

September 11

Time of Terror

SU alumni share harrowing stories of survival and tell of courageous rescue and recovery efforts following the attacks

'It's Just Like a Movie'



TARA NELSON'S MOST VIVID MEMORY of her former office building at One World Trade Center is not of smoke, flame, rubble, or disaster. Instead, the most striking image is the one she saw each day as she got off the subway. "I remember walking up the block and wanting to look up at the World Trade Center, but not wanting to seem like a tourist," says Nelson '01, who graduated

last spring with a bachelor's degree in sociology. "I used to sneak a peak because both towers were so magnificent."

Nelson began working in July as an event coordinator for the New York Society of Security Analysts on Tower 1's 44th floor. On September 11, she was at her desk composing an e-mail when she heard a loud sound and felt the building tip to one side. "I thought it was a bomb," says Nelson, who was aware that the building had been hit in a 1993 terrorist attack. "I was terrified."

Once the initial movement stopped, Nelson ran to a colleague whose office was closer to the windows. "My co-worker was saying, 'We've been hit by something! We've been hit by something!'" Nelson remembers. That's when she saw falling shards of glass and metal pieces reflected in the windows of the neighboring World Financial Center. Nelson and three colleagues immediately headed for the stairs, where they encountered thick smoke and the inescapable smell of jet-engine fuel that burned their eyes and choked them. "My legs were shaking," she says. "I was scared out of my mind." She raced down the stairs, trying to remain calm and all the while thinking: "Something really bad is happening, people on the floors above us are dying, dead, or suffering."

Forty minutes later, Nelson escaped the building and took her first look at the destruction above her. "It was surreal," she says. "There were flames shooting out the side. There was a cut in the building where the plane hit. From there up, it

was black billowing smoke. That's when I saw the first person fall, or jump, or get pushed out by the fire."

All Nelson could think about was getting to her Fairfield, Connecticut, home. Too frightened to take the subway after learning of the strikes on the second tower and the Pentagon, she began walking, then running toward Grand Central Station. There she endured two evacuations of the station before boarding a train for home. Her family's tears of terror melted into sobs of relief when Nelson finally picked up a signal for her cell phone three-and-a-half hours after the plane hit her building.

Thinking back to the events of that day, she says: "I have a hard time processing it in my mind because it's just like a movie."

Today, Nelson is focused on the future, concerned about settling the company into a new space and reconnecting with its 8,000 clients. The attack didn't alter her plans to move to Manhattan, and she feels strongly that the towers should be rebuilt. "I'm nervous about the idea of biological warfare, but we can't let them stop our daily lives," Nelson says. "The terrorists can do this, but it's not going to shatter us completely."

—Margaret Costello

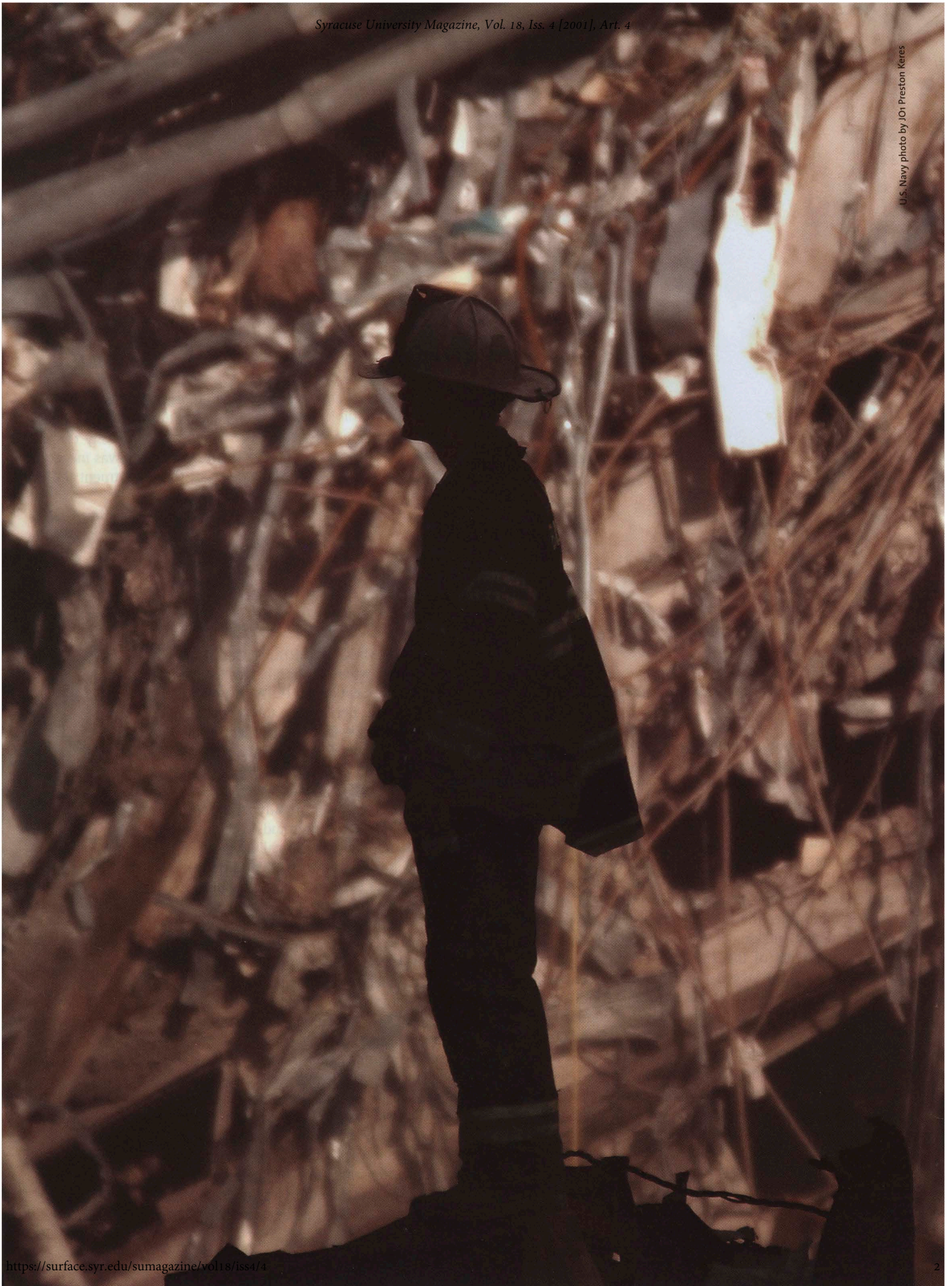
The Orange Shield



NEW YORK CITY FIREFIGHTER ERIK Smith '98 had only been on the job at Engine 81 Ladder 46 in the north Bronx for a month when he was thrown into the largest rescue effort in American history. "I was anxious to get to the site because six of my classmates from the academy were missing," Smith says. "When I uncovered a helmet with the orange shield of a first-year firefighter, I

knew it belonged to one of my friends."

Two days later Smith worked at the World Trade Center for 50 straight hours. He thought his training had prepared him to deal with any disaster, but nothing could have prepared him





Firefighters comb through debris in the World Financial Center atrium.

for the destruction at ground zero. “There was more devastation than you can imagine,” he says. “Fires were raging out of control, and we had to search through a pile of debris 10 feet high. Large pieces of the World Trade Center were imbedded in surrounding buildings, and a cavern 50 feet below street level opened up, creating large voids. I helped search the voids for survivors. Unfortunately, we didn’t find any.”

Immediately after the towers collapsed, lime dust from the pulverized concrete caused severe eye irritation for rescue workers, and after the rain of a few days later, the concrete dust hardened, making it more difficult to dig through the twisted remnants of the 110-story buildings. Many rescuers suffered cuts from jagged pieces of metal, and others were overcome by the stench at the site. Because of such extreme work conditions, Smith and his fellow firefighters are suffering from a variety of health problems. “OSHA [Occupational Safety and Health Administration] and the U.S. Public Health Service are monitoring the air quality, and we have been supplied with goggles and respirators,” Smith says. “I keep going back to the site because until we get all the firefighters out of the rubble, my place is there.”

The fire department is offering counseling to its members and providing financial assistance through special disaster relief funds to the families of the 343 firefighters who sacrificed their lives in the line of duty. “There is an outpouring of support from

around the country,” Smith says. “We’ve been getting donations and letters from everywhere. All of us at the firehouses are on edge, and the letters are very comforting—especially the ones from children. Somehow kids know how to express the right thing.”

The terrorist attacks have caused many New York City firefighters to rethink their choice of occupation. Smith, however, has no intention of leaving the department. “I really think a New York City fireman is what I am—it’s what I was meant to be,” he says. “The older members of the department tell us that someday we will laugh again.”

