

If wounds could heal

Text and photos by Christoph Otto

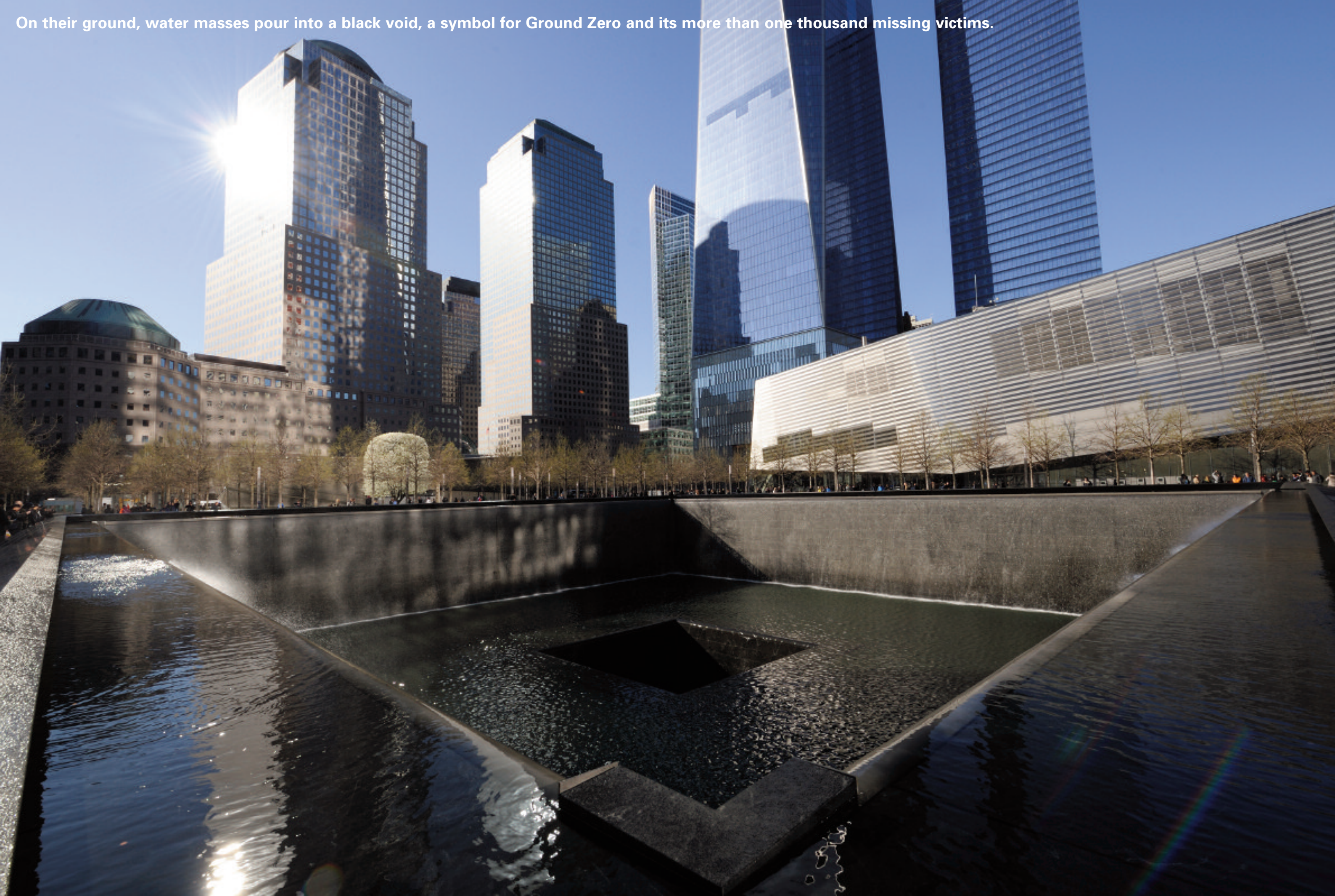
The terror attacks on the World Trade Center in New York took away that which was most important for thousands of people: their family members, friends and their confidence. Over 3000 people died due to the attacks and thousands more from the consequences. The famous towers disappeared forever. After the 11th of September 2001 nothing was as it had been before. Today the place is an expression of grief and of a new beginning, with the new buildings now a tourist magnet. We met people in New York whose life took an abrupt turn on the 11th of September. This story tells of how the day changed their lives and how they have come to terms with this.



Where the foundations of the Twin Towers once stood is now the 9/11 memorial, with its two gigantic black water basins. Their edges are lined by numbered steel plates with the names of all the victims of the attacks engraved on them.



On their ground, water masses pour into a black void, a symbol for Ground Zero and its more than one thousand missing victims.





A female visitor is looking at the photos showing the victims of the attacks. The photo gallery belongs to the 9/11 Memorial built upon the ashes of Ground Zero. Beforehand firemen and volunteers sought for remainders of the 2983 victims for months.

