

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

IN HONOR OF PETER RINALDI AND
THE ENGINEERS OF THE PORT
AUTHORITY OF NEW YORK AND
NEW JERSEY

HON. JERROLD NADLER

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 13, 2002

Mr. NADLER. Mr. Speaker, there were many heroes on September 11th, and many more in the months that have followed. I rise today to pay tribute to the engineers of the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, each of whom could tell you a different story about the difficult days and arduous work following September 11th. I would like to tell you a little about one Port Authority engineer, Peter Rinaldi, who joined his fellow New Yorkers in the tremendous rescue and recovery effort at Ground Zero. The following excerpt is from "American Ground: Unbuilding the World Trade Center," by William Langewiesche, published in the July/August 2002 edition of *Atlantic Monthly*.

At age fifty-two, Rinaldi was an inconspicuous olive-skinned man with graying hair and a moustache, who observed the world through oversized glasses and had a quirky way of suddenly raising his eyebrows, not in surprise but as a prompt or in suggestion. He had grown up in the Bronx as the son of a New York cop, had gone to college there, and had married a girl he had met in high school. Though he and his wife had moved to the suburbs of Westchester County to raise their three sons, he had never cut his connection to the city, or quite shed his native accent. For twenty-eight years he had commuted to the World Trade Center, to offices in the North Tower, where he worked for the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, deep within its paternal embrace and completely secure in his existence. There was an early warning in the terrorist bombing of 1993, which caught him in an elevator. Nonetheless, he was wholly unprepared for the destruction that followed in 2001. During the days after the attack, when to New York City officials the Port Authority seemed to have disappeared, it was hunkered down across the river in its New Jersey offices, suffering through a collective emptiness so severe that people themselves felt hollowed out. Peter Rinaldi felt it too, though he was far away at the time of the attack, vacationing with his wife, Audrey, on the Outer Banks of North Carolina.

Back in New York . . . Rinaldi was assigned to New York City's recovery team . . . [and] given the job of supervising the consultants who had been brought in for the specialized belowground engineering. The underground, beneath the pile, was a wilderness of ruins, a short walk from the city but as far removed from life there as any place could be. It burned until January, and because it contained voids and weakened structures, it collapsed progressively until the spring. The job of mapping the chaos fell to a small team of about six engineers who did some of the riskiest work at the site, climbing through the crevices of a strange and unstable netherworld, calmly charting its con-

ditions, and returning without complaint after major collapses had occurred.

By mid-November only one important underground area remained to be explored—a place people called "the final frontier," located deep under the center of the ruins, at the foot of the former North Tower. It was the main chiller plant, one of the world's largest air-conditioning facilities—a two-acre chamber three stories high that contained seven interconnected refrigeration units, each the size of a locomotive and capable of holding up to 24,000 pounds of dangerous Freon gas.

With the huge quantities potentially involved here, a sudden leak would fill the voids underground and spread across the surface of the pile, suffocating perhaps hundreds of workers caught out on the rough terrain and unable to move fast. To make matters worse, if the Freon cloud came into contact with open flames, of which there were plenty here, it would turn into airborne forms of hydrochloric and hydrofluoric acids and also phosgene gas, related to the mustard gas used during World War I. Then it would go drifting. People accepted the danger. The standard advice, "Just run like hell," was delivered with a little shrug. Everyone knew that if the Freon came hunting for you at the center of the pile, you would succumb.

Of all the people setting out now for the chiller plant, twenty men redefined by these ruins, the one who would have the greatest influence on the unfolding story was an obscure engineer, a lifelong New Yorker named Peter Rinaldi.

For twenty-eight years the World Trade Center was a second home to Peter Rinaldi. After its destruction, he and his fellow Port Authority employees worked "seven days a week, often fifteen hours a day" to make sure that those involved in the recovery effort would be safe, and to restore needed services, such as subway and commuter train service, to those returning to live and work in lower Manhattan. His leadership in the days following September 11th took him, on that day in November, into the debris of the World Trade Center, where it was determined that the Freon had vented and the recovery work could continue in relative safety.

Today, nine months after that horrible day, as we celebrate the lives of those we have lost and commemorate their heroism and bravery, we thank those who have given so much of themselves to the recovery of our great city. I would like to extend my thanks to the employees of the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, each of whom has come to embody the spirit of public service to the city they have served so admirably.

U.S.-RUSSIA RELATIONS

HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 13, 2002

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, President Bush has returned from a successful summit in Moscow. As the Cold War ce-

des more and more into memory, our relations with Russia continue to improve, as they should. Russia has made a significant contribution to the struggle against terrorism since the attacks on the United States last September. While there remain serious differences in the area of human rights, foreign policy, and economics, we should welcome President Putin's "turn to the West" and encourage Russia to further integrate into an international community of mutual security, free trade, and democratic structures.

Nevertheless, over this summit banquet of warm words about the "new strategic relationship" looms a "Banquo's Ghost" of tragic and monumental proportions.

