wright, and the injured guy. The injured guy couldn't walk and he had a broken arm.

The Lieutenant said okay, we are going to have to carry him up the stairs. I should say that he already had a roll call after the dust cleared. We were missing one guy. Then he had another roll call back by the stairwell, hoping the guy might be back by the stairwell, but he wasn't there either.

We decided to carry this guy up the stairwell. One of the guys from the other company said there is a way out, out of the building, that goes out the back. We decided we were going to go that way. We tried to pick this guy up. The stairwell was narrow. We couldn't all get our hands on it. The guy was very big. Eventually we got him up several flights of stairs. We got him out the back of the building and we put him on a boat going over to New Jersey somewhere.

Then we went back from North Cove harbor, we went back to the building and the second collapse occurred when -- the three of us were in the back of the building; myself, Oscar and Joe Petrich. There was a really heavy draft. My helmet just flew off into this black curtain of soot behind the building and on

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the back of the building there was an overhang, so I didn't really want to go into either one of those places, but then I was worried about the glass flying around inside the building. So the thing to do, I figured, was to just stay where I was, where I had the most places to go and see what would happen.

What happened was it subsided. I didn't have a turnout coat at this time. I didn't get cut up so it turned out to be the best thing to do was just to wait and see where the best place (inaudible). That's how it worked out for me with the second collapse.

Then we went back into the building to find the Lieutenant. At this time, there was still lights in the stairwell. There was a lot of water running down the stairs, so we knew the building had some kind of damage. I went down to a lower level, which I hadn't been to before, below the loading bay, where we had been originally. There was no access in the loading bay anywhere else. It was just one level that went down. I was hoping there was, because I was hoping I could hide down there.

Someone located him and yelled down the stairwell, we found him, we got him. So we went back, we all regrouped and then we went up the ramp to go out

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to the front of the building where we had come in. We were looking for the guy we were missing. The Lieutenant and some people were off to the left and me and Joe Petrich went to the right of the bay to the left and we went up there. We kind of searched quite a bit of the building looking for people. We didn't see anybody except one guy with a camera. I don't know where he came from. He was taking a picture of the World Trade Center collapse I guess. He was okay though.

When we left the building, then we saw a couple of other firemen starting to come in to search. We told them we have looked around already. We knew we were the first guys there because there was no foot prints in the dust or anything. There was a lot of dust in the exposure, blown in windows on that side of the building.

After that, we went back into the building. We went out the back. We skirted North Cove harbor and we went to a street, which I guess was North End, and then we went to Vesey Street and we turned right. We ran into a guy. The Lieutenant asked him where is the command post. The guy said I'm it. So we figured the command post was in a lot of trouble, because we could

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see them from where we had been in our staging area. Now there didn't seem to be a command post any more.

Anyway, we found a place on Vesey, somebody forced their way into it. It was a place called Chevy's. We went in there. We were very happy to see people come in. We -- like 39 Engine, we heard them give a Mayday and they weren't responding to any radio transmissions so we thought they might be all dead.

One of the guys came in from 39, a couple of guys came in and started wandering in and it was just good to see these guys were okay. We stayed there for a while. That was pretty much the events of that day for us.

After that, we sort of went back to the school. We went into the school. There was another collapse of another building, but we were too far away to be affected by that. We went back to the rig and we washed the rig down. It turned out that --

BATTALION CHIEF KENAHAN: Thank you Kenny.

The time now is 11:13. This concludes the interview.