

**Naval Historical Center  
Oral Interview Summary Form**

**Interviewers:**

CAPT Gary Hall  
CAPT Michael McDaniel

**Interviewer's Organization:**

Naval Historical Center  
Naval Historical Center

**Interviewee:**

RADM Phillip Balisle

**Current Address:**

N 76 Director Surface Warfare  
Pentagon

**Date of Interview:**

28 JUN 02

**Place of Interview:**

Pentagon

**Number of Cassettes:**

One

**Security Classification:**

Unclassified

**Name of Project:** Pentagon Terrorist Attack Incident

**Subject Terms/Key Words:** Pentagon; Terrorist Attack; 11 September 2001; Reconstitution; Emergency Preparedness; Navy Command Center; Pentagon Rescue

**Abstract of Interview:**

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A native of ██████, Okla., Rear Admiral Balisle joined the Naval Reserve as a Seaman Recruit in January 1969 while a student at Oklahoma State University. After graduation, he attended Officer Candidate School in Newport, R.I., where he was commissioned as an Ensign on 20 November 1970.

Rear Adm. Balisle's first duty station was *USS Harwood* (DD 861), where he served as First Lieutenant and Gunnery Officer. Subsequent sea duty assignments include Communications and Electronics Warfare Officer, COMDESRON FOUR; Operations Officer, *USS Brooke* (FFG 1); First Lieutenant, *USS Denver* (LPD 9); Communications Officer, *USS John F. Kennedy* (CV 67); Executive Officer, *USS King* (DDG 41); Commanding Officer *USS Kidd* (DDG 993) (3 Battle "E" Awards); Commanding Officer, *USS Anzio* (CG 68) (3 Battle "E" Awards) and Commander, Cruiser-Destroyer Group THREE and Commander, *USS Abraham Lincoln* Battle Group.

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Charge, Combat Systems Mobile Training Team, Atlantic Fleet; Assistant Chief of Staff for Combat Systems, COMNAVSURFLANT; Director, Theater Air Warfare, N865; Deputy Director, Surface Warfare, N86B; and Vice Commander, Naval Sea Systems Command.

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Rear Adm. Balisle is currently assigned as Director, Surface Warfare on the Staff of the Chief of Naval Operations. His personal awards include the Legion of Merit (three awards), Bronze Star Medal, Meritorious Service Medal (seven awards), Navy Commendation Medal (two awards), and the Navy Achievement Medal (three awards). He holds the academic degrees of Bachelor of Science in Physical Science and Master of Science in Management.

#### Topics Discussed:

On 11 Sep RADM Balisle was in his office. He had been anticipating the Navy's PRO-3 POM would be solidified that day, a result of significant activity within his staff. Some staff members were with him when someone from his outer office notified him about the first plane hitting the World Trade Center. They turned on his television and saw the second aircraft hit the World Trade Center. Up until then RADM Balisle had assumed the first plane had been a private plane. When they saw the second aircraft it was obvious it was a commercial plane. He told his staff members to take action to secure their spaces with the idea that emergent items were going to come up. He was in the office alone standing in front of his desk, facing the window with his television on when the plane hit the Pentagon. He saw and felt the explosion. The explosion came up from below looking like it was on the opposite side of the C corridor. There was a significant shock wave hitting the windows. Within seconds there was a huge amount of debris hitting the windows. Had they not been the new shockproof windows there would have been heavy damage. He thought it was a bomb because the explosion came from below. It was clear to him something had happened on the bottom decks. The alarm to evacuate started and they began to clear the spaces. Three of them stayed behind, his EA and Flag Lieutenant and himself to ensure all were out of the spaces and to close up a few classified items.

People started to exit the door to the space and discovered debris in the passageway. They came back in the office space and told them they couldn't get out that way. They were told to go down the back exit. RADM Balisle, his EA and Flag Lieutenant followed after ensuring everyone was gone. They went down the ladder way and came down on the ground level between C and B rings. As he looked over towards C ring the bottom two decks were heavily damaged. There were four large holes blown in the bottom deck. There was mangled stuff visible inside this area, fire and smoke. The second deck had windows that had blown out. Inside this area was blackened and there was smoke. The windows in the decks above the second deck were intact. This further convinced RADM Balisle that a bomb had gone off in the wing.

There was a wire fence across the alley. There were people beyond the wire fence. RADM Balisle told the people with him they needed to get the fence open to ensure there weren't

trapped people on the other side. Eventually they got the fence open either by people tearing the wire off or someone finding a key to the lock. They went into the area and RADM Balisle expected to see fire parties at the scene of what he still presumed was a bomb. He sensed they should just take initial action until help arrived. They started to see people on the second deck. A few groups of people who were in the alley got under the windows, the people above jumped and were caught.

