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moments ago. Breathe the dust and ash. It's everywhere.

The destruction at Ground Zero is a reality engraved not only in Bell's mind--but every other American's mind.

However, last Monday, March 11, Ground Zero looked quite different to the crowds of people standing on the streets of New York.

They were there to watch two towering beams of light shoot through the sky, ghostly reminders of the towers that once stood there.

Men and women looked up, their eyes filling with tears once again. Several planes swept the sky, on this night a much-appreciated security.

The beams, commissioned by the city of New York on the sixth-month anniversary of Sept. 11, will light the sky through the month of April as a memorial to the victims--and as an emblem of unity.

"One good thing, if any, is the unity. People don't take things for granted now," said Officer Aguay of the NYPD who was at Ground Zero on this anniversary.

Aguay and other NYPD police officers became the heroes of Sept. 11.

And the streets are still full of these heroes.

On that Monday New York's finest were still giving the relief efforts all they had.

Officer Osurio was stationed on one of the nearby bridges to help the people on Sept. 11.

"It looked like a New York City Marathon," he said, "but we are out here to do our jobs. There was really no time to stop and think. When everyone was running out, the emergency workers were running the other way."

Osurio, along with countless others, did not give a second thought to his job.

However, he--like every other hero involved in the aftermath--could not withstand stoicism for long.

"I went home that night and just held my daughters."

Even now, Osurio is still shocked every time he sees Ground Zero, an area resembling more of a construction sight with only a gaping hole where the famous towers once stood.

"New Yorkers have had to face this every day; we are getting used to it--moving on," said Officer Wagner. "People from out of town come out here at 3 a.m. to look and cry. They are still dealing with it."

However, unlike Osurio, Wagner said that "you get used to it after a while."

When asked how they feel about being a New York City

Police officer right now, they all agreed that they were just doing their jobs.

Each police officer now wears a black band around their badge as a sign of mourning for the lost members of the NYPD.

Emily Yount, a junior at N.C. State, went to New York the weekend after Sept. 11 and was back on this anniversary.

"Life goes on. Then there was just silence," she said. "Now the talk and noise of New York is back."

Bell who now goes to the doctor every sixty days for chest x-rays, said that "the city has recovered well, people just want to talk about it."

Life continues, as America looks for meaning, but the heart wrenching challenge people like Bell, Aguay, Osurio, Wagner, Yount and thousands of other Americans face is to remember-and continue to rebuild buildings and lives in memory of those who perished.

On a memorial wall full of pictures and letters, a letter captures the heartbreak--if that is even possible:

"Dear Jimmy, I miss you more every day. My heart is broken. You are more than my brother, you are my friend. I love you so much. Talk to you later. Love, me."

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"It was one less thing I had to worry about."

Harris said that she still feels that Meredith is a safe place.

"They're just stolen computers. Nobody was physically hurt," said Harris.

Officer William Moore of Campus Police agreed that Meredith is still a safe campus, but would not comment further on the stolen laptop reports he filed for faculty such as Britt.

Moore said he could not comment without official approval from Campus Police Chief Frank Strickland.

Strickland was unavailable for comment.

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