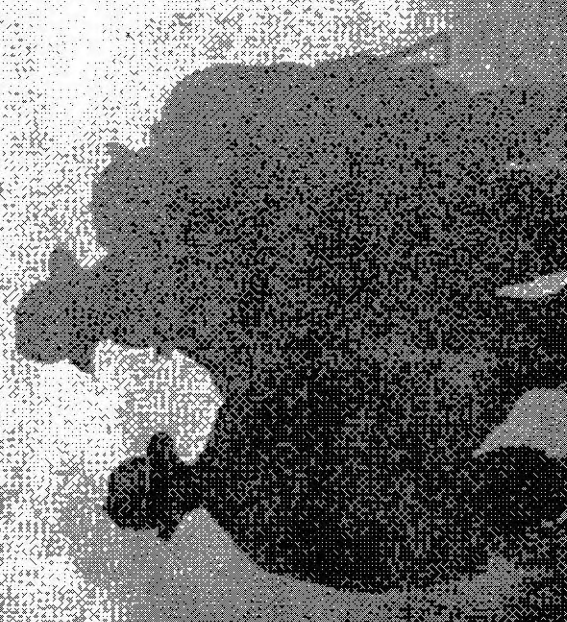


36-PAGE SPECIAL SECTION WRAPS MAIN NEWS

Newsday

**'We have total
blackness.
We have no
way out
of here . . .
Charlie to
Central: Mayday'**

**— A firefighter at the collapse
of the north tower**



Smoke rises at Ground Zero more than a month after the attacks on the World Trade Center

NEWSDAY PHOTO / JESSE JOY



01336

Newsday

NEW YORK CITY

SATURDAY, AUG. 13, 2002

WWW.NYNEWSDAY.COM

CITY EDITION

50¢

THE 9/11 RESCUERS
**In Their
Own Words**

Dramatic excerpts
from FDNY oral histories,
radio transmissions



FDNY

COPYRIGHT 2002, NEWSDAY INC., NEW YORK, VOL. 65, NO. 344

50¢

Rescuers of 9/11

■ After nearly four years, city releases firefighters' accounts and 9/11 tapes of attack on World Trade Center

BY GRAHAM RAYMAN
STAFF WRITER

Fire Lt. Brian Becker had just arrived at the north tower with his unit on Sept. 11, 2001, when a chief grabbed him by the shoulders.

"Team up with Engine 4 and start your way up," Becker recalled. "And I remember specifically asking him, 'How are we going up?' and he said, 'You're walking.'"

Becker's hike toward the burning floors of the Twin Towers was one of more than 500 accounts that emerged in interviews with fire personnel, logs of 9/11 calls and emergency dispatch tapes released Friday by the city under court order.

While some of the material had been reported independently in the past three years, the records contain a wealth of new

details about the experiences of hundreds of rank-and-file firefighters and their immediate field commanders as they waded into the burning towers.

The often-graphic accounts, including raw dispatches in the terrifying moments immediately after the first plane hit, indicate that the response was plagued with radio problems, and that the rank and file had limited information about the situation above and the orders they received as they went into the worst high-rise fire in history.

Lt. Warren Smith, of Ladder Company 9 in lower Manhattan, for example, recalled his orders when he arrived in the north tower lobby. "We got an order to go up the stairway," Smith said. "No specific orders or anything like that, just go up, see what you can do basically."

"I think everybody was pretty much overwhelmed at that point because just shortly before that the other plane had hit, so you could see the confusion," Smith said. "Civilians on their way down slowed their progress, and the radios were 'difficult to use.' Still, Smith heard the order to pull out and passed on the message to others who did not get the message on their radios.

"If you weren't near a chief, from guys I talked to, you didn't get that order, at least not as quickly. I think it came over later," Smith said.

Another lieutenant, Edward Hahn, then of Battalion 30 in the Bronx, said he was able to get through, but [radio] transmissions were very hard. "You're doing basically your own show," he didn't have any information," said Lt. Thomas Pennino, then of Engine 65, who also would end up at the north tower. "The Handi Talkie in-

formation was pretty sketchy at best."

After the south tower fell, Pennino said he opted initially not to evacuate. "We continued to go up," he said.

But then, he changed his mind. "I don't know what it was," he said. "It was just the culmination of intuition or what. I just decided it was time to go. I received no Handi Talkie communications to get out."

Firefighter Michael Beeher, of Ladder 110 in Downtown Brooklyn, says he did hear an evacuation order from the 21st floor of the north tower. "I heard of the radio, Chief coming over the radio," he said. "I don't know his name. He said this is Chief so and so. I personally am ordering you out of the north tower now."

A total of 243 firefighters died that day, along with 26 NYPD officers and 37 Port Authority police.

There are also striking details in the records. At 9:59, for example, within seconds of the collapse of the south tower, a callist already had phoned EMS to raise health concerns about the "white particles falling" through the air. In the ensuing minutes, federal and city officials would seek to deflect health concerns, sparking a battle that rages on today in the thousands of lawsuits.

Inside the towers

A firefighter, Timothy Brown of the Office of Emergency Management, describes the awful scene inside an elevator that had plummeted to the ground floor with eight people inside. "The elevator pit was on fire with the jet fuel," he said. "People were screaming in the elevator. They were getting smoked and cooked."

World Trade Center job," one caller begs. They begin to use the phrase "JMT" for "mass casualty incident." And in the midst of it all, a call for help with a man stuck in a revolving door at the Chrysler Building.

Releasing records

The release of the records — about 12,000 pages of oral histories and 900 minutes of transmissions to units responding to the scene — came after the city lost a three-year struggle in March first to block, then limit their disclosure, citing privacy concerns and federal criminal probes. Eight relatives of people who died in the attack, and a New York Times reporter, filed suit, claiming the public's right to know outweighed the privacy issue.

Lawyers for the city claimed no fewer than six exemptions under the State Freedom of Information Law during the litigation and argued that the firefighters had been assured of confidentiality. That claim was later withdrawn and acknowledged to be "in error," court records show.

In March following dramatic oral arguments in Albany, the state's highest court ruled for the plaintiffs. In the decision, the court ordered the full release of the oral histories, ex-

cept for the names of firefighters who were injured or killed. The records also contain the names of firefighters who were injured or killed.

The dispatch tapes, meanwhile, are filled with voices walking the rugged edge of the crisis: trapped people calling for help, a report of a bomb in the Battery Tunnel, a man hanging from a window on the 110th floor, 30 people with the fire burning below them, the dust cloud.

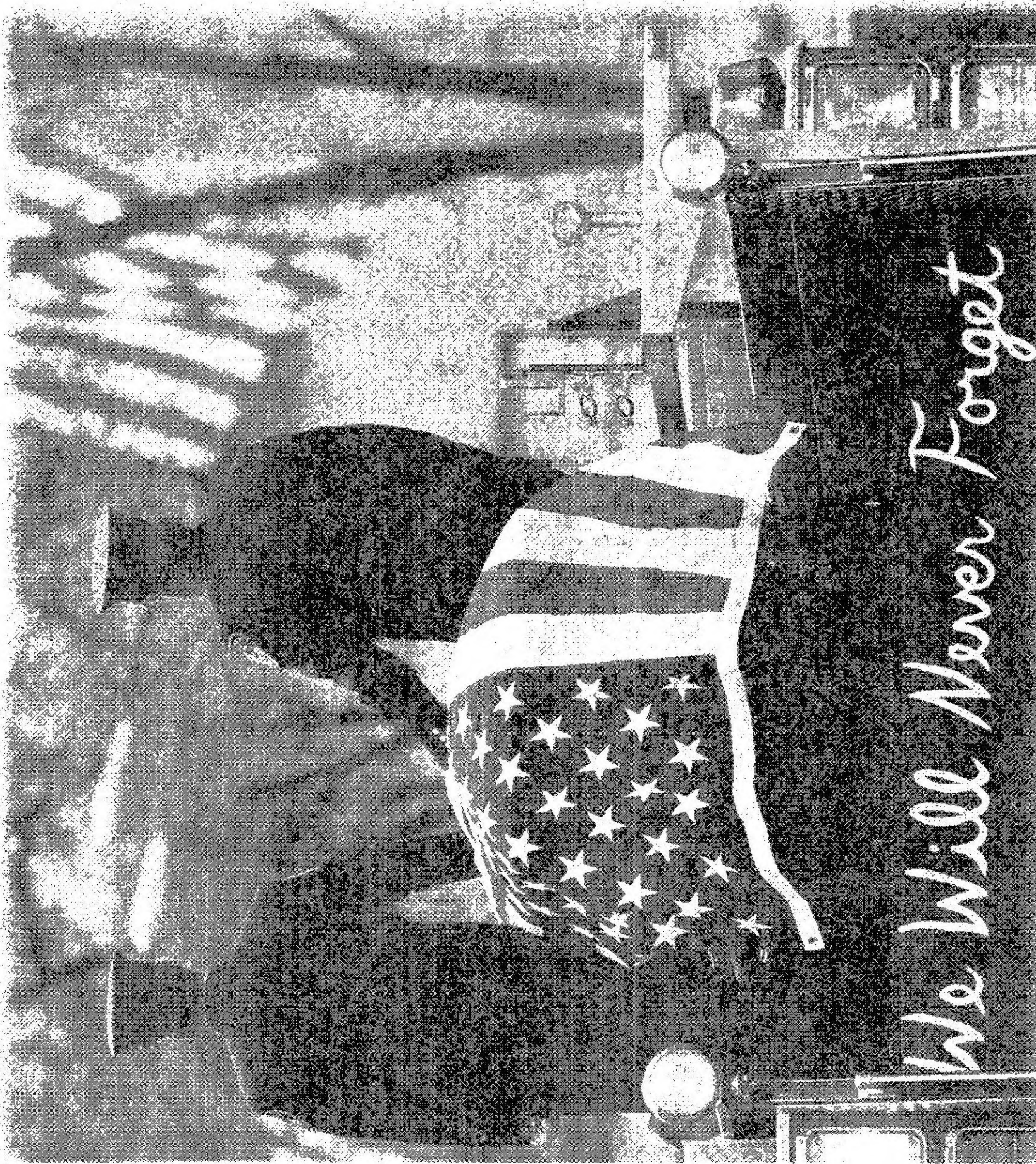
"George," a voice in a deadly serious tone tells the dispatchers, "have them mobilize the Army. We need the Army in Manhattan."

"We have total blackouts," a firefighter transmits at the collapse of the south tower. "We have no way out of here."

One call is from a firefighter who, incredibly, made it to the 70th floor of one tower by 9:49 a.m. "We got injured people up here," he says. "See if they can somehow get elevators past the 40th floor."

Fire units around the city call in. "Put me on the World Trade Center job, put me on the

oh, God, I'm going to die and just get buried alive.



We Will Never Forget

In the flag-draped coffin of fellow firefighter Lt. Dennis Mojica.

entrance . . . Lieutenant went to, I believe, Chief Galvin — I'm not sure who it was — got our orders to go to the 77th floor and above of the south tower, headed out of the lobby of the hotel . . . and were, as far as we knew, heading for the south tower, passed another couple of chiefs walking through a walkway, made a right turn, were heading towards what we believed to be the south tower. . . . We are not sure of exactly if we were in between or — went through this other lobby, doorways, walked into that lobby. Everything was dark.

Water was coming down and everything like that, and then . . . just everything started tumbling, a lot of noise. Turned around, went back the way I came, got probably five steps through the doorway I had just came. I don't know if I got to that, because there was a walk — there were bars in front of that that weren't there anymore, got knocked off my feet and sent — was buried under some stuff and pushed across the floor, and after everything stopped. Dug ourselves out, put the flashlight on, yelled for each other and then exited the building.

I couldn't even say which way. Towards air.

Firefighter Adrienne Walsh
Ladder 20

Well, I wasn't working. I was in my car on the BQE. I had entered the Kent and Wythe Avenue exit, and we were in bumper-to-bumper traffic. I was on my way to two buildings on fire. I inched my way off on the Atlantic Avenue exit, sped to my parents' house and dropped the keys. Car didn't want to get a ticket for alternate-side-of-the-street parking. I ran to my

tween two, and I saw black smoke and I saw three floors of fire, which I thought was very bad for a building like that. I knew we were on our way down there due. We were about fourth due.

So I said . . . "I'm missing the fire of the century." As we inched along under the bridge, I got off across the bridge and ran up to the Promenade, I saw the second explosion, so we had two buildings on fire.

By the time I got to the triangle here on Lafayette, the first tower just fell, and there were streams of people coming up Lafayette. I ran into quarters, quickly went upstairs, put my uniform on, quickly ran downstairs, got my bunker gear on.

apartment and changed my clothes, put my running shoes on and literally ran to work.

I got to the bottom of the Brooklyn Bridge and ran in front of — I think it was Engine Company 246 and they gave me a lift across the bridge. I got off across the bridge and ran up to Lafayette Street.

GFTV IMAGES PHOTO

The debris . . . started covering me up and I thought,

Jose Perez

Battalion 8 EMT
At 48th and Lexington when he heard
a radio report of the first plane
hitting

I guess because of all the excitement and everything, we kind of just started to head down to some extent. I know all the south units were already down there. So we ended up at 11th and Seventh in front of St. Vincent's. We could see both of the towers. At that time when we got down there, they were both engulfed in flames.

At some point, we just saw the first tower fall, and we were amazed. I was with my partner, Joe Valdivia, and we both were shaking our heads and were shaking. We decided to go down, and we took the West Side Highway. At some point, we just couldn't go any further because people were starting to come up, so we threw it in park and basically just helped as much as we can with everybody that was coming out. Then the second building fell. I think for me it was just unbelievable, the whole thing.

For the first few days, it was something that I thought didn't really happen. I just had to convince myself that it did. I just had a good support system at my home with my wife and family.

Lt. James McGlynn
Engine 39

On 31st floor of Tower 1 when orders came to evacuate

I believe I was between the second and third floor on the half landing, and it started to shake and vibrate. Then I heard the sound of floors imploding one on top of the other. You heard it coming, and you heard it getting louder and louder and louder and louder and things are coming down on top of you.

I hit the floor, and I rolled to the wall and just kind of covered up into a fetal position and started saying my prayers. Finally that stopped, and the debris started coming. When the loud banging stopped, I said, "OK, at least I'm not going to get crushed or I'm not going to get crushed on impact."

Then the debris kept coming, and it started covering me up and I thought, oh, God, I'm going to die and just get buried alive. I said I would just rather die quickly than get buried alive. Then that stopped.

Then I felt this strange thing like air rushing up. The only thing I thought, "Am I falling? Am I going to heaven?" I think my only explanation is that that was the outside of the building tumbling to the street and then forcing air in and then it having nowhere to go but it

came up. That's my only possible explanation of what happened there.

Then that stopped and I just waited around and kind of nothing else happened. I stood up, kind of brushed myself off and kind of felt all my body parts. I said, "Well, OK, I'm alive and I'm OK." It was kind of a shock. There was nothing missing, nothing broken, nothing.



Firefighter Tony James salutes at funeral of the Rev. Mychal Judge, who died giving last rites to firefighter at Ground Zero.

Firefighter Derek Brogan
Engine 5, Manhattan
Had chest pains while going up stairs in Tower 1

We started marching up the stairs. All the people were coming down. They were very calm. They would yell from a couple floors up that there was a burn victim coming down, and everyone plastered themselves up against the wall and the burn victim would come down. It was amazing to see that they were actually smiling that they were almost down the stairs.

Maybe about the 13th floor I started having chest pains. I had crossed my extra cylinder over from one side to the other side.

I started feeling better, and we went up again, to the 23rd floor. There the chest pain was getting very irritating. They called mayday for somebody to come up and give us oxygen, because there was myself and two guys from 9 Truck there. The guy from 9 Truck was yelling that he couldn't feel his arms.

So the Port Authority ESU cops came up. They gave us some oxygen.

We were in an outer office on the 23rd floor on the south-east corner, which I guess faces Tower Two. Then we felt the rumble. You just heard

this noise that sounded like the subway train going by but magnified by a thousand. When we heard that noise . . . We didn't bother to look out the window. We just made an exit out of that room.

There wasn't any room in the stairwell. It was loaded with people.

So myself and a guy named Schroder from 10 Engine went down the hallway and found a closet, and we darted into the closet. We were in there

tower . . . I think the windows . . . were already blown out. I'm pretty sure I went in through a window . . . and we proceeded to go up . . . There were civilians coming down the stairway . . . They stayed to one side, and we stayed to the other side and worked our way up. I wasn't positive of what floors the fire was on. I didn't have any information. The handie-talkie information was pretty sketchy at best . . .

The south tower had fallen, but at that time I didn't know what it was. All I heard was a tremendous explosion. The tower I was in shook really bad . . . I thought it was another aircraft that hit the building. We continued to go up . . .

There was no one thing that made me decide to get out . . . It was just the culmination of intuition . . . I just decided it was time to go . . . the consensus was that we were getting out. I received no handie-talkie communications to get out . . .

I made it up as high as the 22nd floor . . . It was painfully slow going down . . . I just kept telling myself, "I'm running out of time to get out of the building . . . We exited the building, and the north tower started to fall.

Laura J. Siebuhr

EMT 5478, Battalion 45
Getting coffee with her partner when they noticed fire in the skyline

You couldn't breathe because when the second plane hit, all that debris, it was like cement. It just filled up your throat, it filled up your lungs, you could not breathe. You were actually spitting out huge particles. It was like it manifested itself in your mouth because it was so small and it filled up. You couldn't breathe. It was just caked in your throat.

They teach you in the academy about the feeling of impending doom a patient might feel. I have never had that feeling up until that day. I knew that this was it. I knew that this is how I'm going out. The only thing that ran through my mind was — other than saying the Our Father as I was running, "God, please don't let this hurt." I thought it was going to hurt. Just "God, make it quick."

Firefighter Kevin Gorman
Ladder 22

[We] are on West Street and we hear an urgent message. We were between the two towers. At that time, I would say we heard an urgent message from OEM [Office of Emergency Management]. It said, where OEM informs us that "There is a third plane en route. Pull back to the command post."

So we pulled back to the



Firefighters atop a fire engine with

command post, which was the parking garage there, and lined up with everybody, stood there, waited until we got orders.

The captain — I think was Mike [INAUDIBLE] — came up and ordered all truck companies to one side and then brought us all to the south tower . . .

We headed down underneath the south pedestrian walkway, stayed under there because of all the debris, and bodies and stuff, and then one by one we kind of ran into the hotel, you know, looking up. We ran into the hotel lobby entrance, or I think it was the restaurant

tell their stories

cept portions shown to "cause serious pain or embarrassment."

The court also affirmed the lower court decision to black out identities of civilians in EMS call logs. The actual tapes of the 911 calls were not released Friday.

In a dissenting opinion, Associate Judge Albert Rosenblatt argued the court should have required the unredacted release of the 911 emergency call records. "Americans," he wrote, "deserve to have as full an account of that event as can be responsibly furnished."

After so long, the release of the records was something of a media event at FDNY headquarters in Brooklyn. Black-garbed firefighters stood guard. About 50 reporters showed up, including two in a shiny, black chauffeured car.

But it remained unclear what impact the disclosures will have.

"I lost some guys, others survived. This isn't going to bring them back," said Battalion Chief Eugene Kelly, formerly the commander of an engine company located across the

street from the trade center. "There would be value to come out of it if changes could be made in building codes . . ."

Norman Siegel, a lawyer for the families, hailed the release. "It is an accomplishment and a relief to finally receive it so we can continue trying to understand and learn from the events of 9/11," Siegel said. "The Fire Department should have released these documents years ago."

For some, the complex issue of the radios was paramount. Jerry Riley, a retired fire lieutenant, said his son now wishes to become a firefighter. "If he becomes a firefighter, I think he should have the best equipment available," Riley said.

On his radio show Friday, Mayor Michael Bloomberg seemed to downplay any significance to the release of the documents.

Bloomberg noted the release was made because of the New York Times lawsuit. "The city did not think that we should release them. There's all sorts of privacy issues," he said.

"People say things when they call 911, or the police officers and the firefighters talking to each other, that probably would be best for everybody that it just was not released."