He also had some people who started to enter the holes and penetrate the lower deck to find people. The problem became the heavy, black smoke. Some people were getting people out of the spaces. RADM Balisle sent some people to go find help and fire parties. Those people came back and reported they couldn't find fire parties. This stunned RADM Balisle, still assuming it had been a bomb. At that point there was a secondary explosion that seemed to come from the lower deck inside the C ring. This was followed by extremely heavy, black smoke. At that point another security person came by and told them they had to vacate the area, they thought someone was going to try to fly a plane into the building. He also told them the structure was unsound and it may be going to collapse. This was tough because there was no fire party there and they weren't sure if any more people were in the building. They could no longer get in the building because the smoke was so bad so RADM Balisle told his people to back away from the building. The people wouldn't leave, they kept trying to go in the building to find more people.

It became clear if they were going to make any progress they would need breathing apparatus. RADM Balisle decided, since he had already sent three runners for help who had been unsuccessful, that he would go for help himself. He and his Flag Lieutenant took off down the passageway and came out under the steps of the mall. There was no one there except two policemen. RADM Balisle asked the policeman where the fire teams were and were told they were all on the other side of the building. RADM Balisle, still not knowing it was an airplane, couldn't figure out why. The policeman used his radio to call other policeman and ask for fire teams. They were told there were no fire teams available. RADM Balisle then asked for breathing apparatus. They came back and said they didn't have anything. RADM Balisle then told the policeman he had to come with him to go back to the disaster site with his radio. When they tried to go back they couldn't go back into the building because a security door had shut and wouldn't allow them to enter back in. While they were trying to find an alternate entrance RADM Balisle's people who had been at the disaster scene came out and told him they had to leave the scene because the smoke had gotten overpowering.

At this point someone came by the Mall parking lot and said another plane was heading toward the Pentagon. RADM Balisle's car was in the Mall parking lot and he had the keys with him. Since they couldn't get back in the building and RADM Balisle wanted to start making phone calls to reconstitute, he, his Flag Lieutenant and CDR Wetherald got in his car. They drove out of the Pentagon and got to Route 66 before that road was secured. They turned on the radio and found out all roads were being secured behind them as they drove towards Falls Church. They went to RADM Balisle's house and called the N76 offices in Crystal City. He had a group of people who stayed at the scene and did rescue work. He had another group of people who had gone to the offices in Crystal City to set up an alternate command post. They had already started mustering people. They wanted to do a sight muster. They had the entire directorate mustered fairly quickly. Due to the secured roads it wasn't until that night that RADM Balisle was able to

get back to Crystal City so he was working out of his house until that time. They were up and functioning very quickly because of the people at Crystal City.

They started doing a little psychological triage right away. They have some young contractors in his command. They focused on both getting a head count and ensuring people were handling the situation psychologically.

The following day they formally relocated to Crystal City.

The positives of that day were the extraordinary heroic, unselfish activity by lots of people. People pulled together calmly and professionally.

The one negative was we don't think of damage to a building like we do of damage to a ship. On a ship we require that we have damage control, the ability to respond, having the right tools accessible are a way of life. RADM Balisle discovered a feeling of helplessness he will never forget. They had a situation that if they had a few tools they could have done so much more. As a result one change he made was to procure damage control equipment to be placed in the N76 workspaces. Included in this equipment is simple breathing apparatus.

When his office moved to Crystal City they practiced evacuation drills and created preplanned assembly points.

September 11 marked a mind shift of sorts. The Navy has always thought about our combat capability and forward deployed forces in the sense that we have supported forces that we send forward to do the fighting. We have infrastructure behind them who are the supporting forces to take care of the people we send forward. We now are almost a single force. Who is at the greatest risk in the face of the enemy? Who is the closest at being engaged in combat and needs to be the most vigilant? He feels its one team now, everyone is engaged in this together. Combat is now distributed. The war fighter is the war fighter wherever he is in this distributed force. That's a huge cultural change. It changes how we think about everything.

RADM Balisle is going to the Naval Sea Systems Command that has always been a supportive command. They supported their customer, the fleet. He thinks he is taking with him a bit of the mentality that they can't think of that organization as a supporting organization. They have to think that they are part of the operating force. They are the point of the spear, just as the ships are. That is aided by the fact that technology is allowing more things to be done by reach back.

The first thing RADM Balisle worried about after 11 Sep was the psychological trauma. It was particularly tough in two groups of people in N76. One group was the young, civilian, contractor individual and some GS people, who weren't seasoned in the business. The second group of people he worried a lot about were the folks close to the scene who went into the building to try to rescue people. They saw an adjustment period in both of those groups. He had everyone go see the expert teams the Navy made available. The best means they had to help people get better was to talk.

11 Sep has not affected how N76 does business in the large sense. It has slightly affected the N76 detail effort because they prioritize the war effort above everything else. It's changed the way the buildings reacted to N76 programs. They view N76 programs as more important now. They are back to OPS Normal. RADM Balisle is glad to be moved back to the Pentagon, that was a good psychological hurdle to overcome.

