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WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER EUGENE KELTY, JR.

Interview Date: December 6, 2001

Transcribed by Elizabeth F. Santamaria

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BATALLION CHIEF MALKIN: Today is December 6, 2001. The time is now 10:44. This is Battalion Chief John Malkin of the Safety Battalion of the New York City Fire Department. I am conducting an interview with Captain Eugene Kelty, Engine Company 10. We are at the quarters of Engine Company 4, regarding the events of September 11, 2001, at the World Trade Center.

There is nobody else present in the room at this time, except the Captain and myself, and now the interview begins.

A. Okay. My name is Captain Gene Kelty. I'm the Company Commander for Engine Company 10, which is located at 124 Liberty Street, which is the firehouse right opposite the World Trade Center. I was off that day. My partner, Lieutenant Gregg Atlas, who was working and is still missing in action, was working that day.

We were on the golf course at a company outing that we have in our neighborhood when we got a report on the pager that the fire -- the towers had been hit. Knowing that that was my company, I

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responded in with my brother, who is a supervising Fire Marshal, James Kelty from Manhattan base, we got in Manhattan somewhere around, I would say, around 9:35, a quarter to ten. We went up to my quarters, because we were changing into our work clothes so we could go and start our assistance on what was going on within the building or outside the building.

When we got into the building, there was a lot of civilians in my kitchen, which is on the backside of Cedar Street, between Greenwich and Church, and they had been quartered with us when the plane hit the buildings, and all the debris and stuff was coming down. Captain Mallery was in the building at the time, and Lieutenant O'Malley, my Lieutenant from Engine 10, was in the building. Captain Mallery is the Captain from Ladder 10. Captain Mallery was in my office with my brother and we were evaluating what was going on and he was giving us a briefing regarding the first plane that hit the tower, and then the second plane.

At that time, which was probably somewhere around a quarter to ten, the second tower, World Trade 2, came down. Unbeknownst to us, we were

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upstairs, we heard the building shake, a lot of debris came down, and the building was hit with a dust cloud.

The apparatus doors were open, because I went out on the second floor by my office, and it was pitch black from the air conditioner that was blowing in the bunkroom of the second floor. I looked out the window. It was pitch black. All the dust that was coming down Greenwich Street headed southbound. We went down the stairs to see how everybody was doing downstairs. There was people all over the place. People with broken ankles, broken legs, femurs.

We went into the kitchen and we started evacuating the house, because we didn't know exactly what happened, other than the building came down and collapsed. It was later determined that it was building World Trade 2, which is the south building that came down. We started evacuating everybody. I had not gotten out to the street yet. We just made sure that we could get people out the back door, that's the Greenwich Street side, and we were having everybody go down up to Trinity Place and go south. We were heading them towards the Statue of Liberty

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way, Battery Park. Captain Mallery, myself,
Lieutenant O'Malley were in the building doing the
evacuation.

At the time, I think, the Captain or the
Lieutenant went across the street. There was a
Lieutenant that was injured at 130 Liberty Street,
which is the Deutsch Bank, and they were assisting a
first-aid case over there. In the meantime, I
continued the evacuation.

Most of the equipment in the building was gone.
All that was left was my turnout coat and I grabbed
the truck helmet. I had an understanding that the
building was taken over by civilians and everybody
else and all our equipment was taken out of the
building and had been ravaged by civilians and
anybody else that needed equipment that day.

While we were evacuating people, there was an
ambulance in the engine bay, that was stuck in the
engine bay because of the debris that came down from
World Trade 2 and there was no way of going out the
front door, other than climbing over piles of debris
that was there. After the tower came down, we made
the determination that we weren't sure if any other
building would come down, so we evacuated the whole

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building. I went through and did a search and there was two EMS people that were still left in the building. Again, Captain Mallery and Lieutenant O'Malley were across the street at 130 Liberty Street. I went into the kitchen to make sure there was nobody there when I heard the rumble of Tower 1 coming down. I don't know the time that it happened. I just heard the same rumble I heard when Tower 2 came down, the same thing, and I took cover in our kitchen.

The only people left in the building were the two EMS people and after the tower collapsed and we got more debris thrown in our kitchen, I opened the door to go out to the apparatus to find out if they were okay and they were right behind the door. We pulled them in the kitchen and the two EMS people were hurt, but they were conscious and stuff, and we evacuated them out. I evacuated them out of the back of the building and they went down the street towards the south.

After that I checked with Lieutenant O'Malley and Captain Mallery to make sure that they were okay and that they were still alive, because I didn't know what happened when the second tower came down,

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which is World Trade Center 1. They were across the street. I was calling to them. I managed to get a hold of them. We went over there and there was a -- at the time, too, when we were evacuating the building Ladder 124 was there. They assisted with moving people up the block and down to the south. They helped work with EMS. When we went over later on, after the second tower, I went over again to see if our Captain was okay. They had stabilized the Lieutenant. I think he broke his leg and his shoulder, and dislocated his shoulder. Lieutenant O'Malley had packaged him up -- Captain Mallery, and we started on our way and we started going down Greenwich Street south to Albany; to Rector Street, we made a right on Rector Street to head over to the west side, away from any more possible collapses until we figured West Street would be open.

We took them over to -- I think there was two other firefighters with us. I don't know what company they were. We stopped on the way on Carlyle Street, between Greenwich and Washington, to take a break and make sure that the Lieutenant was okay. Captain Mallery I think remained and I think he was doing a search at 130 Liberty. We managed to get

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down to West Street and Carlyle and we ran into an EMS person and we passed off the Lieutenant to him, and they backed him out on some type of vehicle. I think it was a flatbed truck. And then Lieutenant O'Malley and I started to search some of the buildings. We went into the Marriott Hotel, which was, I think, 85 or 90 -- 85 West Street.

