

11 Sep 2001: I had just returned yesterday from the trip to Orlando Florida, taking the afternoon route through Northern Virginia, wheeling around the CIA building to get a good bird's eye view, then down the Potomac River, peering over the Pentagon roof again, to National Airport. Mom saw the photos of Dad and Jane and family in Florida, and got me a couple of photos to send back to him. I came that morning into the Navy Annex a bit before 7, and started wading through my e-mails that had accumulated in my absence, creating new e-mails to alert bosses on topics of interest, and flagging the Navy Times for articles of interest, and getting in some exercise on the stairs.

Just after 9 am, my mother called me and said someone said that two planes had hit the World Trade Center in New York. I hit the Internet on my computer, but all I could get was the report of one plane strike. I therefore went downstairs with my purse to the fitness center in the basement of Navy Annex, since I knew the TVs there were tuned to CNN. There I saw the video of the second plane hitting, over and over from various angles, as the other TV had actually been retuned by someone to a BBC news feed. Two officers were muttering things about the Persian Gulf. About 9:20 or so, Bush came on the air, surrounded by Florida schoolchildren that he had gone to visit, to proclaim that the US would find out who did this. Stock market futures plunged, and then it was announced that the stock exchanges would not open that morning. Instead of the usual opening at 9:30, there was background commentary on what the attack would mean for the stock market.

Shortly after 9:30, I had gotten "newsed out" and headed back up Wing 6 to the main corridor of the basement to return to work. As I was passing the entrance to the loading dock, there was a tremendous thud as if a ton of equipment had been dropped on the floor above. I walked into the main corridor, and when I had gotten to the entrance of the snack shop there, one security guard came flying out of the security basement room and shouted to another guard, "The Pentagon's been hit!"

The adrenaline hit, as I had been in a real office fire before that had parted people from belongings for days (the 1985 fire in the Bureau of Public Debt). I flew up the cafeteria stairs ahead of the guards (who acted stunned for about 15 to 30 seconds, then finally were on my heels) to the first floor and ran down Wing 4 to 1417A (the Naval Audit Service office at Arlington Annex). I hit the lock on the doors and shouted "GET OUT NOW!" At that moment, the alarm finally went off. I hurried over to my cubicle, scooped up the rest of my stuff, did not bother to take the time to turn off the computer, and headed out the door and down to the end of Wing 4. For once, there were actually many other people in the hall and coming down the back stairs to get out, treading on each others' feet. But it still did not feel real, until we were waiting to swipe cards at the Columbia Pike pedestrian gate (until the guards told us to go ahead) and I looked back and saw the smoke rising from beyond the edge of Wing 8 (it and the trees blocked a direct view of the crash site), blowing in the direction of Crystal City, smearing the sunshine.

I thought the Navy Annex might be on the perpetrator's list, so I immediately crossed the street and headed as far away up Columbia Pike as I could. Perhaps three or four other people were walking too, but most people were treating this as if it was a standard fire and staying put around the Annex. When I got about two blocks past the Sheraton, I realized I had my pocket TV in my purse from the weekend even though the batteries were out. I turned it on, and it faintly came in, so I had to hold it to my ear as I walked. The commentators were saying that several planes had been hijacked, and they thought there were at least three or four more out there. I walked faster and farther, stopping not up the hill, but continuing all the way to the Safeway. At the Safeway, a few people were standing at the corner next to the street. Overhead, a sound made me look up, and I saw a military plane- a fighter jet?- swooping by very fast. I thought that people would be swooping down on the stores for batteries for their gadgets, and I wanted to be first. I looked up the batteries there, but they were expensive. I then cut across the parking lot to the Giant. As I did so, there was a small thump, which sounded like a very heavy truck. This may have been what it was, or it may have been the partial collapse in the Pentagon.

I obtained my batteries. I put them in the TV and found that part of the World Trade Center had collapsed, and thousands of people were thought to be in it. I thought of my mother (working at Fort Myer) and tried to call

her at the payphones next to Giant, but when I found a payphone that would take my coins the phone did not answer. I figured she was evacuated too. Then, I called my boss at his house (his wife was sick, so he was off). He offered to come and pick me up, but I had heard a report on the TV that Columbia Pike was now closed at Glebe Road, so I told him to not bother. Meanwhile, many people had discovered the phones and were queued up to use them, so I had to wait again. TT from the Annex got off the phone (I later discovered he lost someone in the World Trade Center). I tried calling my mother again, but still no luck.