—Christine Yackel

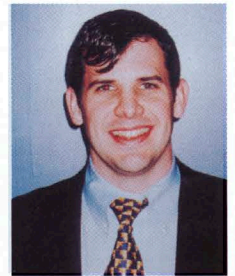
A Matter of Minutes

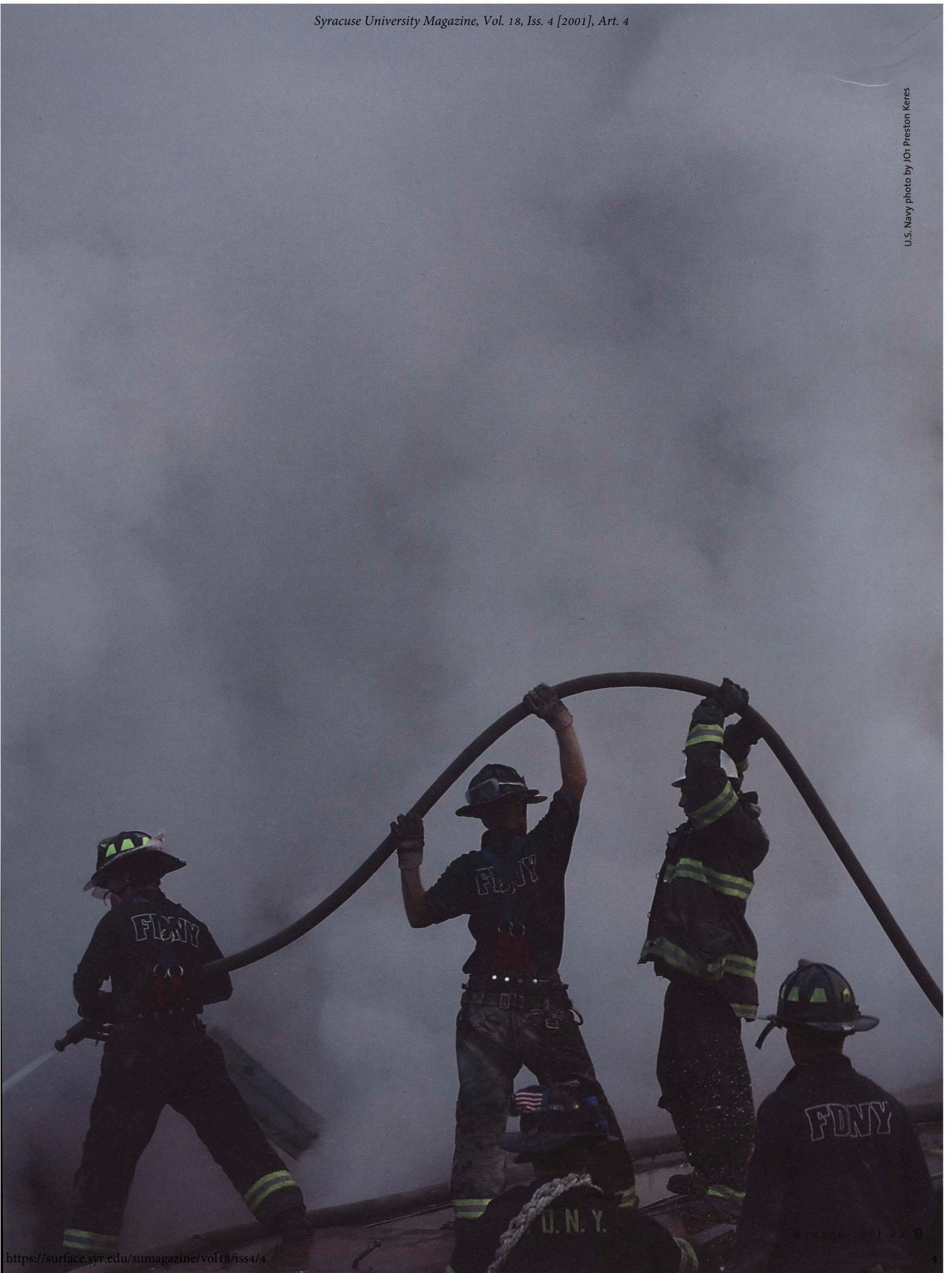
ELLEN SAMMON HARBLIN G’97 WAS still asleep when her mother called the morning of September 11. With urgency in her voice, her mother told her about the World Trade Center attack and wanted to know where in Manhattan Ellen’s husband, Matt Harblin ’93, G’96, worked. “My blood got hot. I hadn’t even brushed my hair yet, and already the word ‘widow’ crossed my mind,” Ellen says. “Within minutes, friends and family began calling to ask about Matt.”

Ellen knew her husband walked through the World Trade Center plaza each morning to his office in the World Financial Center. For the next hour she anxiously watched TV news reports and waited to hear from Matt, the son of Tom Harblin, SU’s vice president for giving programs. “Before I knew it, the towers had crumbled,” she says. “Our young daughter, Lilly, didn’t understand what was happening, but she sensed my growing hysteria and tried to calm me down.”

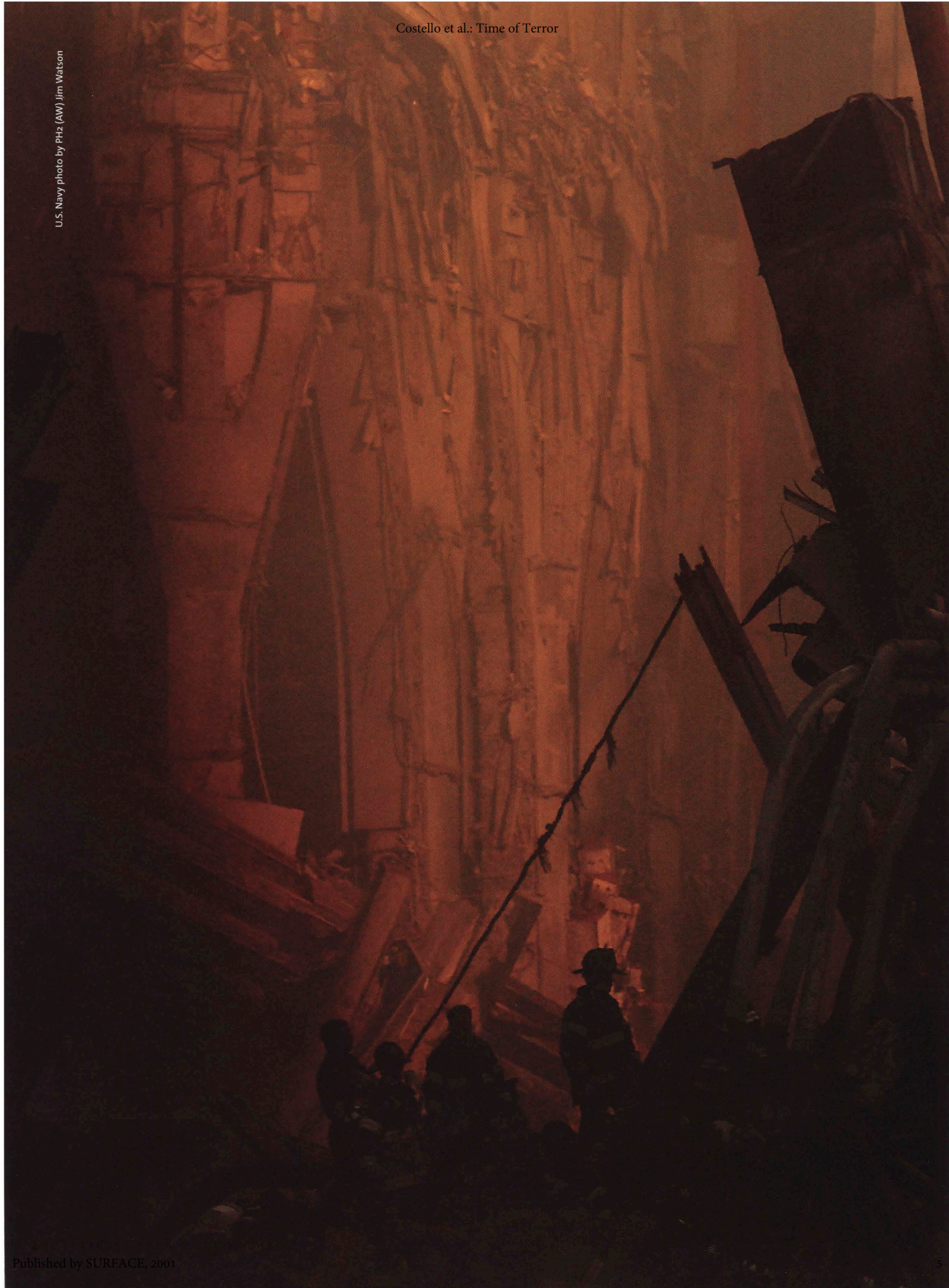
Matt Harblin’s subway ride into work that morning took longer than usual. He stepped out of the station at 8:50 a.m.—just two minutes after the first terrorist strike. As he made his way out of the subway, he noticed groups of people standing in the middle of the road looking up. “I saw pieces of what looked like drywall and insulation all over the road and sidewalk,” he says. “I looked up and saw a big hole high up in the trade center’s north tower [Tower I], with flames and black smoke pouring out and reams of paper floating through the air.”

