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'AN ACT OF WAR'

Survivors relive the terror as towers fall

NEW YORK (AP) — Mounting an audacious attack against the United States, terrorists crashed two hijacked airliners into the World Trade Center and brought down the twin 110-story towers Tuesday morning. A jetliner also slammed into the Pentagon as the seat of government itself came under attack.

Hundreds were apparently killed aboard the jets, and untold numbers were feared dead in the rubble. Thousands were injured in New York alone.

A fourth jetliner, also apparently hijacked, crashed in Pennsylvania as the part of the closely timed series of attacks.

President Bush ordered a full-scale investigation to "hunt down the folks who committed this act."

Authorities were still trying to evacuate those who work in the twin towers when the glass-and-steel skyscrapers came down in a thunderous roar with in about 90 minutes after the attacks, which took place 18 minutes apart around 9 a.m. Many people were feared trapped. About 50,000 people work at the Trade Center and tens of thousands of others visit each day.

Officials said the Trade Center apparently was pierced by two Los Angeles-bound jetliners that had been hijacked after taking off from Boston 15 minutes apart: first by American Flight 11, with 92 people aboard, then by

SEE TERROR PAGE A7

Descent from the 54th floor

The Dallas Morning News

From his office on the 54th floor of the World Trade Center, Kevin Cronin was admiring his view of a sparkling blue sky. It was 8:45 a.m. and the law firm executive could see for miles.

Across the hall, Martha Quatararo, Cronin's colleague in the accounting division of Sidley Austin Brown & Wood, was checking her e-mail. Another co-worker, Kathryn Manukas, was talking to a company colleague in Hong Kong.

Suddenly, the ordinary workday scene was shattered.

"I heard this loud 'Whoosh!'" Cronin, 49, said.

Then came the bizarre sight of a jetliner roaring past, followed by a terrifying explosion and fiery debris hurtling past his window from somewhere above.

"When the plane hit, the building shook like

SEE DESCENT PAGE A8



DEVASTATED: A shell of what was once part of the facade of one of the twin towers of New York's World Trade Center rises above the rubble that remains after both towers were destroyed in a terrorist attack.

'It's very surreal'

New Yorkers with Maine connections tell of being near the twin towers during Tuesday's attack.

Sun Journal Staff

ALISON KING, FARMINGTON

Alison King might have been there. The 26-year-old insurance clerk had worked on the 103rd floor of the World Trade Center's south tower until mid-July, when she inexplicably left. "I just quit one day," King said Tuesday afternoon.

It may have saved her life.

"I don't understand it. I don't understand any of it."

Alison King

From her parents' Farmington home, she watched on TV as a plane crashed into her former workplace, several floors below her old perch near the once massive structure's 110th floor peak.

"Maybe everybody had gotten out," she told herself. "Maybe they're all right."

She tried calling them on cell phones. None worked.

King talked to a friend who worked at the nearby World Financial Center.

SEE SURREAL PAGE A7

Locally, residents shocked, horrified

BY LISA CHMIELECKI
 Staff Writer

LEWISTON — Judy Ripley couldn't wait to get home from work Tuesday. She missed her two young children. She wanted to hug them, hold them.

She wanted to sit down and talk to them about the horrific sequence of events that unfolded throughout the day, spreading shock, fear and deep sorrow across the nation.

The director of the radiology school at Central Maine Medical School, Ripley watched the television news reports of the terrorist attacks in a classroom at the hospital. She knew that her two children, who are 11 and 14, were probably learning about the catastrophe at school.

After calling home several times, she finally reached them at 3 p.m. They told her they were fine. But she worried.

"I just wish that I was home with my fami-

SEE RESIDENTS PAGE A10



MINUS TOWERS: A 1974 file photo of the Manhattan skyline, left, shows the dominance of the World Trade Center towers, while a shot following the collapse of the buildings Tuesday reveals the decimated skyline.



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