I moved into the shade of a nearby office building and turned on the TV again. It reported that there had been a car bomb at the State Department and that people there and at the Justice Department had been evacuated, and that President Bush had left Florida for an undisclosed location. They noted that there was a rumor a plane had crashed in Pennsylvania, but thought others were still in the air. Then, the commentators' voices rose in volume again as a tower of the World Trade Center collapsed. It was a bit later that they clarified this was the second of two towers to fall.

I kept seeing cars go towards the Navy Annex, despite the roadblock, and some coming up the street, so I thought "why not rescue the car"? I headed back towards the Annex, past the roadblock that had been set up at the ramp to 395, and kept walking past the Sheraton. Almost there, so close, I got turned back by this officious dude who would not let me go into the lot to get my car. I then tried along with others to walk up the closed 395 ramp to home, but the state police would not let us pass. Back down on Columbia Pike, no one was being let under the underpass. I caught up with some of my coworkers as we drifted back towards the Giant, stopping at a bus shelter so some could rest. I turned on the TV again- no fresh news, except for the federal buildings in Washington all being evacuated, confirmation that a hijacked plane crashed in Pennsylvania, all airliners being either held in Canada or landing at the nearest airport. I munched some of my lunch, but then people decided to continue, so I went with them.

As they neared the Giant, they started to talk about where to eat lunch. I told my co-workers that I was going to try to walk home. I walked on up to Walter Reed and then cut down it to Glebe Road. I saw my first Metrobuses on Glebe, but I don't think they were running that route. The TV (which I turned on sporadically) said some Metrorail stations were closed. Coming up Glebe was a steady stream of refugees from Crystal City, civilians and military. I said to one Air Force group that if they were trying to get to the Pentagon via Columbia Pike, they couldn't. The leader replied they were headed on to Ballston. Down at the I-395 underpass, I and others dodged traffic from the I-395 southbound ramp, walked under, then had to wait while the police weren't looking to dodge across the I-395 dual ramp while there was a break in traffic. The police had sealed off the underpass so that cars could not use it, but people could. I then turned at the first intersection and cut through the Avalon development, then up Adams to Army-Navy Drive. In the opposite direction, from Glebe Road and extending as far back as the eye could see, were cars of drivers all fixated on the idea that they would be able to get to I-395 (presumably southbound) sometime that afternoon, stuck in traffic. It had been a very hot walk. Around 23rd St., some people had gotten water bottles and were also handing out cups of water to passersby. I took a cup and put it in me. Now I faced the toughest part, getting up 20th Street with my stuff to the house. Slowly, I made it up the half-block (about a 60 foot climb), managing to find my keys at the door and making my way into a COOL house. I shed my stuff, got more water, and tried calling my mother again. I happened to reach her at the dental clinic at 1:15; earlier, she had been pressed into service helping to deal with some of the walking wounded who had gone to Fort Myer. I told her the way to come home, since the car was trapped and Joyce Street (the short pedestrian way home) was blocked. She was not sure if she could get off post, but she said she would try. I next called my father and left a message (as he was undergoing cancer treatment), and then turned on the news to see what shoe would fall next. Bush had already given a speech at some airbase in Louisiana and disappeared again. Newscasters said that the GW and Kennedy aircraft carrier groups had put out to sea to protect the coast, and airplanes would not fly again until noon. They speculated where the plane that crashed in PA was bound; was it to the White House? Was it headed to the Pentagon (as there had been two crashes at WTC)? Was it headed for Camp David (even though the President was not there)? Or the Capitol?

About 4 pm, my mother crawled in the door, sat on the bottom step of the staircase, and finished off the last of a water bottle. She said that by the time she was trying to get off Fort Myer, the gates were all blocked. Finally, she and a couple of reporters trapped on Fort Myer cajoled the guard to let them through into Henderson Hall, where they then were able to exit. We then made many more phone calls, to my sister, to my aunt, etc. to let them know we were safe and sound.

The news reports then started to speculate that Osama bin Ladin was behind the attacks, but did not state what the basis for this belief was. I remembered Oklahoma City and how sure we were in those first few days afterwards that it was Saddam Hussein's people who did it. The stock exchanges said they would be closed Wednesday (I thought to quell panic selling). The newscasts then cut back over to views (unsure if live at first or taped) of another building in the World Trade Center collapsing, the "Shearson Lehman" one (WTC 7). After much speculation about "where is Bush?" on the news networks, it was announced that Bush had left Offutt AFB in Nebraska and was en route back to the White House. Rumors of a revenge strike surfaced, but were denied. The networks then showed a Pentagon briefing, where SECDEF urged the people to show up for work tomorrow if their offices were not destroyed, saying the Pentagon would be back in business. In contrast, the mayor of New York had been shown urging people to stay home tomorrow. I looked at the Univision, BBC and German coverage to see if they had any other news, but they all focused (although with some differing footage) on the WTC and Pentagon hits. The US news then began to feature a tipline for people to call the FBI if they knew anything about this, if something else was going on, etc. They also reran views of the Congress returning to the Capitol and standing on the steps singing "God Bless America". Bush finally came on the air about 8:30 and, besides invoking religion, said the US would not distinguish between those who had done this and those who sheltered them. He noted the government would be open for business as usual tomorrow; I wondered why?

