Grim search for survivors

12 Sep, 2001 04:28 PM ③ 7 mins to read

10.30 am

NEW YORK - Bleary-eyed workers wearing breathing masks pulled at least one person from the steel and glass wreckage of the World Trade Center today.

Emergency workers have recovered 40 bodies from the rubble and treated some 1600 people for injuries, the Federal Emergency Management Agency said.

The US military's enormous Pentagon headquarters reopened for limited business today as rescue teams pressed a perilous search for an estimated 200 or more missing defence workers.

New York Mayor Rudolph Giuliani said three people have been pulled from the area in Lower Manhattan while television news reports said that eight people who were buried alive in the mountain of rubble were rescued.

Hundreds of emergency workers using sniffing search dogs, motion detectors and construction equipment to remove tonnes of smouldering debris, rescued a Port Authority policeman from the destruction of the city's once-mighty symbols of financial power, the mayor said. The policeman was in critical condition in hospital.

Two other officers were rescued hours after hijackers slammed planes into the World Trade Center's 110-storey twin towers as part of a co-ordinated strike that also left the Pentagon in flames and likely killed hundreds, officials said.

The scene in lower Manhattan looked like a moonscape as ash blanketed the area, while armed troops patrolled the perimeter of the rescue area.

Few bodies have been removed from the area. Reams of paper fluttered through the streets - actuary tables, address book pages, stock trade sheets. Shoes littered the area and a charred doll served as reminders of the tragedy.

Dr Leonard Bakalchuk, of nearby St Vincents hospital, said there is still hope for those trapped in the rubble.

"If a person is simply trapped - wasn't burned, wasn't crushed - they may be okay for five to seven days. The problem is that in this situation, many people were hit by debris. They will have injuries that may lead to kidney failure," he said.

Medics stood by with ventilators and eye-flush kits for the rescue workers who battled smoke, ash, shattered glass, piles of twisted steel girders and exhaustion as they searched for any possible survivors. The rescue workers have been working around the clock.

"We slept on a pile of asbestos," said fireman Frank Turner.

Most of the operation was devoted to removing the debris left behind from the collapse of two of the tallest structures in the world, but firefighters crawled over the rubble as they passed twisted steel over their heads and dug by hand through the debris to look for survivors.

Smouldering piles of debris would unexpectedly flare up, engulfing parts of the rescue area in smoke and flame. Other areas were off-limits to everyone because engineers feared that structurally damaged buildings may collapse.

Giuliani said 120 trucks full of debris were removed from the scene overnight.

Smoke from the blackened Pentagon drifted over Washington and a stubborn roof fire continued to burn more than 24 hours after a hijacked fuel-laden airliner slammed into a corner of the five-sided building.

The world's leading investment banks and brokerages said today they were still trying to account for their New York-based employees after the devastating attack on the World Trade Center.

Morgan Stanley was the complex's largest tenant with 3500 employees on 25 floors. The investment bank declined to give details on the status of its staff that worked at the twin towers, but a spokeswoman said damage from the attacks to the firm's business was "fairly insignificant."

Brokerage Cantor Fitzgerald and one of its subsidiaries had 1000 people working on four of the top 10 floors of 1 World Trade Center. Cantor said it has compiled a preliminary "safe" list of 150 to 200 employees who have been accounted for, including President Peter da Puzzo.

Many banks and brokerages - including Morgan Stanley - have abandoned lower Manhattan for midtown offices in recent years, but still maintain significant operations in the area.

Others still have downtown headquarters, including Goldman Sachs Group Inc, Merrill Lynch & Co. Inc and Lehman Bros Holdings Inc. Merrill and Lehman's offices are in the World Financial Center, less than a half a mile from the scene of the attack.

The companies expressed concern for families affected by the attacks.

"We are saddened and outraged by the attack on America, and extend our deepest sympathies and prayers to all the people affected," Morgan Stanley Chief Executive Philip Purcell said.

Morgan Stanley and Cantor have set up telephone hotlines for staff and their families and friends.

More than 40,000 people worked in the steel and glass towers of the World Trade Center and officials feared the death toll could climb into the tens of thousands.

The 110-storey twin towers imploded in ruins after two passenger planes commandeered

by unknown hijackers slammed into the buildings. Later in the day, a nearby 47-storey building, 7 World Trade Center, collapsed after a raging fire.

