

We Have Some Planes

Learning Outcomes

Careful study of this chapter will help a student do the following:

- Describe the 9/11 attacks.
- Explain the significance of the targets.
- Assess whether a similar attack would be successful today.
- Demonstrate the relationship between 9/11 and the 1995 Tokyo subway attacks.

“American 11: We have some planes. Just stay quiet, and you’ll be okay. We are returning to the airport.”

- 2004 9/11 Commissioner Report

Introduction

Tuesday, September 11, 2001, dawned temperate and nearly cloudless in the eastern United States. Millions of men and women readied themselves for work. Some made their way to the Twin Towers, the signature structures of the World Trade Center complex in New York City. Others went to Arlington, Virginia, to the Pentagon. Across the Potomac River, the United States Congress was back in session. At the other end of Pennsylvania Avenue, people began to line up for a White House tour. In Sarasota, Florida, President George W. Bush went for an early morning run.

For those heading to an airport, weather conditions could not have been better for a safe and pleasant journey. Among the travelers were Mohamed Atta and Abdul Aziz al Omari, who arrived at the airport in Portland Maine.

Table 3-1: 9/11 Hijackers & Flights

	AA Flt. 11, Boston Logan		AA Flt. 77, Dulles
1.	Mohammed Atta*	11.	Hani Hanjour*
2.	Abul Aziz al Omari	12.	Khalid al Midhhar
3.	Satam al Suqami	13.	Majed Moqed
4.	Wail al Shehri	14.	Nawaf al Hazmi
5.	Waleed al Shehri	15.	Salem al Hazmi
	UA Flt. 175, Boston Logan		UA Flt. 93, Newark
6.	Marwan al Shehhi*	16.	Ziad Jarrah*
7.	Fayez Banihammad	17.	Saeed al Ghamdi
8.	Mohand al Shehri	18.	Ahmed al Nami
9.	Ahmed al Ghamndi	19.	Ahad al Haznawi
10.	Hamza al Ghamdi		

*Designated Pilot

Boston: American 11 and United 175

On Tuesday, September 11, 2001, Mohammed Atta and Abul Aziz al Omari arrived at the airport in Portland Maine to catch a 6:00 a.m. flight to Boston's Logan International Airport. [1, p. 253]

When he checked in for his flight to Boston, Atta was selected by a computerized prescreening system known as CAPPS (Computer Assisted Passenger Prescreening System), created to identify passengers who should be subject to special security measures. Under security rules in place at the time, the only consequence of Atta's selection by CAPPS was that his checked bags were held off the plane until it was confirmed that he had boarded the aircraft. [1, p. 1]

At 6:45 a.m., Atta and Omari arrived in Boston. Between 6:45 and 7:40, Atta and Omari, along with Satam al Suqami, Wail al Shehri, and Waleed al Shehri, checked in and boarded American Airlines Flight 11, bound for Los Angeles. The flight was scheduled to depart at 7:45. [1, p. 2]

Elsewhere at Logan Airport, Marwan al Shehhi, Fayed Banihammad, Mohand al Shehri, Ahmed al Ghamdi, and Hamza al Ghamdi checked in for United Airlines Flight 175, also bound for Los Angeles. Their flight was scheduled to depart at 08:00. [1, p. 2]

As Atta's team passed through passenger screening, three members--Suqami, Wail al Shehri, and Waleed al Shehri--were selected by CAPPs. Their selection affected only the handling of their checked bags, not their screening at the checkpoint. All five men cleared the checkpoint and made their way to the gate for American 11. Atta, Omari, and Suqami took their seats in business class. The Shehri brothers had adjacent seats in row 2 in the first-class cabin. They boarded American 11 between 7:31 and 7:40. The aircraft pushed back from the gate at 7:40. [1, p. 2]

Shehhi and his team, none of whom had been selected by CAPPs, boarded United 175 between 7:23 and 7:28. Their aircraft pushed back from the gate just before 8:00. [1, p. 2]