There was a security person in there and we talked to him. He said that the whole place was evacuated. We told him we wanted him out of the place, and made sure that everybody was accounted for. After that Lieutenant O'Malley and I went down to West Street. We started walking around on West Street seeing if we could see any surface victims to rescue and stuff. The whole area was covered with gray ash from the debris that came down, and then we ended up splitting up. I was trying to head over to the north side, which was Vesey and West, to see what was happening over there. There was no access on West Street due to the World Trade Tower 1 coming down, part of 3 was down on West Street and there was no way up Liberty Street due to World Trade 2 that collapsed.

I went through the back way, which was through

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the World Finance Centers, cut through the building. I ended up getting onto West Street. I'm not sure if I went through the towers or I went around the back to the north cove and I came out on North End Avenue. At that time, there was people on the Vesey/West Street side and I paired up -- down on the corner of West and Vesey, there was a lot of rigs that were buried under the debris. I remember the super satellite from Engine 9 was there, in front of the 6 World Trade Center. There were people climbing all over the place trying to get into there and there were some fires. They looked for surface victims and stuff.

I ran into some of the people from the first battalion. There was Chief McKavanagh, and we started trying to get water. We wanted water lines down there to start water. I understand the boats were in, so we managed to get rigs that were further back towards Murray and Warren Street that were not covered in debris. I remember Ladder 115's rig was in the middle of the street on West Street by Vesey, heading southbound, and that was covered in debris. I managed to get an Engine out and we backed it down the street, down through Murray, up around the back

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on to North End Avenue and we brought it in on Vesey Street and parked it midway. We then had lines running from the boats, which was at the waterfront at the time. We ran lines down to supply the pumper, and then the pumper ran more lines down to supply the satellite, which was located down at the intersection of Liberty -- of Vesey and West. And we were trying to use that as a supply line to get any hand lines or even to get the super pumper up or the Vesey water satellite unit in service.

We then had another break in the block on West Street heading southbound that we were hooking into to try to boost the pressure up to get water into the satellite units so we could extinguish fires that were going on right now in 6 World Trade, which is the Federal building, the Customs building. We couldn't the get pressure up on it. It would only reach so much pressure and because it was 3-inch, 3-and-a-half-inch lines, we couldn't get enough water down there to provide the pressure to use the satellite gun. And that's where we spent most of the day, was just trying to attack the fires, put whatever we put out in the area.

There was units searching in 6 World Trade.

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One World Trade we couldn't get near, because the bridge had collapsed on top of it. The north end bridge had collapsed on the street, blocking the whole street, and we were just -- there were units all over the place. People were all over the place. I didn't know who they were. Because at the time we had a problem with as far as determining who was who, because equipment was being borrowed from all firehouses.

And 7 World Trade was burning up at the time. We could see it. There was concern. I had gone up to take a look at it, because I knew that the telephone company building, which is 140 West Street, was next to 7 World Trade Center, and there was a concern that if 7 World Trade came down, what would happen to this building? We went in there, we checked it out. There were some people in there. We made them evacuate and I went in the back to see what was happening.

The fire at 7 World Trade was working its way from the front of the building northbound to the back of the building. There was no way there could be water put on it, because there was no water in the area. I went back and I reminded whoever the

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chief was, I don't know if it was Chief McKavanagh or Chief Blaich, that with 7 World Trade Center in danger of collapsing, you had to be careful, because Con Edison had big transformers in the back that supplied the lower half of Manhattan. So we had to be concerned about electricity, that this may be energized or not be energized. We also reminded him about the telephone company, about the equipment that was in there.

After a while, what happened, my eyes started bothering me. I ended up getting taken over to St. Francis in Jersey by the water, had my eyes washed out and when I was coming back somewhere around I think it was 5:00 o'clock, 6:00 o'clock, 7 World Trade Center came down. We were in the water when it came down. It might have been earlier. It might have been 4. I don't know exactly when, but we were on the river coming back from New Jersey when the towers came down.

They were utilizing the north cove as a reference point for evacuation of all people over for hospitals and stuff. The Port Authority -- or police launches were there. They were bringing people across. They had a triage station set up

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over there to flush the eyes or to handle whatever emergency was quick, and then they moved them over and then transported them out over to New Jersey. After pretty much the towers came down and there was some sense of no more collapse happening, Engine 10's quarters started to get used as a triage station and a general focal point.

Throughout the whole time Engine 10's quarters emergency generator was working we had some type of lighting system and some type of electricity. That's why they used it as a focal point. The EMS people were in there, they were triaging a lot of people. They were eye washing any emergencies, any civilians, any firemen. There was continued searches throughout the area. Again, the people I don't know, because helmets were being used by everybody, taken out of everybody's quarters. Partial equipment was worn. There were no face masks down there at the time, we had no breather masks. We were using whatever was handy, and I probably didn't get out of there until almost 1:30 in the morning, and which I stayed at the Fire Marshal's base with my brother. I finally touched bases with him. I stayed there and then we were

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back again at 9:00 o'clock in the morning. That's
it.

Q. You mentioned Lieutenant O'Malley. You
may have mentioned it before. What unit is he in?

A. He's in Engine 10.

Q. Okay. And Captain --

A. Mallery. M-A-L-L-E-R-Y. He's the Captain
at Ladder 10.

BATTALION CHIEF MALKIN: Okay. Good
interview. I thank you for the interview.
The time is now 10:58 hours and this is the
conclusion of the interview.