Harblin was standing across the street in front of the Millennium Hotel when he heard someone say a plane had hit





U.S. Navy photo by PHz (AW) Jim Watson



the tower, and it never occurred to him that the crash wasn't accidental. "Then I saw someone fall from the tower," he says. "Everyone screamed and gasped and people started to cry. It was so sad to know that people were dying such horrible deaths at that very moment."

Still not understanding the full magnitude of the unfolding tragedy, Harblin tried to run around the trade center to get to his office building, but a policeman stopped him and told him to head north. He'd only walked a block when a massive ball of flame burst out of Tower II. "A second later, I could see a cloud of debris coming toward me," Harblin says. "I ran around a corner and ducked into a service entrance with about 20 other people." When the smoke and dust started to clear, Harblin pulled his shirt up over his mouth and began the long walk home, where his wife and daughter awaited him.

Three days later, Lilly celebrated her second birthday with her parents and grandparents. Reflecting on what might have been, her grandfather, Tom Harblin, says: "Lilly's special gift was that her father was there to help her celebrate."

—Christine Yackel

Eyewitnesses to History



Ada Rosario Dolch

ON SEPTEMBER 11 THE STUDENTS AT the High School for Leadership and Public Service in New York City became eyewitnesses to history. After the first hijacked 767 slammed into the World Trade Center, they were evacuated from their building at 90 Trinity Place to the relative safety of Battery Park. But when Tower II collapsed before their eyes, they scattered in all directions to escape the oncoming fireball of soot and debris.

The students were led to safety by their principal, Ada Rosario Dolch, who lost her sister, an employee of Cantor Fitzgerald, in the attack. "Ada knew this even as she worked to keep order and get the children out of the school as quickly as possible," says Jane Werner Present '56, chair of the Friends of the High School for Leadership and Public Service. "After the first tower collapsed and the students ran for their lives, Ada told them, 'Take care of each other—you know how to do that—you're leaders.'"

After the towers collapsed, 200 of the 600 students took the ferry to Staten Island and spent the night at a local high school. Twenty more went by ferry to New Jersey, where they were

housed in a local church and aided by its parishioners. The rest walked across the Brooklyn Bridge and north to upper Manhattan. "Thank God they are all alive and safe," Present says.

The High School for Leadership and Public Service (HSLAPS) was established in 1993 in collaboration with the Maxwell School to develop urban leaders specially trained in democratic principles. Today, the 14-story HSLAPS building is located at what has become known as ground zero. Although the building came through the disaster with only a few broken windows, the students can't return yet because the U.S. Marshals Service is using it as a base for recovery efforts. "For now, the school has been relocated to the Fashion Industries High School," Present says. "Syracuse University rallied to our cause and rushed notebooks and supplies to the students in their temporary housing."

Help also came in the form of moral support from former President Bill Clinton, who met with the HSLAPS students on September 24. He gave them a brief civics lesson on world events and tried to explain to them why the terrorists had attacked. "President Clinton told the students that the only way the terrorists can defeat us is if we let them," Present says. "Our students were enormously inspired and buoyed by his visit."

According to Principal Dolch, the students are "holding up" as well as can be expected. "Inner-city kids are a bit on the tough side, so we won't see the effects of this horrible tragedy for some time," Present says. "Our faculty and mentors are working together to help them cope." —Christine Yackel

A Life-Saving Move

ROB ROSS '93 IS AFRAID OF HEIGHTS. BUT AS A SENIOR performance analyst at a major financial institution in lower Manhattan, he overcame his fear daily to work on the 70th floor of the World Trade Center's Tower II. "The tower creaked and shifted," Ross says. "I was glad when I moved to an inner office. That move may have saved my life."

On September 11 Ross arrived at work early to run some financial reports. "I remember remarking to myself what a beautiful day it was—clear as a bell," he says. Just before 8:45 a.m. he was talking on the telephone to a financial advisor in Michigan, when he was startled by a burst of white light followed by streams of people running from the building's outer offices to the inner offices. "My boss, who had survived the 1993 terrorist bombing of the World Trade Center, yelled, 'Get your stuff and get out of here because you're not coming

back,” Ross says. “At this point we thought a small plane had crashed into the other tower, and I have to admit I was rather nonchalant about the whole thing. The building still had power and there wasn’t any smoke. All we saw were pieces of burning paper drifting by the windows.”

Ross and his colleagues did exactly what they’d been told not to do in an emergency—they took the elevator to the 44th floor. From there they partnered up for the long journey down the serpentine staircase. When they reached the 21st floor, the building shook from the impact of United Airlines Flight 175 crashing into the skyscraper. “The shock wave threw us to the other side of the staircase like paper dolls,” Ross says. “We still didn’t have a clue what was happening, but then we double-timed it down the stairs.”

The electrical power was gone by the time Ross reached the 8th floor, but he felt sure he’d make it out safely because he could feel fresh air coming in. However, he was not prepared for the horror and devastation awaiting him as he emerged into the open courtyard. “It was very bizarre, like a scene out of *War of the Worlds*,” Ross says. “Everything was on fire and there were body parts and debris everywhere.”

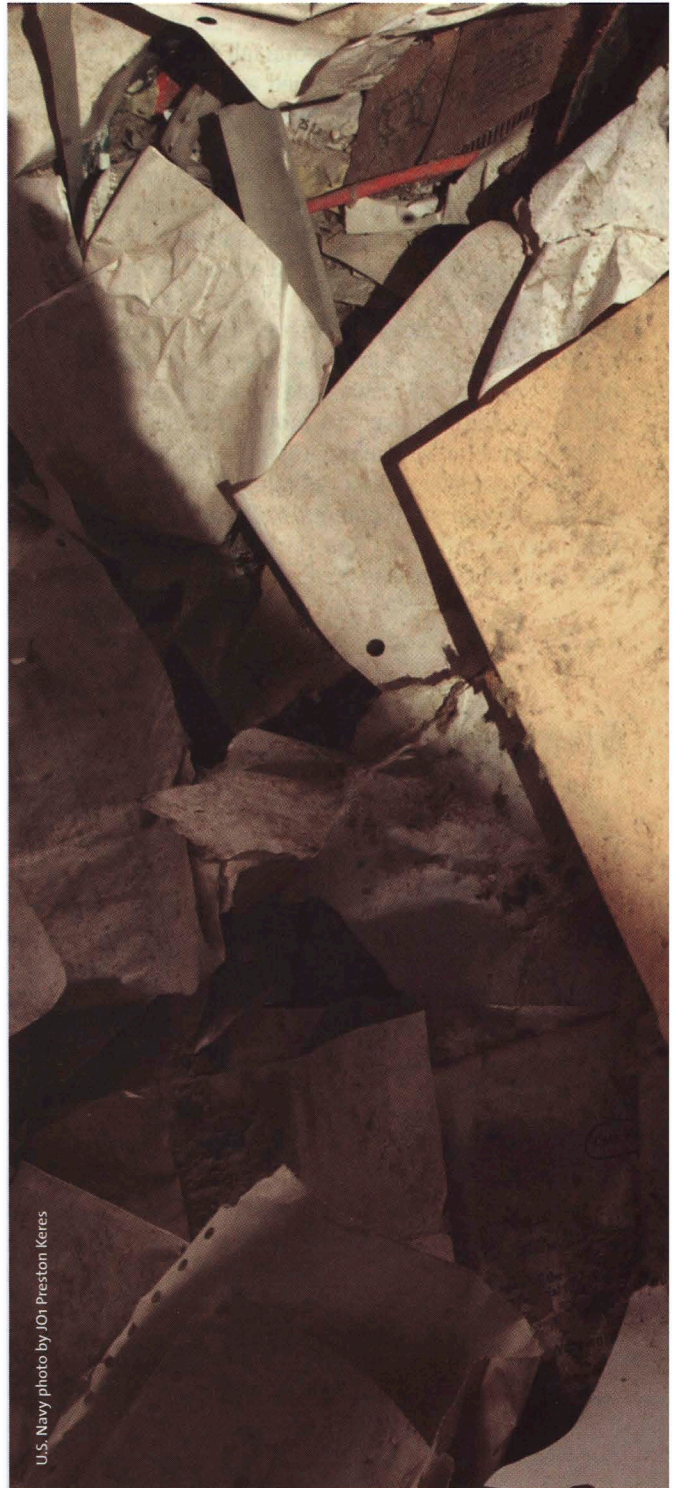
The rescuers kept the fleeing people away from falling debris by funneling them down through the underground concourse and up the other side to Broadway. Bewildered, Ross watched in disbelief as people jumped to their deaths from the fiery twin towers. Realizing the area wasn’t safe, he began his long journey home to Chester, New Jersey, by foot and ferry. “As I was making my way up Broadway, I heard an eerie screeching metal noise and looked back to see Tower II disappear in a cloud of fire and smoke,” Ross says.