Washington Dulles: American 77

At 7:15 a.m., Khalid al Mihdhar and Majed Moqed checked in with the American Airlines ticket counter at Dulles International Airport in Virginia. Both were ticketed for Flight 77 bound for Los Angeles. Within 20 minutes, three other members of the team checked in including Hani Hanjour, Nawaf al Hazmi, and Salem al Hazmi. Hani Hanjour, Khalid al Mihdhar, and Majed Moqed were flagged by CAPPs. The Hazmi brothers were also selected for extra security by the airline's customer service representative at the check-in counter. He did so because one of the brothers did not have photo identification nor could he understand English, and because the agent found both passengers to be suspicious. The only consequence of their selection was that their checked bags were held off the plane until it was confirmed that they had boarded the aircraft. [1, p. 3]

On the morning of September 11, 2001, eight of the nineteen hijackers were flagged by the Computer Assisted Passenger Prescreening System (CAPPs). Under security rules in place at the time, the only consequence was that their checked bags were held off the plane until it was confirmed that they had boarded

The five hijackers proceeded to the Main Terminal's west security screening point. The checkpoint featured closed-circuit television that recorded all passengers, including the hijackers as they were screened. Both Mihdhar and Moqed set off the metal detector and were directed to a second metal detector. Mihdhar did not trigger the alarm and was permitted through the checkpoint. Moqed set it off, a screener wanded him with a hand-held magnetic detector. He passed this inspection. About 20 minutes later, Hani Hanjour, Nawaf al Hazmi, and Salem al Hazmi entered the screening area. Nawaf al Hazmi set off both the first and second metal detectors and was then hand-wanded before being passed. In addition, his over-the-shoulder carry-on bag was swiped by an explosive trace detector and then passed. [1, p. 3]

At Washington Dulles, three of the hijackers set off metal detectors and were directed to secondary screening. All three passed inspection with a hand-held magnetic detector.

At 7:50 a.m., Majed Moqed and Khalid al Mihdhar boarded American 77 and were seated in 12A and 12B in coach. Hani Hanjour, assigned to seat 1B in first class, soon followed. The Hazmi brothers, sitting in 5E and 5F, joined Hanjour in the first-class cabin. [1, pp. 3-4]

Newark: United 93

At Newark Airport in New Jersey, another hijacking team assembled. Between 7:03 and 7:39, Saeed al Ghamdi, Ahmed al Nami, Ahad al Haznawi, and Ziad Jarrah checked in at the United Airlines Ticket counter for Flight 93, going to Los Angeles. Haznawi was selected by CAPPS. His checked bag was screened for explosives and then loaded on the plane. [1, p. 4]

The four men passed through the security checkpoint and boarded their plane between 7:39 and 7:48. All four had seats in the first-class cabin. Jarrah was in seat 1B, closest to the cockpit; Nami was in 3C, Ghamdi in 3D, and Haznawi in 6B. [1, p. 4]

The 19 men were aboard four transcontinental flights. They were planning to hijack these planes and turn them into large guided missiles, loaded with up to 11,400 gallons of jet fuel. By 8:00 a.m. on the morning of Tuesday, September 11, 2001, they had defeated all the security layers that America's civil aviation security system then had in place to prevent hijacking. [1, p. 4]

The Hijacking of American 11

American Airlines Flight 11 provided nonstop service from Boston to Los Angeles. On September 11, Captain John Ogonowski and First Officer Thomas McGuinness piloted the Boeing 767. It carried its full capacity of nine flight attendants. Eighty-one passengers boarded the flight with them, including the five terrorists. [1, p. 4]

American Flight 11 took off at 7:59. Just before 8:14, it had climbed to 26,000 feet, not quite its initial assigned cruising altitude of 29,000 feet. All communications and flight profile data were normal. About this time, the "Fasten Seatbelt" sign would usually have been turned off and the flight attendants would have begun preparing for cabin service. [1, p. 4]

