

# World Trade Center beam lifts spirits



**Matt Stanley / Staff Photographer**

John Thallmayer of Hatfield places an American flag on the flatbed truck carrying a 20-foot piece of steel from the World Trade Center while stopped off Route 1 in Morrisville Thursday. The steel beam was secured by the Travis Manion foundation for a Bucks County area memorial.

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**World Trade Center beam lifts spirits** Freda R. Savana, staff writer | 0 comments

Ginny Heinlein waited patiently, rocking her 6-month-old grandson on her hip, while her son stood by with a large American flag in hand.

The Chalfont family checked up and down Stump Road on Thursday afternoon, anxious to see the flashing red lights of the escort vehicles that would mean the steel beam from the World Trade Center would soon arrive in Montgomery Township.

As the truck carrying the 20-foot-long twisted piece of metal from New York City arrived, the family eagerly waved flags and cheered.

"It's a sign of how America is resilient. It's a celebration of who we are as a country," said Heinlein, who shared the "historic moment" with her 12-year-old son, Tyler; her grandson, Leighton Yerger and his mother, Alicia Sarnese.

The beam will be stored at a Montgomery County electronics business until a sculptor is found to shape it into a fitting memorial, said Ryan Manion, executive director of the Travis Manion Foundation and Travis's sister.

It was the foundation that applied for a grant to receive the beam. Travis Manion, a Marine officer, was killed during his second tour of duty in Iraq in 2007 and his family created the foundation in his honor.

A banner, proclaiming the foundation's motto, "9/11 Never Forget. Honor the fallen by challenging the living" was hung on the truck carrying the beam.

Manion said she expects the beam to eventually be donated to the new Bucks County Justice Center. She envisions the beam as being cut in half, each side representing one of the trade center towers. The bottom of the sculpture would be designed by an as yet-to-be-determined artist.

"It's just a thought," she added.

Army Pfc. Alexander Tranauskas was on hand to witness the arrival of the beam. His family owns the electronics company where the piece will be stored until it's transformed and his mother, Tina, helped secure the grant.

"It makes me feel proud," the young soldier said.

Tina Tranauskas rode on the truck with the beam on its journey from New York City. In Morrisville, groups waited for the truck to arrive and joined the procession through Bucks and into Montgomery County.

For Gary Fitzgerald, seeing the beam was "kind of eerie. It brings back memories of a somber day."

Fitzgerald, a designer with Raymour and Flanigan furniture store, which sits across the street from the beam's storage location, came out from the business with a couple of other employees to see the event.

"I'm curious to see what it will become," said Tristin Clark, who works in store's warehouse. "I'll come to Doylestown to see it."

With the recent killing of Osama bin Laden, the beam took on even greater meaning for some.

"It's a symbol of our freedom, as tragic as it is," said Manion. "Knowing the mastermind of the reason this beam is here is no longer on this Earth is satisfying."

And Tyler Heinlein was pleased such a memorable artifact will be nearby.

"It's really historical and it will be close to where I live, even though it didn't happen close to me," said the Butler Elementary student.

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