



# Hunterdon County Sheriff's Office

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Undersheriff

*Robert W Smith*  
Undersheriff

*Edward W Davis*  
Chief Warrant Officer

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**DATE: September 11, 2019**

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## **First Hand Account of 9/11 Aftermath Shared As Hunterdon Gathers To Remember**

Hunterdon County's law enforcement and first responders community joined with Sheriff Fred Brown and other officials and heard a first-hand account of the scene at Ground Zero in 2001 from a New Jersey Task Force 1 emergency responder, at the County's September 11<sup>th</sup> Remembrance Ceremony on the steps of the Historic Courthouse in Flemington, Wednesday.

Special guest speaker Gary Breuer, who responded to the World Trade Center site on September 11, 2001, as a member of the New Jersey State Police's Office of Emergency Management Task Force 1, recounted his view of events for those assembled at the Remembrance event.

Led by Hunterdon County Sheriff Fred W. Brown, Acting Prosecutor Michaels Williams, and Gary Breuer, Hunterdon County officials, Police Officers, First Responders, and Veterans honored the memory of those who perished in the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, during a Remembrance Ceremony.

Sheriff Brown stated, "September 11, 2001, a day, like December 7th, 1941, is a day that should always live in infamy, and in our memory. We remember that nearly 3000 individuals were killed by terrorist attacks against the United States on September 11, 2001.

We particularly wish to honor the memory of the 16 residents of Hunterdon County who perished that day."

Special guest speaker Gary Breuer responded to the World Trade Center site on September 11, 2001, with New Jersey Task Force 1, providing disaster response services and living at Ground Zero for 10 consecutive days, in the immediate aftermath of the attack.

Mr. Breuer is a resident of West Amwell Township and a retired Raritan Township Police Officer, who is still active with Task Force 1. He was the scheduled guest speaker for the 2018 Remembrance ceremony, but was unable to attend when Task Force 1 was deployed to North Carolina for sixteen days for emergency response to Hurricane Florence.

Breuer has also just returned from another Task Force 1 deployment to provide emergency service in South Carolina and Florida in response to Hurricane Dorian.

Breuer described the scene on, September 11, 2001, telling those assembled at the Courthouse, “On the 11th, we walked up and turned the corner to see the site for the first time. We just stood there for a minute or two, trying to process what we were seeing...nothing could have prepared us for what we saw.

We held on to the hope that we would find a survivor, still alive, trapped in the debris. But each day that hope faded a little, with everything we encountered.”

Mr. Breuer said, “Everything seemed like it was reduced to just grey dust and steel. All the window glass, concrete, the office furniture, the contents of two huge buildings, everything you would expect to find was pulverized.

It was easier to focus on each task, day to day. You didn't want to stop working, because then the enormity of the disaster seemed too overwhelming to think about.”

Nearly 3,000 souls were lost on September 11, 2001, at the World Trade Center, on American Airlines Flights 11 and 77, United Airlines Flight 175, at the Pentagon, and on Flight 93 outside Shanksville, Pa., including 16 residents of Hunterdon County, and nearly 400 First Responders.

Chiefs and officers from the Hunterdon County Law Enforcement community, Rescue Squads, and Volunteer Fire Companies joined the Remembrance ceremony. Dan Torrone, the noted Master of Ceremonies for the County’s 4-H Fair, served as Master of Ceremonies for the event.

Sheriff Brown said, “I want to give special acknowledgment to all the law enforcement personnel and First Responders who have joined us today. As a long time law enforcement officer, and a former Police Chief, I know that we never know when duty may call us into a situation where our lives may be on the line. Thank you for your dedication and willingness to serve and protect your fellow citizens.”

The Sheriff, a U.S. Navy Veteran, added, “And a very special thanks to all the Veterans who have turned out this morning to help us come together to remember.”

Legislative members and County Officials in attendance included, Assemblyman Erik Peterson, Assemblyman John DiMaio, Assemblyman Roy Freiman, Surrogate Susan Hoffman, Freeholders Matt Holt, John E. Lanza, and Shaun Van Doren. Reverend David Errickson of Old Rocks Church provided the invocation and benediction at the event. The Hunterdon Central High School Chorale performed the National Anthem to lead off the ceremony.

The pinnacle of the Remembrance event was the tolling of the bell in the Historic Courthouse 16 times for the 16 Hunterdon County residents who were lost in the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks, followed by a bagpipe rendition of Amazing Grace, by James Curry of the Somerset County Pipes and Drums.

Sheriff Brown, in his remarks, told the assemblage, “When this ceremony was initiated in 2017, I said it was my sincere hope that it becomes an annual Remembrance event in our County, and we shall continue to do so, because too much was sacrificed that day to ever forget.”