He did not elaborate on why. Fire officials yet again sought to portray the department's duty

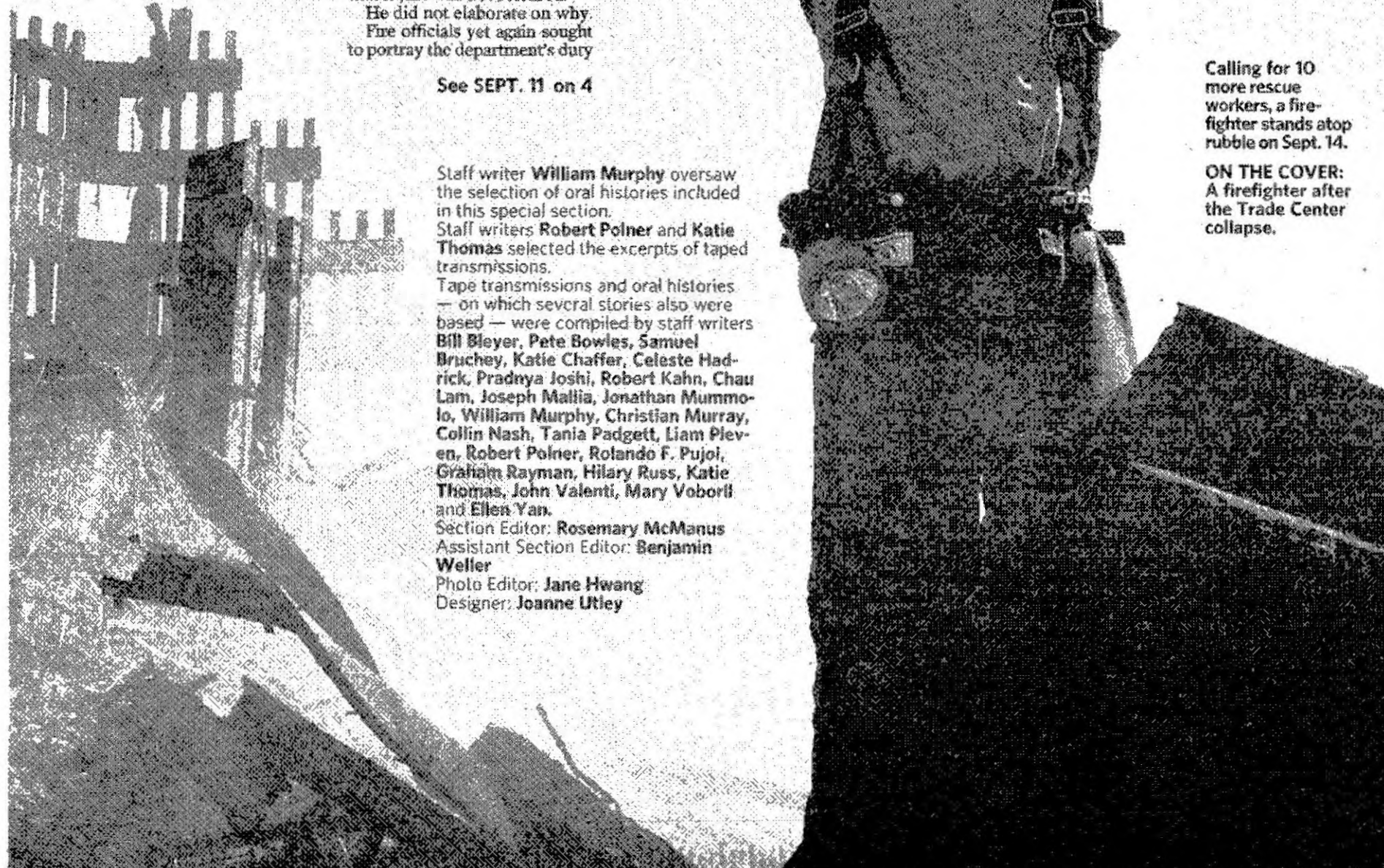
See SEPT. 11 on 4

Staff writer William Murphy oversaw the selection of oral histories included in this special section. Staff writers Robert Polner and Katie Thomas selected the excerpts of taped transmissions.

Tape transmissions and oral histories — on which several stories also were based — were compiled by staff writers Bill Bleyer, Pete Bowles, Samuel Bruchey, Katie Chaffer, Celeste Hadrick, Pradnya Joshi, Robert Kahn, Chau Lam, Joseph Mallia, Jonathan Mummo, William Murphy, Christian Murray, Collin Nash, Tania Padgett, Liam Plevin, Robert Polner, Rolando F. Pujol, Graham Rayman, Hilary Russ, Katie Thomas, John Valenti, Mary Voboril and Ellen Yan.

Section Editor: Rosemary McManus
Assistant Section Editor: Benjamin Weller

Photo Editor: Jane Hwang
Designer: Joanne Utley



Calling for 10 more rescue workers, a firefighter stands atop rubble on Sept. 14.

ON THE COVER: A firefighter after the Trade Center collapse.

Rescuer stories

SEPT. 11 from 2

as protecting the emotions of relatives. "It is the department's hope that the release of the records will not cause our members and their families any additional pain or anguish," a prepared statement read.

Robert Freeman, director of the state Commission on Open Government, said despite the long, expensive legal battle, the disclosure of the records shows that the Freedom of Information Law "works reasonably well."

"Four years is too long in my opinion to gain access to records," Freeman said. "However in terms of history, and the value of records, it is akin to the wink of an eye. After all, what could have been more difficult or wrenching?"

Freeman said he did not think the case set precedent, except in that it was a rare chance for the court to consider the effect information about the deceased would have on their surviving relatives.

How the oral histories were taken

The interviews of fire personnel collected after 9/11 were conducted informally. Questions were few, and appeared to be aimed at gently pressing firefighters and others to continue telling their stories.

Then Fire Commissioner Thomas Von Essen said at the time he wanted to create a record of what happened before individual memories faded and collective memory formed.

The interviews were conducted by fire marshals, who usually investigate arsons, and departmental investigators who normally work on disciplinary matters, a department spokeswoman said Friday.

The interviews were transcribed by volunteers from outside the department.

"It was hectic then, and they were done whenever people were available," the spokeswoman said.

Ranking officials of the department were usually interviewed in their offices, and members of the lower ranks were interviewed in their firehouses.

One retired fire marshal said Friday that while he was at Ground Zero, he decided against being interviewed.

A captain who was interviewed said the oral history seemed to have been given so long ago that he didn't even bother to review it to see whether he wanted it edited before release, as he was entitled to under the court order forcing the Fire Department to make them public.

— WILLIAM MURPHY



MATT McDERMOTT / CORBIS SYGMA PHOTO

Amid the chaos of Sept. 11, 2001, a firefighter takes a moment to pray.

like they had worked together forever like two good partners

department. I remember being those gray shirts, those uniforms, cutting them all up. I found a watering — a plant. What do you call those?

People were coming to me, dousing everybody. I'm taking control of the bathroom, because it's chaotic. I can't let nobody in there because it's going to be — they are fighting for water. They're lining up for me. I'm cleaning them off, giving them rags, cleaning them off. I'm looking at the door. You can't fit nobody more in the lobby. There had to be 500, 600 people in the lobby.

Firefighter John Drumm
Engine Co. 39, Manhattan
Climbing to the 31st floor of Tower One

We met some very nice people on the way up. They offered the firemen water and actually I want to put that in the record because it was a nice thing. One civilian offered to carry my roll-up for a while at one point. I said, "Thank you very much, sir, but I'll get it."

Maybe we were on the 31st hallway for approximately five minutes when all of a sudden a large crashing, thundering, roaring — it's almost impossible to really explain with those words, but it was so much more noise than I could ever really explain clearly. The members that were nearby, we all went and got down on our hands and knees on the floor, not knowing what this was, walls, floor. I had no idea. I had no idea what was happening until I got out of the building later in the day.

After the noise had stopped, there was a transmission on the radio that I had. I was in a position on 39 control that day, so I had a radio so I could hear it myself on my radio.

There was a transmission that I'm guessing was repeated about five times: "Imminent collapse, imminent collapse of the north tower. Immediate evacuation." At least five times I heard that.

After standing on the 31st floor and the collapse of the south tower happening and making our way back into the stairwell, there was a lot less civilians. Most of the civilians hopefully at that point were already down. But there were still a few we ran into on the way down.

One woman we assisted. She was having trouble breathing. The only air we had left was a cylinder. One of the members had a cylinder and I helped to purge it to let the woman get a hit off our mask.

So we gave her the mask. She was able to walk after that, and she was with two civilian men that were going to stay with her the rest of the way down.



A firefighter returns after a call to Engine 54 on Sept. 18, 2001, walking past the tributes to the firefighters still missing.

NEWSDAY PHOTO / KATHY BERNICK

People who were down in the trenches . . . they worked

Lt. Dominic Maggiore
EMS Battalion 50
At triage site in One Liberty Plaza

There were numerous doctors, numerous nurses, all volunteers. There were a bunch of people all over the place.

I spent a lot of my time fighting with these people to keep them away from the pile because I had some serious concerns about it being stable, which unfortunately, later on proved to be true, because there was a secondary collapse which I think wound up taking the lives of couple of the Port Authority officers who were in the rubble . . .

There was a bunch of problems, you know, with doctors staying off the pile, people, you know, narcotics being sent to the front line . . . via anyone who said that the doctor up front needed them, you know there were lot of problems like that.

I had issues with the Port Authority cops being up — they were probably 30 yards into the rubble climbing around and shortly after that was when there was a secondary collapse.

There was a Port Authority sergeant who came to our, you know, treatment area and he requested some narcotics, morphine, because either one or two of his officers were trapped. He made statements to the effect that they were going to try and cut them out. He said he was a nurse. With that two doctors who were at my staging area naturally volunteered to go up on the rubble. So I advised the paramedic to send them to give him the narcotics, and they did.

To my knowledge — and I was there all night — those officers never came to our staging area. It was just mayhem.

What did get my attention — and the hair on my arm stands up as we talk about it — the people, maybe not the higher ranking, but the people who were down in the trenches — cops, the firemen — it was that they worked like they had worked together forever like two good partners. They for the most part listened to direction when it made sense, and anything you needed, people were right there.

Mark Mazur
EMS command
Division 4

We were coming over the 59th Street Bridge. We were looking over at the towers, and you could actually see the people jumping . . .

Everybody did what they had to do. Communications could have been better, but it was hard because when we were coming up to the scene, all you heard was those people



Firefighters carry out flag-draped remains from the site of the World Trade Center on March 26, 2002.

trapped, over the command frequency and citywide. It gave you that much more adrenaline to get up there and try to get these people. When the second tower came down, you had enough.

The radios were pretty much dead. The 800 trunking radios were working very — you know the 800 frequency? They were working very shabby. You had the repeaters on the World Trade Center. That's about it. The cell phones weren't working . . . But I got to admit, everybody stuck together. The system was working.

Daniel Sterling
Firefighter 6th grade
Engine 24, Manhattan

We pulled up to the Twin Towers on West Street and into the lobby of the north tower. We got there about nine o'clock before the second building got hit. We didn't know the second building got hit at nine o'clock or anything. When we made it into the lobby, there was debris falling from the building . . . They're saying the elevators weren't working. Ladder 20, the office from Ladder 20, decided to start walking up the stairs. He like rallied his guys. So we're walking . . . Everybody at that point started walking up the stairs.

We — my team started walking up the A staircase, and we were following Ladder 20.

I guess all the other companies were following behind us. We ended up going single file. Civilians were coming down single file. They were telling us what floors they were coming from . . .

By the time we got to the 11th floor, people started to get tired. We got to the 15th floor, and we were — started taking breaks . . . We heard Maydays on the radio from Ladder 10. Ladder 10 had two men down with chest pains . . . Then we would keep going. When we stopped on the 15th floor we took a survey of the floor, found the vending machines. Guys had broken the vending machines already to start taking out the water, so we were taking bottles of water, taking a break, and then going back on the stairs. We kept doing that every five or six floors, wherever there was an open door.

Realistically what happened is it took us about an hour to get to the 37th floor . . . That's when the building shook from the other tower going down.

A battalion chief — the battalion chief from Battalion 11 — came from a higher floor. He came down and saw us on the 37th floor and told us that he thought there was a partial collapse of the 65th floor of our building, and that we should drop everything and leave the

building . . . We immediately started down Exit A . . . We got all the way down in the A staircase to the 3rd floor. Apparently the ESU cops had — they put a piece of Sheetrock blocking off the 3rd floor . . . so we exited the A staircase at the 3rd floor. We ran into two ESU or Port Authority cops, and they were helping a guy in a swivel chair about — he was at least 300 pounds. He had broken legs, and they were trying to pull him through the hallway to get him to the B staircase, which they said was good. They said they were responsible for blocking off the staircase, because there was debris now in that staircase. We couldn't have made it out to the ground level that way. So we helped them with the civilian . . . We came out of the north side of the tower, and we went right across to 6 Trade Center, to the Customs building.

Frank Pastor
Battalion 31 EMT

At work in Red Hook when he and his partner were sent to Manhattan. The two buildings are standing. There's flames coming everywhere, so I said, "You know what?" I told my partner, Mala, "Let's get suited up," and we gotta go. Turnout coats, everything. I remember putting on my bulletproof — I have the outer carrier on the

bulletproof vest. I remember putting that on, and I remember putting (on) my helmet.

Then we hear, "It's coming down. It's coming down." We didn't even have a chance to turn around. The cloud is coming down, and we get buried.

I remember running into Battery Park in the — everybody is running, people falling. I remember falling down. I remember I lost my helmet.

I didn't know where I was. I remember running into a lobby in the financial district somewhere. I was the only EMS personnel in there with a bunch of women and children crying, and people saying to me, "Help me, help me. We can't breathe." I had no equipment. All I had was my pouch. I remember I had a bottle of water with me, and I had it in my pocket, and I remember doing this clearing my face, people are coming up to me in the lobby, saying, "Help me, help me. I can't breathe, I can't breathe." I'm looking around to see what I can do.

I remember opening up this door. There was a slop sink. There was clothes hanging. I took the clothes, and I started soaking the clothes, wetting them, starting cutting out strips, giving it to kids, giving it to the mothers. I must have ripped everybody's clothes that was hanging from people that work for the maintenance

Some text is omitted

■ City leaves out portions of firefighters' 9/11 interviews that may cause 'serious pain and embarrassment'

BY LIAM PLEVEN
STAFF WRITER

New York City on Friday released more than 500 firefighter interviews full of first-hand accounts of the pain, heroism, chaos and bravery they experienced when responding to the World Trade Center on Sept. 11, 2001.

But there was still something missing.

In some of the transcripts were portions the city blacked

out, because it believed the statements "would cause the person who made them serious pain or embarrassment," said Marilyn Richter, an attorney for the city.

"Serious pain or embarrassment" was the standard set by the state's highest court in March, when it issued the ruling that led to Friday's disclosure.

Many interviews had nothing omitted at all. In some cases, the redactions were brief, such as the two lines of text missing from a passage where a paramedic was urging a detective to use his gun to open the door to a store where they were trying to get refuge near the site. Part of another line also was redacted.

The paramedic, Manuel Del-

gado, said he has mixed feelings about the release of the transcripts, but he agrees with the redactions in his.

Some of the redactions were longer, including the more-than-a-page-long response of an assistant commissioner when an interviewer offered him "an opportunity to give us any further recollections or observations before we conclude the interview, if he has any."

The redactions were "extremely limited and made in good faith," Richter said.

If the parties that sued for the interviews to be disclosed feel differently, however, they could try to get a judge to review what was deleted. As a result, Friday's release may not represent the final conclusion.

David McCraw, an attorney for The New York Times, which was one of the parties that sued for the interviews to be released, said, "I have every reason to believe that the city has acted in good faith and tried to redact in accordance

with the court's order." But while McCraw did not say that the Times would try to challenge any of the redactions in court, he also did not foreclose that option. He said he would review the transcripts personally.

Attorney Norman Siegel, who represents members of eight families that each lost a relative at the World Trade Center and joined in the lawsuit, said, "If in our review of the oral histories we find that parts have been improperly redacted, we will advocate for the complete release of the oral histories in their original form."

Staff writer Ainsley O'Connell contributed to this story.

NOW ON NEWSDAY.COM

- Hear 15 hours of emergency 9/11 transmissions.
- Read all the oral histories.
- View an interactive presentation on the 9/11 material.
- Learn more about Ground Zero. All at www.newsday.com

For families, fight continues

BY AINSLEY O'CONNELL
STAFF WRITER

Families who fought three years for the release of fire department oral histories and radio communications from Sept. 11, 2001, pored over the transcripts Friday, searching for even the smallest mention of lost relatives' last moments.

"We are desperate for information," said Rosemary Cain, mother of firefighter George Cain. "We survived September 11, and we will survive listening to these tapes. They can't break us."

But, she added, "I think it's a disgrace that the families have had to fight for every little bit of information."

And the fight is not yet over. Families who sought the release of the records said Friday that parts of the transcripts may have been improperly blacked out, and also called for the release of transcripts for 9/11 calls made on Sept. 11, 2001.

"We think this is a partial victory," said Norman Siegel, lead counsel in the suit to release the records. "There are too many redactions already," he said after reading 12 of the 503 transcripts or oral histories.

Three years ago, The New York Times and families of eight Sept. 11 victims brought a lawsuit against the New York City Fire Department asking it to disclose the tapes and transcripts — a request contested by the department.

In the section

- Oral histories, pages 6-15 and 22-35
- The emergency calls, pages 16-21



Sally Regenhard with a photo of her son Friday at a news conference with other relatives of victims who sought documents

The department argued that firefighters' privacy would be violated and that some of the records had been released to the federal government for the prosecution of Zacarias Moussaoui, who at the time was charged with helping the Sept. 11 hijackers.

In March, the Court of Appeals ordered the city to release the oral histories and radio transmissions and allowed the redaction of certain parts.

"To learn from 9/11, the pub-

lic must be able to see how the events of that day and its aftermath were handled by the city," Siegel said. "The public cannot be kept in the dark."

Siegel and families participating in the suit said the transcripts indicated that the radio communications system was inadequate, and possibly a contributing factor in deaths of firefighters sent to the north tower of the World Trade Center, which was the second to collapse.

Siegel cited firefighters who

said in the transcripts that they never heard evacuation orders.

"If that's true, that's horrible," he said.

"I trusted the system before 9/11, and so did my son," said Sally Regenhard, mother of firefighter Christian Regenhard and founder of the Sky-scraper Safety Campaign. "9/11 was a massive betrayal of trust, a massive failure of the communications system."

"As we learn more and more we will see that these firefight-

ers were victims of the system they swore to uphold," she said.

Members of the victims' families also said the transcripts represent an important chapter in history.

"The majority of America was not there at the site. They forget," said Christina Serafin, mother of firefighter Robert Evans, who died in the attacks.

"There is no such thing as closure. There may be peace, there may be comfort. But no closure."

'I was getting sick. I felt like I was intruding on a

Excerpts from FDNY oral histories

Maureen McArdle-Schulman
Firefighter first grade,
assigned to Engine 35
in Manhattan



We went to the command center . . . There was already 75 to 100 firefighters standing in this parking garage, at the entrance,

waiting for assignments. Somebody yelled something was falling. We didn't know if it was part of an airplane coming out, if it was desks. It turned out it was people, and they started coming out, one after another.

