Which things about 9/11 fascinate me?

It is a weird thing, to say I’m fascinated by something that started as a terrorist attack, but the old saying must be right afterall. There’s something good in something bad - and even though it nearly brings tears to my eyes, it’ll always be one of my favourite stories to read about.

When the 9/11 attacks happened, there were, of course, search and rescue operations launched immediately, to find and help those who had already survived or who had the chances for doing so. We all know about the medics, firefighters and police departments, but by far, my heroes are in my heart always the search and guide dogs. I’d like to talk about one of the most famous ones; Roselle.

Guide dogs are trained to deal with a lot. Low blood sugar, fainting, avoiding obstacles on the pavement, comforting their owners - however, Roselle and her owner Michael Hingson found themselves on the 78th floor of the World Trade Center’s Tower One, just about 18 floors below where the plane crashed. There are many audios from the calls made during this time, most of which are full of tears and fears and panicked goodbyes - and one can’t be surprised. However, as M. Hingson later recalled, his guide dog stayed absolutely calm even in such an unusual and unpredictable situation and led him and about 30 other trapped employees down all the 78 floors in just about an hour, stopping allegedly just once - to greet the firefighters making their way up the tower to save more lives.

It is definitely impossible to imagine how it feels, to walk down the stairs of a building that is on the verge of collapsing, relying only on the leash of your dog, wondering if you’ll ever get away from that hell. What’s even more heart-striking, by the time they made it down to the ground floor, the second tower had already been hit as well and began to collapse. Even then, Roselle guided Michael to a nearby subway station, to hide them from the clouds of smoke and debris that quickly filled the air. After Tower One collapsed to the ground as well, Roselle guided Michael to a friend’s apartment, and, most importantly, to safety. M. Hingson later said that once they made it home, Roselle started playing with Hingson’s other dog as if nothing had happened.

It is primarily a story of trust for me, a story about a relationship that’s unreplicable. For anyone wanting to hear more about their astonishing story I highly suggest listening to episode 20 of the This is Love podcast, where Michael recalls the day Roselle saved his life. And, to add more, M. Hingson also wrote a book in Roselle’s memory; Thunder Dog: The True Story of a Blind Man, His Guide Dog, and the Triumph of Trust.

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