At this time, American 11 had its last routine communication with the ground when it acknowledged navigational instructions from the FAA's air traffic control (ATC) center in Boston. Sixteen seconds after that transmission, ATC instructed the aircraft's pilots to climb to 35,000 feet. That message and all subsequent attempts to contact the flight were not acknowledged. From this and other evidence, it is believed the hijacking began at 8:14 or shortly thereafter. [1, p. 4]

Reports from two flight attendants in the coach cabin, Betty Ong and Madeline "Amy" Sweeney, tell us most of what we know about how the hijacking happened. As it began, some of the hijackers--most likely Wail al Shehri and Waleed al Shehri, who were seated in row 2 in first class--stabbed the two unarmed flight attendants who would have been preparing for cabin service. [1, p. 5]

It's not known exactly how the hijackers gained access to the cockpit; FAA rules required that the doors remain closed and locked during flight. Ong speculated that they had "jammed their way" in. Perhaps the terrorists stabbed the flight attendants to get a cockpit key, to force one of them to open the cockpit door, or to lure the captain or first officer out of the cockpit. [1, p. 5]

At the same time or shortly thereafter, Atta--the only terrorist on board trained to fly a jet--would have moved to the cockpit from his business-class seat, possibly accompanied by Omari. As this was happening, passenger Daniel Lewin, who was seated in the row just behind Atta and Omari, was stabbed by one of the hijackers--probably Satam al Suqami, who was seated directly behind Lewin. Lewin had served four years as an officer in the Israeli military. He may have made an attempt to stop the hijackers in front of him, not realizing that another was sitting behind him. [1, p. 5]

The hijackers quickly gained control and sprayed Mace, pepper spray, or some other irritant in the first-class cabin, in order to for the passengers and flight attendants toward the rear of the plane. They claimed they had a bomb. [1, p. 5]

By 8:00 a.m. on the morning of Tuesday, September 11, 2001, the nineteen hijackers had defeated all the security layers that America's civil aviation security system then had in place to prevent hijacking.

About five minutes after the hijacking began, Betty Ong contacted the American Airlines Southeastern Reservations Office in Cary, North Carolina, via an AT&T airphone to report an emergency aboard the flight. The emergency call lasted approximately 25 minutes, as Ong calmly and professionally relayed information about events taking place aboard the airplane to authorities on the ground. [1, p. 5]

At 8:19, Ong reported: "The cockpit is not answering, somebody's stabbed in business class--and I think there's Mace--that we can't breathe--I don't know, I think we're getting hijacked." She then told of the stabbings of the two flight attendants. [1, p. 5]

At 8:46:40, American 11 crashed into the North Tower of the World Trade Center in New York City. All on board, along with an unknown number of people in the tower, were killed instantly.

American's Southeastern Reservations Office quickly contacted the American Airlines operations center in Fort Worth, Texas, who soon contacted the FAA's Boston Air Traffic Control Center. Boston Center knew of a problem on the flight in part because just before 8:25 the hijackers had attempted to communicate with the passengers. The microphone was keyed, and immediately one of the hijackers said, "Nobody move. Everything will be okay. If you try to make any moves, you'll endanger yourself and the airplane. Just stay quiet." Air traffic controllers heard the transmission; Ong did not. The hijackers probably did not know how to operate the cockpit radio communication system correctly, and thus inadvertently broadcast their message over the air traffic control channel instead of the cabin public-address channel. Also at 8:25, and again at 8:29, Amy Sweeney got through to the American Flight Services Office in Boston but was cut off after she reported someone was hurt aboard the flight. Three minutes later, Sweeney was reconnected to the office and began relaying updates to her manager. [1, pp. 5-6]

At 8:26, Ong reported that the plane was "flying erratically." A minute later, Flight 11 turned south. American also began getting identifications of the hijackers, as Ong and then Sweeney passed on some of the seat numbers of those who had gained unauthorized access to the cockpit. [1, p. 6]

