



# ZOOM in on america

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## NEW YORK CITY POLICE DEPARTMENT

The New York City Police Department (NYPD) is a relatively young organization that began in 1845. Its predecessors included municipal police, marshals, and night watchmen who, in their turn, were descendants of a unit called Rattle Watch, named after the wooden rattles they carried with them on night patrols and used to wake up citizens in the face of danger, especially a fire. But a city of over 300,000 people as New York was in the mid-19th century, needed a professional and modern police force. However, the Civil War in the 1860s and the next turbulent decades marked by riots and economic instability did not facilitate the smooth and easy development of the NYPD. The turn of the 20th century brought much expected reform under the command of Theodore Roosevelt -

the future President - then Police Commissioner. The 1990s saw an urgent need of another reform and operational change with the rise of the crime rate and new challenges such as drugs and corruption. Rudy Giuliani, the city's mayor at the time, introduced policies known as "zero tolerance" (a full-scale attack on all crime and disorder in the city,) CompStat policy (which consists in reducing crime, improving quality of life and devising strategies to solve problems) and the so called broken window policing targeting acts of vandalism, especially with regard to buildings. As a result, there was a considerable drop in crime and New York City is now the safest large city in the United States.



Photo © AP Images

# WE NEVER FOUND ANY SURVIVORS

9/11 was the greatest ordeal for the New York City Police Department in its 164-year-history. Twenty-three policeman died as a result of the terrorist attack on the World Trade Center and in the rescue operation that followed. In their efforts to find the survivors and clear the ground, they were helped by other organizations. Below is a true story of a member of the U.S. Marshals Service who worked near the WTC when the tragedy happened.

On September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001, I was working in the New York City office of the U.S. Marshals Service, located in the Federal Court House near the World Trade Center. It was early morning when we heard a very loud crash, similar to the sound made by an empty garbage dumpster being dropped onto the pavement once it has been emptied by a collection truck. A few of us wondered about the sound, but business went on as usual. It wasn't until I went to another office that I saw people clustered around a television and learned that an airplane had crashed into the World Trade Center. We all were horrified by the event, but at that time we believed that it was simply an air traffic accident. I returned to my office to find that my co-workers had also learned of the event and were watching the television coverage. It was a few minutes later when the second airplane crashed into the towers, chaos erupted.

We were ordered to ensure that all employees evacuate the courthouses and that the federal judges were safely removed to another location. The reason for our response was very simple: not only had three of our judges presided over terrorism-related cases (the first attempt to bomb the World Trade Center, the bombing of the U.S. Embassies in Africa and a plot to blow up the United Nations and other New York landmarks), but the adjacent federal prison was housing the perpetrators of the African Embassy bombings. My fellow Deputies and I set about clearing the courthouses. As I was running down a flight of stairs, the whole building shook dramatically, as if we were in the middle of an earthquake. One of my colleagues, who was listening to a radio news broadcast via headset, shouted that one of the towers had collapsed. It was yet another surreal moment.

After the evacuation, we set up a security perimeter around the courthouse and prison. From my station, I could see people and vehicles leaving the World Trade Center site. Everyone and everything was coated in a grey dust, which would become very familiar to us over the next month. We maintained this perimeter until the



Michael Sestak (on the right) during the rescue operation  
Photo courtesy and © Michael Sestak

evening, when it became apparent that no additional attacks were forthcoming. Our officers were divided into shifts to provide 24-hour security coverage of the courthouse and prison. Those of us who were not scheduled to work were allowed to return home for the night.

For the next two days, the multiple federal, state and local agencies struggled to organize a response. Our office was finally allowed to go to organize a team and proceed to the site to assist in the rescue and recovery process. When we completed the six block walk to the WTC site, we could not believe our eyes. A smoking, multi-story pile of twisted metal, smashed concrete and a jumble of normal office items stood in place of the buildings that were so familiar to us. Everything was covered in grey concrete dust, giving the site an almost lunar appearance. Groups of city police officers, firemen and National Guard units were working in various sections, digging through the rubble and removing debris, primarily with their hands. We joined in with one National Guard team, forming a human chain to transfer rubble from the pile of debris to the outer perimeter, where it was collected and hauled away. The next two weeks were a blur as we made the daily trip to the smoking pile and joined in with larger groups of city police officers and fireman to help where we could. Countless hours were spent digging through the rubble searching for survivors or the remains of those who perished in the attack. Time and time again, we encountered the normal trappings of everyday office life (family photos, pieces of clothing, etc), which were shockingly out of place in the twisted landscape. At times, one of my co-workers would encounter a portion of human remains, which was then collected by the fire department and transported to the nearby morgue. We never found any survivors.

Michael Sestak

# FEDERAL LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES



Secret Service agent Clint Hill climbs into the back seat of the limousine a moment after President John F. Kennedy and Governor John Connally of Texas were shot in Dallas, November 22, 1963. Photo © AP Images

In addition to state law enforcement agencies, there are federal organizations that implement law on the national and international level. Here are some of them.

## Protecting Federal Courts and Judges

The U.S. **Marshals Service** is the oldest federal law enforcement agency in the United States. It was established by the First Congress in 1789 in order to support the federal courts. Throughout its long history, the Service has undergone changes reflecting the shifts in the nation's politics and structure of the federal government. Today, the Service operates in all 94 federal judicial districts. Its primary task is to apprehend federal prison escapees, protect federal judges, transport federal prisoners and seize property acquired through illegal activities. Last but not least, the marshals operate the witness security program which protects key witnesses in organized crime trials through providing new identities for them and helping them to relocate to different states.