We saw the jumpers coming. We didn't know what it was at first, but then the first body hit

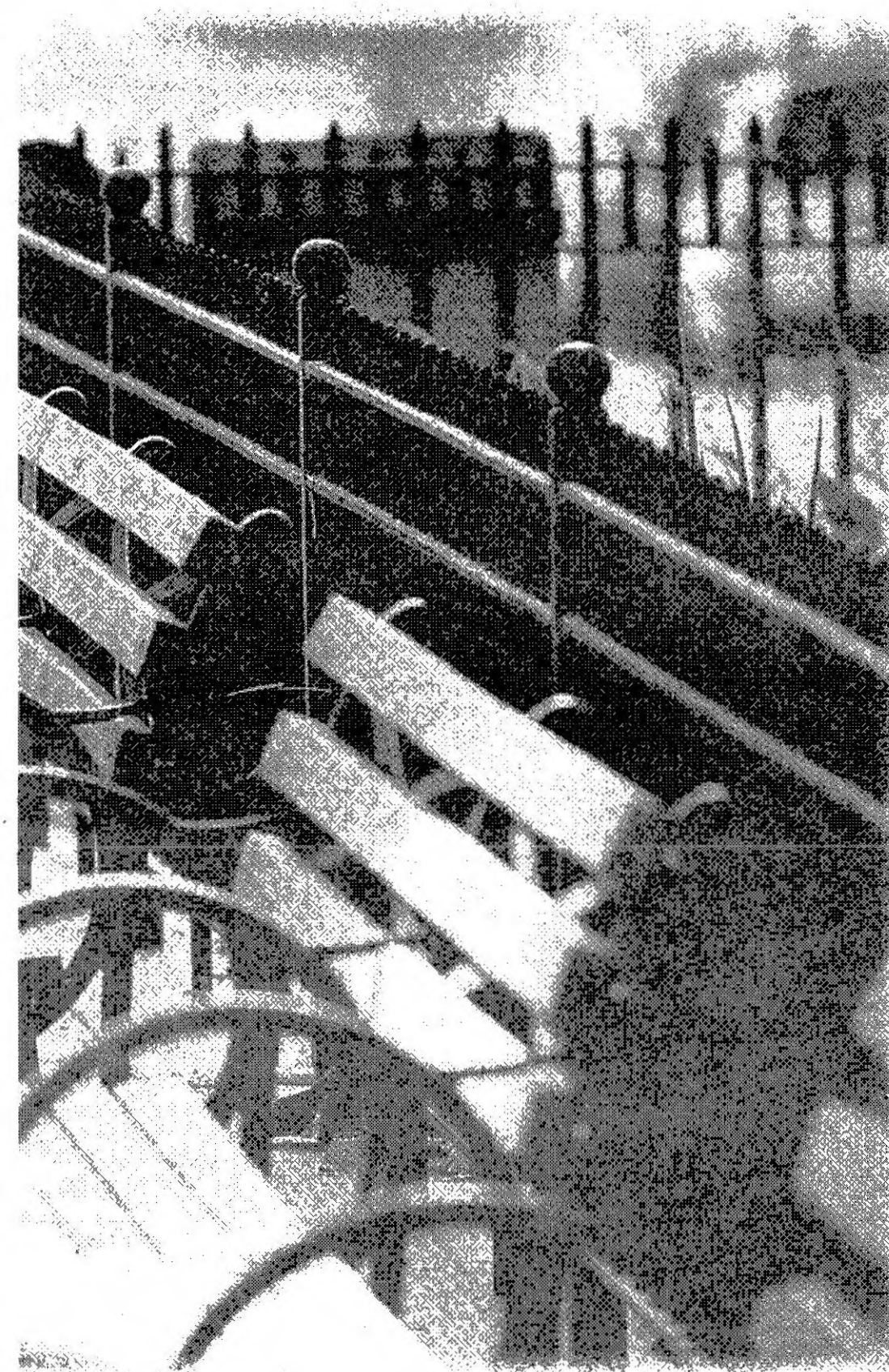
and then after that we knew what it was. And they were just, like, constant . . .

I didn't see anyone landing on the ground in front of us. Most of them were hitting the setback. I'm still across the street in the parking lot . . . I was getting sick. I felt like I was intruding on a sacrament.



Firefighters gather at Ground Zero after the attack on Sept. 11, 2001.

move myself. I really thought at one point I was dead.



lapsed. I ran north up the West Side Highway.

Lt. William Ryan
Ladder 85 in Staten Island
en route by foot from the Staten
Island ferry

We picked up our first Mayday . . . the guy told us, "Mayday. Mayday. Engine 65 with a Mayday. I'm stuck in my rig. My rig is on fire." The chief just asked him, "Where are you?" He said, "The last I remember, I was parked on West Street about 50 yards north of Liberty."

We couldn't tell where we were. I mean, I'd even worked down there seven years. I didn't know where I was standing in the street. Visibility possibly 30 feet at best, and you could only see shadows. You could see several fires, dozens of fires, things blowing up, cars on fire, fire trucks, 113 where I was working for a while on fire. I've never seen anything like it. No one ever has. Chaos.

So we find a street post and we dust off the sign and we see we're at Liberty and West . . .

Guys got in there and they ended up getting the guy from 65 out, and he was banged up pretty good. That was the chauffeur. I don't even know his name . . . I assume he was under about two or three stories of I-beams.

I ran into the probe from 5 Truck that I knew, Frucci, Bill Frucci, and he survived both collapses . . . I found him stumbling around. He was covered with debris. I asked him where the rest of 5 was and he was like, "They're all dead." I said, "What do you mean?" He said, "Well, they're in the tower . . ."

He ended up telling me later that Lt. Warchola wouldn't let him in the building. He ordered him to stay outside . . .

I know now that they were in the North Tower . . . 24 Engine was in the same house with them. They survived. A Lieutenant from there told me they were both on the 37th floor together and some chief came running by and told them to drop their gear and get out. He said they had no communications on the handie-talkies. That was the only message they got. 5 Truck went right. 24 Engine went left. 5 is all dead. 24 is all alive.

They have a story of their own. They ended up carrying some woman down the whole way, not the whole way, nine stories.

Captain Howard Sickles
Commanding officer of EMS
Battalion 45
in lobby of Tower 1

Actually as I exited the building I thought somebody hit me from the back, tapped me on my back. I turned around and didn't see any-

thing. Somebody pointed to my feet. I looked, and there was a body on the floor. So apparently he's what brushed against me, hitting me in the back, because it wasn't there, it was behind me . . .

We heard a rumbling. We thought it was another plane. We looked up, and you actually saw the towers just starting to rull down at you. You saw the building portions coming down. I stood there and couldn't move. I just couldn't move. I couldn't believe what I was looking at. A couple seconds later I turned around and started to go. You just saw a sea of humanity. Before that we were at the command post. Chief Nigro and Chief Ganci were behind me, and they just couldn't believe the human devastation of watching people jumping out of the upper floors. They were hitting the ground and because of the force of hitting the ground, they would break open and blood was splattering and body parts and you could see them hitting the ground and bouncing and parts bouncing up . . .

You just heard a rumbling and you heard things, and it got very black. You couldn't see anything, nothing. There was no light. I couldn't move my legs. I couldn't move myself. I really thought at one point I was dead. I couldn't see my hand. I couldn't think of anything. I was in no pain. I just really thought I was dead . . . I started talking to myself, and then Roger Moore, in a couple of seconds, moans and tells me to "shut up. You're not dead . . ."

Later on, a couple of hours into this, Chief Peruggia turned white as a ghost. He grabs everybody and tells them that they found the commissioner and they found Chief Ganci, and they were both killed. We couldn't get body bags. We were talking to corrections, and we kept telling them where to bring the bags. Not hard. You couldn't understand why they couldn't figure out where it was, because there was no street. There were no street signs. There were no markings. The bridge took everything down, the walkway."

EMS Chief Fran Pascale
Before Tower 1 collapsed

It was the most disorganized feeling I've ever felt. I could say that there was no sense of being organized. It was an impossible thing to be organized. But even though you were tempted at certain points to try to get yourself up and running . . . well, I guess we could throw that in the garbage that day. It just didn't work. It just didn't work.

There was no light. I couldn't move my legs. I couldn't

Stephen King
Safety Battalion
Safety chief on duty

King and his aide, Bobby Crawford, arrive inside the North Tower before the second plane hits and begin checking the elevators and stairwells:

We ran into the lobby . . . I said, "Bobby, this is not going to be a good day." . . . Though I never expected that a tower might collapse . . . so we got into the lobby . . . We looked around at the elevator banks. Nothing was in use. We went around to the escalators . . . They weren't functioning . . . We walked into the first stairwell and walked up one flight of stairs. There were people coming down . . . I would say that there was no panic. Probably shock but quite orderly . . . As we started going up to the third floor, people were coming down the stairwell. There was a large woman coming down the stairs, and I'm a big guy myself. When I was trying to pass her, she had bumped into me and caught me off balance. Anyway, I ended up kind of falling backwards . . . I popped something in my knee anyway at that point in time . . . It felt like I had popped a ligament . . . I got like a piercing pain in my head . . . After that we started to go up to the third floor and it became very clear to me that I could not do stairs very well. My left foot, between the knee and the ankle, was killing me. That woman literally probably saved my life as things turned out . . .

[Bobby] said, "Chief, I'm going to look in the hallway here at the second-floor level again." I said, "OK, Bobby." . . . (King looked for Crawford after that but never found him.) Anyway, I report back in . . . I'm at the command post at this point . . . I'm in the North Tower. I hear something about an aircraft just struck the South Tower. And I don't know that a plane has hit the North Tower . . . I remember hearing something to the effect that the tower is collapsing or coming down. I hear that and then I hear a rumble. I remember a terrific rumbling, getting louder. Now I believe . . . that my tower that I'm in, the North Tower, is collapsing. This is the South Tower collapsing . . . The noise becomes deafening. I can feel the ground shaking . . . I think I hollered out to the guys that were along with me, "Come back here under the arch." . . . The next thing I know I'm getting buried in debris. The windows are shattering. Again, I think it's my tower . . . You can't miss the noise. You can feel the air pressure building up. I mean, literally, it blows the windows in . . . I noticed the guys next to me were alive and I'm like — I'm in shock



A firefighter pauses for a moment on a bench as he works in lower Manhattan on Sept. 11.

. . . We can't see each other. We're blind. We're kind of gagging. I know everybody is absolutely in shock . . . Anyway, we work our way out of the building . . .

Firefighter Thomas Turilli
Engine 47 in Manhattan
Tower 1 rescue team

Turilli arrived at the north tower through the lobby of the Marriott Hotel. He was waiting at the lobby near the elevator banks after a crew of firefighters had gone up.

The door closed, they went up, and it just seemed a couple

seconds and all of a sudden you just heard like it almost actually that day sounded like bombs going off, like "boom, boom, boom," like seven or eight, and then just a huge wind gust just came and my officer just actually took all of us and just threw us down on the ground and kind of just jumped on top of us, laid on top of us.

There were rocks falling and all that. The lights were still on at that point and all of a sudden the lights went out and you couldn't see anything . . .

There was a lot of dust and all of that kind of stuff. After about a minute or so, every-

thing kind of calmed down.

My officer just told everyone, "Relax, just hold onto each other." He was radioing the guy upstairs to see if he was alright.

My officer knew how to actually get out, and we just held onto each other.

There were security guards and some civilians, and he just told people, "Just hold onto us, like a human chain, just grab onto another person and we'll make our way out." We went about 20 feet, 25 feet, and we saw a light.

It turned to be a light of almost like I guess a restaurant area. He said, "No, that's not

the way out," and he said, "Just keep on going straight." In about another 25 feet to 30 feet, there were windows, I guess, lobby, ground-level windows that were blown out, and we just walked out of there.

Two guys I was with said they were hurt. So my officer, myself and the few guys who said they were hurt, we walked them across the street and we brought them to an ambulance.

James Curran
Firefighter sixth grade
Ladder 8, 412
Tower 1 rescue team

sacrament. They were choosing to die.'

They were choosing to die, and I was watching them and shouldn't have been. So me and another guy turned away and looked at the wall and we could still hear them hit . . .

We're standing at the command center, listening to everybody give their positions. You know, what stairway they were using. You

know, escape stairway, rescue stairway. Things like that or what floor they're on.

Someone comes running over to the table and said, "A firefighter was hit by a jumper. He needs last rites . . ."

So a couple of guys went to the right to give this guy last rites with Father [Mychal] Judge, I guess.

We're standing there, and we're looking up, and we're trying not to look at people jumping. We really felt like we were intruding on them.

And the building had red fire, a ring of fire. They started pumping and bouncing and I'm standing there staring.

Finally somebody yelled, "Run." It took everybody out of that

trance we were in. We ran back into the garage.

Anybody that went to the right was killed. People that went to the left were OK.

I was just mesmerized, absolutely mesmerized by this building . . . watching people jump. You just can't believe what you're seeing and you're just standing there like idiots, staring.

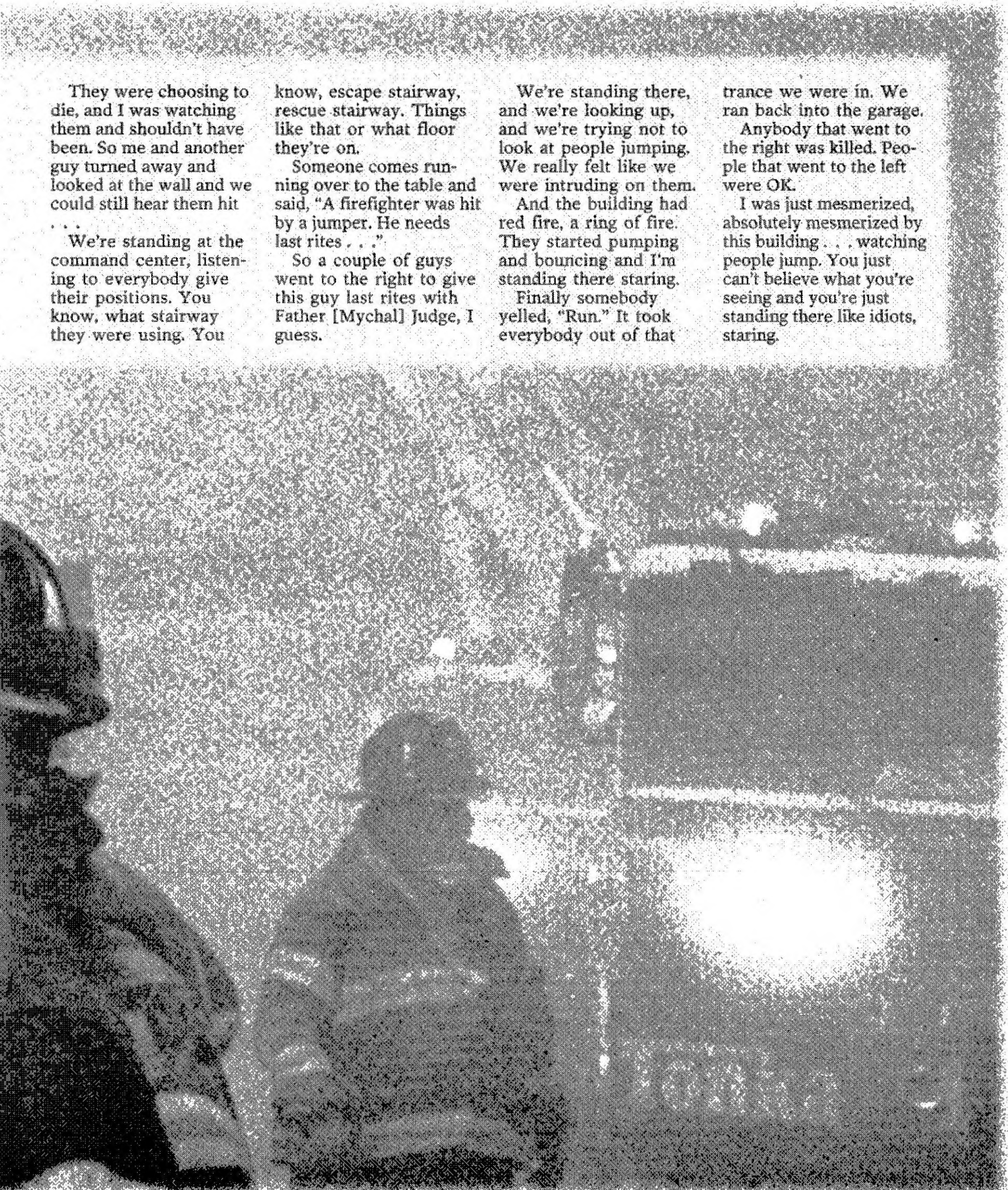


PHOTO BY GILBERT SULLIVAN

It was an amazing sight to see. It was really unbelievable.

Paramedic Louis Cook

Division 2
Advanced Life Support coordinator

We walked up West Street northbound to the command post. I remember looking to my right and seeing an aircraft landing gear tire. We were zigzagging through bodies and body parts. I remember the smell of it being like a butcher shop with all the bodies around. I remember smelling that distinctly . . .

We started walking across West Street to Tower One. I remember a lot of debris falling from the southwest side, a lot of fire coming down, a lot of parts, a lot of debris, bodies, some body parts.

Chief Basile asked me to find another egress out of No. 1. He wanted me to find a safe way if I could get civilians out . . .

I was making a circle of the lobby . . . I made it up onto the — I guess you call it the concourse level, the mezzanine level, and onto the foot bridge when I started to hear — I thought I heard an explosion of some sort, but I kind of dismissed it . . . I'm the only one on this bridge. I'm walking across it, and then I just remember feeling a rumble and hearing this rumbling sound that was really intense. It actually shook my bones . . .

Everything went black. All the windows — because there are windows on both sides of this walkway — started to implode in on me, and ceiling tiles — they had beautiful ceiling tiles in this thing. I think they were mosaics . . . They just started falling on top of me.

I made it to about halfway, and I couldn't run anymore because of all of this stuff hitting. I decided just to lay against the column and just hold on, because there was nowhere else to go.

It was black. I had . . . some debris coming in the window on me, and I just waited there until it all stopped, which it felt like forever. Once it all stopped, you couldn't breathe because all the dust. It seemed to linger. It didn't seem to settle.

Firefighter Michael Regan

Engine 53 in Manhattan

We started hearing Maydays and everything over the radio. Guys being stuck. We heard guys screaming, they were stuck under rigs. We weren't sure what was going on at the time.

People started screaming and running towards us that the second building was coming down. We were unaware that the first building even came down. We didn't hear anything over the radio on it . . .

As everybody was running towards us, we waited for the cloud to disperse a little bit. I was giving oxygen to people that were gasping for air, and when we finally got in there,



A firefighter races up a stairwell of Tower One as workers try to flee the building after American Airlines Flight 11 struck it.

there were a couple of chiefs and a couple of people yelling and screaming about fire over there, secondary explosions and we stretched a line off a rig and started putting out fires."

EMT Michael Mejias

Battalion 4 in Manhattan

As we are driving up Vesey past the Trade Center, we see a severed leg. We run over that severed leg . . . When I stop at West Street and Vesey, a lieutenant was setting up the staging I guess for the ambulances.

We had like three or four or five, maybe five, patients. Two of them were walking wounded. I think two or three of them were burned, second-degree burns.

The north tower started collapsing. It tipped down first and then the thing fell within itself. It was an amazing sight to see. It was really unbelievable. I thought I was watching a movie with special effects . . .

Chief Carrasquillo told us to go to Chelsea. As we are driving up West Street to go to Chelsea, we are picking up all kinds of medical personnel who were walking, because everybody got evacuated to there, so we could set up a staging and a triage and a

MASH unit, which they did an awesome job . . . We had ambulances lined up in rows and we were all waiting for that call to go down there to save some lives, and that call never came.

That was the saddest thing about it, that with a job this size, this magnitude, I was saying to myself there is going to be numerous injured and we are going to have to really depend on our skills. Not a call.

Thomas Fitzpatrick

Assistant Commissioner for Administration, top aide to Fire Commissioner Thomas Von Essen

There were a lot of bodies coming down, but I didn't pay much attention to it. For some reason I was more focused on the airplane parts until somebody started pointing out the body parts . . .

It was evident that we weren't going to be able to get to people above the fire. Based on the number of jumpers, we

could only assume that hundreds of people were trapped . . .

Then the building [south tower] started to come down. My initial reaction was that this was exactly the way it looks when they show you those implosions on TV . . . but the thing that woke everybody up was the cloud of black material. It reminded me of "The Ten Commandments" when the green clouds come down on the street . . .

And then the second building came down, and they had no place to go except into the water, over the railing. As you got further north, you could see that they were getting hit by the cloud. Some people were trying to get into boats . . .

The reason I knew the second building was gone because the smoke drifted for a second, and the sunlight came through and I knew it wasn't an optical illusion, it was just gone.

