

## **FROM THE INSIDE OUT**

Harrowing Escapes from the Twin Towers  
of the World Trade Center  
Erik O. Ronningen



Erik was a professionally trained classical oboist, and at the age of sixteen he performed for a season with the National Symphony Orchestra in Washington, D.C. before receiving a full four-year scholarship to the Valley Forge Military Academy and College.

Upon graduation in 1966 he was commissioned a second lieutenant in the United States Army Corps of Engineers. He asked to serve in Vietnam, but the Army sent him to the Republic of Germany to take command of a NATO nuclear weapons site on the border of the then Iron Curtain in the Fulda Gap.

Leaving military service he experienced the normal business process, eventually starting his own company. He received a United States Patent for a unique software package that audited the destruction of financial and proprietary sensitive components in mainframe computers.

In October 1996 his best friend, the Director of Security for the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, asked him to consult for seven months to architect the new access control systems for the World Trade Center. Seven months turned into eighteen years.

The last person to make it out of the South Tower before it collapsed, Erik was on the 71<sup>st</sup> floor of the North Tower at 8:46 AM that most unforgettable morning of September 11, 2001.