

AMERICAN HEROES, AMERICAN UNION MEMBERS

Remember the US Airways crew that pulled off an amazing landing in the Hudson and safely evacuated the plane?

And remember that ship crew that successfully fought off pirates?

Yesterday, three members of the International Union, Security, Police and Fire Professionals of America joined these men and women as union members whose training prepared them to perform heroically when it mattered most.

ThinkProgress spoke to SPFPA Organizing Director Steve Maritas, who said that the officers working at the museum worked for Wackenhut Services, Inc. He stressed that because of the intense security environment in Washington, DC, these men and women go through extensive training:

These guys are security police professionals, which is a whole different level of training compared to security guards. ...

We represent approximately 5,000 officers around the area, including the Pentagon and the Ronald Reagan Building. It's a tragedy, what happened. [...]

Because of the high-profile buildings that they represent, they would continuously provide training to these officers. ...

When they train these guys, they're trained on more of a terrorism level.

Tragically, Stephen T. Johns gave his life while

protecting the visitors and employees of the Holocaust Museum. And he might not have died had union demands that these guards receive company-issued protective vests been heeded; Johns took a bullet in his torso.

This is our third reminder this year that unions do more than fight for middle class wages. They fight for the training that prepares men and women to do their jobs well. They help to ensure the safety of these men and women—and through their work, the safety of all of us.

We got another reminder yesterday of the real dangers presented by home grown right wing terrorism. But we also got another reminder that a lot of the heroes of these stories are union members, working to keep us all safe.