

# What's Happening

I N T H E U S A ?

BY LAWRENCE GABLE

VOL 19, NO 1 SEPTEMBER 2011

**O**n September 11, 2001 terrorists attacked the United States. They hijacked four jet airliners on that day. All of them crashed and nearly 3,000 people died as a result. The day was one of the saddest in American history. This year, on the tenth anniversary, the country will dedicate a memorial in New York City to the victims.

Nineteen hijackers carried out the attacks. The Federal Bureau of Investigation identified the men within 72 hours. Most of them came from Saudi Arabia, but two were from the United Arab Emirates, one was from Egypt, and another from Lebanon. All of them were working for a terrorist organization, al-Qaeda.

The hijackings were closely coordinated. All four airliners crashed within an hour and a half. The first one smashed directly into the North Tower of the World Trade Center in New York City at 8:46 a.m. Only seventeen minutes later another plane flew into the South Tower. At 9:37 a.m. a third plane crashed into the Pentagon, the nation's military headquarters just outside Washington, D.C. Finally, just after ten o'clock the fourth airliner crashed into the ground in Pennsylvania, though its target had been in Washington, D.C., either the U.S. Capitol or the White House.

On September 11 the World Trade Center included seven buildings in lower Manhattan. The two most famous were the Twin Towers. When their construction ended in 1973, they were the world's tallest buildings. They stood for nearly 40 years as symbols of the United States' powerful economy.

Most of the fatalities and damage from the attacks came at the World Trade Center. The South Tower burnt for 56 minutes before it collapsed. The North Tower burnt for 102 minutes before collapsing. Its collapse damaged and caused fires in another of the buildings, 7 World Trade Center, which collapsed later that day. In all, 2,606 people died in the buildings and on the ground near them.

The collapse of the buildings also caused health problems for people in the area. The incredible

## A NEW MEMORIAL HONORS VICTIMS OF SEPTEMBER 11

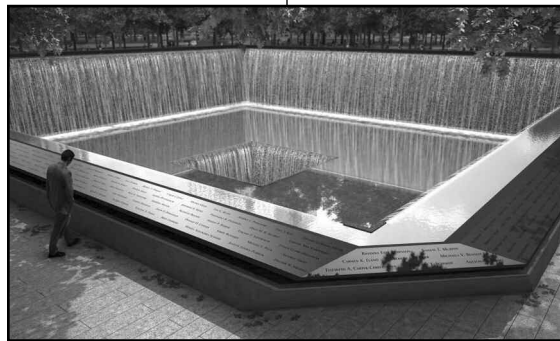
weight of the buildings pulverized nearly everything that had been in the buildings, and the building materials themselves. Within seconds that dust filled the air, and it hung there for about five months. Although officials announced quickly that the dust was not dangerous, many of the first responders, workers and nearby residents got sick from it.

The dust all around the World Trade Center was toxic. It contained poisonous things like glass dust, asbestos, lead and mercury. The toxins have caused cancer and damaged organs like lungs, kidneys and livers. In fact, a report by New York City's Department of Health in 2008 indicated that up to 70,000 people might have long-term health problems due to the dust.

The attacks also still haunt many survivors. Many police, firefighters, paramedics and civilians suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder. They have nightmares or cannot sleep at all. They replay in their minds what they saw and heard on September 11 over and over again. They are nervous, do not concentrate well, and overreact to loud noises. People who worked at the site in the weeks and months after the attacks suffer from this too.

The mayor of New York, Michael Bloomberg, will dedicate the new memorial on September 11. It will attempt to express the emptiness that Americans feel because of the deaths. Two pools with waterfalls will be exactly where the Twin Towers stood. Around them will stand bronze panels with the names of those who died in the attacks. About 500 trees will add tranquility and symbolize the rejuvenation of life.

The National September 11 Memorial will not remind visitors of the attacks themselves. Nor will it refer to the two wars that the U.S. entered into after the attacks. The heart of the ceremony will be the reading of the names of those who died. Only members of the victims' families may attend the ceremony. The focus for them, and for the million visitors who will go there every year, will remain on those who lost their lives on that unforgettable day ten years ago.



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Nineteen hijackers led the attacks. Most of them came from Saudi Arabia, but two were from the United Arab Emirates, one was from Egypt, and another from Lebanon. All of them were working for a terrorist organization, al-Qaeda.

All four airliners crashed within an hour and a half. The first one smashed directly into the North Tower of the World Trade Center in New York City at 8:46 a.m. Only seventeen minutes later another plane flew into the South Tower. Then a third plane crashed into the Pentagon, the U.S. military headquarters near Washington, D.C. Just after ten o'clock the fourth plane crashed in Pennsylvania, though its target probably had been the U.S. Capitol in Washington, D.C.

On September 11 the World Trade Center included seven buildings. The two most famous were the Twin Towers, which were once the world's tallest buildings. They stood for nearly 40 years as symbols of America's wealth.

Most of the day's deaths and damage were at the World Trade Center. The South Tower burnt for 56 minutes before it collapsed. The North Tower burnt for 102 minutes before collapsing. Its collapse damaged another building, 7 World Trade Center, which collapsed later that day. In all, 2,606 people died in the buildings and on the ground.

