



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

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## Senator Griffo's Weekly Column #31: Remembering Sept. 11

JOSEPH A. GRIFFO September 11, 2014

| ISSUE: **CRIME, TERRORISM**



It started as an ordinary business trip, and ended as indelible memories of both tragedy and heroism.

I arrived in New York City Sept. 10, 2001.

My itinerary was simple and straightforward. I had tickets to see my favorite team, the New York Yankees, play that night against their longtime rivals, the Boston Red Sox. The following morning, I was helping to complete a bond sale in my duties as Rome city mayor.

Everything changed that Tuesday morning.

Like those here at home, I watched in horror as the planes struck the towers. It was not a freak accident, we'd come to learn, but an act of terror.

It was chaos. From midtown, I watched as ash blanketed buildings in lower Manhattan and smoke billowed everywhere. As brave first responders rushed to the scene to help, I felt helpless. I had offered to donate blood, but was told it wasn't needed — a dreadful indication that many inside the towers were not injured, but dead.

People from back home were worried about loved ones near the site of the attacks, and I did my best for the remainder of the day to check up on relatives. All were unhurt, but were — as I was — shaken by the events of the day.

Slowly, our collective shock and fear turned into resolve. Instead of creating anarchy, the terrorists' attack brought us closer together. People stepped forward to help strangers they had never met; first responders risked life and limb to help those trapped in the rubble and millions of Americans offered what they could — clothing, blankets, food and donations — to help the families of victims suffering in this tragedy.

The Sept. 11 memorial services have drawn less public interest as time goes on, a result of other life events dividing our attentions. But, as we pause again this week, let us remember those victims and first responders in New York, Washington and Shanksville, Pa., who lost their lives in this senseless attack. Let us also not forget the loved ones who have died or been injured in service to our country, eradicating terrorist networks and defending our liberty, both at home and abroad.

Terror has shown many faces in the intervening years. No longer do the threats come only from the sky. Those that wish us harm have used technology as a weapon to disrupt our

commerce and create panic. I'm proud of the work being done in the Mohawk Valley in cybersecurity and intelligence gathering. They are helping our country remain vigilant about its defense, as our agencies work together to prevent another horrifying attack from occurring at home.