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Vessel Operators Remember 9/11 Heroism, Work Daily to Keep Country Safe

On the 13th anniversary of the terrorist attacks of September 11, America's tugboat, towboat and barge industry pauses to remember the nearly 3,000 Americans who lost their lives, and also to acknowledge the inspiring bravery shown by first responders and everyday citizens on that tragic day. One of the most notable acts of valor was the maritime evacuation of Lower Manhattan – the largest water evacuation in American history – in which 500,000 people were transported to safety by hundreds of vessels which answered a call from the U.S. Coast Guard to converge on New York Harbor to aid in the evacuation. This extraordinary rescue was memorialized in the 2011 short documentary film [Boatlift](#), in which narrator Tom Hanks noted that “for the first time in over one hundred years, boats were the only way on or off the island of Manhattan.”

“America’s domestic maritime fleet plays a crucial role in transporting the nation’s commerce every day and in ensuring our nation’s resilience during times of emergency,” said Tom Allegretti, President & CEO of the American Waterways Operators. “The Boatlift heroes truly lived up to one of the U.S. Merchant Marine’s oldest mottos, ‘acta non verba,’ or ‘deeds not words.’”

“Longstanding maritime traditions of selflessness and concern for the welfare of others guided the heroes of the September 11 Boatlift. Often, we take our American maritime industry for granted as it works in quiet anonymity to keep our country and our economy moving. But, for those who are familiar with this proud industry, these acts of heroism came as no surprise,” Mr. Allegretti stated.

“Now more than ever, domestic maritime supports U.S. economic, homeland and national security. American tugboat, towboat and barge operators are the eyes of ears of the nation’s inland waterways, coastlines and critical harbors, ready to respond at a moment’s notice to a natural disaster or security threat.”

The American Waterways Operators is the national trade association representing the tugboat, towboat and barge industry which operates along the rivers, coasts, Great Lakes and harbors of the United States. Barge transportation serves the nation as the safest, most environmentally friendly and most economical mode of freight transportation. For more information about AWO, or to learn more about the mariners serving in your community, please visit www.americanwaterways.com or contact Ann McCulloch at 703-373-2252.

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