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HOPE IS FADING

Rudy ponders idea of calling off the rescue

By Larry Celona, Philip Messing, David Seifman, Ikimulisa Sockwell-Mason, Dan Kadison and Kate Sheehy

Hopes of finding miracle survivors plummeted even further yesterday, as Mayor Giuliani publicly acknowledged he's "wrestled with" when to call off the heart-wrenching rescue mission.

"The question is, when does rescue become a recovery? The governor and I have wrestled with that," Giuliani said.

"The reality is the longer time, the less hope ... But we're not at the point where it is impossible that we might not be able to save some people.

However, "we certainly can't offer any hope that we're going to save any large numbers of people," he added.

The devastating possibility already was creating angry frustration at times for dozens of bleary-eyed cops and firefighters at ground zero — where some were beginning to chillingly realize that the ash and dust they were stepping through might actually include the people for whom they're searching.

Construction crews and engineers insist they've had to sporadically cut off workers' desperate digging to move in bigger machinery to clear unstable debris.

Rescue workers say their minds understand, but not their hearts.

"They're calling it a rescue mission, but it's more a reconstruction mission," one police lieutenant lamented.

Several other emergency-services officers could be heard literally pleading with their chief at one site where work was halted: "All we want to do is dig. We want to find our brothers."

As thousands of crews swarmed the Trade Center ruins — smoldering and releasing increasingly sickening odors of decaying bodies since last Tuesday's terror attack — even off-duty homicide detectives have offered to perform the most menial tasks.

"I'll do anything — direct traffic, sweep floors," one said.

Hope of finding survivors focused yesterday on the shops in the Twin Towers concourse areas — as well as rumored makeshift command centers that may have been set up by the complex's fleeing private fire safety firms in the six sub-levels.

"People can only go about three days without water, but they can go as many as 30 without food," said Chicago firefighter Joseph Tavitas, whose leather-bootied K-9 "Big Foot" has been sniffing his way through the wreckage, which is believed to hold water in spots.

But the crews were dealt a blow early yesterday afternoon when the dogs were called off after one was killed and another maimed in the mess.

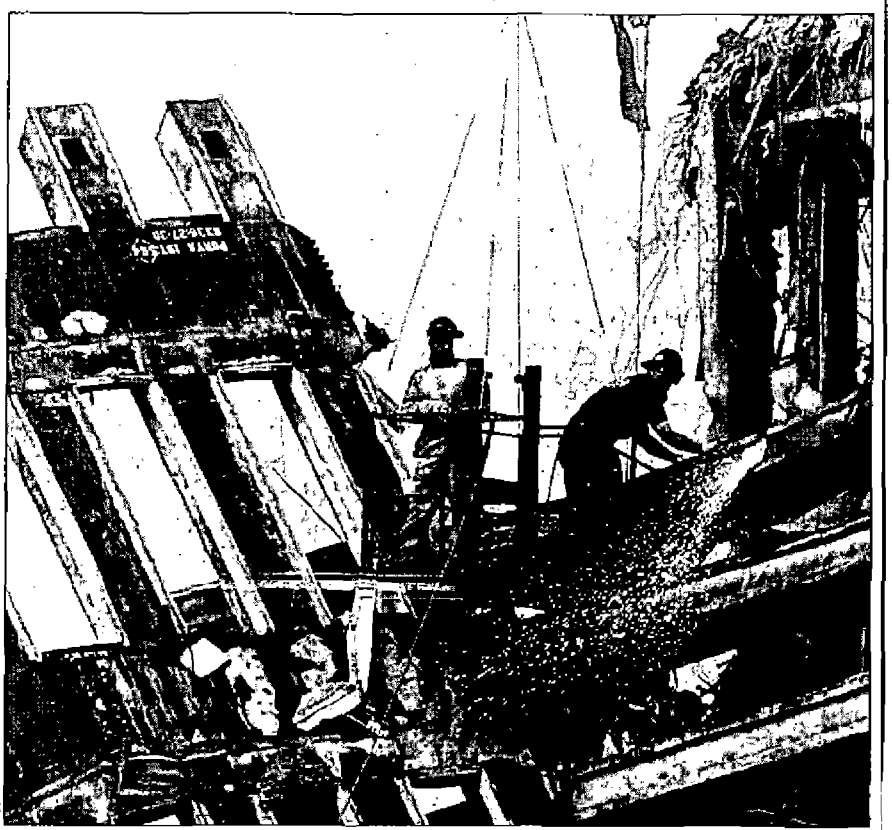
Christian Literowich, a rescue worker from Illinois, said some workers were now banking on devices that could detect cell-phone signals from the wreckage.

Ted Monette, an official with the Federal Emergency Management Agency, said the painful, painstaking work would continue until they got word otherwise.

Heroes

When Staten Island Ferry captains **Jimmy Parese** and **Frank Peters** were asked to pick up panicked people as the Twin Towers disaster unfolded, they didn't hesitate.

When smoke and dust made visibility zero, they switched on their radar to land at South Ferry and board 6,000 terrified passengers each.



DAUNTING TASK: Steelworkers cut beams from WTC Building 7 yesterday as government officials came to grips with the possibility that the rescue mission for potential survivors would have to be terminated. AP

Missing cop's girl waits for mom



MOIRA SMITH
"She never got scared, never."

By LARRY CELONA and DAREH GREGORIAN

Patricia Mary Smith needs her mother.

Named after her two deceased grandmothers, the 2-year-old hasn't seen her mom since Tuesday, when the police officer set out to do what's become second nature to her — saving lives.

Moira Smith, 38, was the first officer to call in about the disaster at the trade center, and is the only female member of the NYPD missing out of a total 23.

The 13-year veteran was on patrol for the 13th Precinct when she saw terror strike from the sky, and was last seen rescuing people from the north tower.

The hero cop's husband, Officer James Smith, said he thinks her cool head has kept her alive.

"She never got scared, never," whether it was pulling out the motorman after a train derailment or saving lives during the Fulton Street subway firebombing, he said.

"She's very strong," he said. "I'm just looking forward to seeing her."

The family asked anyone with information to e-mail her family at findofficersmith@aol.com.

Another cop from Smith's 13th Precinct, Robert Fazio, is also among the missing. The 38-year-old bachelor, who had been one of the first at the scene, is "a tremendous guy," said pal Joe Abruzzi.

Smith's disappearance has been felt at Transit District 4, where she met her husband and where Officers Mark Ellis and Ramon Suarez are now missing.

Ellis has been a cop for three years and is engaged to be married. Suarez is a 16-year vet with four kids and two grandkids.

The two cops were last spotted rushing back into the north tower after carrying out a woman who couldn't walk.

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