At 8:41 Sweeney reported that passengers in coach were under the impression there was a routine medical emergency in first class. Other flight attendants were busy at duties such as getting medical supplies while Ong and Sweeney were reporting events. [1, p. 6]

At 8:41, American's operations center learned that air traffic controllers had declared Flight 11 a hijacking, and thought it was headed toward Kennedy airport in New York City. Air traffic control was busy moving other flights out of the way as they tracked Flight 11 on primary radar, which seemed to show the aircraft descending. [1, p. 6]

At 8:44 contact was lost with Betty Ong. About this time Sweeney reported "Something is wrong. We are in a rapid descent... we are all over the place." When asked to look out the window, Sweeney reported "We are flying low. We are flying very, very low. We are flying way too low." Seconds later she said, "Oh my God we are way too low." The phone call ended. [1, p. 7]

At 8:46:40, American 11 crashed into the North Tower of the World Trade Center in New York City. All on board, along with an unknown number of people in the tower, were killed instantly. [1, p. 7]

The Hijacking of United 175

United Airlines Flight 175 was scheduled to depart for Los Angeles at 8:00. Captain Victor Saracini and First Officer Michael Horrocks piloted the Boeing 767, which had seven flight attendants. Fifty-six passengers boarded the flight. [1, p. 7]

United 175 pushed back from its gate at 7:58 and departed Logan Airport at 8:14. By 8:33, it had reached its assigned cruising altitude of 31,000 feet. The flight attendants would have begun their cabin service. [1, p. 7]

The hijackers attacked sometime between 8:42 and 8:46. They used knives, Mace, and the threat of a bomb. They stabbed members of the flight crew. Both pilots had been killed. The eyewitness accounts came from calls made from the rear of the plane, from passengers originally seated further forward in the cabin, a sign that passengers and perhaps crew had been moved to the back of the aircraft. [1, p. 7]

The first operational evidence that something was abnormal on United 175 came at 8:47 when the aircraft changed beacon codes twice within a minute. At 8:51, the flight deviated from its assigned altitude, and a minute later New York air traffic controllers began repeatedly and unsuccessfully trying to contact it. [1, p. 7]

At 8:52, in Easton, Connecticut, a man named Lee Hansen received a phone call from his son Peter, a passenger on United 175. His son told him: "I think they've taken over the cockpit--an attendant has been stabbed--and someone else up front may have been killed. The plane is making strange moves. Call United Airlines--Tell them it's Flight 175, Boston to LA." Lee Hansen then called the Easton Police Department and relayed what he had heard. [1, p. 7]

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Also at 8:52, a male flight attendant called a United office in San Francisco. The flight attendant reported that the flight had been hijacked, both pilots killed, a flight attendant stabbed, and the hijackers were probably flying the plane. The call lasted about two minutes. [1, pp. 7-8]

At 8:58, the flight took a heading toward New York City. At 8:59, Flight 175 passenger Brian David Sweeney tried to call his wife, Julie. He left a message on their home answering machine that the plane had been hijacked. He then called his mother, Luise Sweeney, told her the flight had been hijacked, and added that the passengers were thinking about storming the cockpit to take control of the plane away from the hijackers. [1, p. 8]

At 9:03:11, United Airlines Flight 175 struck the South Tower of the World Trade Center. All on board, along with an unknown number of people in the tower, were killed instantly.

At 9:00, Lee Hanson received a second call from his son Peter: It's getting bad, Dad--A stewardess was stabbed--They seem to have knives and Mace--They said they have a bomb--It's getting very bad on the plane--Passengers are throwing up and getting sick--The plane is making jerky movements--I don't think the pilot is flying the plane--I think we are going down--I think they intend to go to Chicago or someplace and fly into a building--Don't worry Dad--If it happens, it'll be very fast--My God, my God. [1, p. 8]

The call ended abruptly. Lee Hanson had heard a woman scream just before it cut off. He turned on a television, and in her home so did Luise Sweeney. Both then saw the second aircraft hit the World Trade Center. [1, p. 8]

