

# FAA allows diverted flights to finish their journeys

NEW YORK — As hospitals began the grim accounting of the dead and injured from the airborne onslaught that toppled the World Trade Center, investigators looked to Florida, Canada and beyond for answers to a single question: Who could have done this?

The financial capital remained closed after the attack on the twin towers and the Pentagon. Federal officials partially lifted a ban on air travel, allowing flights that had been diverted on Tuesday to finish their journeys. All other planes remained grounded.

Thousands were feared dead. This morning, Mayor Rudolph Giuliani said there were 41 known deaths so far — clearly, a tiny fraction of the dead — and 1,700 known injuries. He said 259 uniformed officers, including police and firefighters, remained unaccounted for.

The mayor said rescuers were in contact with one person buried in the rubble. Several police officers were taken from the wreckage, alive.

Authorities gave reporters their first close-up look at the site, and this is what they saw: Only about seven stories of the north tower remained, its girders bent outward. The south tower was a two-story-high heap of rubble.

President Bush declared the attacks "acts of war." He said he would ask Congress for money for recovery and to protect the nation.

The focus of the investigation was on Islamic terrorist Osama bin Laden, who denied involvement, though he "thanked Almighty Allah and bowed before him when he heard this news" of the attacks, according to a Palestinian journalist.

FBI agents searched a room at the Westin Hotel in Boston's Back Bay; they said the room was vacant, but they found information linking it to a name on the manifest of one of the hijacked flights. They would not identify the

man. Law enforcement officials were said to be looking at possible bin Laden supporters in Florida. They were aided by an intercept of communications between his Florida supporters, and harrowing cell phone calls from victims aboard the jetliners before they crashed.

A Venice, Fla., man who was interviewed by the FBI said agents told him that two men who stayed in his home while training at a local flight school were the hijackers. Charlie Voss said the agents identified the men as Mohamed Atta and someone known as Marwan.

The FBI in Miami issued a national bulletin for law enforcement agencies to look out for two cars. Records with the Florida Division of Motor Vehicles show that one of the vehicles the FBI was pursuing — a 1989 red Pontiac — was registered to Atta.

Federal officials, speaking on condition of anonymity, also said they were investigating whether one group of hijackers crossed the Canadian border at a checkpoint and eventually went to Boston's airport, where the two airliners that brought down the Trade Center took off.

Tuesday's assault on American government and finance led the president to place the military on its highest state of alert.

Smoke still drifted from the ravaged Pentagon, and authorities said they did not expect to find more survivors.

The government went back to work Wednesday, its political leaders, diplomats and soldiers leaving no doubt the terrorist assault will be answered. "We will go after them," Secretary of State Colin Powell vowed.

The Navy said the aircraft carrier USS George Washington was in position Wednesday off the coast of New York. The United Nations was evacuated for a time Wednesday morning

after receiving a threat. Americans remained on alert. Baseball's major leagues canceled all games scheduled for Wednesday and Thursday. And Les Dorr, a Federal Aviation Administration spokesman, said passengers could expect tough security measures at reopened airports, suggesting that they arrive two hours early for flights.

At Boston's Logan Airport, aviation director Tom Kinton said the FAA is requiring all U.S. airports to comply with some emergency safety measures, including: banning the sale or use of knives, including plastic ones, at the airport; evacuating and sweeping all terminals with K-9 teams; increasing security personnel; increasing ID checks; and discontinuing curbside check-in.

On Tuesday, as workers poured into Wall Street, a hijacked jet tore through one of the 110-story twin towers. Another followed, striking the other tower in a fireball 18 minutes later. By 10:30 a.m., both towers had collapsed in horrifying clouds of gray smoke.

A third jet struck the Pentagon at 9:40 a.m. A fourth hijacked airliner plummeted to earth about 80 miles southeast of Pittsburgh. There was speculation that the hijackers intended to take the plane elsewhere but were thwarted by passengers.

In a phone call from the air, passenger Thomas Burnett told his wife, Deena, "I know we're all going to die — there's three of us who are going to do something about it." Then, Burnett told his wife, "I love you, honey" and the call ended, the family's priest, the Rev. Frank Colacicco, told the San Francisco Chronicle.

The final death toll may not be

known for weeks. The four planes alone had 266 people aboard. Authorities said between 100 and 800 people were believed dead at the Pentagon.

In New York, firefighter Rudy Weindler spent nearly 12 hours trying to find survivors and only found four — a pregnant woman sitting on a curb and three others in the rubble of a building in the trade center complex.

"I lost count of all the dead people I saw," Weindler said. "It is absolutely worse than you could ever imagine." U.S. officials said the attacks were carried out with military precision. Like Burnett, a few people on the hijacked planes managed to make cell phone calls, in which they said terrorists armed with knives were taking over the jets.

The planes were each on cross-continental routes, and thus carrying a heavy load of flammable fuel. They struck the buildings high up and on the corners, stymieing firefighters' ability to contain the blaze and blocking escape for some tenants.

"There are so many other buildings that are partially destroyed and near collapse," said Weindler, the firefighter. "There are a lot of fires still burning."

Three top fire department officials were among those who died. One of them, Ray Downey, chief of special operations command, led a team of New York firefighters to Oklahoma City in 1995 after the bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building.

The 1,350-foot-tall towers, which withstood a terrorist bombing in a basement parking garage in 1993, were reduced to a pile of stone and steel. A hazy, brownish-gray cloud was all that

could be seen where the gleaming rectangular towers used to loom.

On Wednesday morning, the smell of natural gas and the sound of portable generators hung over the site. A coarse,

sawdust-like powder — pulverized concrete, insulation and paper — made it hard to breathe without a mask.

It covered the streets with a gray blanket, inches thick.


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