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Value your words. Each one may be the last. ~Stanislaw J. Lec

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## Carlstadt Police step up for WTC duty

by Debra Winters

Carlstadt Police stepped up in a time of great need, delivering the necessary supplies to the search and recovery teams working at Ground Zero, just hours after the Trade Center was struck.

After 1 p.m., Sgt. Thomas Berta and Officer Keith Higgins brought over the first round of supplies to the workers.

Michael Pisani, president of the Water Jel Company in Carlstadt offered a truckload of Water Jel burn blankets, used for burn victims, if the police could get them to New York. Berta and Higgins then drove to the staging area in Weehawken and were allowed to use the Lincoln Tunnel to get directly to the scene at Ground Zero.

A second load of burn blankets were picked up by the officers along with water, and donated medical supplies. - They quickly returned with the supplies. A total of approximately \$25,000 worth of blankets was donated.

Water and refrigerated trailers were donated by Coca-Cola, in which other Carlstadt officers escorted truckloads of throughout that day. Lt. Patrick Cunningham escorted a truckload of fuel from Sanzari Construction that was needed for emergency vehicles.

Berta and Higgins delivered the blankets to the Triage area, near Broadway and Church St. and to Bellevue Hospital.

Both were given air masks and allowed within a blocks radius of the site where the twin towers once stood.

"It was as if we were driving into grey snow. We couldn't see anything but that," said Berta.

A truckload of badly needed ice was donated by Stop and Shop of Carlstadt and delivered to the triage center by Emergency Management Coordinator Dave Maluda. Officer Damir Blagec escorted this delivery. General Trading and Wonder Bread also donated, food to the local schools, where students were held over and to the shelter in Hackensack that housed residents of New York who work in New Jersey that couldn't return home after work, said Deputy Chief Brian Higgins.

Officers Thomas Negro and Higgins delivered additional supplies the following day including water, socks, and clothing to the Red Cross set up at the Trade Center Building 7 before it collapsed.



Water-Jel Emergency Burn Treatment products.

The worse thing we saw, said Negro, was when we were about 30-50-ft. away from ground zero and the recovery workers brought out a bunch of body bags.

"Everybody just froze in silence and put their heads down as they walked past," Negro said.

The best explanation of what it looked like is a "war zone", said Higgins. "At times, we had to get out of the way because emergency workers feared part of the building was going to come down."

If you can't imagine what it looks like, just visualize a great mound of steel, said the officers.

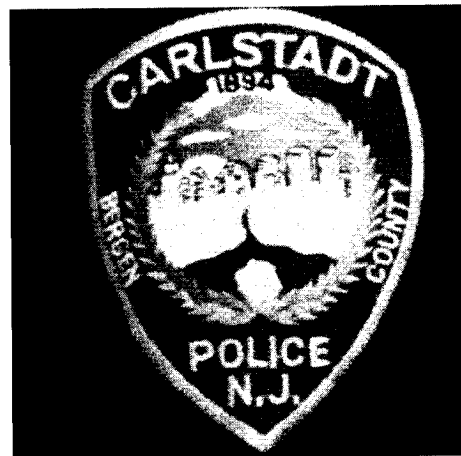
The workers continue to dig despite their exhaustion.

"They just were not giving up. Their determination was and still is amazing," Berta said.

Surgeons and doctors were waiting outside Bellevue Hospital with tons of stretchers, they said, but unfortunately no victims were showing up.

"The emergency room was quiet, no victims were there," said Higgins. The only people being brought in were firefighters with burn injuries.

However, there was a long line of people waiting to donate blood outside Bellevue Hospital.



Carlstadt's police patch shows the NYC skyline with the World Trade Center in View.

Berta spoke about a Mash Unit he had heard about that was set up by Chelsea Piers, where surgeons looking to be recertified were offering their time but not many patients were in need of immediate help.

"It was just a sad sight to see," Berta said. Higgins remembered what it was like driving away from ground zero.

"We were riding out of all the dust that was constantly falling and after a few blocks we looked up and saw the sun again," he said.