



Lest we forget? Some have *already* forgotten. They haven't forgotten the 23 NYPD police officers, the hundreds of other cops and first-responders and some 2,500 civilians who lost their lives on 9/11 and whose memories we honor on tomorrow's fifth anniversary. No one has forgotten them and no one ever should.

But what of the others?

What of the police officers—those of us who were lucky enough to survive — who returned to the toxic-fumed pit that came to be known as Ground Zero and worked in the days and weeks and months that followed first to rescue and then to recover our fallen comrades and other victims? We asked no questions, posed no conditions, demanded no special protections or compensation. We did our sworn duty in homage to our fellow officers, our fellow Americans and the world's free peoples.

And yet, now that it has become increasingly obvious that exposure to the toxic mix at Ground Zero, the Staten Island landfill and the morgue was extremely hazardous to our health, the city and the NYPD are the ones asking the questions and posing the conditions. As men and women in our ranks in their 20s, 30s and 40s are developing health problems rarely seen in people their age, the city is taking a Scrooge-like stance with respect to their health-coverage and disability claims. That's an outrage.

The PBA has established a registry on its website (nycpba.org) to which our members can report their symptoms and diagnoses to aid other officers who are going through the same thing. Through this shared information, perhaps we can seek early treatment and prevent the development of more serious conditions. But the last thing we need right now is a skeptical bureaucracy and departmental indifference.

Five years later, the death toll from 9/11 continues to rise. We need the federal, state and city governments to recognize that appalling fact and do something about it. Lest we forget? Or have we already forgotten?



Lest we forget?

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