

Sept. 11 Attack 20th Anniversary: Live Updates >

Where's Trump on 9/11? Not at ground zero.



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By Katie Rogers

Notably absent from the 9/11 memorial ceremonies on Saturday was former President Donald J. Trump, a native New Yorker who built much of his political brand in the divisive aftermath of the attacks.

“He had the option to attend but decided to honor the day with different stops,” his spokeswoman, Liz Harrington, said.

President Biden, former President Barack Obama and former President Bill Clinton all attended the somber name-reading ceremony in Lower Manhattan. Former President George W. Bush spoke at a memorial near Shanksville, Pa., where Mr. Biden attended a wreath-laying ceremony.

But instead of appearing at one of the ceremonies, Mr. Trump released a series of aggressive statements that criticized Mr. Biden’s handling of the troop pullout in Afghanistan and praised his allies, including Rudolph W. Giuliani, his personal lawyer and the mayor of New York on the day of the Sept. 11 attacks.

Lee Cochran, a spokeswoman for the 9/11 Memorial & Museum, confirmed that Mr. Trump had been given the same information about the ceremony as the other current and former presidents who did attend.

“You would have to ask Trump’s team about their decision, but he did not attend today’s commemoration,” Ms. Cochran said.

Mr. Trump visited a police precinct and a neighboring firehouse in Midtown Manhattan. He briefly paid tribute to the heroism of the police and firefighters after the planes hit the twin towers, but spent most of his time treating the visit as a campaign-style rally, continuing his criticism of the Afghanistan pullout, complaining about crime in cities, commenting on how many police officers and firefighters supported him, and falsely claiming once again that he had won the election.

At the fire station Mr. Trump visited, one firefighter in uniform wore a Make America Great Again hat as he posed beside the former president. A Fire Department spokesman, Jim Long, said that wearing clothing with political messaging while on duty was against department rules and that the infraction “will be addressed.” He did not elaborate.

Mr. Trump has claimed in the past that he spent extensive time with emergency workers in the aftermath of the attacks, but the workers have said that claim is exaggerated.

Mr. Trump also virtually addressed Let Us Worship, an evangelical event at the National Mall in Washington, D.C. And he was set to provide commentary for a pay-per-view boxing match in Hollywood, Fla.

Andy Newman contributed reporting.

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