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Thousands feared dead in day of terror

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NEW YORK - Thousands of people are feared dead or injured after planes slammed into key buildings in New York and Washington, sending panicked citizens into the streets.

The attacks knocked down the two towers of the World Trade Center. By late afternoon, a third building in the complex also collapsed. The seat of military power in Washington, the Pentagon, was attacked as well.



World Trade Center on fire

U.S. Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld held a news conference at the Pentagon on Tuesday evening. Though giving few new details a grim-faced, determined looking Rumsfeld said the Pentagon building will be "in business tomorrow."

Sen. John Warner, the former chair of the Senate Armed Services Committee, accompanied Rumsfeld. He said he felt the terrorist attacks were "the most tragic hour in



Adrienne Arsenault reports for CBC-TV



The second tower collapses



The first tower collapses



The crash of the second jet
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American history," and he called on "the entire world to step up and help."

The American government has also opened a Web site aimed at collecting information on those responsible for Tuesday's attacks. The address for the site is: www.ifccfbi.gov

U.S. Attorney General John Ashcroft also confirmed that at least one of the flights - the first flight to crash into the World Trade Centre - had been hijacked by persons armed with knives.

Dead and Injured

Preliminary estimates released by New York's mayor Rudolph Giuliani put the number of injured at 2,100. Of those, 600 were taken to hospital, 150 of them in critical condition. There was no word on the number of dead.

The Canadian Press is reporting that a Canadian NHL scout was among the passengers on one of the jets that crashed into the WTC.

- PHOTOGALLERY: [America attacked](#)

Preliminary reports from Washington put the number of dead or injured in the Pentagon at about 100.

U.S. President George W. Bush called it an "apparent terrorist attack" and said "the United States will hunt down and punish those responsible for these cowardly acts."

Officials say people with links to Osama bin Laden and his organization may have been responsible, but it's premature to be certain.

Who's to blame?

Attack Anatomy

- Just before 8 a.m. ET American Airlines Flight 11 en route from Boston to Los Angeles is hijacked and hits one Tower of the World Trade Center at 8:48 a.m.
- About 9:05, United Airlines Flight 175 from Boston headed for L.A., hits

Afghanistan's ruling Taliban party denied it could be responsible for the attacks, saying the organization doesn't have the means for such a co-ordinated attack. Bin Laden is based in Afghanistan.

the other Tower of the World Trade Center

- 9:30 a.m. American Airlines Flight 77 travelling from Washington to L.A. crashes into the west wing of the Pentagon building in Washington D.C.
- At 10 a.m. United Airlines Flight 93 from Newark to San Francisco crashes 120 km southeast of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, near Camp David

About nine hours after events began unfolding, explosions were seen on the edge of Kabul. A Pentagon official said it was not part of a U.S. response.

The U.S. army was placed on high alert as troops were deployed in both Washington and New York. The navy sent aircraft carriers and guided missile destroyers to both cities.

Twin towers collapse

The events began when two hijacked passenger jets crashed into the World Trade Center



World Trade Center collapsing

in New York City early this morning, exploding into flames and tearing a gaping hole in the skyscraper, with black smoke pouring out.

About an hour after the attacks, as rescuers tried to reach those trapped inside, one of the towers came crashing to the ground. A short while later the second tower also crumbled, sending shards of glass and other debris raining down on the streets below.

Descriptions of the scene inside the WTC were horrific: Donald Burns said he saw severely burned people as he

fled the 82nd floor of One World Trade Center.

"The fire had melted their skin. Their clothes were tattered," he said.



Witnesses also tried to put into words the final desperation of some people who found themselves caught, trapped and facing certain death from the raging fires.

Jennifer Brickhouse said she saw people falling to their deaths from the windows of the buildings. "All this stuff started falling and all this smoke was coming through. People were screaming, falling and jumping out of the windows," she said.

The two buildings, which are 110 storeys high, could house as many as 55,000 people and there are concerns that some people were still trapped inside.

Eyewitnesses reported seeing bodies falling from the buildings and people jumping out. Hundreds ran screaming in panic as clouds of smoke filled the air.

Among the businesses located in the building is the Port Authority Headquarters. There is also a restaurant on the top floor of one of the towers. The building is a popular tourist attraction.

Chaos in streets

The streets were crowded with people shouting and crying as ambulances rushed the injured to hospital. Dazed workers, covered in dust and debris, wandered about in shock. Elsewhere, crowds gathered around stores listening to the news on the radio.

A carpet of grey ash coated the area around

the collapsed building, five centimetres deep in some places.

New York hospitals are now treating hundreds of people with burns and other injuries, including a number of firefighters.

Hundreds of volunteers converged on emergency centres to donate blood and offer assistance.

New York's major stock markets and a number of major U.S. companies were shut down.

The United Nations headquarters in New York was evacuated as a precaution.

Pentagon hit

Later, a third plane crashed into the Pentagon in Washington, D.C. Smoke and flames were seen spilling out of the windows. The Pentagon, the West Wing of the White House and the Capitol building have all been evacuated over concerns of terrorist threats. All five storeys of a section of the Pentagon collapsed.

All federal buildings were closed and 250,000 people were sent home early, but a spokesperson for the White House says the government is still operating.

Fighter jets were seen flying over the White House as security was stepped up.

President Bush was to address the American public on Tuesday evening.

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Shortly after 10:30 a.m. ET United Airlines Flight 93 with 45 people on board crashed just outside Pittsburgh's main airport. The flight was on its way from Newark to San Francisco.

It was a code share with Air Canada, operating as Flight AC4085.

It is believed that hijackers were trying to fly the jet toward the U.S. presidential retreat at Camp David.

United Airlines later confirmed one of its planes, Flight 175, with 65 people on board, was one of those that hit the towers in New York. American Airlines confirmed that its Flight 11 with 92 people on board also hit the structure.

And American confirmed that the plane that hit the Pentagon was its Flight 77, a Boeing 757 going from Washington Dulles to Los Angeles with 65 people.

Air Travel disrupted

Almost immediately after the attacks all planes flying over the United States were told to land at the nearest airport. All international air travel was diverted to Canada. Many trans-Atlantic passengers suddenly found themselves sitting on the tarmac at airports like St. John's or Halifax.

The border to Canada was closed briefly. The border to part of Mexico was closed as well.

- Your reaction: how has the event affected you?

Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat condemned the attacks, calling them "unbelievable."

In Ottawa, Prime Minister Jean Chrétien thanked Canadians for remaining calm and sent his condolences to the families of the victims of today's attacks.

Canadians with relatives in New York can call 1-800-387-3124

On Feb. 26, 1993 another attack on the

World Trade Center killed six people and injured 1000 others.

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