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'EVIL ACTS'

New York, Pentagon attacked in nation's worst terrorist disaster

Surprise attacks devastate U.S., thousands dead

Staff & Wire

NEW YORK (AP) — In the most devastating terrorist onslaught ever waged against the United States, knife-wielding hijackers crashed two jetliners into the World Trade Center Tuesday, toppling its twin 110-story towers. The deadly calamity was witnessed on televisions across the world as another plane slammed into the Pentagon and a fourth crashed outside Pittsburgh. "Today, our nation saw evil," said President George W. Bush in an address to the nation Tuesday night. He said thousands of lives were "suddenly ended by evil, despicable acts of terror."

Bush said the United States will find and punish "those behind these evil acts," and any country that harbors them.

Establishing the U.S. death toll could take weeks. The four jetliners alone had 266 people aboard and there were no known survivors. At the Pentagon, about 100 people are believed dead.

In addition, a firefighters union official said he feared an estimated 200 firefighters had died in rescue efforts at the Trade Center — where 50,000 people worked — and dozens of police officers were believed missing.

No one took responsibility for the attacks that rocked the seats of finance and government. But federal authorities identified Osama bin Laden, who has been given asylum by Afghanistan's Taliban rulers, as the prime suspect.

Aided by intercepted communications between his supporters and harrowing cell phone calls from at least one flight attendant and two passengers aboard the jetliners before they crashed, U.S. officials began assembling a case linking bin Laden to the devastation.

U.S. intelligence intercepted communications between bin Laden supporters discussing the attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon, according to Utah Sen. Orrin Hatch, the top Republican on the Senate Judiciary Committee.

The people aboard the jetliners who managed to make cell phone calls each described similar circumstances. They indicated the hijackers were armed with knives, in some cases stabbing flight attendants. The hijackers then took control of the planes.

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Two World Trade Center buildings in New York City were destroyed when two commercial jetliners were hijacked and flown through them Tuesday.

Muslim students express concern for their safety

By ROLANDO GARCIA
THE BATTALION

Muslim students at Texas A&M say they are worried about becoming targets of harassment and resentment because of the widespread assumption that Islamic extremists were responsible for Tuesday's terrorist attacks.

"Every time something like this happens, they say it's the Muslims, and that presumption can put us in a lot of danger," said Arsalan Haque, Class of 2000 and an officer in the Muslim Students Association (MSA).

"Innocent people were killed and people are enraged, and we're enraged too," he said.

Lt. Dan Jones, spokesman for the College Station Police Department, said the department had increased patrols in the Northgate area, although no threats of violence have been reported. But a harassing note was left at the door of the Muslim mosque in College Station.

"The note said something to the effect of 'go back to your country,'" Jones said.

Bob Wiatt, director of the University Police Department (UPD), said a few international students have called his office to express concern for the safety of Muslims on campus in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks. To reassure international students living in University-owned apartments, UPD has stepped up bicycle patrols in the area, Wiatt said.

Haque said Muslim women, many of whom wear visible signs of their faith, such as veils, are especially vulnerable.

"Everybody is talking about it, and right now they have a bad connotation of Muslims in their minds," Haque said.

Chris Alexander, associate director for international studies at A&M, said Americans often misunderstand the turmoil in the Middle East and mistakenly brand all Muslims as extremists.

"The overwhelming majority of the Muslim world does not support this kind of terrorism and does not support Osama bin Laden," Alexander said. "Americans may not have a sense for the complex political issues involved, and may not realize that this has very little to do with religion."

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Bush complex closed

By ROLANDO GARCIA
THE BATTALION

The George Bush Presidential Library Complex was closed Tuesday for security reasons in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks in New York City and Washington, D.C.

The Bush Library will remain closed until further notice, said library spokesman Brian Blake. Also, today's event at the library featuring General Richard Eberhart was canceled.

"Once the government feels the danger has passed, we'll get word from the National Archives to reopen," Blake said.

Police barricades were set up outside the museum, Blake said, and all staff was evacuated.

"If there was any target on campus, that would be it," Blake said.

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CODY WAGES • THE BATTALION
Scoty Baxter, a technical search specialist for the TX-TF1 search and rescue team, prepares to leave for New York, while search dog Chulo looks on.

A&M System task force tapped to assist with New York rescue

By MARK PASSWATERS
THE BATTALION

The members of Texas Task Force-1 (TX-TF1) have dealt with the destruction caused by floods, fires and tornadoes in its four-year existence. Tuesday, while quickly packing, members were faced with preparing for their greatest challenge: looking for survivors trapped in the destruction of New York City's World Trade Center.

The task force is one of 28 urban

search-and-rescue teams in the United States, and is designed to respond to disasters in cities or large urban environments. Until Tuesday, reacting to a large-scale terrorist attack was something the members of the unit had only trained for.

"It's really tough to prepare for. I don't think anyone wants to expect something like this," said Mitch Hubbard, a rescue specialist from the Woodlands and a member of White Team, a unit within TX-TF1.

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