

# Never Forget

A decade ago, in the immediate aftermath of the September 11th attacks, I expressed the outrage of our union at what had just occurred. I explained in a [message to IAM members](#) that “It was our planes that were used as weapons of mass destruction. It was our members who were forced to endure the unimaginable nightmare. It was our members who were among the murdered.” I pledged then that “we will have our vengeance.”

Nearly four thousand days have elapsed since that message went out. America imposed a new reality on those who attacked us. And, with the elimination of Osama Bin Laden, our vengeance is complete.

But members of the IAM did more than just build the weapon systems and the high-tech munitions that imposed a new reality on the terrorists and nations who shielded and supported them. Our members, like so many other union members, raced towards the sounds of the sirens – at Ground Zero and the Pentagon. From all across our union came donations and volunteers to help out our brothers and sisters in desperate need.

The bravery and patriotism of union members that day and in the weeks that followed was captured in [Everyday Heroes: Our Stories of 9/11](#), a 55-minute documentary written and produced by the IAM. Even as we taped hundreds of hours of interviews, the Machinists Union recognized the toll being taken on those working on the pile. The IAM made a substantial donation to Mt. Sinai Hospital to begin the treatment of those workers, and donated the proceeds of Everyday Heroes to their care.

Now, a decade later, many of the unionized, blue-collar workers who gave their all in those dark days are suffering grievous illnesses. To add insult to injuries sustained in the service of their country, those same workers – and the union brothers and sisters who supported them – are being vilified by right-wing politicians and ignored by far too many on the left. And that is a travesty.

Commemorating the September 11th attacks should include nationwide period of thanksgiving for what the American Labor Movement did individually and collectively in the minutes, hours and days after the terrorists struck. That may be too much to ask. But I would ask that, as part of your personal commemoration of those events, that you take one last look at who America’s everyday heroes really are.

**Have you heard?**

*An Internet Bulletin for IAM Communicators*

[goiam.org](http://goiam.org)