## Men Behind the President

After President William McKinley was assassinated in a public meeting at the Pan-American Exposition in Buffalo on September 6, 1901, it became apparent that presidents have to be protected by professional agents. The task was assigned to the **Secret Service**, an organization founded in 1865 to stop the production of counterfeit money. The treasury role continues to be one of the most important responsibilities of the Service, but the protective roles, which are not only limited to the person of the president but include his family, past presidents, vice presidents, presidential candidates, and foreign embassies, are always in the limelight. Secret Service agents have acted heroically: for example, agent Clint Hill, who was protecting First Lady Jacqueline Kennedy leapt from the car he was riding on to the moving Presidential Limousine and guarded the First Lady with his body when President Kennedy was shot. Similarly, agent McCarthy shielded President Ronald Reagan during an assassination attempt in 1981 and received a bullet aimed at the President in his abdomen. Secret Service agents accompany the U.S. President when he boards his airplane (which is then called Air Force One) and helicopter

(which acquires the name Marine One when the President is on board) and in motorcades. They wear lapel pins whose shape and color is changed for security reasons, and the Uniformed Division wears a shoulder patch with the presidential seal.

## Collecting Tax and Examining Explosives

ATF (**The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives**) is a federal law enforcement agency whose area of activity includes collecting tax, reducing violent crime, and protecting the public. In its highly specialized laboratories, ATF specialists conduct analyses of alcohol and tobacco products. They also specialize in examining explosives, arson and criminal evidence. The ATF employees perform the dual responsibilities of enforcing federal criminal laws and regulating the firearms and explosives industries. They work directly, and through partnerships, to investigate and reduce crime involving firearms, acts of arson, and illegal trafficking of alcohol and tobacco products.

## Safe Environment for the U.S. Foreign Service

**Diplomatic Security** is the only law enforcement agency with representation in nearly every country in the world. Its origins go back to 1916 and the Secretary of State Robert Lansing, who recognized the necessity to secure the work of the U.S. Department of State. Since then the Bureau has widened its scope of activities from primarily domestic to global. Diplomatic Security prepares a security program for every diplomatic mission in the world and protects U.S. embassies and personnel overseas. In the United States, Diplomatic Security personnel protect the Secretary of State and high-ranking foreign dignitaries and officials visiting the United States, investigate passport and visa fraud, and conduct personnel security investigations. Diplomatic Security agents also secure large events such as the Olympic Games or World Cup matches.

Text by Krakow AIRC

# ACTIVITY PAGE

## Win a Prize!

### June 2009 CONTEST

What year did 9/11 take place?

Send the answer (with your home address) to: [zoom@usinfo.pl](mailto:zoom@usinfo.pl)

Deadline: July 5

## Win a Prize!

The answer in the May 2009 Contest:

In 1906 there was a big earthquake and fire that severely damaged San Francisco

Thank you for participating

The winners are:  
Marianna from Gliwice,  
Agnieszka from Dobra  
Nowogardzka, Małgorzata from  
Nowogard, Claudia from  
Argentina and Rachid from  
Morocco

CONGRATULATIONS  
The prizes will be sent to you by mail

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■ Exercise 1 Comprehension. Read the texts on p.1-3 and choose the correct option: A, B, or C:

- Wooden rattles were used to:
  - make way for an important person
  - wake up citizens if a fire was spotted
  - let the passers-by know that a watchman was approaching
- The policy known as "zero tolerance" means that:
  - there is no tolerance for any kind of crime and vandalism
  - people mustn't say what they really think
  - criminals have no right to have attorneys
- On 9/11 the author of "We Never Found Any Survivors" was working for:
  - NYPD
  - New York state court
  - U.S. Marshals Service
- When they heard the first loud sound, the U.S. Marshals Service employees thought that:
  - a nearby house collapsed
  - there was a car crash
  - a garbage bin fell onto the pavement
- The grey dust that covered the area:
  - made Ground Zero look like an unreal place
  - made it difficult for the rescuers to breathe
  - made it impossible to drive
- The oldest federal law enforcement agency in the United States is:
  - the Secret Service
  - the U.S. Marshals Service
  - Diplomatic Security

■ Exercise 2 New York Police must be prepared to undertake action in very unusual cases. The photo below shows an Airbus 320 US Airways aircraft that went down in the Hudson River in New York on January 15, 2009.



Photo © AP Images

Work with another student. Look at the photo and discuss what rescue operation might such an accident require. What was the role of the pilot, and what was the role of the police, doctors, social workers? How can relatives and friends help the survivors of a plane crash?

Have you ever been in a dangerous situa-

## Glossary

(in the order of appearance)

municipal - of or relating to a city or town or its governing body  
turbulent - characterized by conflict  
adjacent - next to or adjoining  
perpetrator - someone who committed a crime  
perimeter - the continuous line forming the boundary of a closed geometric figure  
debris - scattered fragments of something wrecked or destroyed  
trappings - signs, features, or objects associated with a particular situation  
enforcement - compelling observance of or compliance with a law  
apprehend - arrest  
counterfeit - made in exact imitation of something valuable  
motorcade - a procession of vehicles  
lapel - the part of a jacket below the collar  
arson - criminal act of setting fire to property

(on the basis of *The New Oxford American Dictionary*)