

FILE--The twin towers of New York's World Trade Center rise over the World Financial Center in this view, from the air, in this June 23, 1999 file photo.

Terrorists crashed two planes into the World Trade Center and knocked down the twin 110-story towers Tuesday morning, September 11, 2001. (AP Photo/Ed Bailey, File)





WORLD TRADE CENTER

A pleasant September morning turns horrific when, in a coordinated terrorist attack on the United States, a hijacked United Airlines plane approaches to strike the south tower of the World Trade Center, 18 minutes after a hijacked American Airlines jet smashed into the north building, leaving a gaping hole billowing smoke.

Panic and terror gave way to anger and disbelief on September 11, 2001 as New Yorkers mourned the massive loss of life after two hijacked commercial planes slammed into the World Trade Center's twin towers, which later crumpled to the ground in a heap of concrete, flames and ash.



A fiery blast rocks the second World Trade Center tower, while the first continues to gush smoke.





People scramble to safety in front of City Hall as the first World Trade Center tower collapses. The attack occurred during the morning commute when lower Manhattan was packed with workers and tourists.



The first of the World Trade Center towers collapses at 9:50 a.m., an hour after it was hit by a hijacked Los Angeles-bound airliner carrying 92 people that had departed from Boston.



People in front of St. Patrick's Cathedral look down Fifth Avenue toward the imploding towers. Said Lewis Eisenberg, in charge of the Port Authority agency that operates the World Trade Center: "I just saw my two towers fall. I'm devastated beyond belief."

"All of a sudden there were people screaming. I saw people jumping out of the building. Their arms were flailing," recalls freelance photographer Michael Walters of Manhattan. "I stopped taking pictures and started crying."



Some people fleeing the carnage of the collapsed buildings plunged their heads into city fountains, seeking relief from burning eyes and nostrils and blocked sinuses caused by dust and smoke.



The south tower
begins to collapse.





Bystanders embrace as they watch the buildings burn. Rick Nessel, who works a block from the World Trade Center, heard the explosions. "We saw things falling and thought it was debris but it wasn't. They were bodies. It was surreal."



A rescue team removes a victim. Firefighter Carlos Muniz described the scene: "Some were alive, some were dead, some were badly burned. It just rained and rained soot, and it was dark. When you see cops running, you know you've got no chance."



Firemen work around the World Trade Center. "I see something that's unimaginable," said Howard Safir, former New York City police commissioner. "You have to treat it like a war zone."

A man in lower Manhattan walks toward safety after the incidents that stunned the nation.





People flee the scene of the World Trade Center attacks.



A man standing in the rubble of the collapse calls out, asking if anyone needs help.



Firefighters shuffle through the remains of the two landmark structures.





Pedestrians make their way across the Queensboro Bridge as they leave Manhattan after terrorists crashed two airliners into the World Trade Center, Tuesday, Sept. 11, 2001, bringing down the 110-story twin towers. (AP Photo/Ron Frehm)



An aircraft crashed into the helipad next to the Pentagon (right rear side in photo), setting off a huge explosion, throwing people off their feet inside the building and setting off a massive fire, U.S. officials and eyewitnesses said, September 11, 2001. The Pentagon is shown July 30, 2001. (Hyungwon Kang/Reuters)



The view of the altered New York skyline and the Statue of Liberty after the attack against the United States that brought down the twin 110-story towers, symbols of American capitalism.