There's a clear message that we are going to put an extraordinarily high priority on homeland defense and our lives aren't going to be the same. Our personal lives are going to change as well as our professional Navy lives. We now have a new and different mission that is significant. Someone told him the Navy's job was to go forward and be forward deployed and the homeland stuff was a Coast Guard mission. RADM Balisle disagrees with that. He sees the Navy's job as the defense of the nation. If the nation requires the Navy to do things on the U.S. coast than that's what the Navy should be doing as well as those things it needs to be doing forward deployed. He sees homeland defense as an expansion of what the Navy has had to do in the past. He thinks people are still coming to grips with that. The Navy will need to interface with agencies that they haven't had much to do with before, but which will now be critically important. He thinks the day will come when the same focus will be on building an air picture over the U.S. that's integrated and clear with the same ease and quality that we do when we're forward deployed. He thinks the Navy will need to work much closer with the Coast Guard. The other piece is that force protection in the United States will be focused on more.

The biggest challenge for him at NAVSEA will be the ability to adapt to change. To change the Systems Command you have to get tremendous agreement from Congress, which has significant legislature control over that piece of the business. You have to make the civilian structure adaptable. You have to deal with BRAC closures and recognize there are rules and laws governing acquisition. The Navy also needs to make changes in their processes so that the people not forward deployed can operate as part of the operation and not just supporting the operation.

He believes as tragic 9/11 was there has been real good to come out of it. When the chips are down we're as tough as it gets. 9/11 awakened the best part of our character. He believes that will make our nation stronger in a lot of ways. It will make our Navy stronger. He thinks you see this in retention, morale and the determination of people.

Abstracted by:  
CAPT Carol O'Hagan  
3 JUL 02

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Topics Discussed:

Q. To jump ahead could you tell us about your day of September 11<sup>th</sup>.

A. September 11<sup>th</sup> we were in the office that we're sitting in now. We had come in that day anticipating that the Navy's POM or the PRO-O3 POM was going to solidify that day. So that had been the culmination of some pretty significant activity here as we had worked to get those POM loose ends tied up. A couple of my staff were in here that morning talking about those POM activities when we received a notification that an airplane had hit the World Trade Center in New York.

Q. (05:19) How'd you hear that?

A. One of the people in the outer office had received notification of it. I don't know where that came from. I don't know if it was somebody watching TV or how it had happened. They got a phone call. It was called into us and we started to turn on the TV. We'd never had this TV on before so it took us a while to get the TV going, and we got it up as we were continuing to work on the issues at hand that were pretty time critical. As the TV came on, it had only been on it seems to me a handful of minutes when the second aircraft hit the World Trade Center.

We saw that airplane hit. Until then I had thought this was probably a private plane that had hit the World Trade Center. When we saw the second one - when we turned the TV on – hit, it was obvious this was an airliner. That made things very different.

First it was the second aircraft and then also it was an airliner, so this was not somebody who just flew off course or had had a heart attack or something. You knew you had something different.

At that point I told my staff members to go out and take some action to secure things in their spaces with the idea of getting ready for maybe some emergent things that might come up other than the POM process, but strictly thinking business.

They all left. I was in the office alone and was standing here in front of my desk with some paperwork, facing the window with the TV on where I could kind of watch it at the same time, when I saw and felt the explosion.

The explosion came up from below, looking like it was on the opposite side of the C corridor you're looking at over here, and so I saw the cloud and the explosion go up. I heard the explosion and there was a significant shock wave hit the windows. Within just a handful of seconds, two or three seconds maybe even less after that, there was a huge amount of debris hit the windows. Enough so that had these not been the new shockproof windows there's no question it would have been heavy damage, because this was a lot of heavy debris hit this window, and it was kind of a stunning effect.

Well, at the moment, I wish I could tell you I was intuitive enough to have thought an airplane had hit the Pentagon having seen the World Trade Center, but I thought exactly the opposite. I thought it was a bomb. The reason I thought it was a bomb was I was looking out the window and the explosion came from below, and it was clear to me something had happened down on the bottom decks over here. Logic told me an airplane could not have gotten to that position without



me seeing it come in. I knew it hadn't. So I thought immediately of a coordinated event with the New York activities, but I thought the coordinated event was, they've flown an airplane, somebody's flown an airplane in up there and they at the same time are planting bombs.

So we immediately got the alarm to evacuate and we started to clear the spaces. Three of us stayed behind. My EA and my flag lieutenant and myself to make sure that everyone was out of the spaces. We also were trying to close up a few classified things.

People started to exit the front door to the space and discovered as they went out that there was debris in the passageway, and I guess things had fallen down from the ceiling. So they came back in the door and said, "We can't get out this way."

So at that point we immediately said, "Go out the back exit," which is a doorway that goes out of the working spaces that goes down the stairway. So everybody started vacating that way. Well, it took us a few minutes to make sure things were secure here and then we followed through the spaces and then we went out those door. By then most of the staff was already clear.

We went down the ladder way and came out on the ground level between these two decks, these two wings here. As we walked out the door I was immediately reinforced that this was a bomb, because as I looked across at the bulkhead over there, the bottom two decks were heavily damaged. There were –

Q. (10:59) In the C ring –

A. In the C-ring. There were like four large holes blown in the bottom deck. A couple of them quite large where actual structure had been blown away. There was mangled and tangled stuff that you could see visible in there. There was fire and smoke and the second deck above it, the windows had blown out and so most of the, or a group of the windows were missing and it was

again blackened and there was smoke. Then the windows in the desks above that were intact. So again it was evident to me as I looked at it, a bomb has gone off in that wing there.