By 8 p.m. Ross arrived safely home, where his father and brother were waiting for him. That morning his grandmother, who lives in a Rhode Island nursing home, saw his building destroyed on television. “My grandmother was the one who called my parents and told them about the terrorist attack,” Ross says. “My father immediately drove to my house from Pennsylvania, and my brother drove in from Atlantic City. My brother told me later he had packed a black suit.”

—Christine Yackel

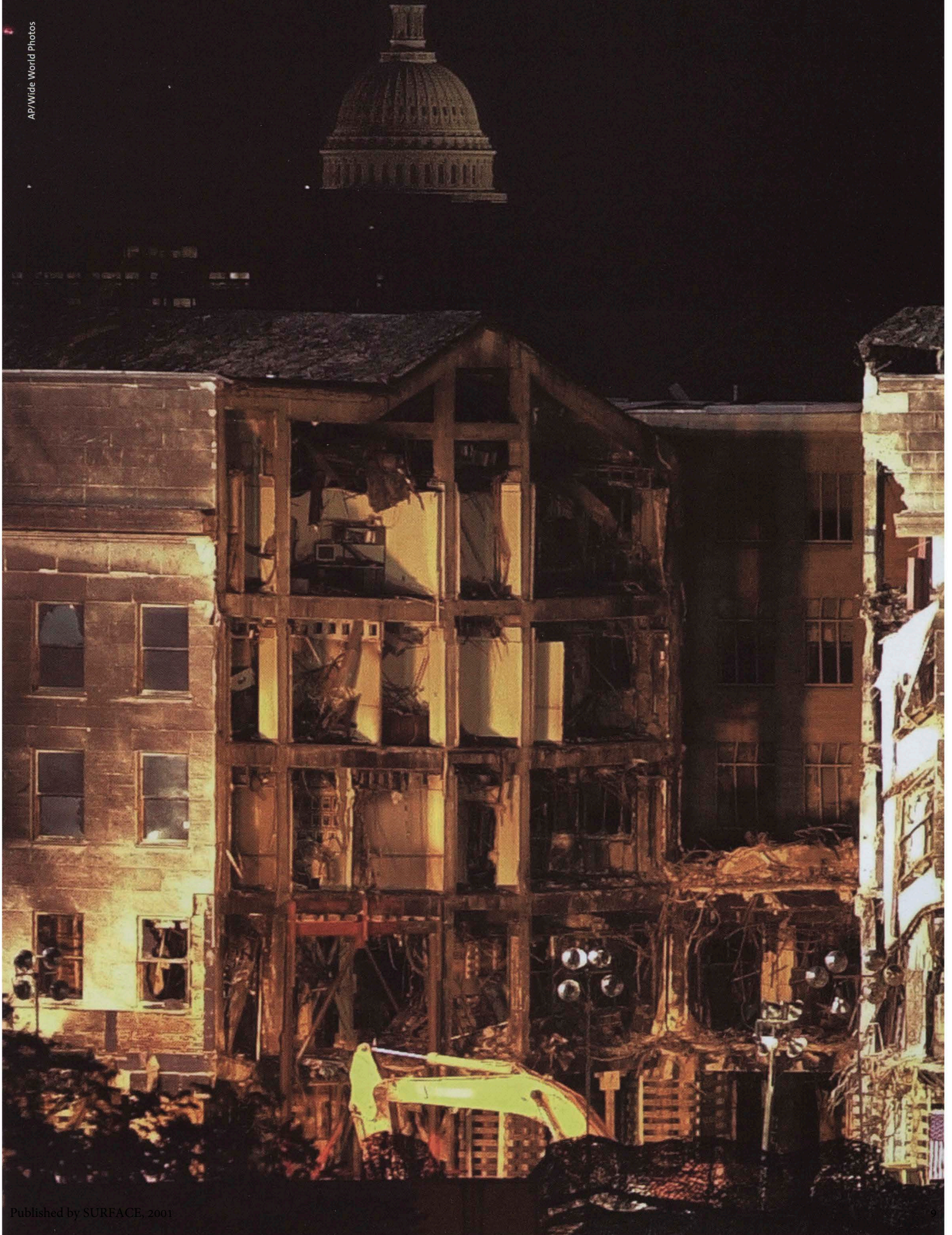
Recovering After a Devastating Loss

IT IS EXTREMELY DIFFICULT TO TALK ABOUT THE EVENTS of September 11 and the following days. The floor that I worked on, 64, lost 17 people in the incident. Twelve of them



U.S. Navy photo by JO1 Preston Keres





didn't fully comprehend the magnitude of the danger and did not leave until 10 a.m. They were in the stairwell, on about the 20th floor, when the building collapsed. Miraculously, one of them survived with just a broken ankle and some bruises. Of the other 11, 3 bodies have been recovered and 8 are still unaccounted for. I attended the wake and funeral of one guy and am going to the wake tonight of another. Our office is still recovering as best as humanly possible. We have group counseling sessions daily and individual meetings with a professional counselor as needed. The first few days were really devastating, and now whenever we see co-workers in the hall, we greet them with hugs and kisses. Our agency, the Port Authority, lost about 75 staff—30 of them police. Our executive director, Neil Levin, who had been on the job about 6 months, was in a breakfast meeting at Windows on the World on the 110th floor. Nobody that high up survived.

—Louis Yannaco '67, president of the Central New Jersey Alumni Club

Hostile Intent



FROM HIS OFFICE IN THE PENTAGON, U.S. Air Force Major Harry Brososky '87 thought the loud explosion was a bomb. Although he'd just seen a news flash about the planes crashing into the World Trade Center, he still couldn't comprehend that the Pentagon was under attack. He immediately ran to the Air Force Operations Center, where he'd previously been a duty officer, to help the Crisis Action Team (CAT) field calls coming in on multiple open and top-secret telephone lines. "We didn't know who was still out there or what their hostile intention might be," Brososky says. "We became the eyes and ears of the Air Force."

