

TESTIMONY

**Testimony from Kenneth C. Weaver
Chief Postal Inspector**

**before the
Senate Subcommittee on International Security,
Proliferation and Federal Services**

September 20, 2001

Thank you Mr. Chairman and members of the subcommittee for the opportunity to appear today. I have a separate written report of the activities of the United States Postal Inspection Service and would like to have it entered into the record.

Mr. Chairman, today I am wearing an American flag on my lapel in place of the Postal Inspector lapel pin that I normally wear. I have served in the Army, as you have, under this flag. I have also served under this flag for 30 years in the United States Postal Service, 27 of those years as a Postal Inspector. As the Chief Postal Inspector, I have always been proud of the outstanding work performed by the men and women of the Postal Inspection Service. But, I have never been more proud of how Inspection Service employees handled themselves and answered the call to duty than I have during this crisis.

As the tragic terrorist events of last week unfolded, the Postal Inspection Service immediately took action in support of the Postal Service and all Americans. Across the country, Inspectors, Postal Police Officers and support personnel performed acts of heroism and provided significant security and investigative assistance to protect the mail, the Postal Service and its employees, and to help others in their efforts to address to our nation's tragedy.

The Inspection Service has the responsibility to ensure the safety and security of postal employees, facilities and assets, as well as the United States Mail. We have done just that. And, we have done more. I visited New York earlier this week to express my heartfelt appreciation to all our people for the outstanding effort that they have put forth during this crisis. Although shaken from the attacks, there is that "steely" New York resolve to put things back together. I saw it in the eyes of our employees. They will not be defeated.

On the tragic day of September 11, our New York Division suffered the most serious affects from the attack. The postal facility across the street from the World Trade Center, Church Street Station, was the office for numerous Inspectors, Postal Police Officers and support staff as well as for employees of our New York Crime Lab. The station sustained extensive structural damage from the initial explosions and the ash and falling debris during the collapse of the World Trade Center towers. Inspectors at Church

Street offered immediate assistance to victims on the street -- civilians and local police officers injured in the attack -- evacuating the area as glass and debris fell from the sky.

Since the attack, Inspectors in New York and at outlying offices have been following up on the numerous bomb threats and scares which have forced evacuation of postal facilities. Inspectors are also working with the FBI on investigative leads in the New York area.

When the attack on the Pentagon occurred, Postal Inspectors from the Washington, DC area responded to assist FBI agents with evidence collection at the crash site. In Pennsylvania, a team of Inspectors from the Pittsburgh area reported to the plane crash site at Somerset County to assist in securing the site and the mail. Three teams of Postal Inspectors continue on rotating shifts at the FBI Command Center.

Since the attack, the Postal Inspection Service has also provided significant investigative assistance and support to the FBI, Federal Aviation Administration, and emergency management agencies across the nation. As part of our role in national security, an Inspector was dispatched to the Federal Emergency Management Agency secure command post to participate with representatives from over 25 federal agencies to continue operation of the government. The Postal Service Continuation of Operations Plan was implemented immediately, with Inspectors providing security at the off-site postal operations command center location.

As Postal Service operations managers have dealt with moving the mail during the last week, the Inspection Service has worked to ensure mail security nationwide. For example, the Amtrak network has been expanded and Postal Inspectors are present at key locations nationwide that serve as transfer points for the mail.

Since 1979 the Postal Service has had an aviation mail security program in place. In 1996, working with the FAA, we tightened restrictions to further improve security. Although this may be an inconvenience to our customers, these steps were necessary to strengthen airmail security.

Tragedies so often bring out the best in people. Unfortunately, tragedies also bring out those who would prey on the misfortune of others and on that very desire to help victims. These are the con artists who will solicit donations for the families of victims, yet not a dime will ever make it to those in need. Postal Inspectors will aggressively pursue those con artists. And we are offering some advice to the American public on how to make sure their donations go where they are intended. In conjunction with this hearing, we have issued a press release with this useful information and I would like to make it part of the record.

Safety and security of Postal Service employees is our top priority. Security must be a part of all postal employees' daily activities. We have advised employees of security precautions they should be taking to contribute to this overall effort. As helpful eyes and ears in our nation's neighborhoods and business communities, our employees have provided information, which has assisted law enforcement investigative efforts. We have learned that

some of the hijackers were receiving mail at commercial mail receiving agency boxes. Unfortunately, we see too frequently criminals hiding behind the anonymity afforded by an address at a commercial mail receiving agency.

I applaud the outstanding commitment to duty and resolve of *all* postal employees during this time of crisis. And I assure you that the United States Postal Inspection Service will continue working to keep our employees safe, to keep the mail moving and to preserve America's confidence in its postal system. We will also continue to assist other federal law enforcement agencies in the investigation of last week's tragic events.

Mr. Chairman, I appreciate your interest in the Inspection Service and the opportunity to provide this statement. This concludes my remarks.

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