

September 11 Attacks

The September 11 Attacks, various called “9/11,” “September 11th,” and “The Attacks on the World Trade Center,” refer to a series of coordinated suicide attacks against prominent U.S. buildings that occurred on September 11, 2001. On that day, nineteen al-Qaeda operatives hijacked four commercial airliners: American Airlines Flight 11 (Boston to Los Angeles), American Airlines Flight 77 (Washington, D.C. to Los Angeles), United Airlines Flight 175 (Boston to Los Angeles), and United Airlines Flight 93 (Newark to San Francisco). At 8:46 A.M., flight 11 crashed into the North Tower of the World Trade Center; seventeen minutes later, flight 175 crashed into the complex’s South Tower. Approximately one-half hour later, flight 77 crashed into the Pentagon, and at 10:03 A.M., flight 93 crashed in a field outside Shanksville, Pennsylvania; though no one is sure of flight 93’s intended target, most experts believe that the al-Qaeda team intended to crash the plane into either the White House or the Capitol Building.

Due to the stress impact from the planes, and the subsequent explosions and fires, both of the 110-floor World Trade Center Buildings (WTO 1 & 2) collapsed; this was the only example in history of the total progressive collapse of a steel-framed structure. Adjoining buildings, including World Trade Center Buildings 3 through 7, were heavily damaged or destroyed due to the attack. The Pentagon building was also heavily damaged. Officially, the number of casualties of the September 11 attacks is 2,977, though many claim that the number should be higher to include the thousands of people who have been sickened or died from what they claim are diseases related to the inhaling the toxic gases and dust emitted from the attack sites following the attacks. The September 11 attacks are typically identified as the beginning of the United States’ “War on Terror.”