The operations center was controlled chaos. The CAT worked



U.S. Navy photo by PHZ (AW) Jim Watson

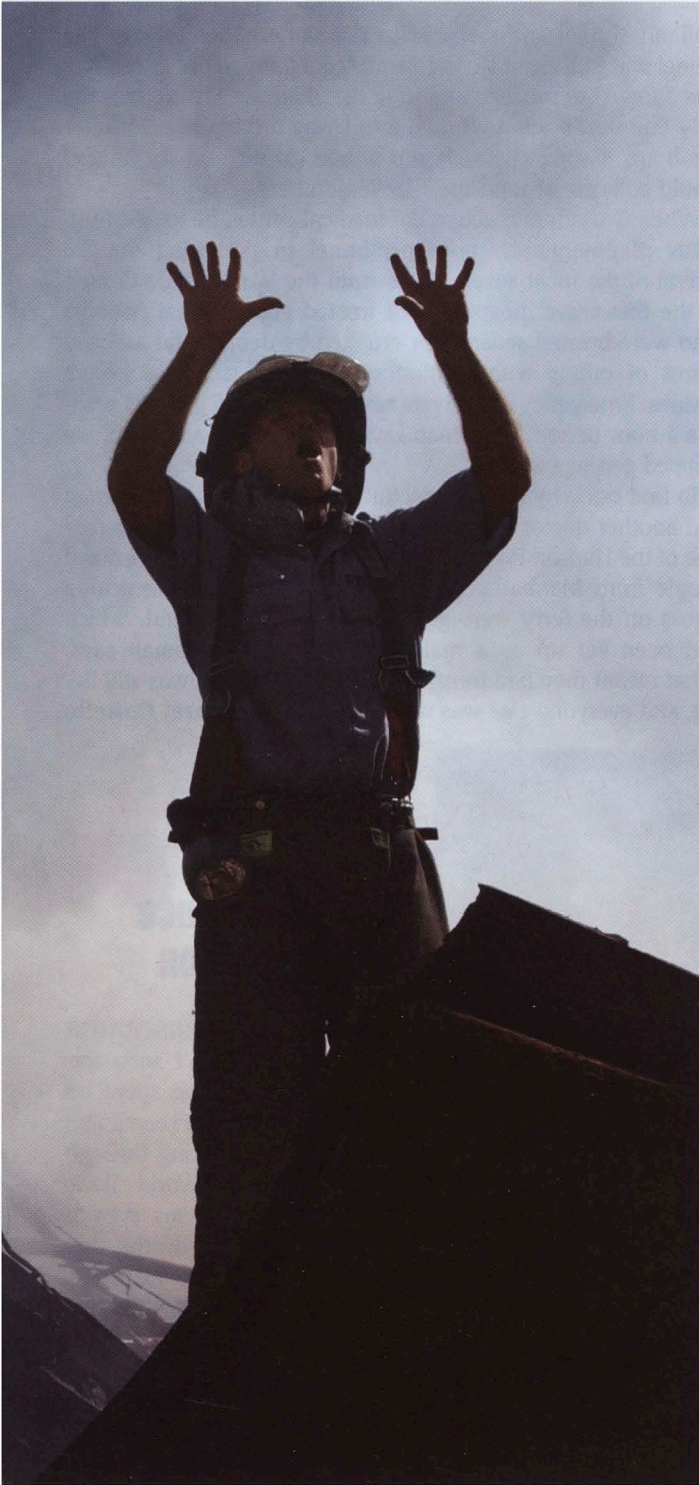
with the Federal Aviation Administration to monitor flight activity over the continental United States and coordinated with the North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD) to put jet fighters on alert in Alaska and Hawaii. Team members worked to obtain a head count of Air Force personnel evacuated from the building and tried to reassure their own families that they were safe. "There was a desk for each assignment and a CAT chief running the whole operation," says Brososky, who is an executive officer to a two-star general at the Pentagon. "We're trained to know what to do in a crisis, but at times we had information overload and had to decide quickly what to do with all the information that was pouring in."

Located partially below ground in a section of the Pentagon's C Ring, the Air Force Operations Center was not in direct danger from the attack, but thick smoke and carbon-monoxide fumes quickly became a concern. "We evacuated the building and moved the Crisis Action Team to an outside location," Brososky says. "I stayed in the Pentagon until 6:30 that night to make sure all the classified information was transferred safely to our new location."

Following the attack, Brososky worked 15-hour shifts for 9 straight days. It wasn't until he logged on to the Syracuse



U.S. Navy photo by J.D. Preston Keres



University alumni web site (www.syracuse.edu/alumni) that he finally began to digest what had happened and became overwhelmed with grief. "I was visiting friends on campus when 35 SU students were killed by a bomb on Pan Am Flight 103 over Lockerbie, Scotland," he says. "It's incomprehensible to me that so many innocent Americans have lost their lives in terrorist attacks. I'm sad to say I don't see any way this is going to end soon."

—Christine Yackel

Moved by the Spirit of Unity

AS A SYRACUSE GRADUATE NOW WORKING AS DEPUTY chief of staff to New York City Mayor Rudolph Giuliani, I was reminded by the September 11 events of the terrible shock and loss following the 1988 bombing of Pan Am 103.

In both cases, hopeful futures were shattered by senseless terrorist attacks. In both cases, many people suffered the deep personal loss of a loved one.

Working in my office the morning of the attack, I saw the destruction unfold before my eyes—the World Trade Center stood just two blocks from City Hall. We were evacuated from City Hall after both towers collapsed, and amid the confusion I had one mission—to make sure that my daughter, Mary Ashley, was safe.

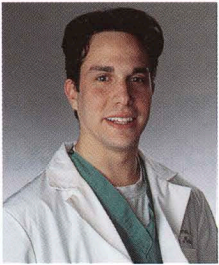
The spirit of unity that emerged in the aftermath of this unspeakable tragedy has been inspiring. There is shared grief, and a shared resolve to rebuild. Amid the sadness there is also a renewed appreciation for life.

The mayor has set an extraordinary personal example of courage. He met every challenge of that day, and since, with uncommon grace under pressure and truly admirable focus and determination. Working as closely as we do with the fire department and the police department, all of us in City Hall have lost friends—exceptionally brave individuals who were so heroic in the course of their daily lives that it felt as though they could never be taken away from us.

Working at the Emergency Command Center in the days since the attack has been a blessing because it provides a constructive outlet for the feelings of outrage and loss. To work among friends, and to feel a deep sense of purpose every day, is perhaps the best way to deal with what has occurred. New Yorkers are resilient, and now more than ever I believe that this is the greatest city in the world.

—Julie Lefkowitz Mendik '89

A Wave of Emergency Care



EMERGENCY ROOM PHYSICIAN MARC Grossman '93 was standing on the roof of his Manhattan home watching the Twin Towers burn when he realized he needed to get to work at the Jersey City Medical Center, one of the major trauma centers closest to the financial district. When he reached the Holland Tunnel to cross the Hudson River into Jersey City, a police officer told him that the passage hadn't

been checked yet for bombs, and that doctors were more likely needed at the disaster site.

Grossman headed for the burning towers. "I was driving on Broadway and all these people came running toward me and police were yelling, 'Get back! Get back!'" Grossman says. "I threw my car into reverse and backed up about five blocks as I saw the building collapse in front of me. It was like a tidal wave of smoke and debris that engulfed everything. My car was shaking like there was an earthquake. I started thinking, 'I'm not going to do any good here if I die,' and that's really what I thought was happening." So he headed back to the

Holland Tunnel and spoke with the same police officer. The tunnel was still closed and considered a danger, but Grossman was allowed to proceed and took the chance. "My car was the only one in the whole tunnel and I was driving like 90 miles per hour, fearing that a bomb would go off and the tunnel would collapse around me," he remembers.

When Grossman reached the medical center, he joined hundreds of emergency room personnel in preparing for the arrival of the most severe cases from the World Trade Center. In the first wave, hospital staff treated eight critical patients who were burned severely or crushed by debris, and assisted scores of others with respiratory problems and less severe injuries. Emergency care-givers saw a total of 175 patients within a 4-hour period, Grossman says. "Then, all of a sudden, we stopped getting patients."

To find out why no more victims were coming in, Grossman and another doctor drove to the triage center along the Jersey side of the Hudson River, where ferries were transporting injured people from Manhattan. "They said the only people getting across on the ferry were going straight to Ellis Island, which had been set up as a makeshift morgue," Grossman says. "That meant they had transported everybody who was still living, and everyone else was dead." —Margaret Costello



The Twin Towers burn in the distance from Dr. Marc Grossman's home.

The Importance of Preparation

SU SAFETY ADMINISTRATOR Michael Ryan won't soon forget the 32 hours he spent on Staten Island with a search and recovery team, sifting through debris from the World Trade Center. "It opened my eyes to the magnitude of deaths that can occur as the result of terrorism," Ryan says. "It also enlightened me about my job here on campus. I need to review our programs on an ongoing basis to make sure that our people are ready for



U.S. Navy photo by PH2 (AW) Jim Watson

anything that could happen.”

Ryan, a volunteer firefighter with the Solvay, New York, fire department, trained in major disaster response as part of a fire service course created after the Oklahoma City bombing. He and other firefighters who took the course were called to New York City to help with the World Trade Center rescue and recovery efforts. Arriving September 14, Ryan was assigned to work on Staten Island, a secondary staging area where rescuers are examining debris. Within two weeks of the attacks, an estimated 101,164 tons of debris were taken to the Staten Island landfill. Law enforcement officials say the evidence collection process there could last as long as a year.

After the experience, Ryan returned to campus with a new outlook. “I’m hoping we can get more training for people here at the University so that more people are aware of what could happen in the face of disaster,” he says. “And if anything happened at the University, hopefully, we’d be ready.”