The collapses also caused health problems

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for people in the area. The incredible weight of the buildings turned nearly everything to dust. Within seconds that dust filled the air, and it hung there for about five months. Many of the

first responders, workers and nearby residents got sick from it.

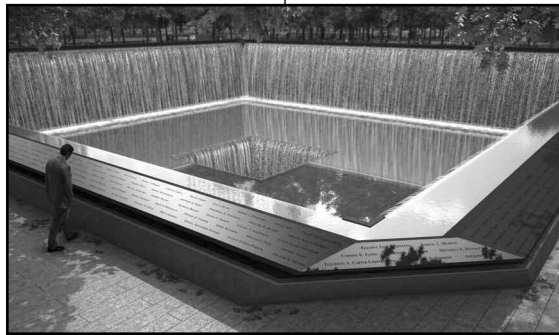
The dust contained poisonous things like glass dust, asbestos, lead and mercury. They have caused cancer and damaged organs like lungs and kidneys. In fact, in 2008 New York City reported that 70,000 people might have long-term health problems due to the dust.

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suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder. They have nightmares or cannot sleep at all. They replay in their minds what they saw and heard on September 11. They are nervous and do not concentrate well. People who worked at the site in the following months suffer from this too.

The mayor of New York will dedicate a new memorial on September 11. It will express the emptiness that Americans feel from the deaths. Two pools with waterfalls will be exactly where the Twin Towers stood. Bronze panels will show the names of those who died in the attacks. About 500 trees will symbolize the renewal of life.

The National September 11 Memorial will not remind visitors of the attacks or the two wars that followed. The heart of the ceremony will be the reading of the victims' names, and only their family members may attend the ceremony. The focus for them, and for the million visitors who will go there every year, will remain on those who lost their lives on that unforgettable day ten years ago.



# Background Information

There were a total of 2,996 deaths (2,977 victims and 19 hijackers).

There has been an anniversary ceremony every year since 2002. It always includes the reading of the victims' names by family members. This year is the first time that the names of those who died at the Pentagon and in Pennsylvania will be included.

This year will be the first time that a president has attended the ceremony, and both President Bush and President Obama will read poems.

At the dedication ceremony there will be six moments of silence at the exact times that the four jets crashed and when the Twin Towers collapsed.

An underground museum will open in New York City in 2012 as part of the National September 11 Memorial & Museum.

The bronze panels also will include the names of the victims of a bombing at the World Trade Center in 1993.

In December 2010 the U.S. Congress passed a law that provides \$4.3 billion for people who suffer physical and emotional problems related to September 11.

The memorial plaza will open to visitors on September 12. It can hold about 1,500 people at a time. Visitors must get passes in advance at the memorial's Web site. They are free, but necessary because they are timed to admit visitors every half hour. Visitors may stay as long as they want.

The Flight 93 National Memorial will be unveiled on September 11 in Shanksville, Pennsylvania, where Flight 93 went down. That flight did not make it to its target in Washington because passengers fought with the hijackers to regain control of the plane.

The Pentagon Memorial to the victims there opened to the public on September 11, 2008.

The other four buildings of the World Trade Center had to be torn down later because of the damage that they had suffered on September 11.

The new skyscraper at the World Trade Center is called "1 World Trade Center." On the tenth anniversary it will be eighty stories high. When it is finished next year it will be 1,776 feet tall with 104 stories.

## Topics for Discussion and Writing

### *Pre-reading:*

- Among all of the pictures of the September 11 attacks that you have seen, which one seems the most powerful to you?

### *Comprehension:*

- Tell how some people are still suffering from the attacks.

### *Beyond the Text:*

- Why do you think the terrorists chose the targets that they did?
- Both President Bush and President Obama will be at the dedication ceremony, but the ceremony will not include speeches from either of them. Why not?
- Do you think that going to a memorial makes people feel better? Explain why, or why not.

## Vocabulary (\*advanced article only)

*Article-specific:* memorial; victim; terrorist; to hijack; headquarters; fatality\*; to pulverize\*; first responder; toxic\*; asbestos; to haunt; nightmare; tranquility\*

*High-use:* to dedicate; to identify; coordinated\*; military; symbol; economy\*; to collapse; resident; to indicate\*; long-term; survivor; site; focus

## Sources

*New York Times* August 10, July 29, July 9, 2011

*New York Daily News* July 29, 2011

*Orlando Sentinel* July 20, 2011

*Washington Times* July 8, 2011

*Crain's New York Business* May 9, 2011

[www.911memorial.org](http://www.911memorial.org)

## CA Curricular Standards (4–12)

### English-Language Arts

*Reading* 1.0 Vocabulary Development

2.0 Comprehension (Informational Materials)

*Writing* 1.0 Writing Strategies

2.0 Writing Applications

### ELD—Intermediate and Advanced

Reading Vocabulary Development/Comprehension

Writing Strategies and Applications

Listening and Speaking

### History-Social Science

10.9; 11.4; 11.9