Firefighter John Snow

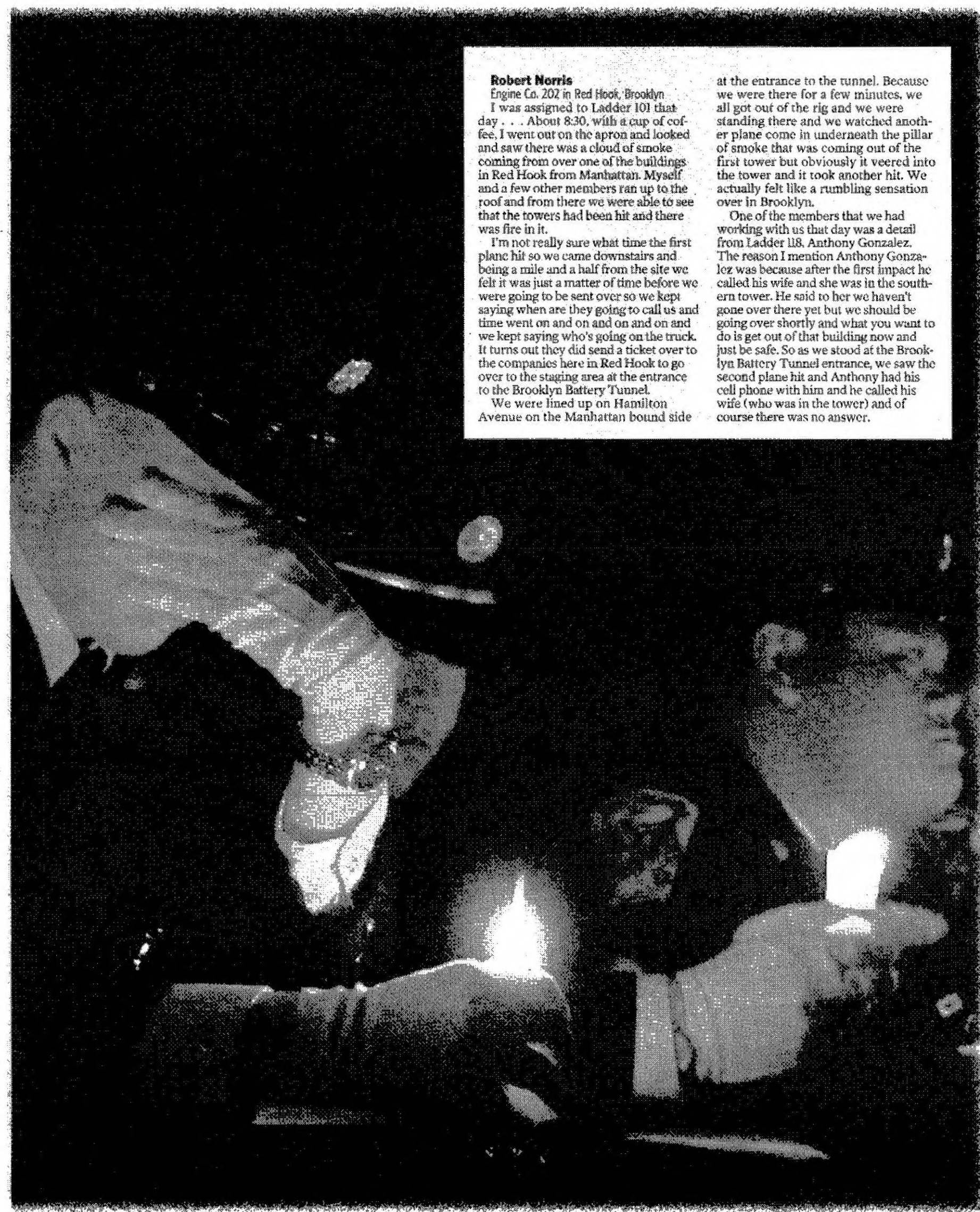
Engine 21 in Manhattan

We went into the north tower. By then I guess it was really bad on the upper floors, because we weren't inside the lobby long before they started jumping. You could hear the tremendous sounds, hitting the concrete.



A firefighter rests during search efforts two days after attack.

stay in here.



Robert Norris

Engine Co. 202 in Red Hook, Brooklyn

I was assigned to Ladder 101 that day . . . About 8:30, with a cup of coffee, I went out on the apron and looked and saw there was a cloud of smoke coming from over one of the buildings in Red Hook from Manhattan. Myself and a few other members ran up to the roof and from there we were able to see that the towers had been hit and there was fire in it.

I'm not really sure what time the first plane hit so we came downstairs and being a mile and a half from the site we felt it was just a matter of time before we were going to be sent over so we kept saying when are they going to call us and time went on and on and on and on and we kept saying who's going on the truck. It turns out they did send a ticket over to the companies here in Red Hook to go over to the staging area at the entrance to the Brooklyn Battery Tunnel.

We were lined up on Hamilton Avenue on the Manhattan bound side

at the entrance to the tunnel. Because we were there for a few minutes, we all got out of the rig and we were standing there and we watched another plane come in underneath the pillar of smoke that was coming out of the first tower but obviously it veered into the tower and it took another hit. We actually felt like a rumbling sensation over in Brooklyn.

One of the members that we had working with us that day was a detail from Ladder 118, Anthony Gonzalez. The reason I mention Anthony Gonzalez was because after the first impact he called his wife and she was in the southern tower. He said to her we haven't gone over there yet but we should be going over shortly and what you want to do is get out of that building now and just be safe. So as we stood at the Brooklyn Battery Tunnel entrance, we saw the second plane hit and Anthony had his cell phone with him and he called his wife (who was in the tower) and of course there was no answer.

Guys were just saying **it's time to go**, this isn't safe to

Firefighter Frank Campagna
Ladder 11 in Manhattan
inside Tower One

"As far as we knew, there were no planes or anything coming in. There wasn't even a plane that hit that building. We just knew there was a fire up there . . .

Any other explosions that we felt from inside were maybe extra machinery or something like that. Those were the words that we were getting . . .

We got up to about the 17th floor, and we felt another pretty big explosion . . . After that happened, the building was still standing, everybody kept going up . . .

We got up to about the 28th, 30th floor, and we were taking another break. There was an office or we had a whole floor full of people. A chief came down from a floor above with another company and said everybody evacuate, everybody out now.

We had to switch staircases. I believe the staircase we were in, there was no way down it anymore on the lower level. There was word that it had been taken out; we don't know what from. So we switched to a different staircase.

We headed down. We let the civilians go first . . . We got down to the lobby, and there's a lot of guys down there in the lobby itself along with 4 Engine. Everyone is standing there, waiting to hear what's going to happen next, what's going on.

Guys were just saying it's time to go, this isn't safe to stay in here.

So I believe we headed out along the wall of the Trade, and I believe 18 followed us out. That was it. It came down on top of us. That's all I remember of who followed us out or I heard who followed us out.

4 Engine obviously didn't make it out. They were with us the whole time, so I'm assuming they were still in the lobby at that time . . .

Firefighters at a Sept. 23, 2001, vigil in Huntington for a missing member of their department.



I thought I was **watching a movie** with special effects . . .

Rescue workers remove debris from the rubble two days after the attack.

I remember the captain saying, I guess the chief told him, we're not trying to put the fire out now. We're going to try to save people.

We took it [the elevator] to the 24th or 25th floor and then we walked up a couple of flights . . . There was a tremendous crash of the south tower coming down, but we didn't know at the time it was the south tower. We just thought it was upper floors maybe that maybe an upper floor that had collapsed, because there was a tremendous crash and everybody just hit the deck. Nothing happened after that so we really weren't sure what was happening. We weren't really getting any radio communications . . . And then I guess after another couple of minutes the battalion chief . . . said, "We're evacuating" . . .

The stairs were very crowded. Guys were helping civilians still coming down. There was a person in a wheelchair. So the descent down probably took 15 to 20 minutes . . .

Somebody was saying in the lobby, "Somebody got hit . . . [by] a jumper. You guys gotta be careful even leaving the building" . . . I guess we just hit West Street when we heard the roar or the rumbling. We just looked back and heard the rumbling of the tower coming down . . . It was kind of like you knew that the dust and everything was catching you. The guys just started diving, tried to dive behind something and then dust and other debris just overcame everybody.

Paramedic Kevin Darnowski
Battalion 20 in the Bronx

On his way to work from Brooklyn, Darnowski sees Tower burning. His fiancée works on the 98th floor. He opts to go to the scene to help.

As I headed down towards the scene, I was trying to call my fiancée in her office, and there was no answer on the phone. It just kept giving me a busy signal. I tried her cell phone, and there was no answer on her cell phone . . . When we finally got through the tunnel to the other side, I parked my car on the corner of Carlisle and West Side Highway, West Street, and I proceeded northbound on West Street towards the command center or what I believed to be the command center at that time. I went along the center median, meanwhile, looking up at the towers in disbelief and basically sheer awe at what was going on. None of us at the Battery Tunnel knew what was going on until the second plane hit. Right then we knew it was a terrorist attack . . .

[Chief Goldfarb] . . . told me regarding patient care-wise that don't bother with patient care, just with moving of patients and



Rescuers remove rubble at Ground Zero

equipment. So we went back over to the pedestrian bridge in front of Three Financial Center. We were standing under there with the Fire Department command center. We were attempting to set up a command center there, when one of the firefight-

ers starts screaming, "Look up!" Everybody looks up, and we were watching the people jump out of One World Trade Center and hitting the overhang in front of World Trade Center where the taxis would let people off originally. At that time it was

just — the best word to describe it was pure chaos . . .

Capt. Fenton told a lieutenant from the Bellevue station that was on the scene to take me back to the station, because I could be of no use patient care-wise given my

situation . . . I called my house to see if there were any messages on the answering machine, and there was a message from a nurse at Brooklyn hospital saying my fiancée was at Brooklyn Hospital. She was OK . . .

AFP / GUTTY IMAGES PHOTO

I thought I guess this is what it's like to be dead. Then I

Firefighter Timothy Brown
Office of Emergency Management
OEM's offices are in
Seven World Trade Center,
so we were there when the
first plane hit . . . I walked
in the walkway between
[World Trade Center] five
and six . . . The whole plaza
area was burning debris,
plane parts and bodies . . . I
went into the lobby of One
World Trade Center. A lot
of people were self-evacu-
ating very orderly, quickly.
People were helping each
other . . . I went past the
core of the building where
the stairwells were.

There were a lot of fire-
men there . . . The people I
remember seeing were Terry
Hatton and Chris Blackwell.
Terry Hatton from Rescue 1
and Chris Blackwell from
Rescue 3. I gave them both
hugs. Terry said to me, "I
love you, brother. It might
be the last time I see you."
Then he went in the stair-
well. Then Chris Blackwell
looked at me and said, "This
isn't good, Tim." That was
the last I saw him also . . .

I ran into the doors of the
Two World Trade on the
Liberty Street side . . . Again,
an orderly evacuation of Two.
A lot of people were leaving
. . . Someone had come to me
and said that there were peo-
ple trapped in one of those
elevators. So I ran around the
corner, and the . . . doors
were open, but the elevator
car was only showing about
two feet at the top of the door.

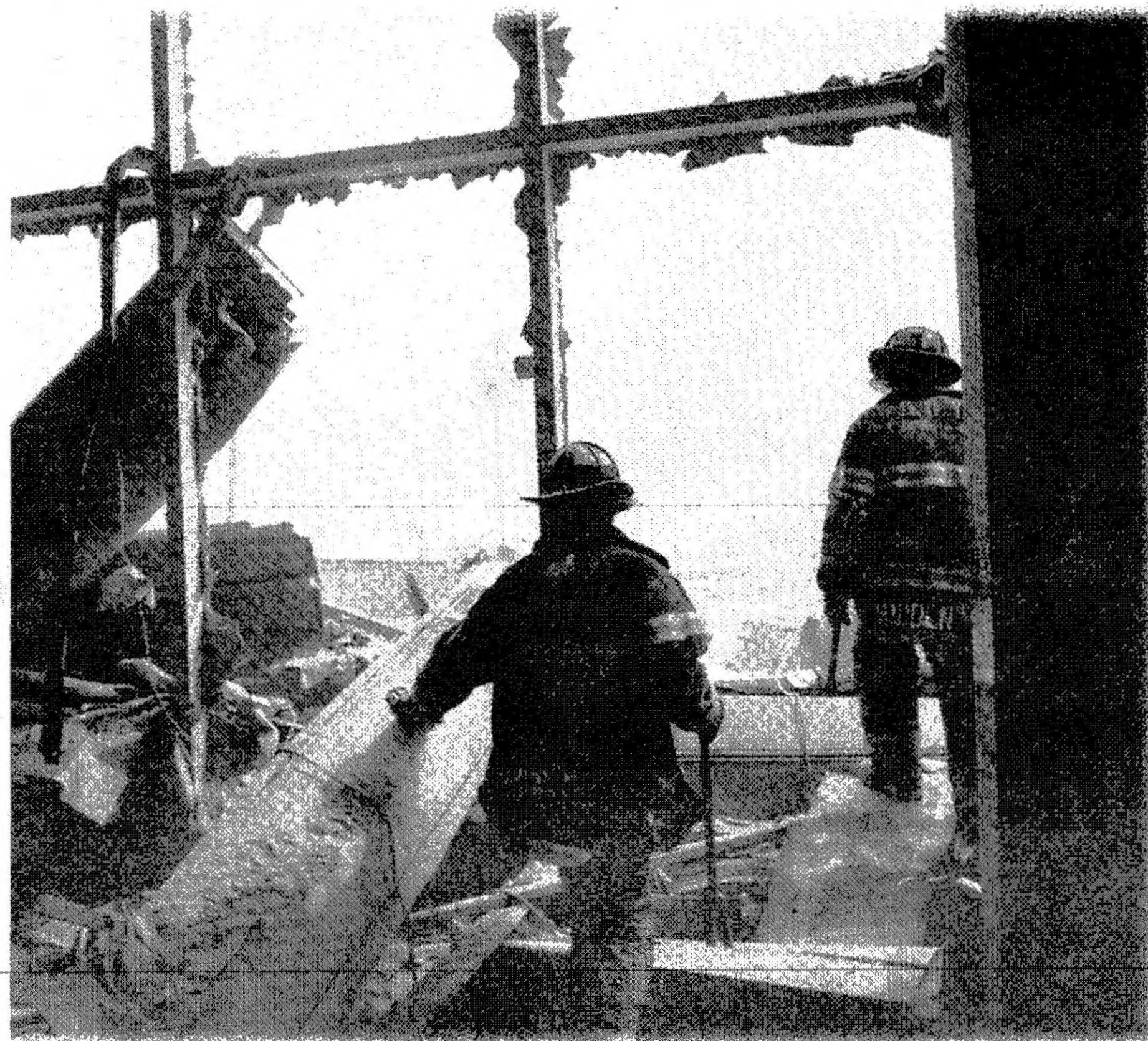
You could see all the legs
of the people that were in
the elevator. I would guess
there were about eight peo-
ple in the elevator. The
elevator pit was on fire with
the jet fuel. People were
screaming in the elevator.
They were getting smoked
and cooked . . . I grabbed
some of the Port Authority
employees and asked them
where the fire extinguishers
were and told them to get as
many fire extinguishers as
they could so we could try
and fight this fire. As they
were doing that, firemen
started showing up . . .

Lt. Glen Rohan
Ladder 43 in Manhattan

I ran into Chief Ferran of
the 12th Battalion, who at
that time told me that we
have some members that are
trapped and on the radio in
One World Trade Center. I
said, "Great. We've got a
team. Let's go get them." It
was a relief to get an assign-
ment, because it was such a
chaotic experience going on
down there.

We worked our way
through (building) No. 5 into
what we thought would be
the crater area of the center.
This Richie was Chief Pic-
ciotto. And the only way
that we found him was that
he had a siren with him. He
had a bullhorn that's carried

There was nothing. Absolutely nothing



AP PHOTO 200

Lt. Warren Smith
Ladder Company No. 9.
Was at Tower One after both planes
hit

We walked in there, went
into the lobby, saw the lobby
command post, reported to the
chief . . . We got an order to go
up the stairway . . . No specific
orders or anything like that, just
go up, see what you can do,
basically. I think everybody was
pretty much overwhelmed at
that point because just shortly
before that the other plane had
hit, so you could see the confu-
sion and everything else at the
lobby command post. So we
went up . . . Working our way up
was slow going because we had
civilians coming down. We

were telling them to stay to the
right, trying to calm them down,
let them know they were out of
harm's way . . . We got up to, I
guess, about the 31st floor . . .
Radios were very difficult to use
. . . The other building went
down. We did not know what it
was . . . I thought it was another
plane hitting our building be-
cause it just shook like we were
in an earthquake. We were near
a stairwell. The guys that were
near the stairwell went up the
stairwell. The building stopped
shaking. The lights went out . . .
Shortly thereafter we got the
order to evacuate. We passed
that order on to everybody that
was with us on that floor . . . So
we started making our way out.

The evacuation was orderly.
There was no panic . . . I've
worked in Manhattan my whole
career in high-rises and every-
thing else. I worked in midtown.
When you get the order to
evacuate a high-rise building,
you know something's . . . be-
yond what we can handle. Usual-
ly we just regroup on a lower
floor . . . It was slow going on
the way down. A lot of firemen
were picking up on the way
down didn't know that the order
to evacuate was given because I
think, if you weren't near a
chief, from guys I talked to, you
didn't get that order, at least not
as quickly. I think it came over
later. I didn't hear it myself. But
the order to evacuate came over

on Channel 6, and Channel 1 just
may have been so bogged down
that it may have been impossi-
ble to get that order through.
I'm sure they tried.

Capt. Janice Olszewski
EMS operations.
Set up triage area in front of the
Millenium Hotel at Church and Fulton
The people were pouring
out of the buildings, and lot
of them were coming over to
our area. I cannot estimate
how many. It's impossible.
They were all over the place.
They were on the corner.
We were trying to keep
them corralled in our area,
but other agencies were
breaking off into other little

triage areas. I think there
was another one over on
Liberty and Church, another
section there we heard
around the corner. So there
were things sort of happen-
ing all over. So it's kind of
hard to get an estimate of
how many patients were in
that area. [After the second
tower collapsed, she ran
north, flagged an ambulance.]
I waved, I flagged one down.
One of them stopped. I got
in, and I said, "Turn around
and just go north, because I
don't know what's going on
down there. It's too danger-
ous. Let's try to get a little
further north."

A firefighter emerges from debris. Said one about the towers: "All it was was rubble. It was steel that had collapsed inward."

Nobody cried, nobody talked, nobody made a sound.



Exhausted emergency workers take a break during rescue efforts a day after the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks. At right, firefighters make their way through the blown out facade of a World Financial Center building as they head in the direction of the collapsed Twin Towers.

Capt. Karin Deshore

Battalion 46
Was at her desk when she was told by a co-worker that a plane hit one of the Twin Towers. She headed to the scene.

Somebody just simply shouted, and I have no idea who it was, "It's blowing." I had no clue what was going on. I never turned around because a sound came from somewhere that I never heard before. Some people compared it with an airplane. It was the worst sound of a rolling sound, not a thunder. I can't explain it, what it was. All I know is — and a force started to come hit me in my back . . . I ran about 10, 12 feet up this little grassy hill and by then this force and this sound caught up with me already. I threw myself behind the last support column of the pedestrian overpass. It became pitch dark. The sound got worse, the force just kept passing me. At times I thought it was like an orange light maybe, coming past me . . . I was sitting with my left side toward the support beam, total darkness, total noise. I felt beyond alone. I felt desolated. I felt like, all I could say was people think about their families and whatever. All I kept saying to myself, within me, 'I don't want to die, I don't want to die, I don't want to die' . . .



All of a sudden it was all over and the silence set in. Nobody cried, nobody talked, nobody made a sound. There was nothing. Absolutely nothing. You could open your eyes, it was pitch black . . . I found this gentleman and we held onto each other like little kids. By then we were coughing, vomiting, spitting. It was just — we were trying to breathe . . . We found about five or six more people and we held onto each other. Like little kids, we walked, as I found out later on, toward the water . . . Some of us fell down. We would pick each other up. After two women gave the group some water, I irrigated my eyes because I had whatever it was in my eyes and that made it even worse. Now I apparently created mud in my eyes. As I was told later on, we had granulated cement and jet fuel mixture all over our uniforms and our bodies.

Stephen Gregory

Assistant Commissioner for Communications
At that point in time we heard a rumble, we heard a noise, and then the building came down. All we saw was dust and everything just started to get very chaotic. At that point in time all of us at the command post — firefighters, chiefs, myself — we turned around, we started to run south, down West Street toward Albany. Looking back over my shoulder, I realized that I wasn't able to outrun whatever was coming because

it looked like a giant wave behind us, so I went up against a chain-link fence, I got down on one knee, I put my hands over my head to hold my helmet on so I wouldn't get bit in the head with anything, and we just proceeded to get clobbered with all kinds of debris. It got very black. It got very quiet. It was very peacefully quiet; so peaceful that I thought I was dead.