—Margaret Costello

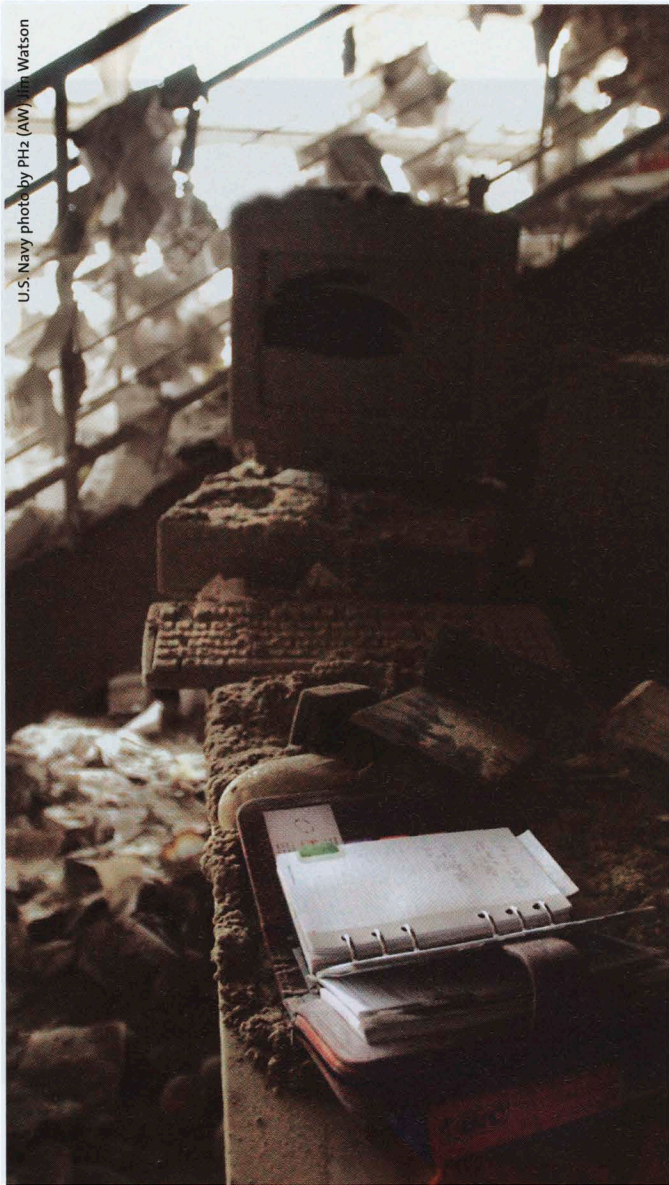
Protect and Defend



USAF photo by Lt. Col. Dave Lamp, USAF

U.S. AIR FORCE LIEUTENANT COLONEL Tyrone “Woody” Woodyard ’85 felt the building shake and saw a fireball blaze past his Pentagon office window. From the distinctive sound and the smell of burning fuel, he knew it was an explosion. “I’d just seen the second World Trade Center tower get hit on television,” Woodyard says. “My gut feeling told me we were under terrorist attack.”

Woodyard’s first instinct was to go and help the injured until professional emergency medical personnel arrived. But he was pushed back from the crash site by security guards and told to evacuate the building immediately. In his job as public affairs advisor to the chief of staff of the Air Force,



Woodyard knew his primary duty was to set up an alternate media center away from the Pentagon and to give the media an accurate head count of Air Force personnel. Then he was sent home to get some rest. “It was impossible to rest because the phone never stopped ringing,” Woodyard says. “It was heartwarming to hear from some of my SU friends—I knew that faith, family, and friends would get us through the difficult days ahead.”

The next morning the public affairs office was up and running again in the Pentagon. “It was eerie,” Woodyard says. “Soot covered the floor and the smell of smoke and fuel filled the air—everyone was on edge.” He briefed the secretary of the Air Force and the Air Force chief of staff and provided facts to the media without divulging classified information that would put military personnel at risk. “We also sent a message through the media to the American public that the

Air Force was resolved and determined to resist aggression from hostile forces,” Woodyard says. “We wanted to assure the American people that their armed forces were ready to protect and defend.”
—Christine Yackel

Keeping the NYPD Going

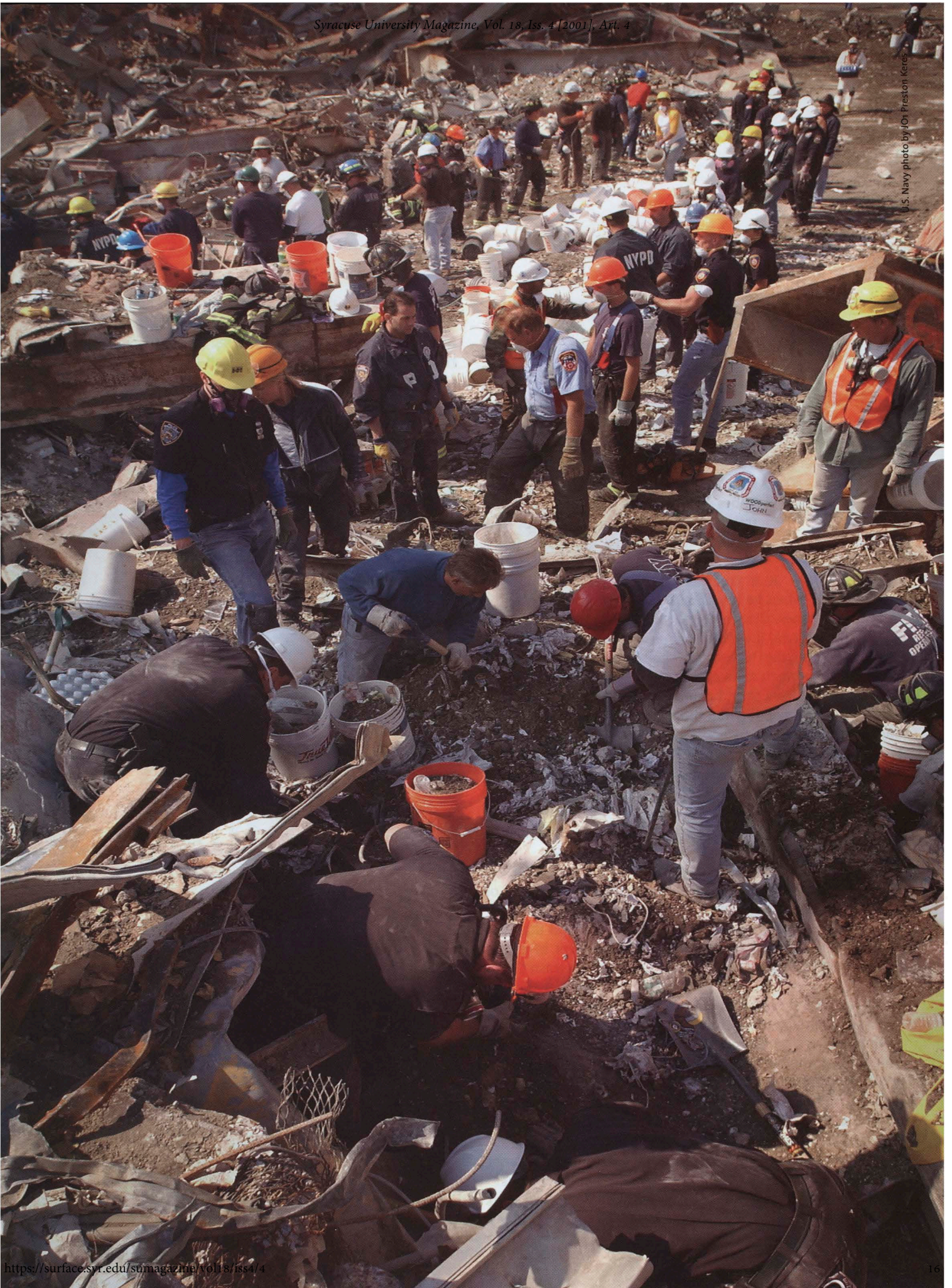


FELIX LAM G’89 DIDN’T HAVE TIME TO stop and reflect about the terror and destruction that struck Manhattan on September 11. Instead, the deputy commissioner of management and budget for the New York City Police Department shifted into high gear with the 600 civilians and police officers under his command. Building maintenance workers delivered and set up light poles and generators at the disaster site. Plumbers fashioned portable eye-wash stations built out of fire hydrants. Carpenters constructed ramps enabling large fire trucks and extraction equipment to move amid the rubble. Electricians rerouted power lines to support emergency lighting and generators.

“It was quite an operation,” says Lam, who earned a master’s degree in public administration from the Maxwell School. “Every day I’d visit them and try to keep their morale high and make sure they knew their boss was in this with them. The first couple days I don’t think anyone slept. We were up around the clock here at headquarters and down at the scene. After that, I slept in my office for the first week. We were working about 100 hours a week. It was non-stop.”