So there was a wire fence across the alley here that was intact and so when I looked at it there were a few people in the distance in various places. So I just said to the four or five people that we had there, "OK, we've got to get this fence down or open or something. We've got to get in there because there's some possibility we've got people in there we're going to have to get to." So we started pulling on the fence and shaking it and everything and trying to, and actually then the fence was torn open. Now in hindsight we had a mixed story on whether that was the result of people just tearing the wire off, or whether somebody found a key to a lock. I don't know the truth, to tell you the truth, but my sense at the time had been they'd torn it down.

We went into that area and I expected that we would see fire parties converging at the location of the bomb. So my sense was what we needed to do was just take initial action and that we would be reinforced very quickly with the pros and clear the area. So the first action was we started seeing a number of people in the second deck and it was clear the heat was really hot up there, because there were, you could see in their eyes, these people were going to jump. I mean they wanted out of there no matter what. So a couple of groups of the people in the alley, we kind of assembled a couple of groups and they go under the windows and just sort of made a human net and the people would jump and they'd catch them. That worked well and they caught several people jumping out of those windows over the full period of time. All successfully, except one lady who jumped and did it in a very difficult projectory and I think probably broke a leg as a result of that. So she required some triage there. But they were getting the people out and as the people would be caught, we were getting people to escort them out of the area, because we weren't sure what we had.

We also had some people who started to enter the space, the holes in the building. The doorways and the holes had been blown open and to go in and try to penetrate the lower deck and find people. The problem became there was smoke and the smoke was pretty heavy and it was very black. So probably due to the fuel and some of that, but at the time we didn't know it was fuel. We thought it was a bomb. Well they were penetrating and getting people out, some burned pretty badly and so this process was going on and had been a few minutes and no one had shown up and I sent a couple of people, my flag lieutenant and some others and I told them, "Go find help. The fire parties may not realize the explosion's here, and guide them back."

So they took off to do that and came back after this was still ongoing, and they came back and said, "We can't find the fire department. We can't find anybody," which just stunned me, because I said, "Gosh the whole Pentagon ought to be converging right here. What's wrong?" I still had no idea it was an airplane.

Well then we had a secondary explosion, and the secondary explosion seemed to come from the lower deck, inside there somewhere, and it was followed by extremely heavy black smoke. The smoke intensified greatly.

At about that point, there had been one security guy come by earlier and I grabbed his radio, but the radio wouldn't work. We couldn't reach anybody. Another security guy came by just as, right as the secondary explosion occurred and said, "You've got to get out of here. You've got to vacate the area. We think that somebody is going to try to fly an airplane into the building," and secondly, "We think this structure is unsound and it may collapse."

Well, this was tough because there was nobody there yet as a fire party or anything. We weren't sure if the people were in there or not, but this guy was very insistent. "You've got to get these people out of here now."

Q. (17:06) Was he a DPS guy do you know?

A. He was a security guy wearing a white shirt as I recall, and I don't know anything else about him.

When that happened I told some of my folks there, because the truth of the matter was, we could not get in the building hardly anymore, the smoke was overcoming. I told them I said, "You've got to back away from the building. They're saying it's going to collapse. We've got to back back, You've got to get away and see what the situation is here."

They wouldn't leave to be honest with you. They were just going to go in there and find if there were more people, and they kept trying. At this point I'm not sure if we were doing any good, because the smoke was so horrible. You really couldn't get in the building much, but nobody was going to leave.

It became clear that if you were going to fix this thing, if we were going to make any progress, we had to get breathing apparatus. We just could not meaningfully penetrate without it. I at this point had sent like three runners for help and nobody'd shown up. So I decided at that point that I would go for help, because I thought well I'm a flag officer. I can make them come in here. So my flag lieutenant and I took off down the passageway here between the wings and we managed to weave through there, and happened to pop out at the Mall, coming out from under the steps of the Mall.

When we got out there, there was nobody there except, there was no fire parties and no fire truck or nothing except there were two policemen. I went to this policeman and I said, "Where are the fire teams? You know we've got an explosion in here. We've got people hurt and we need help."

He said, “The fire teams are all around the outside of the building.” I couldn’t figure out why, because I still didn’t know it was an airplane.

He said “I’ll call for help, “ and so he called on the radio and we heard over the radio, I heard them come back and say, “We don’t have any fire teams to send.”

I said, “Well call them and ask them can I get some breathing apparatus. I just need some kind of breathing apparatus and we’ll keep fighting the fire, or to get the people, but I need something.”

So he called and asked for that and they came back “We don’t have anything.”

So I told him, I said, “OK, well you’ve got to come with me with a radio and we’ve got to go back in there because I’ve still got people in there fighting this situation.”