EMT Patrick Richusa

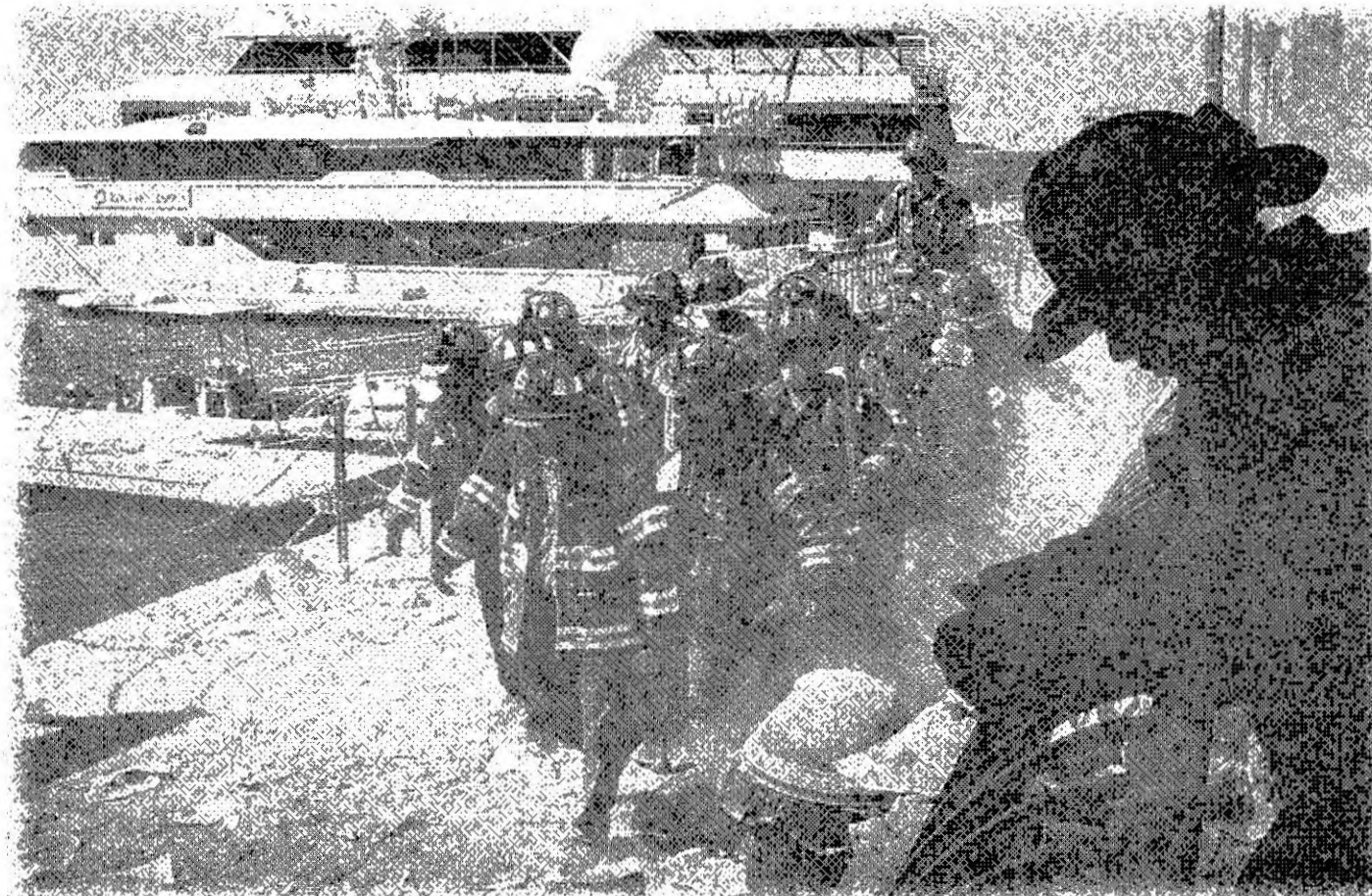
When I came around the block, and this was — I don't remember what time it was. It was just minutes before 1 World Trade Center fell. I made the turn and two guys were walking toward me and I looked up and that's when I saw One [World] Trade Center coming down. There was no way to outrun World Trade Center 1 from falling. So me and the two guys laid on the ground. I laid on top of them . . . One guy was a black guy in kind of a jumpsuit and one guy was a business guy dressed in something else. We got buried under all the debris from 1 World Trade Center and what was left of 6 Trade Center when they both came down because they toppled into each other. I don't know how long we were under there. Everything went black and I felt stuff hitting me all over the place and they were screaming. I was screaming, everybody was yelling. Basically, it was so loud that you couldn't hear anything else



except what was right in front of your face, and everything went so black that it went from as if you shut all the lights off and closed your eyes, it was that dark. It was hard to breathe. That stuff, all that powder was getting in our faces, your eyes burning and everything else. I would say maybe a half an hour we were under that rubble before we dug ourselves out, before we thought it was OK. But when we opened our eyes, I thought, *jezz*, now we're in a cave. How the hell am I going to get out of here? But it was mostly debris and the powder. When we stood up after digging for about a

half an hour, we basically just popped out of the powder, and five feet from where we were, an R&P, a cop car, was destroyed by an I-beam. So we got lucky with that. I walked them — we still couldn't really see. I had a flashlight and we just started walking to the side, and we walked into 3 Financial Building and we traced that to the corner by touch because you still couldn't see anything, made the turn onto Vesey, and then all the way in the distance you could see a dim, blinking red light . . . So I said 'head that way' because from behind us I heard a whole bunch of people, screaming. So I went back . . .

heard a woman screaming . . . I guess we're still all here



was one chief, I believe, up there. I'm not sure. He told us to start our way down, make your way down, everybody out. Since I didn't hear that on the radio. I just heard it from — start your way down. We were there with Captain Billy Burke, who we lost. We're like, 'Let's go, Cap. We're all out.' He said, 'Start your way down. Make your way down. We'll all meet at the rig.' Again, we're like, 'Let's go.' He said, 'Start your way down. We'll all meet at the rig.' I talked to him three times on the way down, once in the stairwell, once on the 19th floor as we were switching over from the B to the A or the A to the B. Again, I'm not sure. I spoke to him once in the lobby. It was the same thing all the time, 'Meet at the rig, meet at the rig . . .'

James Basile

EMS chief

We were helping people over large areas of debris and channelling them, trying to keep them calm, bringing them over to a walkway that led to No. 7 World Trade Center. When the majority of the civilians were out, I waited a few minutes. There was nobody else coming out. I had a feeling, a gut feeling inside that it was time for me to leave.

So I started walking. I went over the walking bridge to No. 7. I went into the second level or the main lobby and walked down the escalator. As I was approaching the corner of West and Vesey, I heard over the radio that the building was leaning. As I was crossing West Street, that's when I heard that jet sound again. I knew that the building was coming down. I made it about — somewhere between West and North End there was a fence, approximately, I guess, 200 feet or maybe 100 yards away. I decided to use that as a wall to protect myself from any debris, not knowing what the extent of the magnitude was going to be.

I brought a couple of civilians down with me, a couple of firefighters. I brought them close to the ground. I covered them with my turnout coat with me. I essentially waited and figured that was it, it was all over, because of the proximity to where we were to where the building was.

It went down, got filled with this dust and dirt, debris, again, this cloud. I opened up my eyes. It was total darkness. I guess for about two, three minutes. I thought I guess this is what it's like to be dead. Then I heard a woman screaming next to me, and I said I guess we're still all here . . .

Among those rescued and lost were the rescuers. Firefighters, above, carry injured comrade and others, at left, gather at the end of a shift.

on the left side of the crater. It wasn't easy to walk even two guys next to each other through all this steel.

There were high voids and there were fires burning.

They were giving us reports that there were two firefighters trapped below them and a chief that was in very bad shape. They're also asking us to make sure rescue was with us because they needed special equipment to get these guys out. But we were pretty much carrying just about ourselves, because we were dropping tools as we were going because it was a tough crossing. I spoke to Lt. Jimmy McGlynn from 39 Engine. He said, 'Glen, you're never going to get them out. We need air bags. We need torches. We need the Hearst tool.' I said, 'Jimmy, we barely have a hook with us. We have a rope.'

There were reports that we were missing, because the last transmission I had given to Chief Ferran was before we actually got to Picciotto . . . Once I got in the stairway, we couldn't transmit anymore. The radios weren't any good anymore.

From the time we began our search with the siren, it was probably an hour and a half to transverse the crater area with my whole group of guys.

We had guys around the top of the crater, on the right side of the crater and

Firefighter Michael Byrne

Engine 21 in Manhattan Responded to Tower One

We got a report maybe 69th floor, 64th floor, partial collapse. After that — there,



in the battalion van. He said he's going to ring his siren.

We were operating on channel Number 5, thank God, because that's the only way we were able to communicate with him. Everyone else that was on 1, it was impossible to talk to anybody.

He would hit the siren mode of this megaphone, and it sounded like a police car. It went 'woo-woo-woo,' like

that. When we first did that, it sounded a mile away, but at least it was something to go on.

When we removed some debris around the escalator, we were able to go up into what was the eastern exposure of the crater, where the center of the World Trade Center was. All it was was rubble. It was steel that had collapsed inward. We could barely hear this

siren going off, but it was something enough to go.

So every 20 minutes or so he would again use this siren, and we zeroed in on him.

From the time we began our search with the siren, it was probably an hour and a half to transverse the crater area with my whole group of guys.

We had guys around the top of the crater, on the right side of the crater and

... I actually thought a plane was coming because of the

Lt. Gregg Hansson
Engine 24 in Manhattan

Responded to One World Trade Center and was on a floor in the 30s when the call came to evacuate.

We were trying to formulate a plan with the battalion chief as to how we were going to get up somewhere around the 90th floor, being that we were already exhausted at this point ... I was in the vicinity of the battalion chief, who was on the command channel, when I heard a mayday given over the command channel to evacuate the building. He started to tell everyone to evacuate, as I did also. I saw all the units get up. Everybody got their gear. Everybody started for the staircases to evacuate. Ladder 5 I know for a fact had been going down stairway B, which was in the elevator bank in the middle of the building. Engine 33 — I'm not positive but I believe they went to stairway C, which I believe was the southwest corner. I went back to my men with Ladder 20 to stairway A. Still in the hallway, we heard a big shake in the building. It's my belief that was the Tower Two coming down. I'm not positive, but you could definitely feel an incredible shake ...

The chief had directed us, after this big loud shaking, to get in the stairways ... At that time I ordered my men, "Let's get out." So we started to get out ...

We went down stairway A. We got down to the third floor, and the third floor was partially blocked by some Sheetrock. We started to move that when a firefighter ... said to me that you can't get down that staircase, there's no exit that way, and he needed help with a civilian ... He was on the ground. We assisted him in trying to remove this guy. We made our way to staircase C, I believe ...

We finally managed with great difficulty to get this guy down to the first floor, and we were directed by Port Authority police officers to the lobby area of the north side of the Trade Center, which was a couple of doors right in the middle. We had two officers there who said, "Hold up. There's people jumping out of the building and there's a lot of debris coming down." They were actually looking up outside the building when we were still in the lobby. They said it was OK to go, and we started to bring this guy across."

There was people running all over the place. A lot of emergency vehicles going back and forth. People almost getting hit by police cars and everything shooting around over there ...

EMT William Trucollo
Battalion 26 in the Bronx

Was at Liberty and West streets heading for the Marriott.

There was people running all over the place. A lot of emergency vehicles going back and forth. People almost getting hit by police cars and everything shooting around over there ...

We got in front of the — I believe it was the Marriott. I just heard somebody yell, "Run!" I tried to run ... I woke up. I was partially underneath a — I don't know. It had to be some type of motor vehicle, because I could see the exhaust and there was a fireman digging [out] my leg, because my legs got buried, the rest of me was underneath the car ... I remember he pulled me out and I actually thought a plane was coming because of the roaring sound. That's when he told me the tower collapsed.

Former Chief of Department Daniel Nigro

To my recollection, we had never put out a fire that involved that many floors in a high-rise building in this city before. I think more or less the direction of — in both towers ended up, evacuation was the main, the initial concern. Get as many people out of the building as we could."

Chief of Operations Salvatore Cassano

When the south tower collapsed, what we did was we either ran, got blown or fell down that garage, into that garage. That's where we all went. And after the dust and smoke cleared, someone showed us an exit. I went up an exit stairway and came out the lobby of the building ...

I started to walk north to try to get people to set up a command post farther north ... I realized we have people up there [in the north tower]. The building is loaded with our

guys. We got to get them out of there ... There was no debris on that street at all from the first plane. I drove right up there and then like I said, I had just opened my door and the second — I thought it was the secondary explosion. I didn't know it was another plane in the south tower, because when I heard it, I looked up and I saw debris. It had to be debris flying over from the south tower. Not much, but there was enough coming down in the street where I took off and I ducked into a garage until it cleared up.

After the secondary explosion in the north tower, I didn't know what the hell — I didn't know it was another plane that had hit until I got around to the command post ...

I saw Father [Mychal] Judge as I was walking to the Millennium [hotel] ... and I walked up to him, gave him a smile. I told him, "Father Judge, we are going to need a lot of help here. You better get some more chaplains." He smiled and said something. I forget what he said. I don't remember what he said. That was the last time I saw him."

Fire Lt. Brendan Whelan
Engine Co. 35 in Manhattan

Recalling his journey to the World Trade Center from two to three minutes north:

On the way down, we heard the upper collapse of the first building. That's probably one of the things that I'll never forget, because after the initial collapse, there was total silence on the radios, the department radio. The next thing, members that were trapped in vehicles were screaming over

their handsets ...

A couple guys were saying that they were trapped, they were buried, they couldn't breathe, they were running out of air. It was pretty eerie to hear that over the department radio, something that I never thought I would hear and I never want to hear again. Who those members were, I don't know. What their outcome was, I don't know.

I realized everybody that had heard those transmissions thought they were going into hell, basically ...

One of the funny things was — I don't know if you'd want to say it was funny. But I remember looking up at the building and seeing the volume of fire that was in the building, and I grabbed Mark Ferran by his turnout coat and I pulled him at me and I said, "You know what, Chief, we're in a collapse zone here." He looked at me and he said, "That's not coming down" ...

A huge cloud of I guess it was just smoke from the collapse itself shot out ... It was easily 20, 30 stories high, this cloud.

As you were running, you were watching the cloud catching up to you ... You didn't know what was in it, if there was heat in it — actually I was thinking there was going to be huge boulders coming down right down West Street and basically knock us over like bowling pins.

Capt. John Kevin Culley

Office of Emergency Management

Once the plane hit, there was no debris, or it fell. What we did have coming out of the building were people ...

Once I arrived at the fire

command station, I was told by someone who had actually witnessed the plane hitting it that it was indeed a plane. Up until that point, I thought it was a bomb ...

The only report that I remember was that somebody, I believe in the FBI, had a telephone conversation with somebody on the 51st floor reporting that there's jet fuel on that floor. It wasn't clear to us exactly what floor the impact was on, but I knew it was higher than that ...

I came in from the command, and I don't recall having a problem entering with all the people exiting. It was not an issue. I do remember civilians in the area exiting, but never like masses of people that were clogging things.

The radio that I carry is an 800 megahertz connected to the OEM channels. I was transmitting and receiving. All the Fire Department radios that I was aware of were transmitting, you know, you could hear all the conversations going on. We did hear the jumpers jumping.

So that brings us up, you know, the next key point is when the next plane comes. We heard the engines ... You heard this thump and the rain of debris coming down ... It was pretty clear then that these weren't accidents. It was also clear then that there wasn't any control of that building, no elevators, communications above.

Paramedic Neil Sweeting

We started running. People were diving into the back of ambulances that were open and on the hoods of ambulances, cars. Anything that was moving, they were trying to get into. There was one ambulance, there must have been 25 people piled into the back of it: firemen, policemen, civilians, EMS.

We started running, but there was a woman on Vesey Street between the Financial Center and the complex, like the plaza, and she got hit with something. She just went down like a shot. She got up and tried to run and just collapsed again. You could see that she had snapped her leg, her ankle ... The poor woman was trying to run.

Lt. John Nevins
Fire Operations

Just prior to the collapse of Two World Trade Center [the south tower], probably 5 to 10 minutes, Chief Fred Villani arrived at our location and he was transitioning into taking over the staging at that location.

At that point Two World Trade Center began to collapse. I was directed by Chief Villani to run ...

Following the collapse, we attempted to regroup, shuttle ambulances down to North End and re-establish the stag-

when people really were saying run, run'

they told us run away, you have to evacuate immediately, because the second building is going to collapse.

We were like, "Oh, my God, it can't be possible." Patients were already hooked into their oxygen lines and their masks. They were strapped into long boards and all that kind of stuff and there was too many of them, so we had to unstrap them, remove their face masks and just assist them as good as we could, because there was too many for us. We are doing this or just let them die there. Believe me they run.

As soon as we let them go they just disappeared, as we did. We started running and running and running and I just remember ... looking back and seeing the cloud.

First listening to this sound, this thundering sound and then silence after that, like eerie silence, until the cloud caught up to us and surrounded us and you could see no more ...

The only thing I was able to listen was to my breathing. I mean it was — oh, my God, it was such a weird feeling. It was just like hu, hu, hu. Slow motion like in a tunnel.

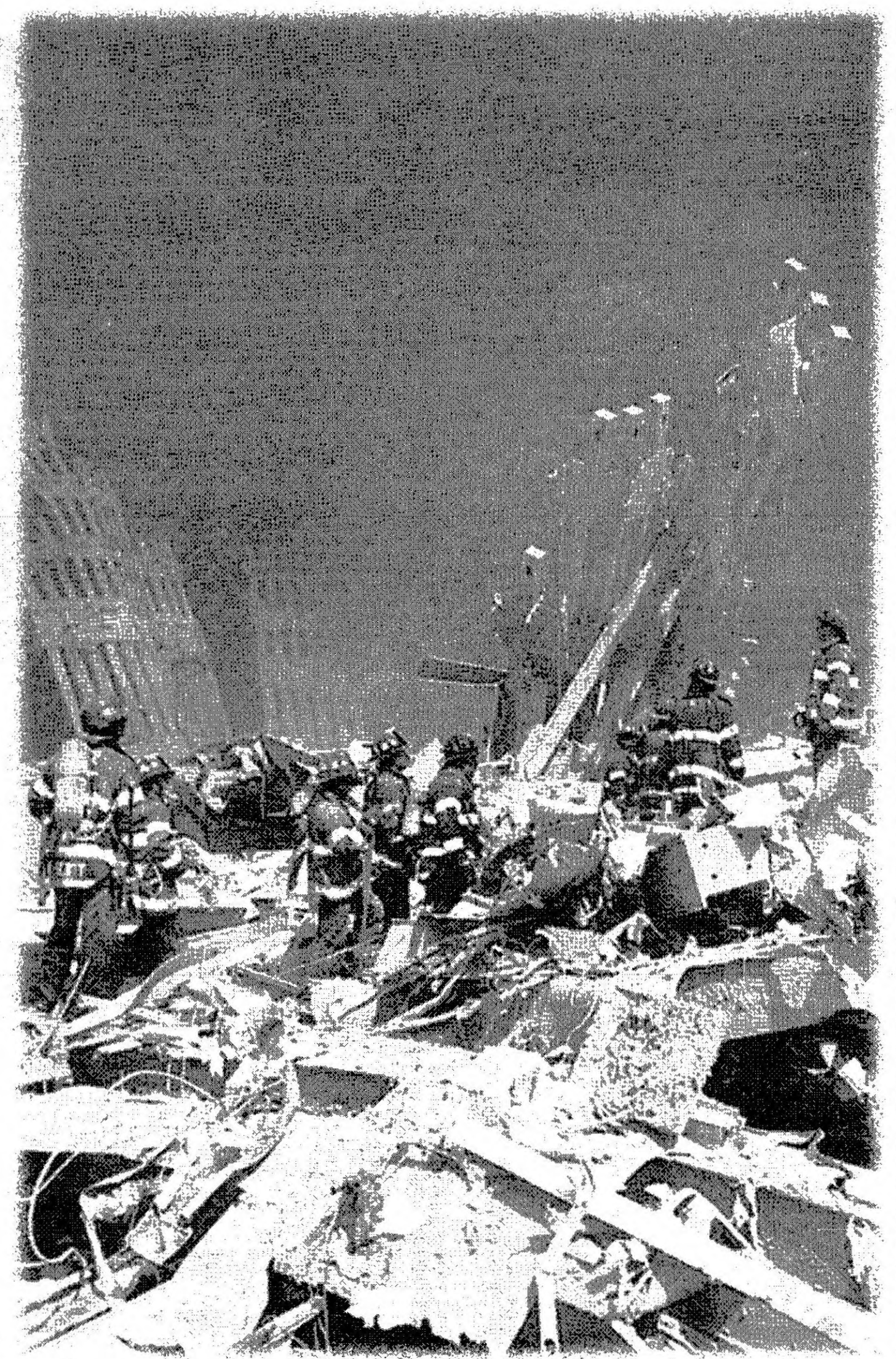
I kept on walking, running and walking, and running and walking, until someone saw me and picked me up. It was an ambulance that was picking up emergency personnel. They were picking up paramedics and EMTs and police officers and firefighters. They took us to the — drop us at the bus terminal, somewhere on the West Side Highway.

