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Like London In the Blitz

Praising city's bravery, Rudy rallies NYers

By Ron Howell
STAFF WRITER

As New York struggled to return to its bustling self — preparing for the reopening today of public schools and the Stock Exchange — Mayor Rudolph Giuliani invoked the memory of Winston Churchill, who 60 years ago rallied the British as they withstood Nazi air attacks on London.

Just as Londoners had been heroes, Giuliani said, so, too, are New Yorkers.

"We're not the first people that have gone through being attacked," the mayor said yesterday, pointing out that he has been reading the book "Five Days in London" for courage over the past week.

"It's been really inspirational the way New Yorkers have dealt" with the aftermath of the deadly attack on the World Trade Center, he said. "They've conducted themselves as bravely as the people of Britain."

But today will be the test of whether heroic New York can get back to its routine in short order. If, as one president long ago said, the business of America is business, then the 9:30 a.m. ringing of the bell at the New York Stock Exchange will be a moment of great symbolism. That sound will mark the opening of the first round of securities trading since air assaults on the Twin Towers and the Pentagon put the United States on war footing.

The task of preparing for the reopening of the financial district today has been formidable. Almost 2,000 Con Ed workers labored in the area, hooking up more than 20 generators to temporary power lines. As of yesterday, 9,365 Con Ed customers in lower Manhattan were without electricity because of damage related to the attack, said spokeswoman Brenda Perez.

Another 2,000 Verizon employees hustled to connect lines for phones and computers. "We're working night and day to get things back by tomorrow, believe me," Verizon spokeswoman Yvette Mendez said.

Some Wall Street area employees said they were at once hopeful and fearful about the future, as they looked over their businesses. Humble workers at small enterprises seemed to harbor the greatest fear.

At the Record Explosion store at 176 Broadway, for instance, George Carcana swept up dust and hosed down the sidewalk. He spent hours cleaning shelves and putting music discs in place. There are no working phones in the store, he said.

"I need the money and I need to work," he said.

Even as feverish preparations were ongoing to get the city's financial district on its feet, the mayor was urging New Yorkers to get out on the town and seek peace in the simple things in life. He took his own advice, walking down the aisle as the stand-in father for bride Diane Gorumba, whose family had suffered within a year the loss of her grandfather, her father and her brother, Michael, a probationary fireman who died battling a blaze in August.

See WALL STREET on W4



AP Photo



The markets are opening today, but yesterday on Wall Street, people were still wearing face masks because of the dust. Mayor Rudolph Giuliani, left, hugs a firefighter after an emotional promotion ceremony yesterday in Brooklyn.

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