

I was in the Pentagon on September 11, 2001 in my office which was 4D447, on the 4th deck, 4th corridor, D Ring. When the plane hit, I felt the impact and having just seen the World Trade Center attack on the television, I realized there had been an explosion of some kind and immediately thought it had been a bomb or something like that. Then I could smell jet fuel. I checked all the desks in our office to ensure everyone was out. I was the last to leave and when I entered the hallway, it was filled with smoke. I crawled down the hallway to the center (A) ring and went down the stair case where everyone was exiting to the center courtyard. When I got to the ground level, several people were bringing out a man who had been burned. We helped him to the grassy area where medical personnel came to his aid. Then one of those who had helped him out said there were others inside and asked for help getting those injured people out as well. Two of my co-workers and I, along with about six other people went back in the Pentagon. We ended up in an alleyway between two of the building rings (between C and B rings) between the 4th and 5th corridors. There had been an explosion and a big piece of the wall had been blown out. The building was on fire on the ground floor and on each of the other floors up to the roof. The windows were all black from the smoke and flames inside and several of them were bulging out from the frames. The man who lead us back to that area said there were 20-25 people inside that area. It was on fire and too hot to go inside so we ran for fire extinguishers. A couple of people tried to go inside but the fire kept working its way around to their side and they were in danger of being trapped inside so they came back out. I made about 10 trips from various adjacent corridors to bring extinguishers to this area. I encountered emergency equipment closets in several areas that I could not open to retrieve extinguishers. It appeared that the last time the doors were painted, they had been left shut and the paint had sealed them shut. I tried to work the doors open and succeeded with some but not with others. We could not find any fire hoses or risers anywhere to provide a continuous water supply for firefighting. During one of the trips into the alleyway, a Deputy Sheriff notified us that they had a report of another plane inbound on the Pentagon and told us all we should exit the building immediately. We decided to keep working to try to help the people who were reportedly trapped inside. There was a Pentagon maintenance man with us who told us which overhangs were reinforced and where we could go if we needed deep, reinforced shelter. I later learned that this area where we were working was the inner-most part of the damaged area resulting from the airplane fuselage penetrating that part of the building. In between the alleyway were piles of burning debris as well as flooding. We also noticed body parts in some of the piles of debris probably from the explosion that occurred inside that ring of the building.

Captain Loren V. Heckelman, Supply Corps, U. S. Navy  
Head, Readiness and Logistics Analysis Section  
OPNAV N801E