Battalion Chief John Sudnik

I was trying to get accountability of how many units we had on the scene responded to an order from Chief Downey to get five truck companies to report to him, and I guess he gave them an order to go to Tower Two, don't know which ones those were, it was kind of crazy at that point.

So after Tower Two started coming down everybody really pretty much took beeline into the garage area where we were operating anybody who was operating near that command post or at the command post most got out didn't see where everybody went but know a lot of guys took cover down below ...

So I went out the way I came. There was some debris that I was able to get over. Before I knew it, I was walking up the ramp again. I kind of assumed I was outside and I kept walking and walked into tree. That was it. I got out there. There was nothing. It was total silence. No sign — I mean you couldn't see anything, but there was no sign or anything being around there of what was left of the command post."



Emergency personnel search the ruins for victims and fight fires at Ground Zero on Sept. 11, 2001.



An exhausted firefighter rests on the back of a flatbed truck on Sept. 14, 2001.

'We just heard a loud, thunderous, rumble sound, and that's

Joseph Pfeiffer

Battalion Chief, Battalion 1

Sometime about 8:15 or so in the morning we got a call to Lispenard and Church for a gas leak in the street. We were there for a while checking on the gas leak, and then we heard the loud roar of the plane come over, and we turned around and we looked and we saw the plane coming down, heading south toward the Trade Center, and made a direct hit on the Trade Center. I saw it hit. Within about 10 seconds after that or so I gave the first report on the radio and transmitted a second alarm for a plane into the Trade Center.

I went into the lobby. There were people injured. I tried to gather information, where the plane hit, what floor, and the best we could get is somewhere around 80. As the units were coming in, we checked for the elevators to see if we had any elevator service.

There wasn't any. I started to send people up to perform a rescue because we knew there were people trapped above the fire and we were getting reports in the lobby people were trapped in the elevators.

I believe we started sending units up. I told engines, half the group to take hose, the other half not to, at least early on, and started their way up. Also, I saw my brother, who was a lieutenant in 33, and we spoke a little bit, and then he went up also.

Then the plane hit the second tower, the south tower. Right before that we discussed the operation of the radio. Any time in a high-rise building, communications is difficult. We tried to get repeaters to work. The Trade Center had a repeater. That did not work for some reason, and there were problems with the repeater in the car also.

So communications from the onset was difficult. We tried it numerous times and we couldn't get the repeaters to operate properly, so we had to rely just on handie-talkie communication, which is at best hit or miss in any high-rise.

At one point I was asked to get the operations with the helicopter into motion. Unfortunately, or fortunately, I could not get a hold of the dispatcher to do that. One of the citywide radios got moved around and I couldn't grab that. The phone lines were out, and nobody was picking up or the lines were busy to the dispatcher, so I couldn't get through to them on a landline or a cell line.

We weren't getting good reports from the police at all.

At one point after the second plane hit, I think, I'm not positive of the time line, I know Chief Callen asked over the radio to come down to the lobby. But with difficulty with communications, that didn't

happen. It didn't fully happen. I'm not too sure who heard that or how many people came down. There was no way of really telling at that point.

But right before the south tower collapsed, I noticed a lot of people just left the lobby, and I heard we had a crew of all different people, high-level people in government, everybody was gone, almost like they had information that we didn't have. Some of them were moved across the street to the command post.

At one point the Fire Safety Director, Mike Hurley, asked us if we wanted the building evacuated. I'm not too sure if he meant both buildings or he was just talking about this. In either case, I believe he was talking about both buildings. I turned to Chief Hayden and said do you want to evacuate the buildings? He said yes.

I turned to Mike and I told him evacuate the buildings.

So there were definite communications back and forth that we wanted the buildings evacuated. I forget what stage that was at that time. Again, I can't put that on a time line. But it was before the second building collapsed for sure.

As things were collapsing into the lobby of the north tower, I pushed everybody around the corner. I knew where I was, so I pushed people around the corner.

They were just pushed around a wall literally and then the whole area went black. We heard things collapse. There was debris falling in and everything was black.

At that time I went around to Chief Hayden and said 'I'm going to evacuate the building.' I got on the radio and I called up to the battalion chief upstairs, which I got an acknowledgment to evacuate the building for a number of times.

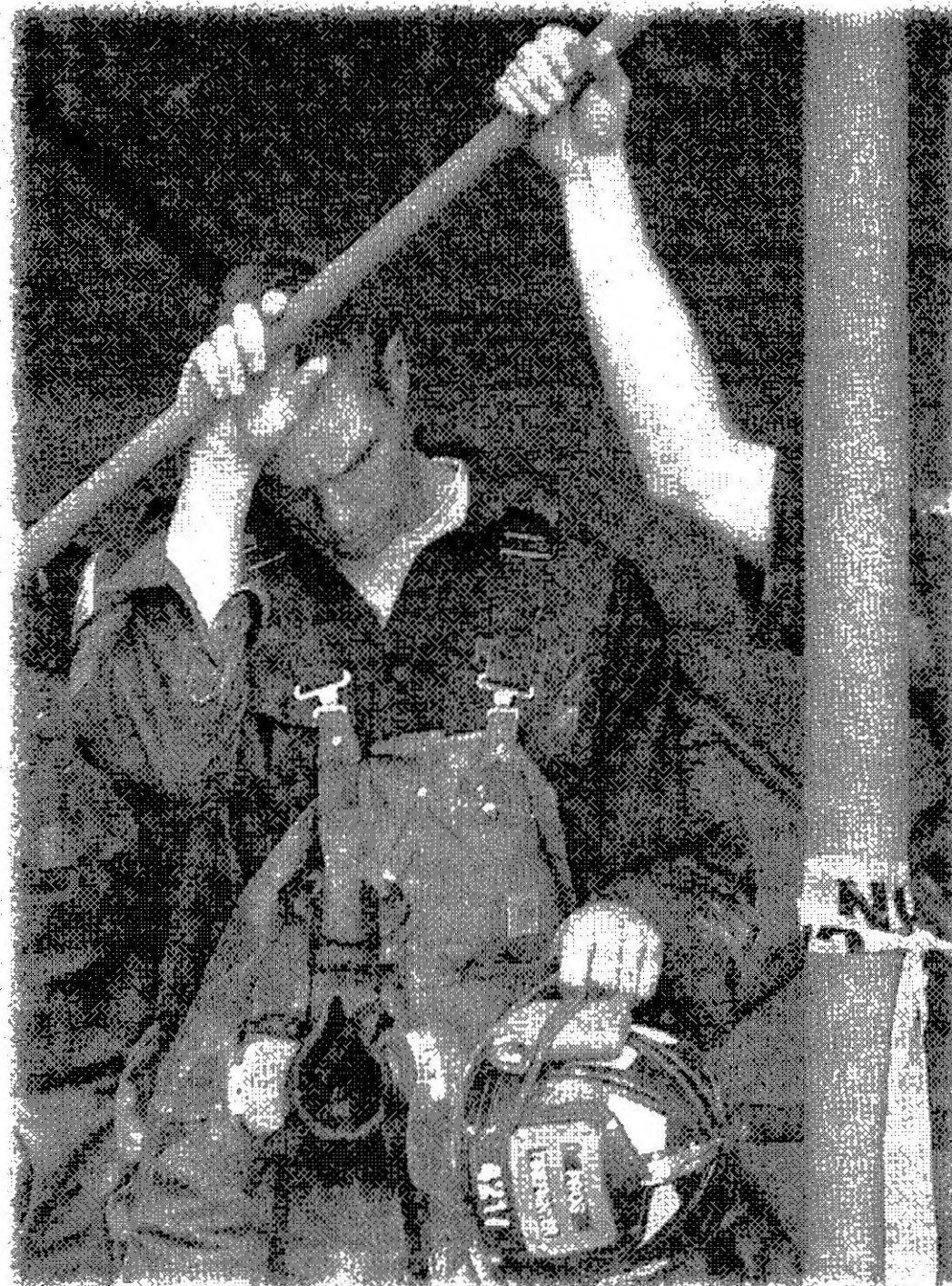
I don't know what chief. But I did get acknowledgment, like I said, a number of times firefighters said they heard me and that's why they got out. And that was just in the blackness where at that point we didn't even know our way out.

Then Father Judge was there and he was lying on the ground and I went over to him, took off his collar, I opened up his shirt, checked for a pulse, and I knew at that point that he didn't have any.

We wound up walking out into the street on Vesey and West pretty much standing in front of One, the north tower, or hopefully the north tower, just north of the bridge.

It was all smoke. It looked like a fire. But it was the buildings. So still I didn't know the whole thing collapsed. I knew we had a big collapse but I had no idea. What people saw on TV I didn't see and nobody told me that's what had occurred and I didn't hear any radio communications of that either.

But standing out there, at one point, we just heard a



Holding onto scaffolding, a firefighter takes a moment during a search on Sept. 21, 2001.

loud, thunderous, rumble sound, and that's when people really were saying run, run. I must have had my back to the building or was talking to one of the chiefs because I never saw it. I just heard the sound and ran about 50 yards west up Vesey Street toward the river and got about half a block at most and dove behind a car or between cars in the street.

Everything was coming at us, and as it started to turn brown, we dove behind the car, and then the whole street went black and at that point I thought that was it. When the whole street goes black in the middle of the day, that's not a good thing. At that point it was real difficult to breathe. You couldn't see anything now with the debris being under a lot of force.

Then after a while it started to clear.

[Pfeiffer is asked if his brother made it out.]

No. That's the toughest part.

And that's the story.

Deputy Chief Charles R. Blainch

was off-duty and arrived on the Staten Island ferry after the second tower fell.

I got my volunteers together. We had a contractor giving us an assortment of shovels and picks and whatever and we proceeded further up to the west. I bumped into Dr. Prezant, who looked like he had just been put in a bag of flour and shaken up and down several times.

One of the volunteer ambulances that were there, gave us some face masks to wear at that point. We grabbed a pile of those and proceeded further north. We attempted to establish a command post. We were attempting to establish it on top of the roof of the van.

There were numerous fires burning through the pile. We were tentatively directing the volunteers to start fanning out on top of the pile to see if we

could make any spot rescues, if anyone was alive.

At the same time we were informed that there was no water in the hydrant system and what engine companies we had that were still remaining, were reporting they had no water.

At some point during this, the difficult part was people were trying to make rescues of victims that they could see in the pile and we had to force them away because people had I beams through them and things like that.

We just didn't have the time to invest in bringing out dead bodies. We were trying to find live bodies.

EMT Christine Bastedenbeck

wrote down information about patients — their names, where they were being treated — after first tower fell.

I remember going inside this building... and as I was tracking this patient information,

roaring sound. That's when he told me the tower collapsed.



Lines of firefighters and rescue personnel work at the base of the World Trade Center a few days after the attacks.

ing location at that area.

For approximately 10 to 15 minutes we continued to do that until we were told that — I believe at the direction of the police, that that area was probably unsafe due to the impending collapse in number One World Trade Center.

Deputy Chief Thomas Galvin Division 3, Incident Commander for South Tower

Ushered out several people using a safety rope:

Now hindsight's twenty-two when you see the layouts of the buildings. I wasn't aware the Marriott directly interconnects — even this picture doesn't give it to you. It directly interconnects into the north tower. I remember saying to somebody how do get into the tower not realizing that this interconnects with both. And the guy actually sends me to the north tower.

I don't think at that time I

realized I was in the north tower. I just said something's wrong here. It just doesn't seem right. I remember coming back and there was more debris that's falling down into the atrium. I'm calling it an atrium but it's just an open area.

I would say from that time, maybe one minute later, two minutes later, is when the hotel just started shaking. Everything came down. I ran south down the lobby and

that's when I got caught in debris in the lobby there. There was just dust, debris coming down all over. I got knocked to the floor with lot of people.

Fire Marshal Salvatore Rignola

Was in Queens when he got the call for aid:

The radio wasn't working properly, and we never made contact with anybody. [On a pedestrian bridge]

... someone starts yelling: "There's an explosion!" All of a sudden you could hear some weird sound like crumbling. All of a sudden everybody starts running.

So I went to the corner of Vesey and West, and there was the RSU truck. I went against the ESU truck, and all of a sudden everything got black. The wind blew by. Material flew by. About two minutes later it cleared up that I was able to see.

Everybody was stopping in . . . You saw so many faces of

Fire Marshal Steven Mosiello

"I heard Chief Ganci, whose offices are three offices away down the hall, call out to Dan Nigro that a plane just hit the World Trade Center . . . We all jumped up, ran to Chief Ganci's office, myself, Chief Nigro, and we looked out the window. And the World Trade Center was on fire . . .

While we were on the Brooklyn Bridge, some five minutes later or so, Chief Ganci gave a fifth alarm for the World Trade Center due to the amount of fire and smoke we saw from our position on the Brooklyn Bridge. We were on the center of the bridge at the time, I remember. Chief Nigro said to Chief Ganci that it's probably going to be one of the worst days of our career.

[We set up in] front of Two World Financial. Somebody mentioned — I don't recall who — that this is our area of refuge should something happen, meaning the two garages, which during the course of the day did wind up being our first area of refuge when tower number two collapsed . . . Looking at the buildings, both garage doors were up. We were set up, looking at the building, to the garage on the left, which would be the south garage. And on the north garage there was a red van from communications . . .

This was our command post, and everybody was stopping in. You saw so many faces of guys that are dead today that were going into these buildings. They'd stopped by, how you doing, where do you want me to go, they went to their location and they went to work . . .

[When] the second plane hit, we saw the second plane hit . . . People actually saw the plane. You heard it, the closer it got. It just got louder and louder. I say that he throttled up as fast as he could. That's what it sounded like, but I think he became more in earshot of us. And he just came in and put the plane into the building.

Deputy Chief Peter Hayden

I was the on-duty deputy chief in the first division. I was in my quarters at the time . . . I heard a plane passing overhead extremely low. I ran to the window . . . The building line obscured my vision, but I did hear a large impact. And right away I suspected that a plane had hit somewhere in lower Manhattan. Very quickly thereafter there were alarms transmitted and a report that a plane had hit the World Trade Center . . .

When we responded in, I entered the lobby. There were a number of people outside of the building who were burned

and in need of assistance. There were people jumping from windows. It was very chaotic. When we entered the lobby, there was a lot of damage . . . broken glass, tiles dislodged and laying on the floor, you know, the decorative panels all around the walls. But it was rather calm in the lobby.

Chief Pfeifer was in control . . . We tried to gain control of the building systems, meaning the communications systems, the elevators. None of the building systems were working. The elevators were all out of service. The communication lines were not working.

The initial orders were to try and get the elevators in operation. We met up with the fire safety director from number One World Trade Center, Jim Corrigan, who is now deceased, and we told him of our problems, what we needed to do, what we needed from them to gain control of the building systems. He put his engineers to work on that . . .

We realized we had a lot dying and fire up there . . . I specifically remember telling Commissioner Von Essen that we were not attempting to extinguish this fire. It's just strictly a search and rescue operation.

There were numerous discussions in the lobby. The chief of safety came in. He discussed his concern about the collapse. His advice to us was to let the building just burn, you know, get the people down and get out. We said that's exactly what we're planning to do . . .

We concentrated on trying to get some type of hand line hardware communications. We attempted the repeater system . . . The repeater system wasn't working. So we were at a distinct disadvantage because we had none of the building systems to work with.

All we had to rely on was handy talky communications. Once you go up several floors in the towers there, you have poor handy talky communications, and that's all we had . . . Then at some point in time we were told there was another event. We were in the lobby of the north tower. We weren't sure exactly what it was. We were told another plane hit the south tower.

The last report we had from anybody at all was that there were people that were heading up around the 48th floor. That was several minutes prior to this collapse. So we had people as high as the 50th floor while we had communications. I think that's about as far up as anybody got . . .

There was a violent impact and the south tower collapsed while we were in the lobby of one . . . It was pitch-black in the lobby after that. We gave an order to evacuate the building. Everybody in the north tower was ordered out . . .

We directed everybody



Firefighter Armando Reno of Engine 65 screams in pain after being rescued. He was found at foot of an overpass and said he doesn't remember what happened when the towers collapsed.

north. Then Chief Cassano and I started to go south, looking for the command post. We were just north of the north bridge overpass when the second building came down. I crawled under a fire truck, a fire pumper. I'm pretty sure it was a pumper. I'm not sure which one it was. To this day I don't know.

I just had my helmet off and just laid down underneath that. I was told later that Chief Cassano did the same thing. After the second building collapsed and the dust settled, I came out, and I'm here talking to you.

EMS Battalion No. 8 Lt. Eloy Albuernie, who stopped at 7th Avenue and West Broadway to help 11 people who had been injured, then proceeded to West Street and Murray Street:

I asked one of the medics to have all the vehicles turn around facing northbound and to collect a key and make that as a staging area.

At that time, one of the trade buildings collapsed, and I turned right — turned left on Murray Street, using the District 37 building as my cover, which at that time I was screaming out to everybody to

come my way to use the building as a cover.

And then after that I assisted (inaudible) for the people to be evacuated, and then I don't know how I got to Chambers Street, but I went down on Chambers Street, and we just started setting up triage area at the Manhattan Community College, so in case we had to take any of the personnel, and after that I encountered a couple of EMS personnel that had their cell phone on them, which I used their cell phone number as a communication device in case — so that way we can talk to each other, since all the radio communica-

apart as if a giant had punched through tinfoil



it around the corner and that's when the . . . hit the fan right then and there.

We heard that loud and then ba-boom. It was like an earthquake or whatever. A giant, giant explosion.

Kenny made it and those other guys made it around this bend here. I was like the last guy. I just turned around and just sort of . . . I just did a fetal position. I crawled down and held, thank God, that helmet saved my life. I just held onto it and the impact, I closed my eyes, just the impact, I could just feel [a thing] biting me, flying. . . . Then this big gust came and I just went flying maybe 30, 40 feet. Tumbling.

I got up, got on my hands and knees because all of the white — was all over me. I just kept crawling. My ears were like deaf, you know, when you hear a giant fire-cracker or something. I went crawling, spitting, and I couldn't see anything because everything was white. I just kept crawling."

Firefighter Kirk Long

Engine 1 in Manhattan
He was in the north tower

We made it up to the 22nd floor. We stood there for a couple minutes. I believe Andy Desperito talked to the battalion through the fire warden phones.

We did locate somebody at the end of the hall, but everything was blown out. The ceiling had fallen. The drop ceiling had blown to the floor. Some of the walls were blown out. So Andy and I had crawled down the hallway to get to the Port Authority command post.

After that we went back to the members, and when the building started to shake, I don't remember anybody telling us to get out, but there was a Port Authority person with us and I believe he had orders to leave. Again, I think that's maybe why we were going. I believe it was [stairway] B. Again, I was watching every person coming down, looked at their face, just to make them happy that they were getting out and we were going in and everything was OK.

Making our way down the stairs, there wasn't too many people around. We were like the only company coming down. We reached the lobby. Again, somebody there told us to leave. I can't remember that part . . . As I was leaving, there were still guys running in. We heard a noise like the plane was still coming in — We turned around to look, and that's when our building was going down. After that I cleaned up with the rest of the members of Engine 1 — all but Andy Desperito, which I later found out that day that he made it out but he didn't.

An emergency worker treats a victim near the World Trade Center on Sept. 11, 2001.

else says, it was like an earthquake. The building went six feet to the right, six feet to the left. We started to make our way down, a very slow process. Once the Maydays kept coming over, guys were just stopping in the stairwell. At approximately the 18th floor, the other members of Ladder 110 started carrying a woman down in a chair . . . I picked up another civilian at 10. I walked her down. She was with two civilians. I walked her down. She was hyperventilating. She thought she was having a heart attack. So I put my mask on her, because the dust from the other tower was starting to come up into the other building. This was probably around like the sixth floor that the dust started getting bad. I gave her my mask from like 10 down because she was just trying to catch her breath. We went down — this was the B stairwell. We got down to the lobby. . . .

When I got down to the lobby, I asked the woman if she was OK. The two civilians told me that they would take her. She went with the two civilians."

Firefighter George Kozlowski

In the north tower lobby

. . . At that point we heard more jumpers hitting the outside awning. We thought it was stuff, but man, the sound of those bodies crashing down was unbelievable. Then Kenny and I just thought, well let's just walk in the main lobby there and maybe try and pry open and see if anybody is left in the elevator itself.

. . . There was lot of water coming down from the stairs, a lot of people were panicking so we kept pushing them out — pushed them to that second-floor lobby and then it was getting pretty bad out there because I couldn't tell you what side. I guess the jet fuel and everything that was flying down was really kicking up on

the outside. We let them know, too, and we were afraid because those big plate windows, we wanted to get the people away from there in case it blew and that's eventually what happened. Thank God, Kenny and I, we closed off that door so nobody could go down there any more.