A Morgan Stanley spokesman Ray O'Rourke denied any confirmation of the safety of the firm's employees in the building.

"We are continuing to account for employees," O'Rourke said.

Credit Suisse First Boston, which has offices in building 5 of the complex, said its premises and some 800 staff were evacuated. Building 5 is adjacent to the collapsed towers.

The firm, the investment banking arm of Swiss Bank Credit Suisse Group, said its main New York offices on Madison Ave were not affected.

Schroder Salomon Smith Barney said all its employees were evacuated from the towers. But the firm could not account for all staff because many people were on the ground when the towers collapsed, it said.

Merrill said there was limited damage to its building in the World Financial Manhattan streets, normally packed with throngs of workers and tourists, were eerily quiet on as the World Trade Center attack closed airports, bridges and tunnels, severely hampering entry into the Big Apple.

Although much of New York City's subway and bus service resumed except in lower Manhattan, there was a strange silence caused by the absence of the usual bumper-to-bumper traffic, the din of honking horns and packs of pedestrians rushing to their jobs.

By late morning, some bridges leading into Manhattan had reopened and traffic was expected to pick up. New York City's two main rail stations - Grand Central Station and Penn Station - had reopened and many commuter trains were operating close to schedule today. "We are back and running with our regular weekday service," said Karina Van Veen, a spokeswoman for Amtrak based in Washington, D.C. "We are travelling in and out of New

12/13/22, 8:52 AM

York without any difficulty."

More people are using trains and Amtrak is trying to add seats whenever possible. Amtrak's

service includes trains that travel the northeast corridor running from Washington to

Boston.

Van Veen said Amtrak's reservation system is being flooded with calls and suggested that

travellers make their plans through the train system's website www.amtrak.com.

- REUTERS

The New Zealand Herald will publish another special edition this morning with

extensive coverage of the terrorist attacks in the USA. Look for your copy on sale

throughout the Herald circulation area at noon.

Full coverage: Terror in America

Pictures

Video

The fatal flights

Emergency telephone numbers for friends and family of victims and survivors

These numbers are valid for calls from within New Zealand, but may be overloaded at the

moment.

United Airlines: 0168 1800 932 8555

American Airlines: 0168 1800 245 0999

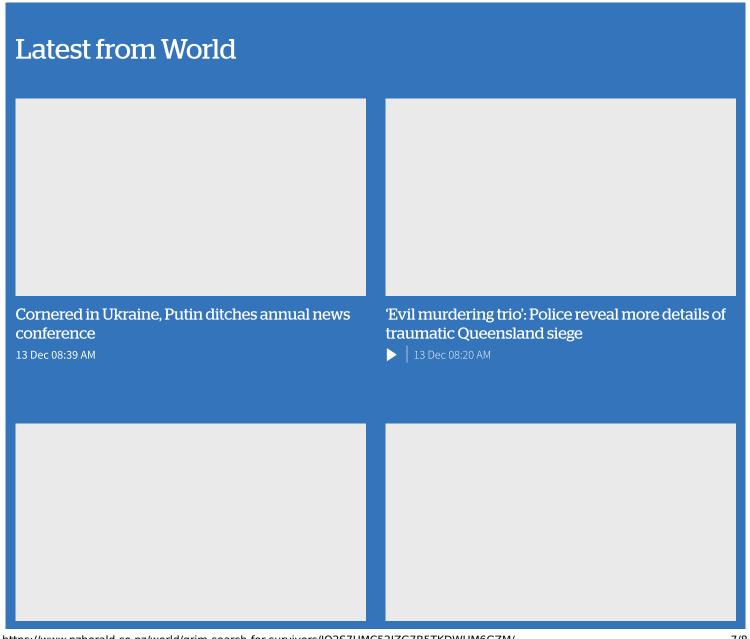
NZ Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade: 0800 872 111

US Embassy in Wellington (recorded info): 04 472 2068

Online database for friends and family of victims and survivors

Air New Zealand flights affected

Air NZ flight information: 0800 737-000.



Cheating scandal: What sparked Queensland copkiller's murderous spiral

Elon Musk's Twitter disbands its Trust and Safety advisory group

13 Dec 01:13 AM

12 Doc 11:00 PM