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The Hijacking of American 77

American Airlines Flight 77 was scheduled to depart from Washington Dulles for Los Angeles at 8:10. The aircraft was a Boeing 757 piloted by Captain Charles F. Burlingame and First Officer David Charlebois. There were four flight attendants. On September 11, the flight carried 58 passengers. [1, p. 8]

American 77 pushed back from its gate at 8:09 and took off at 8:20. At 8:46, the flight reached its assigned cruising altitude of 35,000 feet. Cabin service would have begun. At 8:51, American 77 transmitted its last routine radio communication. The hijacking began between 8:51 and 8:54. As on American 11 and United 175, the hijackers used knives and moved all the passengers to the rear of the aircraft. Unlike the earlier flights, the Flight 77 hijackers were reported by a passenger to have box cutters. Finally, a passenger reported that an announcement had been made by the "pilot" that the plane had been hijacked. Neither of the firsthand accounts mentioned any stabbings or the threat or use of either a bomb or Mace, though both witnesses began the flight in the first-class cabin. [1, p. 8]

At 8:54, the aircraft deviated from its assigned course, turning south. Two minutes later the transponder was turned off and even primary radar contact with the aircraft was lost. The Indianapolis Air Traffic Control Center repeatedly tried and failed to contact the aircraft. American Airlines dispatchers also tried, without success. [1, p. 9]

At 9:00, American Airlines Executive Vice President Gerard Arpey learned that communications had been lost with American 77. This was now the second American aircraft in trouble. He ordered all American Airlines flights in the Northeast that had not taken off to remain on the ground. After learning that United Airlines was missing a plane, American Airlines headquarters extended the ground stop nationwide. [1, p. 9]

At 9:12, Renee May called her mother, Nancy May, in Las Vegas. She said her flight was being hijacked by six individuals who had moved them to the rear of the plane. She asked her mother to alert American Airlines. Nancy May and her husband promptly did so. [1, p. 9]

As some point between 9:16 and 9:26, Barbara Olson called her husband, Ted Olson, the solicitor general of the United States. She reported that the flight had been hijacked, and the hijackers had knives and box cutters. She further indicated that the hijackers were not aware of her phone call, and that they had put all the passengers in the back of the plane. About a minute into the conversation the call was cut off. [1, p. 9]

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Shortly after the first call, Barbara Olson reached her husband again. She reported that the pilot had announced that the flight had been hijacked, and she asked her husband what she should tell the captain to do. Ted Olson asked for her location and she replied that the aircraft was then flying over houses. Another passenger told her they were traveling northeast. The Solicitor General then informed his wife of the two previous hijackings and crashes. She did not display signs of panic and did not indicate any awareness of an impending crash. At that point the second call was cut off. [1, p. 9]

At 9:37:46, American Airlines Flight 77 crashed into the Pentagon, traveling at approximately 530 miles per hour. All on board, as well as many civilian and military personnel in the building, were killed.

At 9:20, the autopilot on American 77 was disengaged; the aircraft was at 7,000 feet and approximately 38 miles west of the Pentagon. At 9:32, controllers at the Dulles Terminal Radar Approach Control "observed a primary radar target tracking eastbound at a high rate of speed." This was later determined to have been Flight 77. [1, p. 9]

At 9:34, Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport advised the Secret Service of an unknown aircraft heading in the direction of the White House. American 77 was then 5 miles west-southwest of the Pentagon and began a 330 degree turn. At the end of the turn, it was descending through 2,200 feet, pointed toward the Pentagon and downtown Washington. The hijacker pilot then advanced the throttles to maximum power and dove toward the Pentagon. [1, p. 9]

At 9:37:46, American Airlines Flight 77 crashed into the Pentagon, traveling at approximately 530 miles per hour. All on board, as well as many civilian and military personnel in the building, were killed. [1, p. 10]