At that point we were, I can't remember, how long we were on that third floor pushing the people through. That's when we felt big giant tremble like a mini earthquake. That was the south tower collapsing. We didn't see it but we really felt it. All the lights shut down. The emergency lights on the stairwell and everything. People were starting to really panic.

Then there was another small explosion on that second floor, I guess it was that plate window — everything going. That's when we encountered 5 engine. They were coming down from the fourth floor or whatever . . . luckily

a person was coming down. I don't know from what floor, but on the third floor encountered us. He says, no, I know another exit down this way.

Well, that was the only other door that we could get out of. It was lucky because . . . it was pitch-black now so Kenny, well, we all lined up. It was not like a long walk but a good enough walk to get to the other exit. It was good that guy found it because I think we would have got stuck. That he knew about it, because I don't think we would have found it. . . . We heard like lot of trembling and everything. So we better get out of here. This doesn't look good there is no more people coming. . . .

As we were walking we heard — we thought it was another plane coming. It was like big shhhhh. A thousand times louder than that. It sounded like a missile coming and we just started booking.

We took off. . . . We made

'It looked like the core elevators of the building were blown



Robert Byrne, Firefighter sixth grade
Assigned to Engine Company 24 in Manhattan. He was still finishing his probationary duties and had to "beg" to come along.

Sept. 11th, I arrived for work early to do my probationary firefighter duties so I was square with everything. When we got the call to go, I was able to — I had to beg the nozzle man to let me take up on him, which I did. The call came in around 8:46, so we responded immediately. So I had the knob....

While going to the trade center, I'm really doing my size-up and saying, 'Oh, my God, there's like 10 floors missing.' Everything is blowing out fire. I remember looking how high it is and saying, 'Oh, my God, how are we going to get up there with all of our equipment....'

We headed to the north tower at that time. When we were going there, I remember seeing debris and whatnot falling. When we got to the staging area inside the lobby, I remember seeing other companies. I remember vividly seeing it looked like the core elevators of the building were blown apart as if a giant had punched through tinfoil. I remember seeing some bodies.... Debris was everywhere. I remember we were just waiting for our assignment.

From there we headed up. I believe it was behind Ladder 20, and we headed up to the staircase A. We got as far as, I'd say, the 13th floor initially.

We had to take our first blow because we were carrying a lot of equipment. There were civilians jamming the staircase. There was water flowing down the staircase. I

remember that. People saying, 'Thank you, guys.' I remember another unit behind us. I don't remember what company they were with. One of the senior guys was saying basically, 'You're almost there, folks. You're almost there.' Then I started joking around with the people. I said, 'Yeah, all this for 32 grand.' People thought it was funny. That was my way of trying to make them feel better, tell them a joke....

I kept going up. I remember seeing people coming down in the stairs....

It was around the 29th floor, I think it was, that we decided to take some of our gear off in order to make it up to the 80th floor.... That's where we left Rich Billy to be communications relay, basically, because communications were pretty poor in the staircase. Personally I didn't hear a lot of radio transmissions.... I remember somebody had gotten into a water dispenser, and we took Poland Spring bottles. I think it was Andy Brunn that got into it. We were giving them out to civilians on their way down. I remember later on we went up to — I don't know if it was still on the 35th floor and that's when we all dove into the staircase because basically the whole tower shook and we heard the noise of something going on. We didn't know what it was. What it was was the south tower collapsing....

We made it as far as, I believe it was the 37th floor, and I believe it was a chief from the 11th Battalion that popped up on the staircase. His exact words were 'Drop everything and get out.'

We looked to Lt. Hanson, and he said, 'Drop everything



and get out.' That's when we basically evacuated.... when the chief told me to drop everything, because I'm a proby, I followed orders to the T, I guess, and I dropped everything, except for my bunker gear, of course. But I dropped my Scott tank and everything. When I got down to that floor, he said, 'All right, Byrne, you don't have your face piece. Just get out of the building....'

It was a good thing I had my flashlight on still, because it was pitch black. I followed a pitch-black hallway, and that's

where I ran into a group of civilians. When we got to the point, I think it was the lobby, and that's where we had — we had a little overhead protection there, and then we had to run across to the next overhead protection. It was about a 75-foot run. There were jumpers and debris that was falling.

We had to pretty much take our chance when we made the run.

Michael Brodbeck
Firefighter First Grade
from Engine 210

Firefighters and rescue workers continue searches in the days after Sept. 11 on a roof of the World Financial Center, above, and at World Trade Center site, at left.

Found a working elevator and used it in north tower.

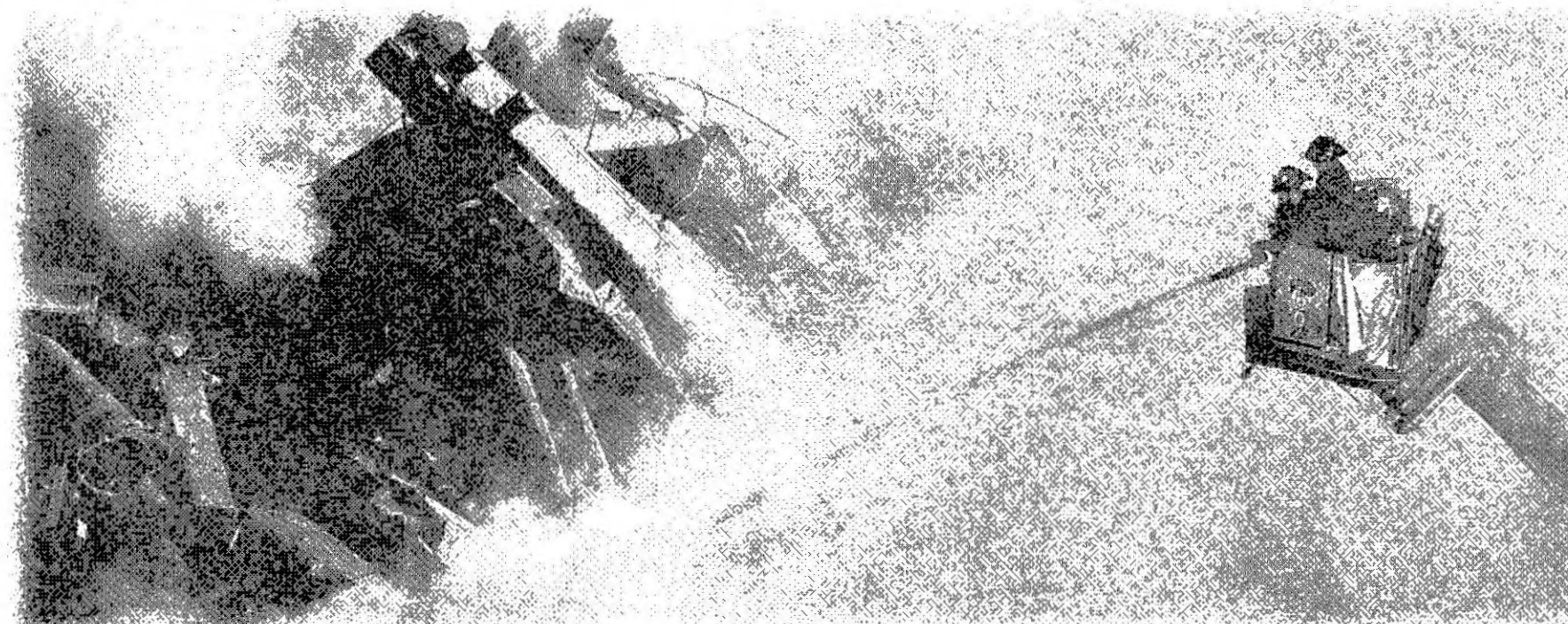
We made a left and came to the north tower. We proceeded to wait until jumpers were down. We went into the lobby. We arrived in the lobby, awaiting instruction.... We went up to the mezzanine and we took an elevator. The chief said that these elevators were all right. We took the elevator, which I believe goes up to eight. We got off at eight and proceeded to walk up to 23, and then we went up to 25. Then we made our way back down. So we were either on 23 or 21. I don't know....

The lieutenant gave us instructions to make a thorough search, pop all the doors, make sure everybody is out of the building.... We probably popped at least 10 or 15 doors making a search.... At this point after we made a thorough search, we located together via a stairwell. At that point, unbeknownst to us, the south tower fell. We didn't know that the south tower fell. I didn't have a radio because I had the can. But I heard there was a collapse in the north tower between the 68th and 70th floor.

When we heard the evacuation, we started our way down. At this point we were still unaware that the other tower went down. We were in the stairwell. We all regrouped at the stairwell before it went down. When it went down, like everybody

AP PHOTO

guys that are dead today that were going into these buildings.



AP PHOTO

Weeks after the attacks, firefighters continued to battle blazes in the rubble. At left, a wreckage of a fire truck.

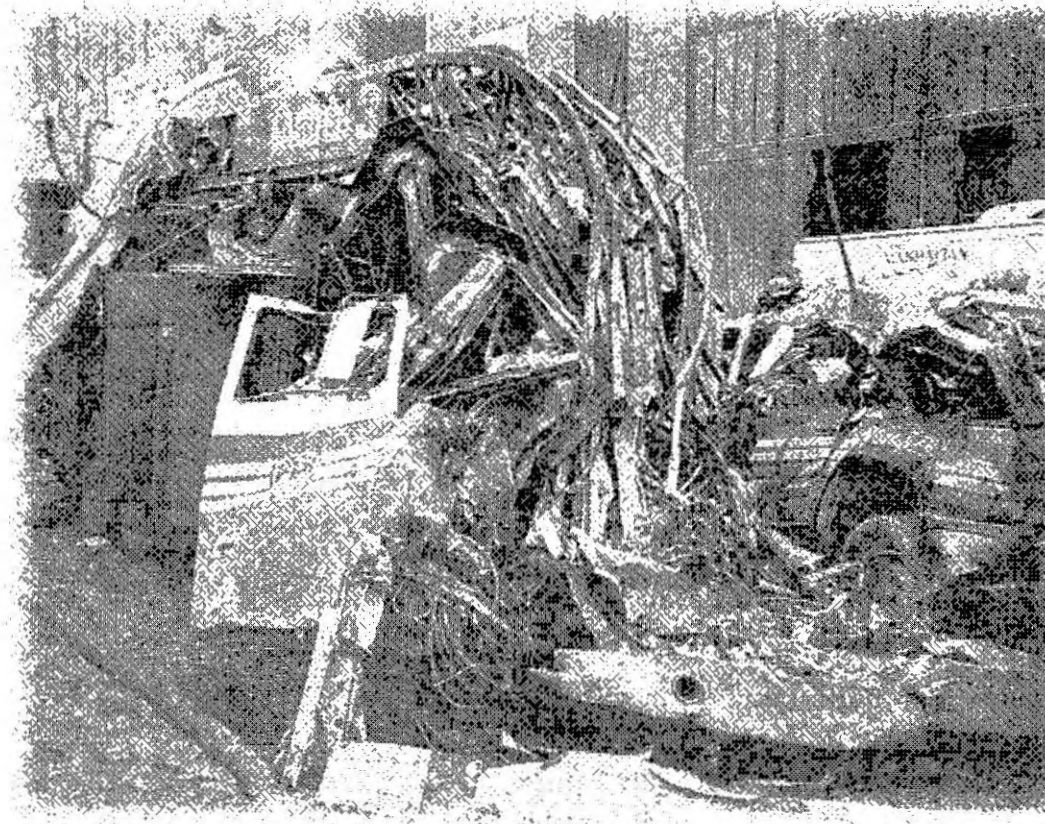


PHOTO BY GERT SALTAN, 2001

tion at that time was down.

On my way to where the EMS command center was, I went over there and I tried to speak to an EMS chief that I have started communication, I had two different staging areas set up for ambulance to respond in case we need them.

At that time, I was told to go and see the captain. The captain then told me to go see the chief. The chief told me to go back to the captain who told me I will be in charge of transport right at the Chambers command center.

After that, it just stayed there until 2:30 in the morning, return to the station, and I went home.

I think that we should start doing more drilling on an incident like this, as far as I think that we haven't done in

many years because they're too comfortable. It's not only keeping in practice to have a lot of (inaudible) to make sure that everything is done correctly.

You have proper training, like the army had the war games and things like that. We have this command, this system. We should have that more often, you know, and in a city anything could happen.

Paramedic Arturo Gonzalez, Battalion 8, who got a call sending him to the World Trade Center, at around 8:40 a.m.

"We went down West Street. We saw building number one had fire on the top floor. You could see that right actually from 34th Street. We parked at West Street in

front of One World Trade Center. That's where we stationed at. We took our equipment.

The second explosion came in building number two, in that area. We didn't actually see the plane, but we heard the explosion. We were told to go into that building, Merrill Lynch right there, the building in the lobby to set up the triage.

As soon as we set up triage there, building number two went down, and all the windows in the Merrill Lynch lobby, they were all out.

We ran out of that building, and we went to proceed to the next building that was across the street. I'm assuming that's the American Express building; we ended up on. And we went in that building, and all the glass exploded in that building

too. There was so much panic and running, everybody was spread. I don't think everybody entered the building. I think some people just went up West Street and some people went out the other direction. They all were separating.

We actually stayed about 20 minutes here watching people jumping out of the building. Actually they were jumping, landing on West Street. There was about 20 — we watched about 18 to 20 people jump out of the building, and they were landing on West Street or right in front of the World Trade Center.

They were just landing in front. We could watch them and that's it.

So we went out of that building and ran into the park that's behind the Winter Garden, in that area. It was too much smoke coming out of the whole area.

We ran to the Stuyvesant High School, that I don't see in the map there. We stayed a few minutes there. People started running up West Street. Me and my partner that was — we switched partners because my partner parted — Rick Perez, we picked up the MERV (Major Emergency Response Vehicle) there because it was abandoned because of the collapse of the building. We proceeded eastbound to West Street, and we stationed at Vesey and West.

We were told to stop and treat patients, because patients were coming out of the area. When we were trying to proceed north, we were stopped at Vesey and West to treat patients, and we didn't move from that location all that time.

We were not expecting what happened there. They caught

us by surprise. I just remember that one of the officers took all the keys to — usually you park somewhere and the officer takes the keys. That officer was never found. Most of these vehicles were left on the scene because the reason is they didn't have the keys.

The officer that took the keys, we never found. I don't know who it was, but we never found them at that time period. Luckily Rick had a copy of the MERV (key), and we wanted to move slow but we had to stop because we were the only ambulance active at that moment, the MERV.

They told us to stop and treat people, and that's where we stayed all night.

Tiernach Cassidy, firefighter third grade, Engine 3 Manhattan, who dropped his rope to trapped survivors in a rubble pile.

"The life saving rope is taut now. I'm like 'Come on this way. I'm just like directing traffic you know get up to the top of the girder again, and now it's tough climb to get to the girder."

So I use my body like bridge. He gets up on my leg and then my shoulder and he's up on the girder. He lies there on top of the girder and he gives me the biggest hug and he starts crying. For me it was like 'All right. No time for sentiment. You've got to get going you walk that way.'"

■ Oral histories continue on pages 22-23

By the Minute
Excerpts of the static-filled emergency radio transmissions on September 11.

A16

Nearly four years after they were made, the **STATIC-FILLED** emergency radio transmissions have the visceral power of immediacy, as if 9/11 was only yesterday. They are difficult to take in, even, or especially, today. Nearly **3,000 INNOCENTS** were killed, including **343 MEMBERS** of the New York City fire service. For all their painful effects on the survivors of that day, on the listeners, transmissions — **900 MINUTES** worth gathered from five different dispatch centers — reveal the **BUSINESS-AS-USUAL BRAVERY** and stoicism of those who worked at the front lines when time seemed to slow to a crawl, and history changed course.

Excerpted here, those voices tell a story like no other.

Tracking the voices of 9/11

8:46 a.m.
American Airlines Flight No. 11 hits 1 World Trade Center, the North Tower, prompting calls from lower Manhattan's first battalion and other firefighters to the Fire Department central dispatch center in that borough.

Battalion 1: Battalion 1 to Manhattan.

Dispatcher: Battalion 1.
Battalion 1: We just had a plane crash into an upper floor of the World Trade Center. [American Airlines Flight 11 hit the 1 World Trade Center, the North Tower.]

Sanchez: Battalion 1.
Battalion 1: The World Trade Center Tower 1 is on fire. The whole outside of the building. There was a huge explosion.

8:48 a.m.
Unidentified voice: Be advised, from my location now I can see heavy smoke coming from the building of the World Trade Center ... heavy, heavy damage to the upper portion of the building.

Battalion 1: We have a number of floors on fire. It looked like the plane was aiming toward the building. Transmit a third alarm. We'll have the staging area at Vesey and West Street. Have the third alarm go to that area. Have the second alarm go to the building area.

Dispatcher: Second alarm assignment, report to World Trade Center. Second alarm report to 1 World Trade Center.

Battalion 1: First Battalion. It looks like it was intentional. All units going into the box. It could be a terror attack.

Dispatcher: 10-4. All units be advised ...

1 World Trade Center resembles a giant, flaming cigarette, the fire and smoke bringing a blizzard of calls from firehouses not yet dispatched. At the scene, FDNY supervisors call for reinforcements.

Engine 10: Engine 1-0.
Dispatcher: Engine 1-0.

Engine 10: Roll every available ambulance that you got to this position.

Three Trucks: We're at Houston and West Broadway. We can see it from here. We've been directed by numerous civilians. Do you want us to take this in or do you want us to stand fast?

Dispatcher: Take that in.

Dispatcher: Incoming units, be advised. Visible flames from the side of the building.

Dispatcher: Manhattan calling Division 1. Manhattan calling Division 1. Manhattan calling Division 1.
(Silence)

Dispatcher: 110 to Manhattan. Go with your message.

110: Whatever it was hit the north side of the building ... fire at least one floor, heavy smoke all over the front and the top of the building, approximately the 90-something floor.

Dispatcher: Floor No. 106. Numerous people trapped.

Unidentified: We're going to need the PD [Police Department] for security around the entire World Trade Center ...

Dispatcher: 10-4.

People are seen jumping from World Trade Center

window ledges, evidently with no way out.

Battalion 2: Battalion 2 to Manhattan

Dispatcher: Battalion 2 — go.

Battalion 2: Be advised, we have jumpers. Jumpers.

Dispatcher: Division 1, be advised we have jumpers from the World Trade Center.

Division 1: Division 1 to Manhattan. Those jumpers, did they already jump?

Dispatcher: Division 1, Battalion 2 is advising jumpers down.

9:03 a.m.
United Airlines Flight 175 hits 2 World Trade Center, known as the south tower, or Tower Two.

Central Dispatcher: We've got another plane! 10 Oscar, another plane! Two of them ... another one!

9:05 a.m.
Central Dispatcher: We're been told by numerous people a second airplane, a second airplane, went in on the other side of the World Trade Center.

9:18 a.m.

Caller to Central Dispatch: I'm inside the subway station on the corner of Vesey and Church. I have three aided downstairs, two females, one

male that needed to be transported ... This is horrible.

9:34 a.m.

Dispatcher: Manhattan to Engine 228.

Engine 228: Engine 228.

Dispatcher: What's your location?

Engine 228: We just — Battery Tunnel.

Dispatcher: All right, 228, is it possible you can get to the Marriott Hotel, No. 2 World Trade Center? Firefighters trapped.

Rescue workers arriving on the scene encounter chaos.

Call dispatcher: 12 Charlie. Be advised I have seven ambulances, seven ambulances no bosses sitting on West Street and Vesley [sic] Street, West and Vesley. We have no bosses, seven ambulances and no idea what to do.

Radio communications are faulty, leaving some firefighters unable to give information to their commanders, or to receive it.

Dispatcher: Division Three Messenger Van ... (static) ...

Dispatcher: Manhattan to Fieldcom.

Fieldcom: Fieldcom.

Dispatcher: Fieldcom, we're not able to raise Division Three Messenger Van regarding the extra handy walkie-talkies.

Fieldcom: 10-4.

Unidentified: (inaudible) ... three to Manhattan, urgent. One of the buildings is partially collapsed ... the area ...

Dispatcher: Identify yourself.

Unidentified: (inaudible) ... three. A major collapse in one of the towers.

Dispatcher: Which tower?

Unidentified: Tower Two. [2 WTC, or south tower]

9:49 a.m.

Unidentified Firefighter: Tommy, have you made it back down to the lobby?

Tommy: The elevator's screwed up.

Firefighter: You can't move it?

Tommy: I don't want to get stuck in the shaft.