This is one of the last getaway stairs, which enabled the retreat from the World Trade Center for many people on September 11th, 2001. Now its remainders are one of the some 10 000 exhibits in the Memorial Museum.





The 9/11 Museum in the middle of the World Trade Center areal winding itself around the former foundations of the destroyed twin-towers is an absolute visitor magnet.



The 9/11 museum displays a reserve helmet, found in the crushed fire service car, which belonged to Captain Patrick John Brown, who was killed a few days before his 49th birthday.



Photos, letters and keepsakes of those who lost their life during the terrorist attacks are lying on the altar of the St. Pauls Chapel. This house of God in the area of Ground Zero remained intact. Here the firemen and volunteers spent the nights when searching for body parts for three quarters of a year after the attacks.



"Jonathan's helmet was found one or two weeks after we found Jonathan. The helmet is the symbol of every fireman, it's his signature piece that's been blackened and bent by many years of fighting fires. 343 firefighters were lost at the site but only 15 to 16 full helmets were found."

"This coat tells the story of what these men and thousands of other people went through on September 11". It is viewed right down the back, ripped right off of him. Some guys from Rescue 2 were there when the coat was found and they gave it to me."

Lee Lelpi, around 1995, father of Jonathan Lelpi. Helmet and uniform coat belonging to Jonathan Lelpi. Photo: David Pitt

The Tribute Center is a registered charity organisation for the families of those who died. Fireman Lee Lelpi is one of its founders. His son Jonathan's helmet and uniform are in the exhibition in the centre's cellar. Jonathan was killed during the rescue operation.



Together with his colleagues the fireman Dave Steinhauser of the 124th Fire Department saved the lives of hundreds of people. However, the time after the attacks was hard for him to bear: "We went to funerals every day."



A poster showing the photos of the 343 fire fighters who lost their life on September 11th 2001, hangs in office of the 10th fire department.



Leokadia Glogowski an urban planner survived the attacks as by a wonder. When the plane crashed into the tower six floors above her, she hurried down 86 floors into safety. Then the building collapsed behind her.



On the 9/11 Memorial Day the runners are on their feet in remembrance of those friends and family members who lost their during the attacks.



“United by hope”: bracelets to help people take heart.



Policeman Eloy Suarez is running in the “Memorial Run Walk”. His stars and stripes flag carries the names of all those who died in the attacks. Eloy knew five of them personally. They were his friends.





Emily McAleesejergins belongs to the West Point Band of the US-Army performing on Memorial Day. She says: "I want to serve my country. We are all in this together. It is the freedom we enjoy. And music makes us feel better. It brings us a smile and good memories to work through. We are thankful how far we have come with the healing."



Claire Alvarez, a young visitor to the Ground-Zero Museum, looks at toys which were found in the rubble of the Twin Towers.



The new One World Trade Center is the most expensive and secure building worldwide. Steel constructions and bulletproof glass protect it from further terrorist attacks by aircraft.



Police officer Curving belongs to one of the numerous surveilling the new World Trade Center area around the clock. The fear of another terror attack is immense.

For a long time, the area measuring 6,5 hectares was called Ground Zero, a freezing point of death, a zone of nothing. Yet after 15 years, the quarter has re-emerged. With its 541 meters height, the new tower is the highest building in the western world.





The entrance to the new subway station at Ground-Zero looks like the fossilized bones of a dinosaur on the outside as well. It is the work of the Spanish star architect Santiago Calatrava. The building costs of almost 4 billion Dollars, the same amount as those of the One World Trade Center itself, make it the most expensive station in the world.



The new underground station is strongly suggestive of the fossilized skeleton of a type of dinosaur called Oculus. It is designed by the Spanish top architect Santiago Calatrava. The building costs of almost 4 billion Dollars, the same amount as those of the One World Trade Center itself, make it the most expensive station in the world.



The underground entrances to the new One World Trade Center have been kept filigree too, here seen from the new subway station.



Hardly any light falls from the narrow windows which have been reduced to slits on security grounds: A peak into one of the entrance halls at the new One World Trade Center.



For rent in the most expensive building in the world: A conference room on the 63rd floor of the One World Trade Center.



Peter Manetta
Maintenance Engineer,
Spire Crane
Local 15 IUOE

In the foyer, the visitors are greeted by the Voices of America. Construction workers involved in the building talk of the "One World Trade Center" as an adventure. the present builders on the World Trade Center site are proud to be making their contribution to a new beginning. They belong to the ten thousands of workers in rebuilding the tower.



Seventy lifts bring the visitors and people working here from the entrance halls onto all the floors in western world's highest building.



The fastest lifts in the western hemisphere take us to the 102nd floor, to the new viewing platform called the One World Observatory. Then the curtain opens to reveal one of the most spectacular views from the tallest building of the occident.



Barkeeper Mathew Matteo is mixing a cocktail. His workplace is the Bar One in the 102nd floor of the new tower. His statement: "I can't imagine a better place to work than here above the clouds touching the sky."



