

# Weymouth Firefighters Plan 9/11 Memorial With World Trade Center Artifact



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From left, retired Weymouth firefighter Kevin Dawyskiba, retiree Jim Merchant, firefighter Tom Bradley, retiree Art Mahoney, firefighter Brad Flannery and retiree Steve Milligan with the steel being stored in Pembroke. Wednesday, June 17, 2015.

**By Christian Schiavone**

PEMBROKE – The 11-foot long steel crossbeam is badly twisted and sharply bent in the middle. It's flecked with concrete where it used to hold up a floor in one of the World Trade Center towers and dotted with what's left of rivets that were sheered off when the tower came crashing down on Sept. 11, 2001.

Members of the Weymouth Firefighters Union Local 1616 picked up the one-ton relic salvaged from the wreckage in Lower Manhattan last week, capping a four-year effort to get a piece of the World Trade Center to use as part of a memorial to the nearly 3,000 people killed in the terrorist attack.

“Its’ a great visual representation of what happened,” firefighter Brad Flannery, who heads the union’s 9/11 Memorial Committee, said. “The way it’s twisted and mangled really shows the enormity of the events of that day.”

A contingent of 10 Weymouth firefighters picked up the beam from a hangar at John F. Kennedy International Airport in New York and trucked it back to Weymouth wrapped in an American flag. A state police escort led the way.

“It’s an experience I’ll never forget,” firefighter Tom Bradley, who drove the beam back in his truck, said. “It feels like I’m doing something good for those people so they can be remembered.”

The union is currently storing the beam in Pembroke where current and retired firefighters gathered Wednesday to see it up close. They’re still coming up with a design and location for the memorial.

“I think this will be a moving tribute,” retired Weymouth firefighter Kevin Dawyskiba said. “People need to remember history and never forget what happened.”

Among those killed in the 9/11 attacks were 343 firefighters.

Mayor Susan Kay said she’s looking forward to working with the firefighters to find a location for a permanent 9/11 memorial in town.

“I think it’s wonderful for Weymouth to have a piece of the World Trade Center. Now it’s just a matter of where to put it,” she said. “We want it to be in a place that’s fitting.”

The Port Authority of New York and New Jersey has given out pieces of steel from the towers to public safety departments around the country, but they’ve become harder to get as supplies have dwindled. The Weymouth firefighters first requested one in 2011 and were turned down. It took several more tries before their request was accepted.

There are no markings on the beam to indicate what floor it held up or which of the two towers it was part of.

“You put your hand on it and that’s what you think about,” said Flannery, who was inspired to leave his job at a software company to become a firefighter by the events of 9/11. “Who was on the floor this supported? Did it hold up long enough for them to get out? To put your hand on it makes it really poignant