

# **Out of the darkness: Digital issue looks inside the minds, lives and hearts of responders to Sept. 11**

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The Journal of Emergency Medical Services (JEMS) today announces the publication of a special 150-page four-volume digital issue featuring first-person accounts of responders who were thrust into the world spotlight the morning of September 11, 2001, when terrorists invaded their response districts – and their lives – and changed the way they, and most responders throughout the world, think, train, respond and live their lives.

A.J. Heightman, Editor-in-Chief of JEMS, and Teresa McCallion, Editor of the EMS Insider newsletter – both published by Elsevier Public Safety, a business unit of Elsevier – teamed up to write some of the most factual and insightful editorial coverage in the history of EMS. More importantly, they were able to weave together important facts and events of the three simultaneously-occurring disasters, and present positive – and negative – effects of the events on EMS agencies and their personnel.

An important finding was that, with ten years of hindsight, they and those they interviewed realize that the responders directly involved in each terrorist event now belong to an exclusive, dreadful club. A club none of them asked to join and every one of them would rather not have been inducted into. However, they recognize that they have been set apart from the rest of humanity, damaged in a way no one but other 9/11 responders and witnesses can understand. Most responders say that they

will only talk about 9/11 with others who were there that day—other members of the club.

Since 9/11, some responders have been promoted, some have had to retire with disabilities, some have major health issues and many have experienced stress, strain and deep chasms in their relationships with loved ones. Divorce rates have soared in some circles after 9/11. Heightman and McCallion offer reasons why this is occurring and offer suggestions to reduce the emotional damage on rescuers and their families in the future.

What Heightman and McCallion also found was that while many could benefit from counseling there has been a reluctance to participate in it. But now, a decade later, many say they may finally be ready for it. Many responders are still having dark emotional days as a result of their experiences that day as well as the sights and sounds associated with their incident. The report also found that while counseling was offered to the children of responders, in many instances, their spouses and significant others were left to deal with the ramifications of 9/11 on their own.

"As we reflect on the events of that day ten years ago, it is important that we look at the responders themselves, to truly understand how that day affected their personal and professional lives," said Heightman. "In this way, we can learn what should be done to care for our front-line responders in the event of future disasters, terrorism and catastrophic events."

**More information:** [www.jems.com/](http://www.jems.com/)

Provided by Elsevier

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