12 Sep 2001: The USS Comfort in Baltimore was shown loading up their people, sucking them out of Bethesda Naval Hospital again no doubt, to go off to New York to try to help out. The government announced a liberal leave policy in effect for non-essential employees. I decided to use up some of my leave, since the airports were supposed to open at noon (making us targets once again) and I also did not want to try walking all that way back to work in the dark. I wanted to try to retrieve my car, and to go try going via Joyce Street first and see if it was open. First, I walked along Arlington Ridge Road to the overlook over Army-Navy Drive, eyeing all the passing vans suspiciously. At the overlook, one could still see smoke rising from the Pentagon; so much for the claims that the fire was out. I took the stairs to the street and walked down Army-Navy to Joyce. They were letting cars coming the other way out, but not allowing them to go in under the underpass. Someone showed her pass at the far sidewalk and went ahead. I showed my pass too and walked in, then cut through inside the underpass to the other side as I saw all the camera trucks from the media parked in the Quarters K parking lot. I thought that if it had been a private gas station, the owner would be rolling in dough from renting out truck parking space. There were about 19 TV transmission trucks from far and near, from Richmond and Hagerstown and the DC stations and some stations that I did not know, both in the Quarters K lot and the grass around it and in the bottom of lot 6. Microphones had been set up near the station, no doubt the ones that the local TV shows had been broadcasting from, lying in wait to snare unwary passers-by. I cut up the hill into lots 6,5,4 and looked back, but the best view of the Pentagon was from the end of lot 3. The left end of the gash was straight cut through, with collapsed decks angling down from the right-hand side. The firemen were using crane trucks and ladders to get themselves onto the roof at the ends of corridors 4 and 5, and the water was being sprayed on the building, but it seemed that the fire was winning. I got my car, no worse for wear, out of the lot, went to a grocery store and got a newspaper, and then headed home. The wind had been blowing smoke from the Pentagon down into Crystal City, but now it had wrapped around and was coming up through Crystal City onto Arlington Ridge Road, smelling of paper and fuel and things more awful, not the relatively sweet sanitized smell from the Arlington cemetery vents. I entered the house and told my mother to shut the windows.

The TV, on again, showed smoke rising from the Pentagon, but only Channel 5 provided relatively consistent pictures of the rooftop to show where the smoke and fire was happening and the firemen fighting it. It had now

become clear that the plane hit in the newly renovated Wedge 1, where all the insides had been taken out and you could see construction lights in parts of it as recently as this past spring. I wondered how many people had moved back in, or if they had been waiting until the start of the fiscal year to do so; if the latter, then it would be far less than if the plane had hit elsewhere, and so perhaps the casualty figures being officially suggested (and the far higher numbers being suggested on the nets) were exaggerated. However, I wondered how many construction workers had been killed, and how many of them had been illegal Hispanics. About midday, they evacuated the Pentagon; it was unclear if it was because of the fire or because of another threat received. In the early afternoon, it was announced that the fire at the Pentagon had been put out. Meanwhile, in New York, they found a handful of survivors early in the day, but rumors of even more good news wound up being debunked. Flights were further postponed until sometime on Thursday at least, and the stock exchanges would reopen perhaps Friday, or Monday if not. We were too worn out by all the TV news to even consider going to the Arlington Ridge association meeting that evening.

