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## September 11, 2001



AP/ERNESTO MORA

Two women hold each other as they watch the World Trade Center burn following a terrorist attack on the twin skyscrapers in New York City on Tuesday, Sept. 11, 2001 (above). Terrorists crashed two civilian planes into the World Trade Center, causing the 110-story towers to collapse Tuesday morning (below). Terrorists also made attacks involving planes on the Pentagon near Washington, D.C., and in Pennsylvania.



AP/JERRY TORRENS

## Pile of Rubble, Twisted Steel All That Remain of Towers

The Associated Press

NEW YORK — In the most devastating terrorist onslaught ever waged against the United States, knife-wielding hijackers crashed two airplanes into the World Trade Center on Tuesday, toppling its twin 110-story towers. The deadly calamity was witnessed on televisions across the world as another plane slammed into the Pentagon in Washington, D.C., and a fourth crashed outside Pittsburgh, Pa. "Freedom itself was attacked this morning, and I assure you freedom will be defended," said President Bush, who was in Florida at the time of the catastrophe. As a security measure, he was shuttled to a Strategic Air Command bunker in Nebraska before returning to Washington on Tuesday afternoon.

Establishing the U.S. death toll could take weeks. The four airliners alone had 266 people aboard, and there were no known survivors. At the Pentagon, about 800 people were believed dead on Tuesday night.

In addition, a firefighters' union official said he feared an estimated 200 firefighters had died in rescue efforts at the trade center — where 50,000 people worked — and dozens of police officers were believed missing.

The chaos started at about 8:45 a.m. when a hijacked airliner crashed into the north tower of the World Trade Center, the 25-year-old skyscraper in downtown Manhattan.

"I just heard the building rock," said Peter Dicerbo, a bank employee on the 47th floor of the building. "It knocked me on the floor. It sounded like a big roar,

then the building started swaying. That's what really scared me."

The enormity of the disaster was just sinking in when, 18 minutes later, the south tower of the center also was hit by a plane.

"All this stuff started falling and all this smoke was coming through. People were screaming, falling and jumping out of the windows," said Jennifer Brickhouse, 34, from Union, N.J.

Workers stumbled down scores of flights, their clothing torn and their lungs filled with smoke and dust.

At the World Trade Center, the dead and the doomed plummeted from the skyscrapers, among them a man and woman holding hands.

John Axisa said he ran outside and watched people jump out of the first building; then there was a second explosion, and he felt the heat on the back of his neck.

Donald Burns, 34, was being evacuated from the 82nd floor when he saw four people in the stairwell. "I tried to help them but they didn't want anyone to touch them. The fire had melted their skin. Their clothes were tattered," he said.

But the worst was yet to come. At about 9:30 a.m., an airliner hit the Pentagon in Washington, D.C. — the five-sided headquarters of the American military. "There was screaming and pandemonium," said Terry Yonkers, an Air Force civilian employee at work inside the

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*A date which will live in infamy.*

Franklin Delano Roosevelt