We went back down to go back in and couldn’t enter the building because it turns out that’s a one-way safety door, security door. So as we had exited, it had shut and you can’t enter it from the outside. You can only access it from the inside. So we were coming back to try to find an alternate way to get into the building and go down into this same area, when my people the last one that had been there came out of the door. They said that they had had to leave the scene. The smoke had gotten totally overpowering and they said some other security people had come by and told them they just had to leave so they did. So the area had basically been vacated. At that, just prior to that, the two policeman had gone off personally to try to get help and couldn’t. – they never came back so I don’t know what happened there.

At this point there was someone came by in the parking lot that said again they think there’s an airplane en route to the Pentagon and everybody needs to clear the area. We could see the people streaming out of the Pentagon going places.

Well it so happened that in the Mall parking lot right there where I’d come out was my car. Just right there. I happened by chance to have the keys with me, which is unusual during the day, but

I did. So we couldn't get back in the building. They told us we had to get out of the lot and I wanted to get to a telephone someway, somewhere to start making calls to reconstitute. So the only, the flow away from the Pentagon was starting to really stop. So I had my flag lieutenant and a commander that worked here for me, COMMANDER WEATHERALL, that had been down with us at the scene and I grabbed, they were right with me so I grabbed them, said, "Get in the car."

We jumped in my car and drove before they secured this road right here, just drove out of the parking lot and kept going. I managed to get to 66 before they secured the road. Of course by then there were thousands of people just streaming everywhere.

I live in Falls Church right off 66, so when I got out, we were listening to the radio and it became clear you could not come back this way anywhere. They were securing all the roads. In fact they were securing them right behind us. As we were driving they were just, you could see them putting up barriers, police cars kind of –

So I went straight to my house and got on the phone and called and we have offices also in Crystal City. What had happened is that I had a group of people who had stayed here at the scene and did all the rescue work that you've heard of. I had another group of people that when they exited the building they had gone initially to the courtyard and they cleared the group out of the courtyard and they went to our offices in Crystal City. They had set up an alternate command post so to speak in Crystal City, and they had started mustering our folks. By just word of mouth and other ways, we had started to locate people and get them to check in. We wanted to do a site muster. We wanted to make sure we had everyone, sort of the ship-at-sea approach and frankly they did a phenomenal job of getting our entire directorate mustered fairly quickly considering the dispersion and everything. So we were able to get that done.

We could not get back to Crystal City, because this was all totally secured, so it took a while. It was that night before I could join up in the offices and stuff, but we were able to keep the phones going. I had, the two fellows with me, all those folks were over there. So we were able to do just about everything we had to do. The truth is we were up and functioning and able to respond to calls and do those sorts of things very quickly. I attribute that to some great headwork by a group of folks over there in Crystal City.

It worked well, the command center. We were able to report in all of our people. We were also able to start doing a little bit of psychological triage right away. Especially for the young civilians. I have contractor here. Some of them are pretty young. This was a pretty stimulating day for some people, and so we focused a little bit that day too on trying to make sure that not only do we have a headcount but that we had people who were handling this OK, in a near-term sense. So that happened.

That sort of concluded that day. We continued in that mode then we relocated over there the following day to formally set up offices, get what we could out of here, which was not much at the time. We couldn't get back in for a while, but we were able to get up and get functioning. So we worked the entire directorate out of those Crystal City offices for the next several weeks until they could refurbish and we could get back in here.

By that approach we were able to basically keep business as usual going, that hopefully people on the outside calling in wouldn't have known a whole lot of difference and it worked well.

I will say about that day, I was impressed about some very positive things and I learned something that I consider a negative. The positives were the people. Extraordinarily, heroic, unselfish activity by lots of people. Navy for sure, because I knew them, but there were Army folks down there with us and I never knew who they were and everybody just pulling together

doing what they had to do at the same, it was what we do in our profession I think, amazingly well. You could just see it was a relatively calm, professional approach to the problem. A lot of activity. A lot of things to make it exciting and a little bit of hectic. But through all that in reality it was a pretty reasonable, well-orchestrated set of activities here.

It probably went on down here for 45 minutes or more before we really had to vacate the space. Many even an hour or so. This was a long period that these folks were down there working, or at least it seems that to me. But not just at the scene. The work that was done around the scene, the way the people handled the reconstruction of our complement of people and where they were and how they were taken care of and all that was likewise I think a tribute to how this profession trains people to do things.

The one negative was we don't think about damage in a building like this like we do on a ship. On a ship, damage control, the ability to respond, having the right tools accessible and those things are a way of life. None of that's true here, and so what I discovered was a feeling of helplessness that was something I will never forget. We were down there. We had a situation that if we'd have had a few tools we could have done so much more, but we didn't have anything. So as a result of that one change we have made is we have gone out and procured damage control gear and we have it located in bags in our workspaces.

Q. (29:47) As part of N76?

A. Yeah, just to have it, and we did that, it's not exotic. It's the basic stuff, but the idea is, if you're in an emergency like this and you're going to go vacate and assemble or something and the bag is right there, grab the bag. Now you might never need it, probably won't, but if you do, boy on that day, what I wouldn't have given for a couple bags of that equipment. It would have



made a lot of difference. So that's sort of one of the things. The mindset's changed a little since then.