Firefighter: All right, Tommy. It's imperative that you try to get down to the lobby command post and some people up to 40. We got injured people up here on 70. If you make it to the lobby command post, see if they can somehow get the elevators past the 40th floor. We got people injured all the way up here.

9:59 a.m.

After Two World Trade Center, south tower, collapses.

Marine 6: Marine 6 to Manhattan.

Dispatcher: Manhattan to Fieldcom.

Marine 6: Marine 6 to Manhattan. Urgent. Tower Two has had a major explosion and what appears to be a complete collapse ...

Dispatcher: Box 8084, what is the command post? Box 8084 (clicking, then silence)

Dispatcher: I need the location of the command post.

Unknown voice (yelling): Explosion!

Dispatcher: Car 65 command post is Church and Fulton, Church and Fulton.

Unknown voice: Citywide,

See EXCERPTS on 18



People run for their lives as the World Trade Center's south tower collapses.

EXCERPTS from 16

the tower just collapsed.

Unknown voice: Citywide, be advised the tower was (garbled).

Dispatcher: Everybody just standby, standby!

10:01 a.m.

8Adam: We're responding down to the MCI (Mass Casualty Incident).

Manhattan Central Emergency Medical Dispatcher: Negative, negative, I need you for something else.

8Adam: The tower [2 World Trade Center, south tower] has collapsed. The tower has collapsed.

Dispatcher (upset) 8Adam, 10-4.

10:04 a.m.

Unknown voice to dispatcher: I'm on West Side Highway, I'm at cross street to Wall Street. I've got FD personnel down. I got EMS personnel down, dispatchers and so forth. I have debris all over my vehicle. I cannot move at this time.

Dispatcher: All right, 10-4, 10-4.

Unknown voice: Supervisor, I have a fireman who was caught here in the explosion live over here severely injured. (Sound of someone gasping, then silence)

10:05 a.m.

Unknown caller to dispatcher: The former staging area at Vesey and West is no longer usable. (garbled) set up a staging at Vesey and North End.

Unknown caller: What is the best access to the staging?

Dispatcher: No best access at this time, there is no best access.

10:07 a.m.

NYPD Aviation unit says 1 World Trade Center, north tower, is leaning and in danger of collapse.

07Nora: There was some sort of explosion. Half of the crews are unaccounted for... 1 World Trade.

Manhattan Central Emergency Medical Dispatcher: Where is the explosion? At the MCI?

07Nora: 10-4.

10:12 a.m.

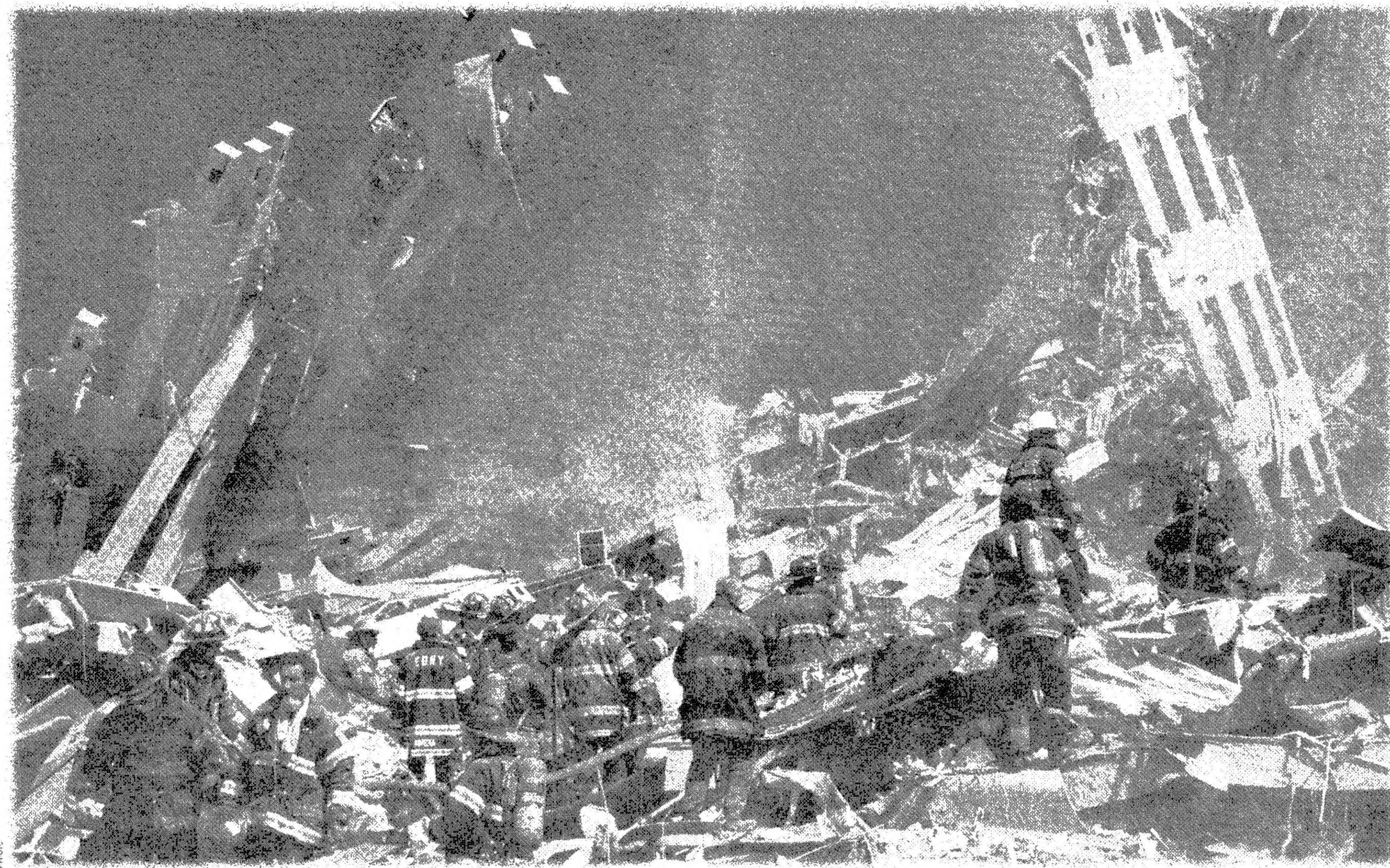
Unknown caller to dispatcher: We're right in front of the building that collapsed at the Trade Center. I'm stuck with a patient here who has possibly a broken hip. I need some help if anybody can get over here possibly.

Dispatcher, frustrated: Sir, we have numerous people trapped at this time, numerous priorities. The first unit available will be sent to you.

Caller: 10-4.

10:19 a.m.

22Adam (alarmed): Can you assist me with the (GARBLED). I am on scene. I am Albany Street



Firefighters make their way through rubble left after the collapse of the Twin Towers.

and South End Avenue. Numerous fire, PVS, and ambulance on hand with me. We have no idea where we're going. Where is the safe area?

Manhattan Emergency Medical Dispatcher: All right 22Adam, Vesey and where?

22Adam: 22Adam, Albany street, Albany Street and South End Avenue.

Dispatcher: 22Adam, calm down.

22Adam: I have to yell, I can't (GARBLED) everything.

Unidentified: (GARBLED)... off so we can hear him.

Dispatcher: It's Vesey and Chambers. 22Adam, if you're going to be like this on the air you need to stay off.

10:24 a.m.

Fire Department Mobile Command Center: We have numerous calls about people

trapped.

Manhattan Fire Dispatcher: Stand by for further instructions.

10:27 a.m.

Manhattan Central Emergency Medical Dispatcher: 32X, go, where are you?

32X: We got a four (garbled). That one has third-degree burns throughout his face. I'm gonna

go to St. Vinnie's with all four (PATIENTS), is that OK? There's no conditions for us here.

Dispatcher: 10-4.

10:28 a.m.

1 World Trade Center, north tower, collapses.

Mobile Command Center: The other tower has collapsed.

Major collapse. Major collapse...

Marine 3: Everybody get out, we had a collapse of the second tower... All units, we have received a report that No. 1 and No. 2 World Trade Center have collapsed — both towers.

Battalion 26: We are at Broadway and Vesey. A huge dust cloud, people are all around.

The desperate call goes out: Where is everybody?

Dispatcher: Manhattan to Division II.

(Silence).

Dispatcher: Any other unit for Manhattan.

(Silence).

Dispatcher: Manhattan to Fieldcom.

Unidentified Voice: George, have them mobilize the Army.

We need the Army in Manhattan.

Dispatcher: All units stand by. Everyone try to calm down. Manhattan to Fieldcom.

(Silence).

Dispatcher: Manhattan to -

Manhattan to — Manhattan to Car 9. Urgent. Manhattan to Car 9. Urgent.

(Silence).

All right. Manhattan to any unit operating at the fifth alarm West Street, at Liberty Street, at

Tower No. 2. Any unit. Any unit operating at No. 2 World Trade Center at the collapse. Contact Manhattan by radio forthwith.

Dispatcher: OK, Car 33 Bravo, we understand there was some kind of major collapse. Can you report?

Emergency Medical Service worker. This is an EMS worker. There's been a major collapse. We need additional units forthwith.

Dispatcher: The command post is being consolidated. Everybody's being moved out to West Street.

Unidentified: The tower [2 World Trade Center, south tower] collapsed.

Manhattan EMS Dispatcher: That's what I'm getting ready to tell you. That's the last note we got, that the partial collapse of Tower One...

07Nora: Several of the crews are unaccounted for. We had two units on the scene and we had a Jeep on the scene. Half of the crew is unaccounted for. Visibility is bad.

Manhattan Central Emergency Medical Dispatcher: Are you saying that these people are involved? EMS involved?

07Nora: ... (unintelligible)

Dispatcher: OK, 07Nora. 10-5 your message. You're saying because of the tower collapse, the captain was involved in this?

7Nora: 10-4. We're setting up a... (GARBLED)... are falling.

(Silence)

Dispatcher: Can I have an identification?

(Silence)

10:30 a.m.

Firefighter: Call to Command Post Manhattan South. Me and my partner are both OK... We have building collapse. We have total blackness... we have no visibility. We have no way to get out of here... Charlie to Central: Mayday.

10:30 a.m.

In Brooklyn, the fire dispatcher warns units that the second tower has collapsed.

Brooklyn Dispatcher to unknown: Are you able to get in contact with the companies in the (Brooklyn Battery) tunnel before you leave? Let them know there's gonna be another large pile of dust. It appears the second tower has collapsed.

10:31 a.m.

10Adam to Manhattan Central EMS dispatcher: Where do you want us to go?

Dispatcher: Where are you now?

10Adam: 35 and 9. Do you want us to go to the World Trade Center? Tell us where you want us to go.

Dispatcher: Still holding.

10Adam: Whatever it is, wherever you have it, just tell us. We'll do it.

Dispatcher: OK, I can't have you responding to the site right now. We're holding numerous in that site, but it's, um, it's unstable there so I

See EXCERPTS on 20

EXCERPTS from 18

cannot send you there.

A civilian voice.

Unidentified Civilian: (shouting) Can anybody hear me. I'm a civilian. I'm trapped inside one of your fire trucks underneath a collapse that just happened.

Dispatcher: Stand by, there's somebody close to you.

Civilian: I can't breathe much longer. Please save me. I'm in the cab of your truck.

Dispatcher: OK, person transmitting the Mayday. Where are you?

Civilian: I just told you. If you look at the World Trade Center, there's the north pedestrian bridge. I think it just collapsed... I was on the street. I don't have much air. Please help me.

Firefighter: I copy that, I'm going to go look for him.

Civilian: I can barely breathe, please send somebody.

Dispatcher: OK, person calling for help. Listen to me. You need to calm down and relax. Stand by. We do have somebody on the way. Maintain air. Get off the air. We do have somebody on the way over to you. You are to remain calm. 10-4?

Civilian: I'm in the cab of a truck.

Dispatcher: Manhattan to any unit at World Trade Center 2. Urgent. EMS Ladder 15, I want you to go to the nearest chief, fire department chief, and have him come to the radio forthwith. If you find anybody with a white hat, get him to come to the radio. I need a report to find out what else I can send to him... Let me know who is in command there at this moment.

10:46 a.m.

07Adam to Manhattan Central EMS Dispatcher: ... We're getting a lot of people that are walking up from the MCI.

Dispatcher: All right. [GARBLED] care, take as many as you can.

11:10 a.m.

At the scene, trapped firefighters begin to radio for help.

Firefighter: I'm trapped here
Dispatcher: Rear of tower of number one?

Dispatcher: There is help on the way. Calling any unit to assist the trapped firefighters.

Dispatcher: Calling any members to assist trapped firefighters...

11:18 a.m.

Dispatcher: I have a trapped firefighter —

Firefighter: Chief V — is trapped, I have him... I need some help getting him out —

Dispatcher: We have some units coming, we are coming in a city bus.

11:31 a.m.

In the aftermath of the towers' collapse, confusion reigns in lower Manhattan.

Dispatcher: All units, a report of a bomb in the Brooklyn Battery Tunnel.

Dispatcher: We have a number of city buses at the Brooklyn bridge [filled with firefighters].

Dispatcher: Calling Capt. V? Come in, Capt. V. if you hear me? Calling the unit looking for Capt. V?

(Confusion)

Dispatcher: I'm getting four different chiefs giving me four command posts. I have Park and Vesey, West and Chambers, Liberty Command, and Church Command. You guys have to help me out, here.

Dispatcher to Battalion 37: Get some type of head count on how many members total you have. We're gonna try to split you into two sections. We're gonna send one of you over with approximately half the membership that's there, and then we're gonna hold the other half back. Can you split 'em up evenly you think?

Battalion 37: 10-4.

12:09 p.m.

In Brooklyn, failing radios create confusion.

Brooklyn dispatcher (sirens in background): Brooklyn's responding to the 37.

Unit: We have approximately 50 on each — [garbled tape,

said originally. You have Number Four World Trade Center is in imminent collapse. Number Seven World Trade Center is also in danger of collapse? Is that correct?

Unknown voice: No. Number Seven, we have the walls are scaling from sides of the building.

Dispatcher: All right. And Number One World Trade Center is fully involved, the floors that are remaining —

Unknown voice: Yeah. The floors that are remaining are also in danger of collapse at that location... fully involved... and you've got the member trapped, is that correct?

Dispatcher: Can you confirm that that is the member that I was in contact with on the radio before?

1:10 p.m.

Fire engines have trouble navigating the chaotic streets of lower Manhattan.

Dispatcher to Engine 31: Were you given, um, what instructions were your last, uh instructions, what were they?

Engine 31: To report to Liberty Avenue (sic) and Washington to chief... from the Brooklyn command post. We are about three blocks away. Dispatcher: All right, uh, listen, we have no way of getting through to the command post on this frequency. If Manhattan is busy, all I can tell you is park the rig and then walk in if you're only three blocks away. Park the rig and then walk over your equipment to the chief. Engine 31: OK, 10-4.

1:24 p.m.

Emergency vehicles continue to rush to Ground Zero.

Manhattan dispatcher to Mobile Command Center: Be advised FEMA CASH unit is en route with three tractor trailers of rescue equipment. Where do you want them to respond, and what's the best route for them to take?

Mobile Command Center: 10-4, we'll get back to you.

1:26 p.m.

In Brooklyn, the dispatcher gets the word that no more firefighters should be sent to Manhattan.

Unknown company to Brooklyn dispatcher: We have approximately 300 firefighters stationed here with approximately 10 to 12 buses. We're in formation to proceed over Manhattan Bridge when the need arises. Until further orders, we'll maintain our position here.

Three hours after the collapse of the second tower, calls unrelated to the attacks come in. The Brooklyn dispatcher receives a report of a "smoke condition" at a building on Linden Boulevard, near Lincoln Avenue.

12:58 p.m.

Meanwhile, units at the scene continue to report in to the Manhattan dispatcher.

Unit 429: This is search team 429 from the 14th Division. We are in front of the WTC. We cannot communicate with the units inside. We would like to know if there is anybody from the first two companies missing that we

12:39 p.m.

As reports come in that the other World Trade Center buildings are in danger of collapsing, the Manhattan fire dispatcher tries to figure out what is going on.

Dispatcher: All right. I need you to repeat what you

12:05 p.m.

Brooklyn firefighters amass at the base of the Manhattan Bridge.

Firefighters arrive on the scene after the collapse of Tower Two, the first of the towers to fall on Sept. 11. Part of the tower is seen in the background.

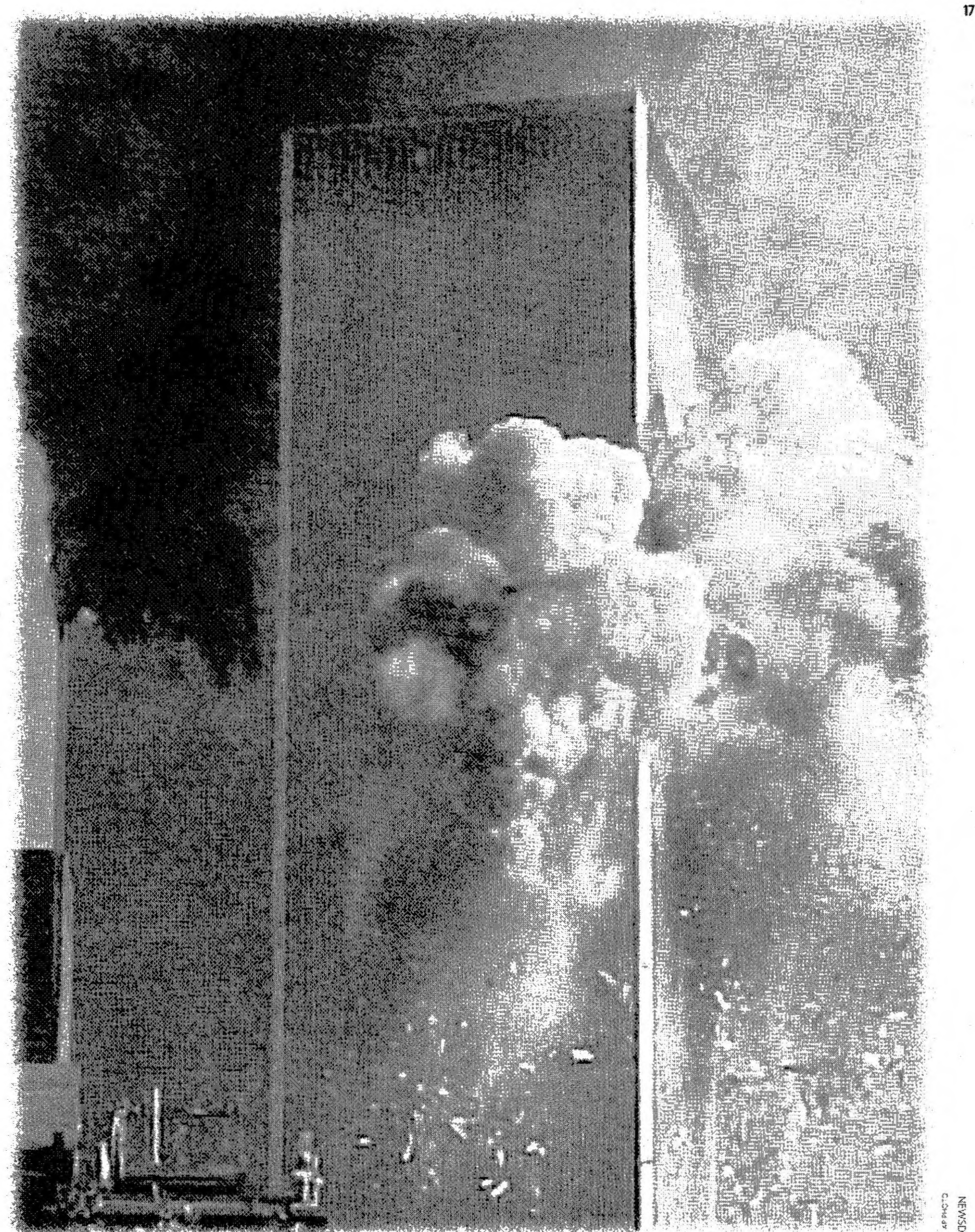
Dispatcher: All units — calling Captain V. — come in if you read me...

11:59 a.m.

The Manhattan dispatcher radios to Brooklyn, updating them on the situation.

Dispatcher: They are to use the Manhattan Bridge. The Manhattan Bridge is under police control. It is closed for our units to come across into Manhattan...

(Unknown voice): All right. We're going to change the staging area to the foot of the Manhattan Bridge, then.



A fireball erupts at the World Trade Center after United Airlines Flight 175 hits the south tower.