I refer to the war in Chechnya—the subject of a recent hearing of the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, which I co-chair—which continues to wreak havoc and death on combatants and non-combatants alike. The brutality of the so-called "anti-terrorist operation" of the Russian military has been amply documented by reputable Russian and international organizations. Bloody military "sweeps" of civilian areas, bestial "filtration camps" and "holding pits" have become hallmarks of what passes for Moscow's military strategy.

One month ago, the Helsinki Commission heard chilling testimony from Ms. Aset Chadaeva, a nurse from Chechnya who resided in a community near Grozny, Chechnya's capital. Ms. Chadaeva described an event in February 2000, when the Russian military carried out one of its most notorious "anti-terrorists" operations:

Young Chechen men living in Chechnya today have two choices: to wage war or to wait for Russian soldiers to arrest or kill them. All three of my brothers were illegally detained by Russian servicemen. One of my brothers—officially classified as disabled because of his poor eyesight—was severely beaten by Russian soldiers in my presence. When I asked the soldiers why they were arresting him, they told me: "He's a Chechen! That's reason enough!" I treated women who had been raped by Russian soldiers, and I've also seen the bodies of women who had been killed after being raped. During both wars, I buried many dead. Bodies were left lying in the streets. I, my brothers, and my neighbors collected them so they wouldn't be eaten by dogs.

In February 2001, the remains of over fifty persons were found in a mass grave in a village located less than a mile from the Russian military headquarters in Chechnya. Russian authorities attribute their deaths to Chechen partisans.

In 2000 and 2001, the UN Commission on Human Rights in Geneva condemned the widespread violence against civilians and alleged violations of human rights and humanitarian law by Russian forces. I would note that even Chechen officials who have sided with Moscow in the conflict with the secessionist movement have criticized the reign of terror created by the Russian military in Chechnya. Unfortunately, efforts to have a resolution passed this year at the Human

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Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.

Rights Commission failed with allies and friends casting the swing votes either in opposition to the resolution offered by the European Union or abstaining. The United States does not currently have a seat on the Commission and thus was not voting.

A Human Rights Watch report of February 2002 entitled "Swept Under: Torture, Forced Disappearances, and Extrajudicial Killings During Sweep Operations in Chechnya" describes the "sweeps" conducted by the Russian military in the summer of 2001:

Troops rounded up several thousand Chechens, mostly without any form of due process, and took them to temporary military bases in or near the villages. According to eyewitnesses, soldiers extrajudicially executed at least eleven detainees, and at least two detainees "disappeared" in detention. . . . Twelve former detainees [gave] detailed testimony of torture and ill-treatment, including electric shocks, severe beatings, and being forced to remain in "stress position." Eyewitnesses also gave testimony about widespread extortion, looting, and destruction of civilian property.

Eventually, Russia's top military officer admitted that the troops had committed "widespread crimes." International revulsion against the conduct of these "sweeps" was so great that in March of this year, the Russian military introduced "Order No. 80," according to which "sweeps" are to be conducted "only in the presence of procurators but also of the local authorities and the organs of internal affairs," and local authorities are to be provided with a list of detainees. However, reports by human rights groups indicate that even these minimal requirements are not being observed on the ground. In a rare admission, the military commander in Chechnya has acknowledged that innocent people have disappeared during the "sweeps."

In October 2000, Human Rights Watch issued "Welcome to Hell," a vivid and horrifying description of arbitrary detention, torture and extortion in Chechnya. As described in the report, groups of Chechen non-combatants, usually men of military age, are detained on suspicion of participation or collaboration with Chechen guerrillas, and subjected to brutal and humiliating interrogations. This is the description of the procedure followed at the infamous Chernokozovo prison:

Detainees at Chernokozovo were beaten both during interrogation and during nighttime sessions when guards utterly ran amok. During interrogation, detainees were forced to crawl on the ground and were beaten so severely that some sustained broken ribs and injuries to their kidneys, liver, testicles, and feet. Some were also tortured with electric shocks.

In many cases, a detainee was released only after relatives or a loved one paid a bribe to his captors. In other cases, the detainee simply disappeared. Chechnya is filled today with desperate souls seeking word of their missing loved ones who are presumed dead.

Even if the Russian Government manages to create a graveyard in Chechnya and call it peace, it will be a Pyrrhic victory, sowing the seeds of social disintegration in Russia. The prominent Russian journalist and military analyst Pavel Felgenhauer has written, "The complete impunity of the military leaders is leading to the moral decay of their subordinates." He concludes that "the war in Chechnya is serving to destroy both the armed forces and the [Russian] state."

Mr. Speaker, these comments should not be seen as an endorsement of Chechen separatism, and we must frankly admit that some Chechen partisans have been linked with international terrorist organizations who see Chechnya as a staging ground for "jihad" against Moscow. I am fully aware of the depredations visited upon the people of the North Caucasus by marauding kidnappers, hijackers and terrorists. According to press reports, some Chechen guerrillas have executed "traitors" who work for the pro-Moscow administration in Chechnya.