Let me shift gears on you for a minute.

Q. (30:36) Let me ask one question before you go there.

A. Sure.

Q. Emergency breathing apparatus, is that part of your -?

A. We do have some. We have some of the simple breathing apparatus now that you can use. It's not going to let you stay in a space 45 minutes, but you can put it over your head and you can breath for a little. And frankly we weren't trying to fight fire in this space ever. We were just trying to get people, so this wasn't a fire fighting evolution for us. It was accessibility. Get in there and do what you had to do to find people, and that's what you're really trying to do. I don't see us in the future even in a building like this as being fire fighters. Let the building burn or let the pros come in and fight the fire for the building. Our job is the evacuation of people and in the immediate triage of the area. So that's really what I think you have to be focused on, but I'll tell you what you also have to do, have to know how you're going to get out of here.

Again on the ship, in the berthing spaces, we practice how do you get out in the dark? What do you do? We're not going to be in the dark probably, but you ought to know the routes and you ought to know what to do.

When we were in Crystal City for instance and we had a bunch of people moving into those new buildings, we ran evacuation drills and we went down the stairways and showed them, where do

you assemble. Not having an assembly point was a big deal, because now how do you get people to focus? If you have some pre-articulated assembly points that can make a lot of difference.

Now the truth is we'll get lackadaisical again. This will happen, but for a while here we've paid more attention to that and I think it is one of those things that makes a lot of sense, is a policy. If your people know when they leave the building, they're not just going to go outside, but they're going to go to a particular area. Then they're going to muster and who's going to take the muster and how you're going to do that with some backup is real important, because reconstitution is a big deal. Finding out where everyone was and who's injured and who isn't became an extraordinarily important part of that day. Not having a real well defined process to do that is hard.

We were lucky in our directorate. We mustered fairly quickly, but it's still a challenge.

I do think September the 11<sup>th</sup> marked a mind shift of sorts. We have always thought about our combat capability, our forward deployed forces in the sense that we would say, "We have supported forces that we send forward to do the fighting." We have infrastructure back behind them who are the supporting forces to take care of the guys we send forward. I'm not sure that September the 11<sup>th</sup> didn't change the calculus. We now are almost a single force. Some of us may sit back here and some of us may sit up here, but whose is the greatest risk in the face of the enemy? Who's the closest to the point of the spear? Who's the closest to being engaged in combat? Who needs to be the most vigilant, the most alert? Who needs to work with the greatest urgency, the greatest sense of need and the sense of focus? I've got to be sure what I'm doing is done right and done now, because I'm in a time of some urgency.

I'm not sure that it's any different now, forward deployed than it is here. It's one team. We're all kind of engaged in this together. Combat is now a distributed thing. The war fighter is really the

war fighter wherever he is in this distributed force. So my sense is that's a huge cultural change for us. It changes how we think about everything. Going to work. What we do at work. How we think of security. How we think about our priorities during our day at work. What's going to be important and what is something we can let go 'til tomorrow. Those things change when you start to think about you're on the point. You're part of the forward deployed force.

If you're over in Desert Storm during the war, there were a lot of things that you didn't pay much attention to anymore that used to be important. A lot of that admin, a lot of those things – that went on the back burner. Why? We're out here doing the serious business. We're on the point of the spear. This is where lives can be at risk. We're not going to mess with that stuff today. We're going to focus on this other thing that's really critical.

I think that's the right attitude in Desert Storm for those people forward, but I will tell you right now, I think some of the folks back here may need the same attitude, because I'm not so sure that the people here are that much further from the front lines than those guys are. So it is a cultural shift. If you think of it in those terms, that September the 11<sup>th</sup> may have brought us.

Q. (36:45) Has that discussion permeated throughout the leadership?

A. I have not heard it talked about in those terms, but I'm going to an organization, Naval Sea Systems Command that in the classic sense has always been a supporting command. We supported our customer, the fleet. I think I'm taking with me a bit of that mentality that maybe we can't think of that organization as a supporting organization anymore. We've got to think that we are part of the operating force. We are the point of the spear just as those ships are. The way we interface with them and the way we interact with them has got to reflect that urgency. That's being aided by the fact that technology right now is giving us the ability to do many more things

by reach back, distant support. The idea that the fellow back here providing the insight and the technical guidance and maybe even the operational guidance is doing so in a reach back kind of way that he's physically not there, but he's engaged. He's also critical. His role is just as important to the success of what's happening in the whole organization as the guy that's forward. They're one, they're interconnected. They're doing things collaboratively in real time.

I think when you put it in that context, your organization needs to think a little different. They need to perform a little differently. They need to focus different, but so too do the people forward. They need to think about the folks back here in a little bit different way too. That they are fully contributing members and they're not somebody who's out of touch with what's going on.

I mean it's got to really change how we think and operate together and I think in the Systems Command world is a place that that cultural shift may happen sooner, and the technology will help us, but I think September 11<sup>th</sup> may have helped us to in that sense.

