



American Dunkirk: The Waterborne Evacuation of Manhattan on 9/11

James M Kendra, Tricia Wachtendorf

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When the terrorist attacks struck New York City on September 11, 2001, boat operators and waterfront workers quickly realized that they had the skills, the equipment, and the opportunity to take definite, immediate action in responding to the most significant destructive event in the United States in decades. For many of them, they were “doing what needed to be done.”

American Dunkirk shows how people, many of whom were volunteers, mobilized rescue efforts in various improvised and spontaneous ways on that fateful date. Disaster experts James Kendra and Tricia Wachtendorf examine the efforts through fieldwork and interviews with many of the participants to understand the evacuation and its larger implications for the entire practice of disaster management.

The authors ultimately explore how people—as individuals, groups, and formal organizations—pull together to respond to and recover from startling, destructive events. *American Dunkirk* asks, What can these people and lessons teach us about not only surviving but thriving in the face of calamity?

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