

The Alternative Line

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Dear friends; Yesterday was not a good day all around. In far more ways than I can even contemplate at this moment my life and those of thousands of others were changed forever with the use of hijacked airliners as weapons of destruction of innocent lives. That made my rental car flat tire and travel disruptions pretty insignificant, all things considered.

As with the moment Kennedy was assassinated, I will always remember where I was, and how disbelieving I was of the news. And however much the impact on me, it pales by comparison with those directly affected at the site of the carnage. My grandfather was a Fire Chief in NYC, who was fortunate to survive to the age of 96. As a boy, he would tell me stories of the infamous Shirtwaist Factory fire which he worked, and his feeling of helplessness at the plight of the young women who were killed there. He also told me many tales of firemen who lost their lives in the rescue of others. The term "gave their lives" needs to be clarified here, because in some horrific circles there will be some who view the actions of the hijackers in that same light. But the distinction is obvious; the rescue workers were killed trying to save the lives of people they did not know, not trying to kill them.

And the real demonstration of their courage was that, no sooner had their comrades been buried in the rubble of the initial collapses, than the remaining rescue workers immediately returned to harms' way to help again.

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