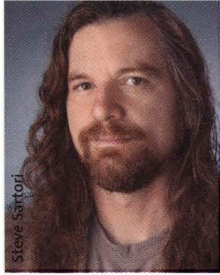
Lam’s office was responsible for obtaining and delivering thousands of breathing masks and biohazard protective suits. After fulfilling these and other unexpected supply requests, Lam struggled to put together a revised budget and assess what resources the department might need in the future. “No one really knows what’s going to happen next,” he says.

Lam estimates that nearly one-third of the department’s total budget, or approximately \$1 billion, will be spent on the disaster, including overtime costs and replacing or repairing equipment. Lam, however, tries to be optimistic. “We’re getting a lot of equipment donated, especially vehicles, because we lost a lot of them at the scene,” he says. “We’ve got a large amount of money coming in from people donating to our widows and orphans fund. All those things are helping us get through this.”
—Margaret Costello



U.S. Navy photo by JOY Preston Keres

Inspired by Childhood Memories to Help



WHEN CASE CENTER RESEARCH ASSOCIATE Polar Humenn '80, G'84 was a small boy, he looked forward to the weekends when he tagged along with his father, who was the chief electrical engineer during the construction of the World Trade Center towers. "I remember standing in the pit, staring at the Hudson Tubes [the original name of the PATH train]," says Humenn, a native New

Yorker. "I grew up watching the towers go up. It was like a giant Erector set."

Humenn was at a computer conference in Toronto on September 11 when he heard that the towers had been hit by hijacked airplanes. Conference participants made their way to a television set in the hotel bar and watched in disbelief. "They told me the towers had collapsed," Humenn says. "There was so much smoke that I thought they were just hidden. I didn't believe they'd come down."

After finally accepting that they were gone, he grew restless and longed to return to his hometown and help his fellow New Yorkers. "I couldn't sit there and watch it over and over," he says. On Thursday he left the conference, hopped into his truck, and headed for New York City. He swung by Syracuse just long enough to pick up clothes and e-mail some friends, making sure they had safely escaped the disaster. By Thursday night he was in New York and ready to get to work.

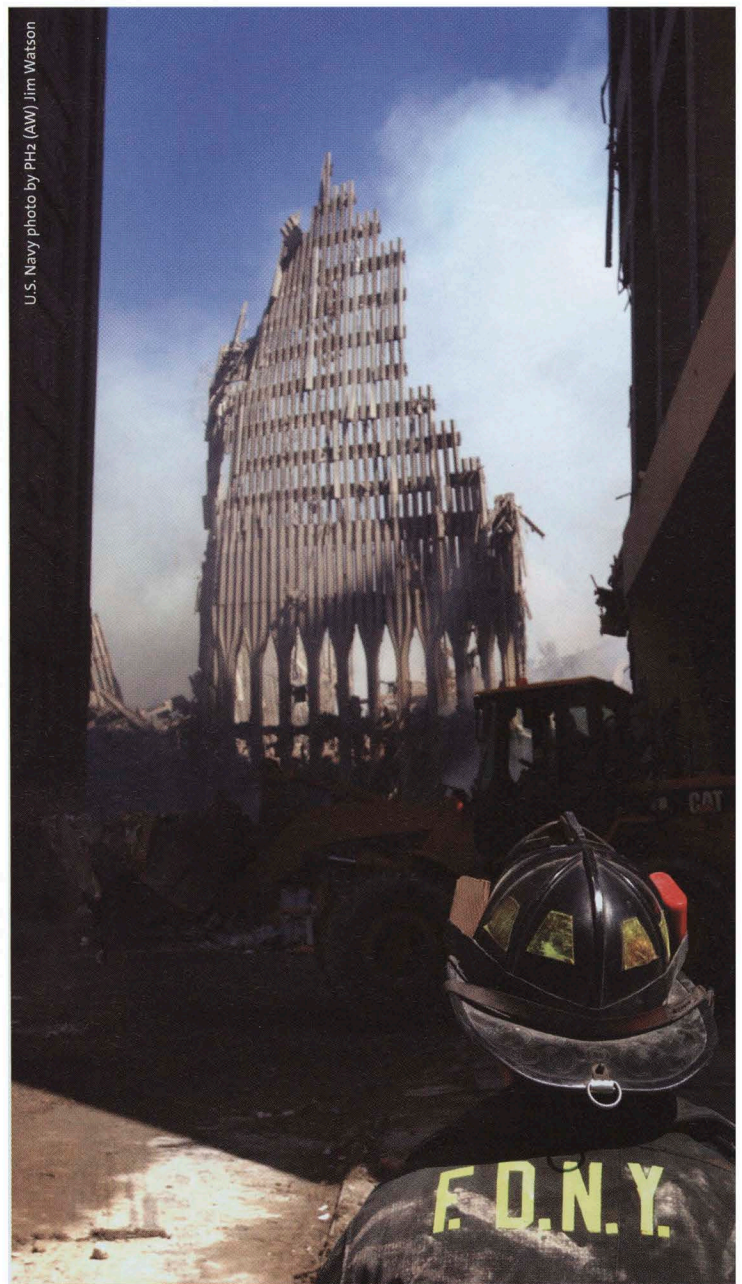
For four days, Humenn volunteered in a warehouse near Pier 40, several blocks from the collapsed buildings. He was part of a supply chain that delivered tools, boots, water, and other goods to the rescue workers at the site. He ate food that was prepared and donated by volunteers, and he slept in empty buses stored in another warehouse. "Oddly, there wasn't a lot of talk," he says. Like Humenn, many volunteers at the site couldn't find the right words to express themselves; instead, they spoke through their actions.

Humenn says he shared the sentiments of his father, Dick Humenn, who wrote in an e-mail to his son on September 12: "With the death of the World Trade Center yesterday morning, I am overwhelmed with the sense that a part of me also died when the towers and all the people trapped within slipped into oblivion. I cannot yet comprehend that the towers are gone, forever erased from the New York skyline, nor can I even speak about it with anyone, as the words will not come."

Volunteering in New York helped Polar Humenn deal with his emotions, he says. But the permanence of his family's

loss—although not as devastating as that of families who lost loved ones—has yet to sink in. "The World Trade Center was my father's life's work, and a big part of my childhood," Humenn says. "I can't believe it's all gone."

—Margaret Costello



U.S. Navy photo by PHz (AW) Jim Watson

Off-Campus Centers Respond to Disaster

THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE STREAMED down Connecticut Avenue in Washington, D.C., a block from SU's Greenberg House, as the federal government and most downtown offices closed at midday on September 11. By late afternoon the neighborhood was unusually quiet; the sound of an occasional helicopter or F-16 fighter making passes overhead replaced the usual bustle of cars, buses, delivery vehicles, and pedestrians. Smoke was still pouring from the Pentagon four miles away across the Potomac River in northern Virginia.

In the evening, students in the undergraduate international relations Washington semester class gathered at Greenberg House to share their thoughts on the day's cataclysmic events. All had been dismissed from their internships early. Faculty and staff met with students to ensure they were safe and had contacted their families. For the rest of the week, both undergraduate and graduate classes explored the context and possible consequences of the attacks.

