

9/11 Changed His Life, Man Says

By: Brandy Smith - September 11, 2017

For many like Galen Bargerstock, the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center towers 16 years ago forever changed his life.

Bargerstock, a Dayton-area native and president of Government and Civil Employee Services Inc. in Indiana, was living in Newark, N.J., and commuting into New York City for college when the attack happened. He was pursuing a career in audio engineering and production.

The night before, he had stayed at a friend's house, which changed his usual route to school. That morning he walked past the towers before the planes struck the buildings. He was late for class and decided to just sit in the back when less than 10 minutes later a female student, who was also late, came rushing in, saying a plane had flown into the World Trade Center. Bargerstock and his classmates immediately went to the windows to look, but all they could see was smoke filling the streets of New York City.

The students filed out into the streets. A girl ran to a neighboring convenience store to get a camera and was snapping pictures. Bargerstock watched as the second plane crashed into the other tower. "Everyone was just silent. The streets were full, but everyone was just watching," Bargerstock said.

Dust and smoke filled the air, covering everyone who was standing nearby. Cellphones were not working, but Bargerstock and a group of five people from his school stuck together. "We didn't know where to go or what to do. The saddest part was seeing people jumping from the buildings," Bargerstock said with tears in his eyes.

The group decided they had to do something to help. They went to a nearby hospital to donate blood and unload trucks with supplies. They worked through the night and returned home to process what had just happened the next afternoon. "It was such an odd morning. I had just walked by there and I wasn't usually on that side of town," he said. He continued with saying it looked like a bomb scene in a movie; it was a ghost town with the windows of buildings blown out and everything covered in dust.

With graduation so close, the school took the remainder of the week off, but resumed classes the

following week to finish the semester.

Bargerstock worked in the city making phone calls to ask for donations for the victims of the attack, but couldn't find a job in his field in New York City. "I was preparing for internships and job interviews and the place I was interested in just wasn't there anymore," he said. With no luck finding a job, Bargerstock moved to Pittsburgh after a couple of months.

As soon as he returned to Pittsburgh, he got the phonebook out and started making calls to recruiters. He decided to join the Army because they would completely pay off his student loans.

Bargerstock served three and a half years in the United States Army. He was stationed in Germany for airborne school for two years, then moved to Iraq for his remaining time. In Iraq, Bargerstock had been there less than a month when the Humvee that he was riding atop was blown up.

"I saw stuff you didn't want to see because it's a war zone," Bargerstock said. Luckily, he was not seriously injured in the explosion and received a Purple Heart. "It was just another adventure," he said about his time in the military. "I met a lot of great people."

After his discharge from the Army, Bargerstock came back to Indiana. Very soon after, he met his partner in life, Clinton Smith. The couple moved back to Pittsburgh, where Bargerstock took a job at a call center dealing with Medicare claims and general questions. He worked there for a year and a half before Smith received a job offer in Florida. They moved and Bargerstock took a marketing position at an insurance agency where he marketed long-term care for seniors. In 2009, they moved back to Indiana when the economy took a turn for the worse.

Back in his home state, Bargerstock was on the job hunt again. He responded to an ad on Craigslist, but after just three months, the company went bankrupt. Before closing their doors, they offered to teach him everything they knew. He took over, started his own business and it has grown since. Government and Civil Employee Services, Inc. began in 2010 and moved to Indiana in April of this year.

"You're not planning someone's money, you're plan-

ning their life — it's a bond," he said. Bargerstock and Smith wanted to do more with the community though. Upon opening in Indiana, they joined the Chamber of Commerce and have been giving back to the locals as much as possible. "I've done a lot, I've seen a lot, it's time for me to help others."

"Everything I've done in my life is just a buildup to where I am now and it all happened because of 9/11," Bargerstock said. "I joined the military because I couldn't find a job in my field and everything else has just happened."

He said he went to New York as a child and came out as an adult because of the events that unfolded on that mournful day in September. He has been back to New York City, but was unable to visit the area where the twin towers were or the monument stands today.

Of his original group, he is Facebook friends with two of them and they talk from time to time. He lost touch with the others, however. He has not had any issues with PTSD or anything of that nature, like other people who witnessed the tragedy do.

"It's been a crazy ride, but I just try to stay positive about it all," Bargerstock said. "I love New York."



Galen Bargerstock, president of Government & Civil Employee Services, LLC (GCES), is concentrated on navigating federal and state employees through financial and retirement planning. Galen holds a Pennsylvania Life, Health and Annuity License, as well as Series 6 and 63 licenses. To contact Galen, call 800-985-3272 or visit gces.us.

Securities offered and sold through CoreCap Investments, Inc., a registered broker/dealer and member FINRA/SIPC. Government & Civil Employee Services, LLC (GCES) and CoreCap are separate and unaffiliated entities.