

[Received October 03, 2001]

The following constitutes the narrative account of JOCM(SW) David L. Lovato, USN, who was present in the new wedge of the Pentagon in 4B 463 from about 0645 until directly following the impact of the airliner.

I am the Senior Enlisted Advisor to the Navy Chief of Information. Onboard that morning in the front office were the CI, DCI, EA, Aide, SEA, Flag Writer and SEA's assistant. There had been a general call to watch the TV's as the WTC disaster unfolded in real time. My office adjacent to the DCI and CI's offices was typical of the new wedge project- we had been in the spaces about two or three months I guess. As my assistant JO2 Jennifer Kute and I discussed the plane hit on the WTC, we watched the second plane pile in and began to discuss the 'accidents' as an attack. Part of our speculation turned to an attack on DC and she disagreed with my assessment that the Pentagon was next, DC being a 'target rich environment', she speculated that the White House was a more symbolic building (!!). As we adjourned our morning meeting, and JO2 returned to her front office desk next to RADM Pietropaoli's office, there was an extremely loud rumbling crash and the building literally shook sideways- while at the same instant my window (which was made with the blast resistant material) was immediately clouded by a billowing yellow-beige cloud of smoke and flying small debris. I stood up from my chair which had been pushed sideways and yelled out to JO2 Kute "That's it! They've hit us!" The space immediately began to fill with light gray misty smoke that smelled characteristically of burned plastic, while the alarms sounded instantly as well. Our front office staff (after just a second or two of confusion) began to gather to evacuate the spaces immediately. RADM Pietropaoli went on a tour of the spaces to call for immediate evacuation, and I followed him doing the same as the last person out of the CHINFO offices. We saw the fire doors closing in 4C and at 4-B as we left. The Admiral was surrounded by his Deputy, EA, Aide, me and a couple of officer personnel from CHINFO OI-2 Media Operations and escorted from Corridor 4B at the escalators, where we first saw other service members with head injuries and the smoke was noticeable but not oppressive, down the A-ring stairs to 2-A and then out of the building in a large crowd to South Parking. Our group split up as we left the building and I waited close to the lane 15 parking looking for other CHINFO personnel. In the end, we accounted for all of our people while CHINFO relocated his operation within two hours of the incident to offices in the Navy Annex.

VR/JOCM(SW) Dave Lovato