

# **EAGLES -- FLYING ON ONE WING**

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Since Katrina, now a year ago, have you felt that your life was flying on only one wing? After Katrina the population seemed stuck in a subliminal morass of self-doubt and despondency. Our country, leaders of the world, had witnessed a monumental failure of our systems during desperate times. Until the FAA/TSA DEFCON YELLOW, and then the Strong Angel 3 challenge arose, there appeared to be a lack of confidence (and interest) in taking a hand to end this stagnant lack of interest in the resultant federal nonsense.

Since Strong Angel 3, it is apparent that this belief that Emergencies can be "managed" is evaporating. Disasters on both a large and small scale are not your ordinary emergency (if there is any such thing.).

They are large or small "runway trains". Even the smartest "manager" cannot stop a run-away train. That's the job of an "operator" who RESPONDS with the chosen immediate action to whatever circumstance in order to mitigate the damage further down the track.

After 15 years of Federal focus on paper planning and federally led systems, training, equipment lists of untested technology and "management" we are experiencing a serious short fall in trained Operators, while saddled with a plethora of "managers" in high places.

The result of this 15 year course is a nation significantly devoid of trained civilians for Ready Operators. Our only present source, in numbers, is the military, which includes the Coast Guard. We could be faced with the possibility of a national debacle greater than that of another 9/11.

Luckily, in 9/11 we had great policy in Mayor Juliani and Gov. Petake, leaders at the local and state level. Although declared an "Event of National Significance" making federal resources immediately available, it remained a local site until the following attack on the Pentagon.

Our National Response "management system" was woefully incapable of responding in a lifesaving time frame to the NYC catastrophic event. More importantly the necessary local and state infrastructure and logistics were not in place and cost the lives of our valiant first responders.

What saved our national pride and gave our communities across the nation the willingness and heart to Press On in the face of the slaughter was the "valor" of our sacrificed First Responders. We underscore the word "Valor", a word seldom read in any of today's rabid media reports. All words carry with them

"baggage", both good and bad. Valor is more than courage or bravery. Valor carries with it not only courage, but also responsibility and ethics, all graphically conveyed in every photo and film clip of 9/11.

It is our obligation to these valorous First Responders that we insure the nation returns to a Ready Response for the Operations of Disaster Response, then following into the Recovery phase. Time for this is running out. Let's get at least a "quick fix" for Rapid Response into our pockets before the "next one".

Will that "next one" turn out to be our generation's "Pearl Harbor"? Believe me, as a survivor of the 1940 Pearl Harbor, the World Trade Center, a horrible, life-costing and dastardly deed against civilians was not a Pearl Harbor. That day after Pearl Harbor, our nation awoke to find our Navy, our vaunted protection from the Pacific, -- gone, sunk at the bottom of our forward "protected" sanctuary.

Heaven knows this country does not need another lesson like that one. Let's get some solid remedial action here immediately. We are running on empty as it is today. A workable system that can be immediately employed is the mandated ICS system. NIUSR is recommending that all civilians wishing to be considered qualified Emergency Managers be required to complete the ICS 300 series in order to meet CEM certification. We further urge that as many as possible be trained through the entire 17 section of the ICS system. Note, we state use of the Incident Command System, NOT the National Emergency Management System This is not an esoteric difference, but crucial to training for taking action to stop the "Run0away Train" of a multi-agency, multi-jurisdictional Disaster.

Key to any change--to ALL change—is rapid, simple, constant communication and information exchange. Time is the killer in disaster, whether natural or man-made. We must add a portfolio of information-ready systems and redundant networks, available at a moments notice from our 21st century technology.

In the last analysis it is not technology that fails in an emergency, disaster or terrorist catastrophe. It is untrained, uninformed people, out of their comfort zone and over-stressed by the unknown and unaccustomed circumstances, making incorrect (or no) decisions. That is the lesson re-learned in every disaster to date in this century, both here and overseas.

Ready Response is an achievable goal. People, trained in thoughtful action, networked by information, cooperation, kindness and courtesy can form a Community of the Willing that can overcome mountains of adversity. NIUSR can lead the way. Will you join with us to fly on two wings—Readiness and Information, or more accurately Readiness and Intelligence. Press on.