Q. (39:17) You talked a little bit about this but what changes has your organization N76 undergone since 9-11? The challenges that face you, that people have dealt with, realities of the attack.

A. I mean the first thing that I worried about after that was the psychological traumas that people can have. I mean that was a pretty tough day. It was tough on two groups of people particularly, in N76. One group was that very young civilian contractor kind of individual or even some GS people who had been working with the government, some for just a short period of time, but they weren't seasoned in our business. So to be brought that close to something like that was very traumatic. The uncertainty of "is it going to happen again?" was very traumatic. So they got very

nervous about coming to work, being in the buildings, moving back into the Pentagon. Those sorts of things were a strain for them.

The second group of people I worried a lot about were the people close to the scene down here. The folks that went into the building, saw some bodies, had to deal with people seriously injured felt great responsibility that there might have been people in there they didn't see. That kind of thing, were greatly frustrated they could not go back into the building, type thing.

We saw a little bit in both of those groups of people who had to go through an adjustment period. We used the expert teams that the Navy made available and we had everybody go see those, but it took a little time. Most of it probably to be honest with you, the best means we had to help people get better was just talk. If you just talked and listened they kind of talked it out, and basically after several days, maybe I'd say a few weeks, we seemed to be passed it, and I didn't hear anymore about it at that point. Everybody was doing OK.

We did, we had a period there we'd watch some people pretty close, but we had that adjustment. It hasn't affected how we've done business in the large sense. It has slightly at the detail level because now we are very quick to prioritize the war effort over other things. Whereas before September the 11<sup>th</sup> you might have been willing to say, "Oh, we'll take money from that to go do something else over here." Now maybe we wouldn't. So it's changed our priorities slightly to focus more on the war. It's changed the way the building's reacted to our programs, because there were things I had on September the 10<sup>th</sup> that everybody was ready to decommission and terminate and get rid of that now they view as a lot more important.

So it has changed the context of what we're dealing with in that sense. But frankly, the operation has gone on here very much like it did before as I think it has in all the other areas here. It's a tribute to our business. The resiliency, robustness of what we have in our people and our way of

doing business that the truth is we can go through something like that and just continue to make it operate. I mean that's what we're supposed to do and I think it worked here pretty well.

So we're sort of back to OPS normal. Very glad to get back in here. That was a big help and sort of, I think, a good psychological thing to just get back here.

Q. (43:50) Can you speak to, I know at one time N76 was going to take the lead on Homeland Security and then it went to kind of N51 and the whole way that Homeland Security has kind of turned into this big conglomerate of a whole bunch of organization and where's it's going. So from a leadership perspective insight –

A. Well I sure wouldn't try to tell you what I think homeland defense will ultimately be. I think there's a clear message that we are going to put an extraordinary high priority on this thing called Homeland Defense. It's going to, our lives aren't going to be the same. Our personal lives are going to change as we deal with security and things in a different way, but our professional lives in the Navy's going to change too, because we now have a mission that is new and different and it's very, very significant. It's not going to be a side bar for us. It's going to be one of the main things we do.

Someone made a statement to me the other day that that's not the Navy's job. Our job is to go forward and to forward deploy and to do the things that we do in taking advantage of our forward forces, and this homeland stuff, that's the Coast Guard or somebody.

I disagree with that very strongly. Our job is the defense of the nation and if the nation requires us to do things on our own coast then that's what the Navy ought to be doing. Now we also ought to be doing things the nation requires us to do forward. So I see Homeland Defense not as a substitute for something we were doing before but as an expansion of what we've had to do.

We're going to see some real changes there. I don't think we've seen them yet. I think people are still coming to grips with that. We're going to have to figure out how to interface with agencies that before were sidelights for us. Now they're going to be critically important. I think the day may come where the same kind of focus is going to be on building an air picture over the US that's integrated and clear and we can inter - people can go in that network and go out of that network just with the same ease and the same quality of picture that we do when we're forward deployed.

That's going to take some changes in things. I think we're going to have to work much much closer with the Coast Guard, and in fact in one of our new ship building programs which is originated really since 9-11, not totally due to 9-11, but it has come along since then, we have now initiated a very close liaison with the Coast Guard on the idea of trying to build that next generation ship so it also will serve their needs. Because we think we're going to work together more. We're going to be more integrated, and no things closer so I think it's a sign of the times to come that in the homeland security area we're going to have to do more and more that way.

That's the big picture stuff. The other thing is force protection in the continental United States is going to be naturally much more closely watched, and a thing we have to focus on much more than we did before 9-11. So it affects all those sorts of things. You just have to be a little more vigilant.

If you were stationed in Bahrain, during Desert Storm you probably were not thinking about you would be under an air attack at any particular moment. But as you walked around and you just looked at the buildings around you, you looked at the vehicles and who parked where and what they did, who was standing here or there, you had a vigilance. It wasn't real overt, but you knew what was going on around you a little bit. I think we're going to have to do that much, much

more in our day-to-day business now. You watch those things, those subtleties a little bit. So I think it's going to change that piece of it, and that's sort of part of homeland defense. So we're going to act a little different. We're going to certainly change professionally our mission a little bit. That helps.