The Battle for United 93

At 8:42, United Airlines Flight 93 took off from Newark (New Jersey) Liberty International Airport bound for San Francisco. The aircraft was piloted by Captain Jason Dahl and First Officer Leroy Homer, and there were five flight attendants. Thirty-seven passengers, including the hijackers, boarded the plane. Scheduled to depart the gate at 8:00, the Boeing 757's takeoff was delayed because of the airport's typically heavy morning traffic. [1, p. 10]

As United 93 left Newark, the flight's crew members were unaware of the hijacking of American 11. Around 9:00, the FAA, American, and United were facing the staggering realization of apparent multiple hijackings. At 9:03, they would see another aircraft strike the World Trade Center. Crisis managers at the FAA and the airlines did not yet act to warn other aircraft. At the same time, Boston Center realized that a message transmitted just before 8:25 by the hijacker pilot of American 11 included the phrase, "We have some planes." [1, p. 10]

The hijackers attacked at 9:28. While traveling 35,000 feet above eastern Ohio, United 93 suddenly dropped 700 feet. Eleven seconds into the descent, the FAA's air traffic control center in Cleveland received the first of two radio transmissions from the aircraft. During the first broadcast, the captain or first officer could be heard declaring "Mayday" amid the sounds of a physical struggle in the cockpit. The second radio transmission, 35 seconds later, indicated that the fight was continuing. The captain or first officer could be heard shouting: "Hey get out of here--get out of here--get out of here." [1, p. 11]

At 9:32, a hijacker, probably Jarrah, made or attempted to make the following announcement to the passengers of Flight 93: "Ladies and Gentlemen: Here the captain, please sit down keep remaining sitting. We have a bomb on board. So, sit." The flight data recorder (also recovered) indicates that Jarrah then instructed the plane's autopilot to turn the aircraft around and head east. [1, p. 11]

The cockpit voice recorder data indicate that a woman, most likely a flight attendant, was being held captive in the cockpit. She struggled with one of the hijackers who killed or otherwise silenced her. [1, p. 12]

Shortly thereafter, the passengers and flight crew began a series of calls from GTE airphones and cellular phones. The calls between family, friends, and colleagues took place until the end of the flight and provided those on the ground with firsthand accounts. They enabled the passengers to gain critical information, including the news that two aircraft had slammed into the World Trade Center. [1, p. 12]

Five calls described the intent of passengers and surviving crew members to revolt against the hijackers. According to one call, they voted on whether to rush the terrorists in an attempt to retake the plane. They decided, and acted. [1, p. 13]

At 9:57, the passenger assault began. Several passengers had terminated phone calls with loved ones in order to join the revolt. One of the callers ended her message as follows: "Everyone's running up to first class. I've got to go. Bye." [1, p. 13]

The cockpit voice recorder captured the sounds of the passenger assault muffled by the intervening cockpit door. Some family members who listened to the recording report that they can hear the voice of a loved one among the din. We cannot identify whose voices can be heard. But the assault was sustained. [1, p. 13]

Aboard United 93, five calls described the intent of passengers and surviving crew members to revolt against the hijackers. According to one call, they voted on whether to rush the terrorists in an attempt to retake the plane. They decided, and acted.

In response, Jarrah immediately began to roll the airplane to the left and right, attempting to knock the passengers off balance. At 9:58:57, Jarrah told another hijacker in the cockpit to block the door. Jarrah continued to roll the airplane sharply left and right, but the assault continued. At 9:59:52, Jarrah changed tactics and pitched the nose of the airplane up and down to disrupt the assault. The recorder captured the sounds of loud thumps, crashes, shouts, and breaking glasses and plates. At 10:00:03, Jarrah stabilized the airplane. [1, pp. 13-14]

At 10:02:23, with the sounds of the passenger counterattack continuing, United 93 plowed into an empty field in Shanksville, Pennsylvania, at 580 miles per hour, about 20 minutes flying time from Washington, D.C.

