

THE TAMPA TRIBUNE

THURSDAY, JANUARY 31, 2002 ♦ TAMPA, FLORIDA ♦ TBO.COM

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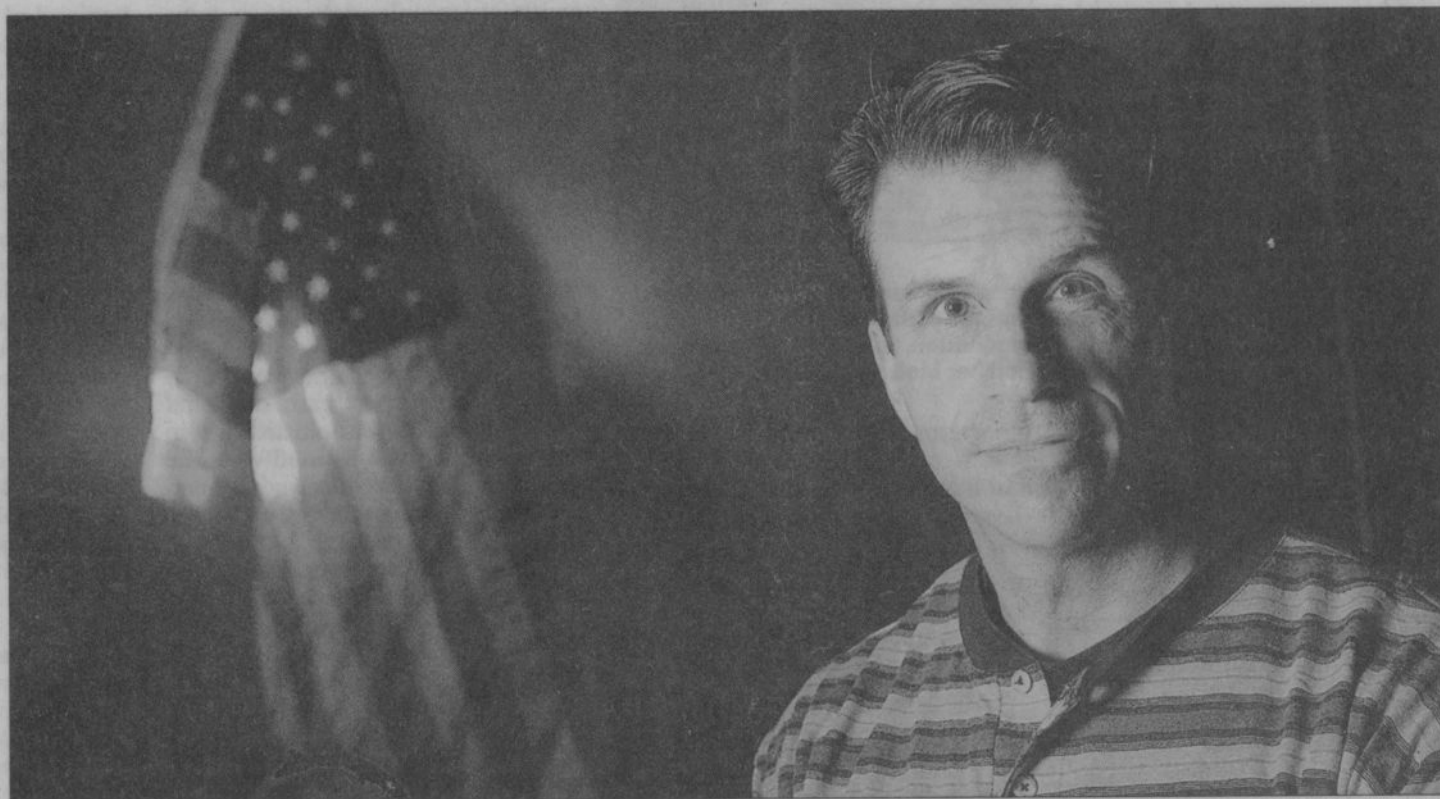
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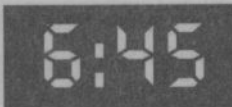
Tribune photo by JASON BEHNKEN

Joe Bonanno Jr. remembers "reading a list of the missing. I didn't have to go too far to see another name and another friend."

Fraternity Of Fighters



SEPT. 11, 2001



Retired New York firefighter and cookbook author Joe Bonanno Jr. cooks pasta at Ladder Company 3's fire station in Manhattan for a morning TV show.



Bonanno and the firefighters do a second live segment.



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RIDGE



Video image supplied by JOSEPH BONANNO

On Sept. 11, Bonanno appeared on WPIX, Channel 11, with Larry Hoff, left, and firefighters Jeffrey Giordano and Joseph Maloney, background. Giordano and Maloney died that day at the World Trade Center.

While promoting his cookbook, a retired New York firefighter served his brethren their final meal.