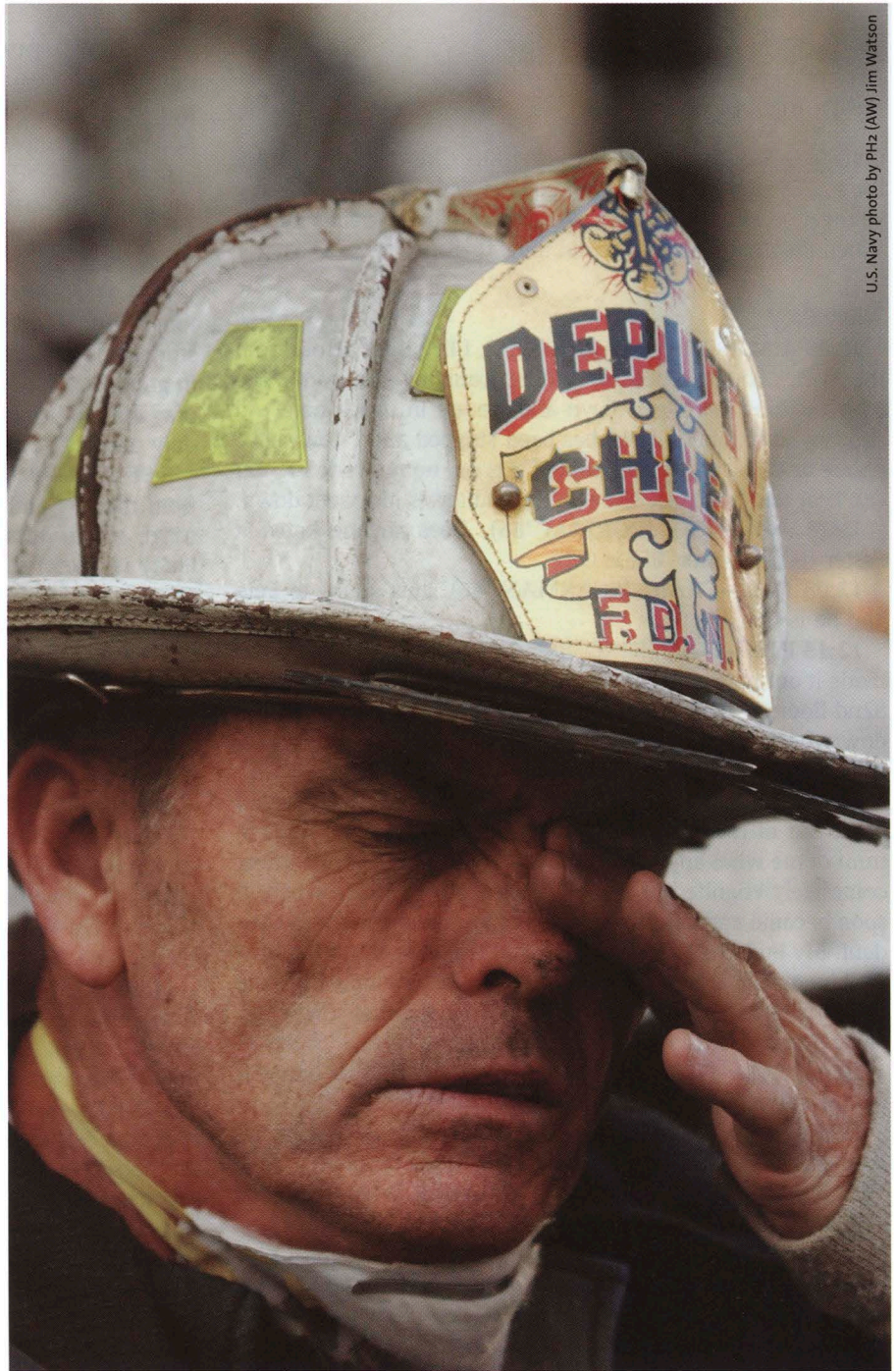
The meeting of the SU Alumni Club of Washington scheduled for September 11 was held the following week and focused on attempts to help the victims. The club voted to make an immediate contribution to Red Cross relief efforts and to make a more substantial contribution later to assist the SU community.

On October 9, the Rev. Thomas V. Wolfe, dean of Hendricks Chapel, led a memorial gathering at Greenberg House and offered spiritual support to alumni, family, and friends of SU, including prayers for the four SU alumni killed during the Pentagon attack.

A few weeks earlier, Wolfe provided words of comfort to about 30 New York City area alumni who gathered at Lubin House for a period of fellowship. "We have quite a few younger alumni in New York—who are single or don't have

family nearby—who needed an outlet to talk," says Lil O'Rourke, associate vice president for alumni relations. "The gathering was very well received. There were some classmates who reconnected with each other and some who met for the first time."

—Dug Gillies '68, director of Greenberg House, and Margaret Costello



U.S. Navy photo by PHz (AW) Jim Watson

E-mail Exchange Brings Friends Together

By Doug Allen

ONE OF MY SU FRATERNITY BROTHERS CREATED AN E-MAIL list so 200 of us could keep in contact with each other. In my younger years, I lived with these guys and made friends for life. When the attack started, so did the e-mails.

Tuesday

10:39 A.M.—ROB (BRAUNER '86). I live right across from the WTC...you can see everything from my backyard. The \$%# building just went down and we are in shock here! All subway and tunnel service has been stopped and I don't have phone or cell service...only cable TV is on, no network TV. You can hear jets fly across. Now the second tower just went down.

11:28 A.M.—RAY (BORELLI '86). Does anyone know if Fester (Peter Nester '85) is OK?

12:08 P.M.—CRAIG (SHERMAN '86). Just spoke to Pete and he is fine.

12:13 P.M.—MAX (KING '86). Just heard from Roz. Fester made it out and is on his way home. Roz's brother was on the 82nd floor of Tower II and they haven't heard from him. I was down there at Court and saw the whole thing...total chaos, an unbelievable sight.

12:30 P.M.—NICK (BLAIKIE '87). Guys, Blaikie here. I came out of the subway this morning at 9 and saw right in front of me what appeared to be the top 50 floors of one tower completely engulfed in flames. Walked to my office where it soon became apparent that this was more than a random accident. My building was evacuated and we were all told to start walking north. Subways were closed. About one mile from the towers I turned around and actually saw the first tower collapse on itself. It is scary and surreal.

12:43 P.M.—FRED (FELDMAN '87). Nick, I'm home if you or anyone else needs a place to stay.

2:08 P.M.—BILL (PEARCE '84). Guys, I thank God for all your safety. I will pray for the safety of Roz's brother.

2:17 P.M.—MIKE E (EPSTEIN '87). Nick, where are you? I've been trying to get ahold of you all morning. Linda is trying to get ahold of you. She is trying to get on a train, if not, I will pick her up in Queens or Brooklyn. Get her and get out!

2:23 P.M.—SCOTT (DANN '86). Has every metro N.Y. brother been accounted for? Off the top of my head, Ralph (Della Rocca '85), Hans (Hornbostel '83), Evan (Yellin '84), and Mitch (Hara '86) come to mind. I am sure there are more. I spoke to Marcus and he should be checking in soon.

2:37 P.M.—EVAN. Evan and Hans are OK, but my apartment is probably destroyed as I live downtown about 4 blocks from the WTC. Cops won't let me near it. Someone should investigate the whereabouts of Mitch as I think he works at Merrill Lynch at or near the WTC. I'm trying to get his number at home to check on him. Ralph works in midtown and should be OK.

3:07 P.M.—MIKE E. Evan, if you need anything let me know.

3:26 P.M.—EVAN. Thanks. I'm OK. At Hans's house with my girlfriend. We have everything we need and lots of money. But I left a message at Mitch's house. Got his voice mail. I hope he was traveling today for his sake.

4:08 P.M.—MIKE E. Seems like we are all accounted for except Mitch...has anyone heard from him? I just heard that all the bridges are closed, including the Tap, Throggs, and Whitestone. Good luck to all.

5:04 P.M.—MIKE B (BARTOL '87). I'm glad you got in touch with Marcus. I feel pretty helpless watching all the news stories and my first thought was of all my brothers right there in ground zero having to live through this hell. All I can do is pray for your safety. I checked in here to hear that Mitch is the only one not accounted for. I'll be saying my prayers tonight.

5:58 P.M.—ROB. Right now the hospital across the street from me has ambulances coming every 5 minutes...there is triage set up outside the emergency room. It's bizarre since today is one of the most beautiful days in NYC...but all you can see out my back window is a giant cloud of smoke.

10:28 P.M.—RAY. I spoke to Roz about an hour ago. She has yet to hear from her brother...as you guys already mentioned. Pete is home and fine. Without a doubt, the most \$%#-up scariest day of my life.

Wednesday

10:32 A.M.—SCOTT. I just got off the phone with Phil (Nevins '86). He will do some Merrill research. He says the company completely moved out of the towers and doesn't think Mitch would have been there. I also left a message on Bubala's (Al Harris '86) voice mail because he grew up with Mitch. Let's keep trying.

11:04 A.M.—SCOTT. I just got off the phone with Mrs. Hara. Mitch is fine. He lives across from the WTC on Read Street. He was late getting into work because he was setting up a new computer.

2:11 P.M.—MITCH. Scott, thanks I'm OK. I appreciate your concern. Please extend my prayers and well wishes to those brothers and their friends or families who might have been impacted by the disaster. The first plane hit just as I was getting ready to leave my apartment—just five or six blocks from the trade center. I then watched the entire tragedy from my windows and roof deck, which both face the trade center. I hauled butt out of my apartment after the first tower collapsed and caught everything else from the street below.

Thirty hours later, the Sigma Phi Epsilon brothers of New York Alpha are finally all accounted for. Unfortunately, thousands more people are not, including one brother-in-law.

Doug Allen '85 of Lincoln, Rhode Island, is the owner of Clark Mini Fastener and writes the weekly column "On Life" for The Pawtucket Times, where this column originally appeared on September 15. It is reprinted here with permission of The Times, whose publisher is Paul Palange '77.