13 Sep 2001: We decided to go back to work. From the Arlington Ridge crossover, we fought our way into the Fort-Myer-bound traffic. The exit to Columbia Pike east was blocked, so several of us exited down the other ramp and then made illegal left turns, being let in by others, into traffic. I eventually inched my way over to the right lane and was able to drop my mother. The police were using a McDonalds semitrailer to block the right lane just short of the pedestrian crossover, so all the traffic then had to squeeze left. Finally, I got into the lot, and showed my ID, but had to pull over and hunt for the parking pass as it had fallen down. Eventually, I did find a spot in lot 5, trudged up the hill, and walked past the big mobile command center that the Virginia State Police had put in lot 1 (banning all the parking in there) and found I shouldn't have, as there was police tape at the far end. I then found we had to put our things through the X-ray machine, walk through the metal detector, and show two ID in order to break into the building. I was wondering why the extra security? The mystery may have been solved when I passed the front lobby; posted were temporary room numbers for many of the Pentagon folk who now were taking refuge in here. Or perhaps instead these were measures in response to the higher THREATCON level. The rest of the day was spent attempting to do the normal routine, the standard Wednesday monitoring that now was being done Thursday, but with glances from time to time at the news to see "now what?", especially after the planes (except at Reagan National and the tiny airports within 25 miles of DC) were allowed to start flying again, making me nervous. There was much confusion about whether people could take excused absence if they had been told (especially at the Navy Yard) not to report for work Wednesday; eventually, those people were allowed to do so. A bombshell hit late Thursday; the Navy published a list of missing from the Pentagon, and LT Lamana and CAPT Panches were on it. Apparently, the Navy command center had moved from the old spot (no wonder the guards were not there any more) to a new spot. I was annoyed; wasn't it our job, as Naval Audit Service, to give the Navy grief but not too much grief? The rescuers were still digging at the WTC, and Guiliani was still being interviewed. They were not finding any new people alive (despite rumors to the contrary). The New York markets said they would shut down through the weekend, although they would try trading some bonds in Chicago tomorrow. At the Pentagon, the area enclosed by fencing had sprung up a tent city, and they were interviewing rescue workers, affected workers, the people feeding the troops, and so on. My mother complained about them searching her bags at the Henderson Hall gate and at the footgate to Fort Myer, and in reverse in the afternoon. The FBI said they were getting numerous tips on their lines. Bush appeared once again on TV, telling people that terrorists had declared war on America, so he was going to lead a war on terrorism, and wanted other countries to join in. The golf tours cancelled tournaments this weekend. Some golfers did not want to go play Ryder Cup.

14 Sep 2001: The day was gray and drizzly, and the post office at the Annex was still closed (no doubt because of the security concerns). We saw the lineup again to go out the Washington Blvd ramp, and tried Joyce Street. The road was blocked, so we had to go by way of Glebe, Walter Reed and Columbia Pike, our Tuesday hike in reverse, to get to Henderson Hall. Once there, I had to show my ID twice in order to get to the point where my mother could be dropped off, and then fight my way back into line. At least I made it into the end of lot 4. The Navy had set up a SPRINT team for counseling/grief management in a series of rooms almost next to us on the 4th wing, with many phones and people available, plus a room full of refreshments and literature plus private rooms. More rumors abounded, that Arabs had been pulled off planes yesterday and that was why the NY

airports had been shut down for a time. Many were speculating that Osama Bin Ladin was behind all this, although the government did not jump to that conclusion (having been burned from OKC). Others were claiming that passengers on the plane that crashed in PA had rushed the hijackers once they had learnt from calls where other planes had crashed. I worked some more on the workpapers, even though I really did not want to. Shortly before noon, I decided to go to the ceremony that BMDO was having in the parking lot outside wing 8, picking up a ribbon being handed out. There was a big flag draped from the roof, no doubt held up by the monofilament wire that some guys had been looking for that morning. The Air Force Band (not in demand as none of their people had died at the Pentagon) played as the colors were paraded, and played as people sang verses of America the Beautiful and other stuff, including a medley of Navy and Marine Corps songs (not bad from Air Force guys). We could not see the gash from where we stood, but at least there was no smoke (it had started burning again for a moment last night). Security was present. The BMDO Director, LTGEN Kadish, got up and made a speech, as did the Navy Chief of Chaplains (I think) and representatives of Christian, Jewish and Moslem faiths. As the drizzle faded, umbrellas came down, and we could see more. Then, we were invited closer to hear the rest of the speeches, and I could see less again as people crowded in. The Pentagon also held an official observance. Meanwhile, unbeknown to most of us, down below along the Arlington cemetery railing and across from the cemetery, at the foot of the hill leading up to wing 8, others had been coming by and creating makeshift memorials to the fallen at the Pentagon. Later that day, Bush proclaimed a National Emergency and authorized call-ups of reservists, using the authority of a partial mobilization to do so. DoD suspended the application of anti-mad-cow rules, to allow those who had been in Britain and Europe for lengths of time to continue donating blood. \$40 billion was being furnished in emergency aid, some to go to the WTC cleanup, some to go to the military. That evening, it was claimed that bonds had traded normally for a brief while in Chicago, and the markets were set to resume Monday. All the talking heads were encouraging people to stay in the markets.

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