Five seconds later, Jarrah asked, "Is that it? Shall we finish it off?" A hijacker responded, "No. Not yet. When they all come, we finish it off." The sounds of fighting continued outside the cockpit. Again, Jarrah pitched the nose of the aircraft up and down. At 10:00:26, a passenger in the background said, "In the cockpit. If we don't we'll die!" Sixteen seconds later, a passenger yelled, "Roll it!" Jarrah stopped the violent maneuvers about 10:01:00 and said, "Allah is the greatest! Allah is the greatest!" He then asked another hijacker in the cockpit. "Is that it? I mean, shall we put it down?" To which the other replied, "Yes, put it in it, and pull it down." [1, p. 14]

The passengers continued their assault and at 10:02:23, a hijacker said, "Pull it down! Pull it down!" The hijackers remained at the controls but must have judged that the passengers were only seconds from overcoming them. The airplane headed down; the control wheel was turned hard to the right. The airplane rolled onto its back, and one of the hijackers began shouting "Allah is the greatest. Allah is the greatest." With the sounds of the passenger counterattack continuing, the aircraft plowed into an empty field in Shanksville, Pennsylvania, at 580 miles per hour, about 20 minutes flying time from Washington, D.C. [1, p. 14]

Jarrah's objective was to crash his airliner into symbols of the American Republic, the Capitol or the White House. He was defeated by the alerted, unarmed passengers of United 93. [1, p. 14]

Table 3-2: 9/11 Timeline

11 Sep 01	Flt.	Events
07:59	AA 11	Takeoff from Boston Logan
08:14	UA 175	Takeoff from Boston Logan
08:19	AA 11	Report of Onboard Trouble
08:20	AA 77	Takeoff from Dulles
08:41	AA 11	Declared Hijacking
08:42	UA 175	Suspected Time of Attack
08:42	UA 93	Takeoff from Newark
08:46	AA 11	Crashes into WTC North Tower
08:47	UA 175	Aircraft Beacon Codes Changed
08:51	AA 77	Suspected Time of Attack
08:54	AA 77	Aircraft Deviates from Course
09:03	UA 175	Crashes into WTC South Tower
09:28	UA 93	Suspected Time of Attack
09:32	AA 77	Tracked Inbound to DC
09:37	AA 77	Crashes into Pentagon
09:57	UA 93	Passengers Assault Hijackers
10:03	UA 93	Crashes in Shanksville, PA

Conclusion

More than 2,600 people died at the World Trade Center; 125 died at the Pentagon; 256 died on the four planes. The death toll surpassed that at Pearl Harbor in December 1941. This immeasurable pain was inflicted by 19 young Arabs acting at the behest of Islamist extremists headquartered in distant Afghanistan. Some had been in the United States for more than a year, mixing with the rest of the population. Though four had training as pilots, most were not well-educated. Most spoke English poorly, some hardly at all. In groups of four or five, carrying with them only small knives, box cutters, and cans of Mace or pepper spray, they had hijacked the four planes and turned them into deadly guided missiles.

Challenge Your Understanding

The following questions are designed to challenge your understanding of the material presented in this chapter. Some questions may require additional research outside this book in order to provide a complete answer.

1. Who was responsible for airport security on 9/11?
2. Describe three airport security measures the 19 hijackers defeated on 9/11.
3. What was the purpose of hijacking transcontinental passenger jets?
4. Describe three different methods the hijackers used to subdue aircraft cabin and crew.
5. How were the hijackers able to evade FAA tracking?
6. Why do you suppose the Twin Towers and Pentagon were selected as targets?
7. What do you suppose was the target of the fourth aircraft?
8. Why do you suppose the passengers of the first three aircraft didn't mount a collective resistance?
9. Identify five similarities between 9/11 and the 1995 Tokyo subway attacks.
10. Do you think a similar attack would be successful today? Explain your answer.

And They Saved Many

Learning Outcomes

Careful study of this chapter will help a student do the following:

- Describe emergency response efforts in New York City on 9/11.
- Evaluate emergency response efforts in New York City on 9/11.
- Appreciate the dedication and effectiveness of first responders on 9/11.