Q. We hear you're putting on a third star here shortly, going to command NAVSEASYSTEMS Command which is technology and where it's all going. Some of the things you mentioned before. What do you see as some of the, you mentioned some of these also as well at this point, but our perspective of leadership challenges, what your taking into this in a pivotal time in history.

A. Well, the biggest challenge at NAVSEA and it applies to a lot of the things that's happening to our Navy and our country in general, is the ability to recognize and adapt to change. When you think about it in the last two or three years, not due to 9-11, but influenced heavily by 9-11 and the *Cole* and events like that our Navy has gone through significant change.

We have realigned OPNAV and the organization here that does our day-to-day business, our oversight. We have realigned the fleet very significantly. We've realigned our organizational command structure. We've created CSFC and the LITYCOMS (phonetic). We're changing how we're emphasizing the IDTC process even more. A lot of things along those lines, so big changes in the fleet.

If you change those organizations, those are the customers for NAVSEA. If the customer changes that significantly it is only natural to me that the supplier is going to have to change to adapt to the customer. The difference is, you can change this building with a policy letter. You can change the fleet with an order. To change the Systems Command you have to get



tremendous agreement from Congress, because there's significant legislative control over that piece of the business. You've got to change the civilian personnel structure, at least make it adaptable, because the workforce you're talking about is so predominantly in that group that you can't just move people and change people the way you do in the fleet. You have to deal with things like BRAC closures which have significant regulations to them. You have to recognize there are rules and laws governing how we do acquisitions; how we do certain things. When you look at all those criteria that have to be met, before you can get through the wickets to make change like that, to change the Systems Commands is a very different beast than changing the customer. That's going to be a challenge. How do we flex an organization bound in that kind of administrative control to be responsive to a customer that is much more flexible and fluid and especially in a timeframe where the customer needs to change and flex quickly? To adapt to that real environment, this is tough.

At a minimum you're in a tail chase and worse case you're lagging way behind the tail. So that's going to be a challenge is how do we work through that kind of a process to effect change to keep up with the customer. So that's a piece.

I think a second piece is to think about our business as we discussed before in a little bit different light. We're not supporting the operation. We're part of the operation in real terms. Then make the changes in the way you do processes to be able to operate in an environment where you are part of the operation. The process you use to do things may not be the same as it was in the other setting.

So there's those kinds of challenges I think. I think in a time of change to make sure the civilian workforce, the professionals who are there year after year after year, they have long histories in this business, they're gone through all kinds of different timeframes, to try to make sure they

appreciate their incredible importance at a time when the world they've been very accustomed to is going through tremendous upheaval and flex and it causes anxiety in people. It's sort of like what 9-11 did in a few seconds and minutes, but you're doing it over a period of days and weeks, but it's still a disruption to everything I know and trusted and I felt comfortable with. Well now, you start to get very nervous and apprehensive. To make sure they appreciate that, hey this is OK, it's suppose to be doing this, and at the same time they're importance doesn't change just because that environment changed. That kind of stuff I think is it.

I'll just wrap by telling you, I do believe as traumatic as 9-11 was and the personal loss that the Navy and the nation incurred on that day both in New York and here, there's been a real good come out of 9-11. We're a nation that by our nature day-to-day can be pretty soft. We really kind of want things the way we want it. We want it pretty nice. When the chips are down we're about as tough as you get, but we don't get tough until the chips are down. Before that we kind of like it nice. 9-11 probably awakened the best part of our character and I have to believe that's going to make this nation stronger in a lot of different ways. I think it's going to make our Navy stronger. I think we're going to quit worrying as much about the fluffy stuff and we're going to worry more about the real important stuff.

I think we're going to recognize even more how incredibly valuable our people are. I think we're going to have a little bit more of a no nonsense approach to business and work through the little things that bug us on the side and really stay focused on what counts and deliver.

I think you're seeing it in our retention. You're seeing it in the morale. You're seeing it in the determination of the people. There's been some good come out of that. So we shouldn't just take that as a terrible day, which it really, really was, but as life can do sometimes, there's some good stuff there too. Fortunately I think the good stuff has taken an effect.

I will tell you this I was very proud of a bunch of people in 76. They did pretty good.

Q. (56:52) They sure did. Thank you Admiral so much. It's been very beneficial for us.

A. Thank you guys. Glad you're capturing it. You're right. We're terrible at it. But I hope it helps and I hope after you get all the notes together and everything, it's one of those things not only will we not lose it, but maybe we're learn from it.

Q. (56:13) Learn from it, yes sir. Well said.

A. Well you guys did great work on *Cole*. I wasn't privileged to your specific efforts, but the lessons learned that came out of that and what has been captured and all is going to make a big difference for the Navy. I'm not surprised they called you back and so I'm real glad to see the pros doing this one. If we can help with anything else you let us know.

Q. N76 has been a great help.

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