All of us remember. We will always remember. It is a part of our lives — that day and those awful moments.

But pause and consider the experience of Joe Bonanno Jr. And cry again for what we have lost, and remember those who still serve.

Bonanno lives in Safety Harbor. He likes Safety Harbor. He likes the name, the place and the



STEVE OTTO

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brought him to Ladder Company 3 in Manhattan.

Bonanno retired in June after a 21-year career with the Fire Department of New York. Like most firefighters, Bonanno fancied himself a chef. So much so that he had gone to culinary school

Channel 11, suggested he come on the air and cook pasta for the crew at his old fire station in Queens.

Then came one of those twists that make our lives so unpredictable.

The TV station didn't want its crew to travel all the way out to Queens. So it asked him if he would cook at Ladder 3, a Manhattan fire station at 13th Street and Broadway.

"That was OK with me because I knew most of the guys there anyhow," Bonanno said. "It was a lot of fun. Some of the guys pitched in, and we did a live segment at 6:45 and then again at 7:45 that morning.

"We finished up and I stuck

Bonanno leaves the station. At that moment, American Airlines Flight 11 from Boston crashes into the north tower of the World Trade Center. He sees the smoke through the car window.



United Airlines Flight 175 from Boston crashes into the south tower of the World Trade Center.



Trade center's south tower collapses. Bonanno arrive at his sister's house in Lindenhurst, N.Y.

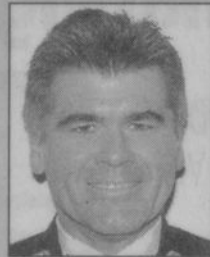


STRICKEN LADDER COMPANY

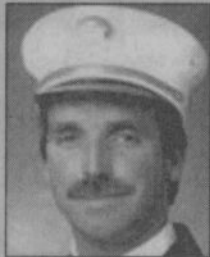
Shortly after Joe Bonanno Jr. shared a televised pasta cooking demonstration with members of Ladder Company 3 and Battalion 6, the firefighters were called to the burning World Trade Center. These men never returned.



John Williamson
Battalion Chief
Battalion 6



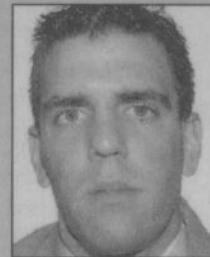
Patrick Brown
Captain
Ladder 3



Kevin Donnelly
Lieutenant
Ladder 3



Michael Carroll
Firefighter
Ladder 3



James Coyle
Firefighter
Ladder 3



Gerard Dewan
Firefighter
Ladder 3



Jeffrey Giordano
Firefighter
Ladder 3



Joseph Maloney
Firefighter
Ladder 3



John McAvoy
Firefighter
Ladder 3



Tim McSweeney
Firefighter
Ladder 3



Joseph Ogren
Firefighter
Ladder 3



Steven Olson
Firefighter
Ladder 3

Sources: The Associated Press and Fire Department of New York

LOOKING BACK

Continued From Page 1

up and I left the station almost exactly at 8:45. I know that was the time because when we got in the car the man on the radio said that apparently a small plane had hit one of the towers of the World Trade Center."

Bonanno looked out the car window and could see the smoke. "I saw that smoke and knew that unless it had hit some sort of fuel storage area in the building there was no way that could be a small plane."

Attack On America

His car went into the Queens midtown tunnel. As it emerged they could see smoke coming from both towers.

"I asked the guy to turn around. I wanted to get back to the station, but by then the police were already closing down the tunnels back into town."

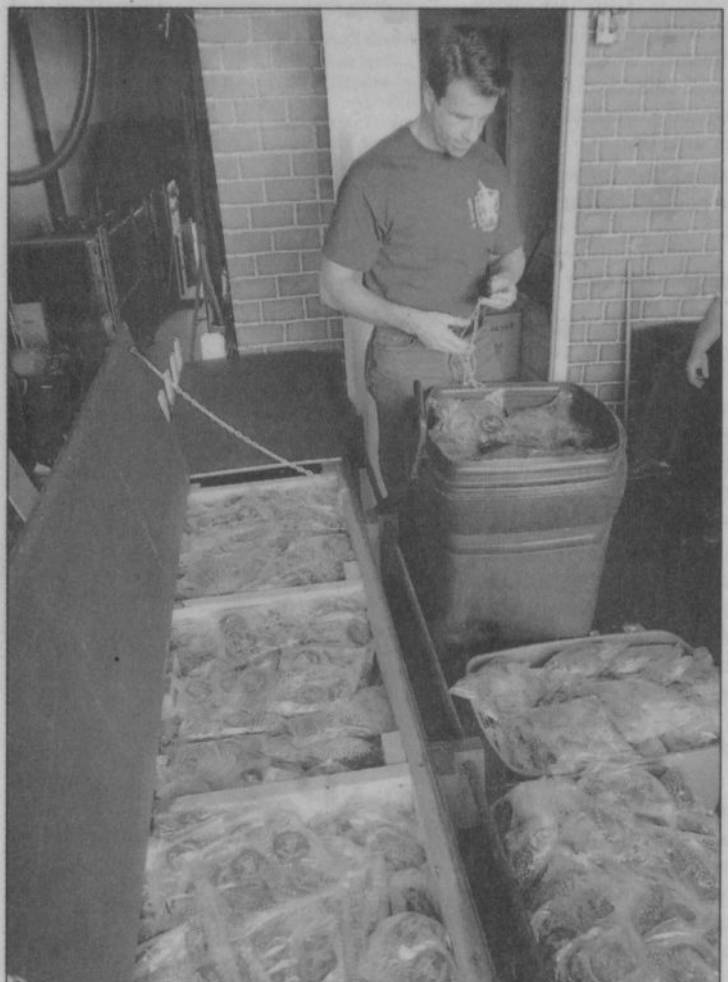
He made it to his sister's apartment in Lindenhurst