But this does not absolve the Government of Russia from having to live up to basic standards of conduct such as the Geneva Conventions and the Code of Conduct of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. "Anti-terrorist operations" and "territorial integrity" are not synonymous with waging total and barbaric war against one's own citizens.

How many more bodies will show up in mass graves? How many young Russian soldiers' bodies will be sent homes to grieving parents in Russia? How many more displaced persons will spend another winter in tents?

The Administration has called upon Chechnya's leadership to "immediately and unconditionally cut all contacts with international terrorist groups, while calling for 'accountability for [human rights] violations on all sides,' and a political solution to the conflict. I urge the Administration to continue to use every appropriate opportunity to condemn human rights violations in Chechnya, and impress upon Moscow the need for a just political solution. I trust that the return of the United States to the UN Human Rights Committee in Geneva will afford one more such opportunity.

The last leader of the Soviet Union, Mikhail Gorbachev, once called Afghanistan a "bleeding wound." Chechnya is now the "bleeding wound" for the Russian Federation. I say this as someone who wishes Russia and the people of Russia to prosper. The time for a cease-fire and serious negotiations is at hand.

HONORING THE MEMORY OF FALLEN HEROES

HON. MARK STEVEN KIRK

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 13, 2002

Mr. KIRK. Mr. Speaker, on Dec. 16, 1944, on a snowy battlefield known as "Hill 88" near the Belgian border with Germany, the Battle of the Bulge began. As the German army advanced, heavy casualties were sustained by the U.S. Army's 99th Division, Company C, forcing surviving G.I.'s to leave fallen comrades behind in shallow graves with only dog tags, sticks, and weapons to mark them. These soldiers were lost, but not forgotten, and after 57 years, six of the more than thirty soldiers designated as Missing in Action after the battle will be given the honor they deserve after sacrificing their lives for their country.

I want to recognize the extraordinary effort by veterans from the battle and a group of Belgian nationals, who worked together to find the remains of six MIA's. This search has spanned across several generations. In September of 1988, two young Belgians, Jean-

Louis Seel and Philippe Speder, were digging in the Ardennes Forest when they discovered the remains of Private First Class Alphonse Sito of Baltimore, Maryland. This prompted William Warnock to compile a list of the 33 missing soldiers, which was published in the 99th Division Association news letter by Dick Byers, a seminal member of the 99th Division. Based on mail and data they received, Byers and Warnock prepared a map pinpointing the location where they believed the remains of Second Lieutenant L.O. Holloway could be found. After a two-day search in November 1990, Seel and Speder were successful in recovering Holloway's remains. His remains were returned to Texas at the Fort Sam Houston National Cemetery in September 1991.

The Holloway case convinced Vernon Swanson of Deerfield, Illinois, that the remains of his "foxhole buddy," Jack Beckwith, could be found. Swanson enlisted the cooperation of a wartime cohort, Byron Witmarsh, and set about the task of recovering the remains of their fallen comrades. Hoping to find Beckwith's remains, Swanson and Witmarsh joined forces with Byers, Seel, Speder, and Warnock in 1991. The group pored over records in the National Archives, the National Personnel Records Center, and the U.S. Army History Institute. An old map of the grave sites was found in Beckwith's Army file, however, an aerial photograph discovered in the National Archives proved to be the critical piece of information. It showed "88 Hill" in December 1944, from which Bill Warnock identified a grouping of trees where the grave sites were. Warnock then transferred the locations of the graves to modern topographic maps and the Belgians were on the hunt again for the remains. In April 2001, Seel decided to search an area that, to his amazement, turned up a dog tag which marked the grave site of Private David A. Read. Seel returned with Speder and two other members of the Belgian search team, Marc Marique and Luc Menestrey. On April 17, the remains of Jack Beckwith, Saul Kokotovich, and David Read were found. Over the next two days the Belgian search team labored to exhume the remains. Each of the dead was found with a single dog tag around his neck, rotted clothing, and boots. David Roth of the U.S. Army Mortuary Affairs activity was contacted and took possession of the remains to complete the official identification process.

Vernon Swanson vowed to someday return to recover the remains of his friend, Private Jack Beckwith. Over the years he made many inquiries to fellow veterans of the battle, organized an international search team, and succeeded in finding lost soldiers in a forgotten corner of a vast woodland in Belgium. During the months of June and July the remains of all six comrades will find their final resting place in a cemetery of their families' choice. On June 8, 2002, burial ceremonies were held in Ada, Oklahoma for Private First Class Ewing Fidler. On Saturday, June 22, 2002 the remains of Private First Class Jack Beckwith, Private First Class Saul Kokotovich, and Sergeant Frederick Zimmerman will be laid to rest in the American Military Cemetery in Henri Chapelle, Belgium. Private First Class David Read will be buried in Arlington National Cemetery on July 18. Private First Class Stanley Larson will be returned to Rochelle, Illinois on July 22. I want to offer my thanks to the Department of Casualty and Mortuary Affairs and