GREEN-WOOD
CEMETERY

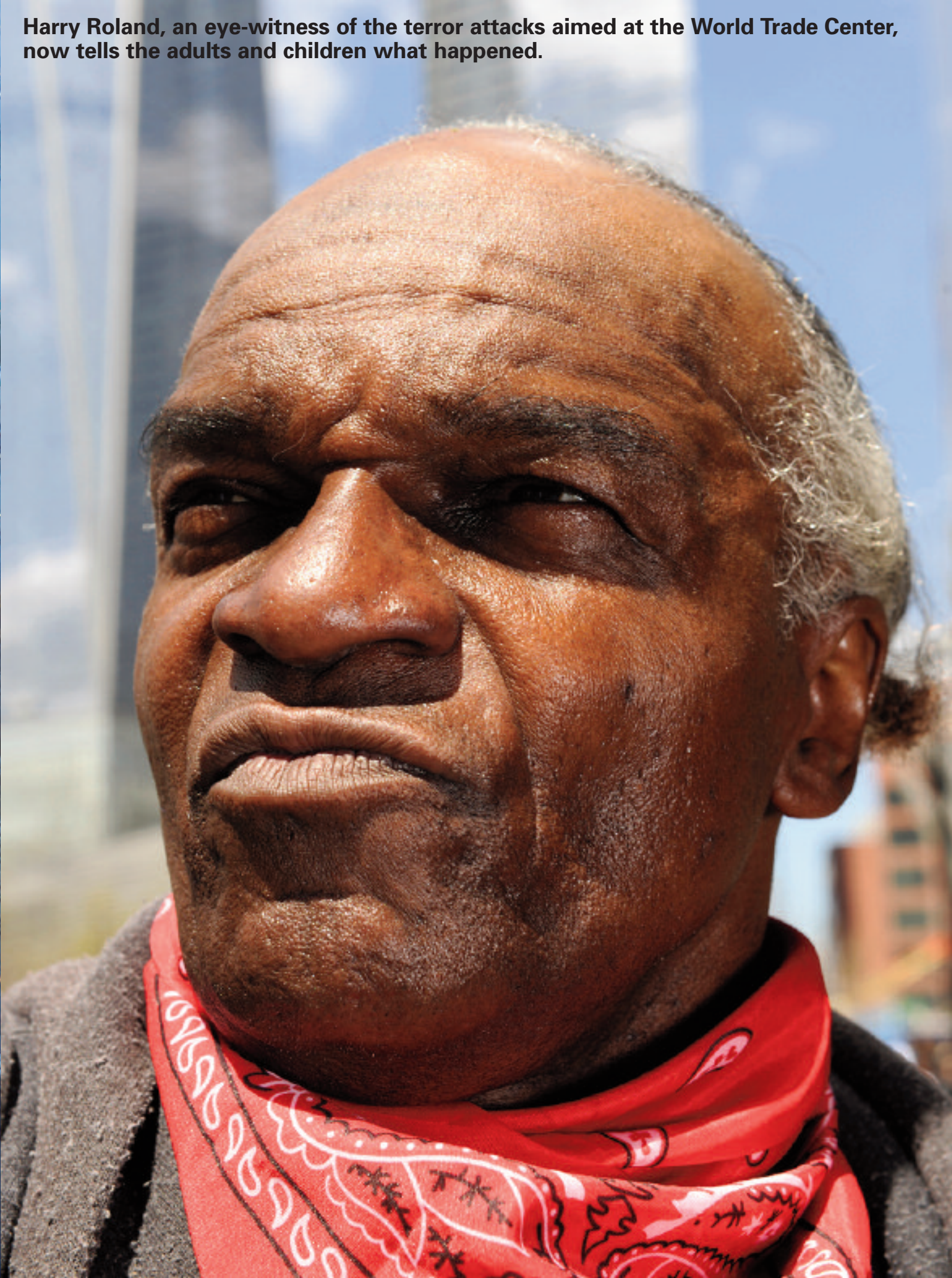
The new viewing platform on the 102nd floor, the One World Observatory, is a magnet for tourists. The Buzz is one of the highlights amongst the many multi-media shows. Those behind it say: "With the new tower we are looking forward. We are back. This is the rebirth of New York. Our slogan is 'see forever'."



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From the observation platform of the new One World Trade Center one's view goes from the Underground station built by Calatrava to one of the two water basins called 'the foot prints of the twin towers'. In the background the skyline of Lower Manhattan.



Harry Roland, an eye-witness of the terror attacks aimed at the World Trade Center, now tells the adults and children what happened.



The American artist Douwe Blumberg created a bronze sculpture ordered by a group of Wall Street bankers. The "American answer" is documented on a sign at the fence: "We will never forget".



WE WENT TO
OUR JOBS
FATHERS & SONS

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This too is part of a visit to the museum: Souvenir coffee mugs in memory of the attacks.

EXTRACT

PORTFOLIO

If wounds could heal

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