and I tried to do. I didn't have a set assignment, but in my mind I was looking for the members of Ladder 3, the same guys I had been laughing with that morning.

"It was 'Here's a flashlight and some rope. Go find somebody,' which is what my brother and I tried to do. I didn't have a set assignment, but in my mind I was looking for the members of Ladder 3, the same guys I had been laughing with that morning.

"These were the same guys that morning who had called up their wives and kids and friends to tell them to turn on the television because they were on it live. I wonder how many of those families had turned on the TV just because of that show, and that was the last time they would see their husbands and sons and fathers?"

For the next week Bonanno and his brother returned to ground zero. "It was like a war zone. I remember sitting there on a firetruck that had been blown over and was covered in debris, reading a list of the missing. I didn't have to go too far to see another name and another friend



He made it to his sister's apartment in Lindenhurst, N.Y., and walked in the door just as the first tower collapsed.

"I was going crazy. The first thing I did was call my brother. He had retired [from the fire department] a year earlier because of a disability."

It was a day of frustration and anguish, as the horror unfolded and thousands jammed phone lines trying to find out what happened to their loved ones. Bonanno was one of them, calling friends, trying to get facts, trying to reach his old firehouse.

An appeal went out for retired firefighters to suit up. He was ready, with a uniform and gear there with him.

The next morning Bonanno and his brother Michael, wearing their gear, were on the train to Penn Station. "Almost as soon as we came up, a couple of state troopers pulled up and motioned us into the car and took us down to scene."

To understand why Bonanno and his brother would do something like that you have to understand the fraternity of firefighters, that included their father. They truly are a family.

far to see another name and another friend.

"My God, there was Tom Gambino, my old friend. He had just told me he had been transferred to Rescue 3. I didn't want to believe it was him. Maybe there was another Tom Gambino. That night I went by his house, afraid of what I would see. Outside there were purple ribbons stuck up everywhere. I couldn't stop and just kept going home."

Answering The Call

And what of the 12 men of Ladder 3?

They had climbed to the 40th floor of the first tower. Most of them were found gathered around their captain, Patrick "Patty" Brown, already legendary in the department. In a eulogy to Brown, New York Daily News columnist Michael Daly wrote that as Brown led his men into the tower, someone called out, warning him not to go in. His reply: "Are you nuts? We've got a job to do."

Once inside, Brown radioed that there were 30 or 40 severely burned people on one floor that they could not leave behind.

"I think they must have



Tribune photo by DAVID KADLUBOWSKI

Joe Bonanno Jr. looks over special Gasparilla beads commemorating the Fire Department of New York. He and more than 60 of his fellow heroes will be at Saturday's parade.

"There were so many good ones. I had one friend. He had gone to Rockaway Beach with his wife. They were just going into the water when the first plane hit. He takes off for Manhattan, gets there and is killed when the second tower goes down.

"There was another guy, Michael Weinberg. He was teeing off at a golf course in Forest Park. You can see the skyline from there and he saw the first plane. His sister worked in one of the towers. He got there in time to get killed." She survived.

"For the rest of us, I think it was the helplessness. When we were on the pile I said to Michael, 'Do you see a computer monitor or a desk?' There was nothing. It was all gone — incinerated — except for the

were cadres of doctors and nurses standing around, waiting for the injured who never came. They were all dead.

"Not too long ago I had a nightmare where I'm back at Ladder 3 that morning. I know what's going to happen, and I tell everyone of those guys to get in their cars and go home. I tell them two airplanes are going to destroy the World Trade Center buildings and all of them are going to die. They just ignore me."

Saturday, Bonanno and more than 60 of his fellow heroes will be guests of Tampa firefighters who have brought them down here. They will be up near the front of the Gasparilla parade. Let them know