

Committee on Homeland Security
Subcommittee on Emergency Preparedness, Response and Communications
Hearing on Protecting our Passengers
Perspectives on Securing Surface Transportation in New York and New Jersey

Testimony of on the Day of June 21, 2016;

Captain Richard D. Gorman #539

Jersey City Department of Fire and Emergency Services
Office Of Emergency Management and Homeland Security
Metropolitan Medical Response System Coordinator
715 Summit Avenue
Jersey City, NJ 07307

New Jersey Task Force 1 (NJ-TF 1)
Urban Search and Rescue Team, Haz Mat Red Team Manager
(Recent addition to the National USAR Response System)
New Jersey State Police USAR Unit
Joint Base McGuire-Fort Dix-Lakehurst
Hangar 4 Admin Bldg 118
County Road 547
Lakehurst NJ 08733

Chairman Donovan , Ranking Member Honorable Donald M. Payne Jr.
And the respected members of this subcommittee, On behalf of the
Jersey City Fire Dept and Emergency Response partnership of the North
New Jersey Region, Please accept my deepest gratitude to appear and
present testimony regarding the Protection of our Passengers on Surface
Transportation.

On February 9, 1996 at 840 am, the emergency response community of
Jersey City, Hudson County and NJ State, and Federal Agencies
converged to a remote section of Jersey City and Secaucus Border. As a
young firefighter/ EMT and one of the first due responders, I was
presented with a horrific crash of 2 commuter trains.

Our society was beginning to worry about terrorist events after the 1993 WTC Bombing.

Was this a terrorist event?

As highlighted in the NY Times article provided, there were many obstacles to overcome.

As the police, fire rescue and EMS crews began to triage and treat the injured, we quickly exhausted the resources we had on hand. We were already beyond our capabilities, and we haven't even transported a single patient to a hospital yet. In order to accomplish that, Command and Control had to be established, and multi discipline mutual aid had to be summoned in an unprecedented scale for our city.

Unfortunately we measure our response by stating our losses. 3 people lost their lives, the 2 engineers and 1 passenger, 162 passengers were injured (16 severely). We should begin to realize that we were successful in that all the passengers treated survived largely due to the rapid response, on scene operations due to extensive training and superior knowledge skill and ability of many emergency response personnel both on scene and in hospitals.

That day ended for us, and we were proud to say that we saved many from death and further injury that day. But the lessons learned continue to evolve.

The executives of many agencies gathered and conducted very comprehensive evaluation (Post Incident Analysis) of many aspects of this accident.

There were models presented to many committees, which included natural and man made disasters related to rail and surface mass transportation. Different target locations were introduced, to include Transportation hubs and terminals, as well as hard to access remote locations as described.

The State of New Jersey and Jersey City has come a long way from that day.

As Director Kierce has testified to the attraction of attacks on our infrastructure, we in the emergency management and response community are well aware that any place is a potential target. And we respond to each and everyone of them to protect the lives of the citizens we are sworn to protect.

Many programs have been developed to support our response to Terrorism, and enhance our ability to operate in these large scale event events.

- * Metropolitan Medical Strike Team (MMRS)
- * Urban Area Security Initiative Funding (UASI) on a regional basis
- * Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) Grants
- * Assistance to Firefighter Grant (AFG)
- * Port Security Grant Program (PSGP)

- * Enhancement in the Communications
- * Threat Analysis Groups, Fusion Centers
- * Specially Trained Teams and Groups
(NJ-TF 1, MUST, NJEMSTF, NJ Transit Police Special Operations)
- * Training and Exercise
- * Command and Control
- * Special Trained Law Enforcement Teams (RDF)
- * Information Gathering Sharing committees

MMRS was developed and was one to the 1st National Grant programs to support the emergency response agencies to address gaps in equipment and training. This funding has been discontinued, however many other programs such as the UASI has replaced it and has a more detailed , focused structure to provide a better defined overall system.

The ongoing inter agency communication of radio , data and live streaming to enhance situational awareness from on scene operation to senior commanders and executive decision making officials continues to evolve. Secure radio communication have become better and will continue to grow with the demand.

Systems like NJ NET and Mutual Link are becoming common. Local, County and State Emergency Operations Centers, Fusion Centers, Coordination Centers are in virtually every city and township, which are used for planned events, and natural and manmade disasters.

These systems and locations are extremely useful, however they do have a price tag in the new and evolving technical support they require.

Specially Trained units such the NJ-TF 1 USAR team. Due to a large commitment of manpower and equipment was recently the latest to be accepted into the National Urban Search and Rescue Response System. This team began it's journey in 1998. From that unit, a new concept was introduced in NJ. The Metro Urban Strike Team (MUST), Funded by the UASI program, local departments have received equipment and training to fulfill the first response operational period of the 1st 4-6 hours in structural collapse, trench rescue, technical rescue, and seek to train and respond in enhanced disciplines. The NJ EMFS Task Force is also a system born of the continued UASI subcommittees.

I would like to thank you for your support and commitment and that of our elected officials from many levels of government.

Training and Exercise Programs in basic to advanced operations. From initial arrival to advanced Command and Control have also been developed. These programs are world class, delivered by the very best instructors in the their field. Many are sponsored by the National Office of Domestic Preparedness and similar agencies.

These are invaluable, however often are scaled down due to departments operating at minimum staffing levels and or budgetary concerns to pay for venues and cost of replacing personnel.

The allocation or allowance of federally funded training centers and staff should be seriously reconsidered. Hudson County does not have a fully functional, fully staffed multi discipline training academy training ground. The personnel must be placed off duty and often replaced to attend training academies in other counties leading to delays in response should they be recalled .

RDF and Information Sharing Components (JTTF) have or will be addressed by other capable persons here.

In closing, On Behalf of Director of Public Safety Shea and Chief of Department Darren Rivers and the men and women of the Jersey City Fire Department, The men and women of the NJ Task Force 1, and of course Jersey City City Mayor Steven M. Fulop, I thank you again for your interest in the most important aspect of our business, keeping the citizens of the United States and her visitors safe and secure.