

**Naval Historical Center
Oral Interview Summary Form**

Interviewers:

CAPT Gary Hall
CAPT Mike McDaniel
CAPT(S) Carol O'Hagan
CDR Karen Loftus
YNCS Kathleen Wright

Interviewer's Organization:

Navy Combat Documentation Det 206
Navy Combat Documentation Det 206
Navy Combat Documentation Det 206
Navy Combat Documentation Det 206
Navy Combat Documentation Det 206

Interviewee:

Pilot/SGT Kenneth S. Burchell

Current Address:

United States Park Police
Anacostia, Washington, D.C.

Date of Interview:

20 Nov 2001

Place of Interview:

U. S. Park Police Aviation Squadron,
Anacostia

Number of Cassettes:

One

Security Classification:

Unclassified

Name of Project: Pentagon Terrorist Attack Incident

Subject Terms/Key Words: Pentagon; Terrorist Attack; 11 September 2001; triage; evacuation; lessons learned; Defense Protective Service; FBI; carnage; Navy Command Center; renovation

Abstract of Interview:

1. Born and raised in ████████ MD. Firefighter during and after college. Learned of the Park Police – a small federal agency that is limited to Washington, New York and San Francisco. With them 16 and a half years. On patrol, to SWAT Team, then to the aviation section. Was a rescue technician for three years (the flight paramedic) and then was selected to become a pilot. He attended flight school through the Park Police at Fort Reuckers for one year in Alabama. Four years of in-house training and became a pilot for the Park Police.
2. Reserve and active career: he started out in the Coast Guard reserve and was called to active duty for Desert Storm. Much to the shock of his colleagues. Deployed to Ottoman, Saudi Arabia. He was a 50 cal gunner on a patrol boat. After the war went to active duty with the Park Police and stayed in the reserves. Park Police sent him to flight school, winged by an Army General. Wanted to fly in the reserves. Attempted to transfer to the Army reserves. Told he was too old; he was 34. Told he could be no older than 27 to go to flight school. Told them he had already graduated from their flight school. Again denied. Three years later after numerous appeals, someone realized how stupid this was and allowed him to go to Warrant Officer's candidate school. He was the oldest candidate there. Graduated, then stayed in the reserves for several years. His reserve unit folded, and due to time constraints he left the reserves. Still looks back on

those years; graduating from Warrant Officer candidate school was one of his greatest accomplishments

3. Park Police were formed in 1791; arguably the oldest law enforcement agency in the U.S. Formed by George Washington to protect the parks that surround the White House. Part of the U.S. Interior and the National Park Service. Not park rangers; the Park Police are a separate agency. About one third of Washington DC are federal lands. The parkways in and out of Washington; Constitution Ave; part of Independence are all Park Police jurisdiction. They are a full service police department divided into branches. The Special Forces branch includes SWAT team, the motorcycle team, special operations canines (bomb dogs), and the aviation unit. The aviation unit falls under the command of a LT. He is a non-aviator, a manager. The XO is an administrator; there are seven pilots and seven rescue technicians. They operate two Bell 412 helos and a Bell 206 L3. They operate 24 hours a day/7 days a week with one crew. Prior to September 11th there were two man crews: now there are three. Launch time is three minutes. Alert aircraft ready to go at all times. Approximately 400 medical evacuations a year. 175 search and rescue missions, usually with rivers and some work in the Shenandoahs. Standard is a heart attack on Old Ragg. 600-800 police missions a year, including jail breaks, moving the SWAT team, rooftop chases, high speed chases, snipers. Dignitary protection, usually for the President. 300-400 a year; provide over flight protection and follow the Presidential motorcade. There is a secret service agent onboard for those missions. Hoist rescues. Patients are mostly trauma; gunshots and motor vehicle accidents. One third of those involve children. Aircraft completely equipped to provide advanced life support. Rescue technicians are nationally certified paramedics. Full complement of rescue gear. All techs are trained in white water rescue. 38 million candlepower searchlight. Use FLIR (forward looking infrared) for searches; can convert it to a video downlink to beam down actual video footage from the aircraft to the command posts of various organizations. Have the LOJACK vehicle recovery system onboard to track stolen vehicles. Use seven-satellite global positioning to navigate. Use a moving map system that allows them to type in an intersection and convert it to either an aeronautical, topographical or a road map. They are on the crash rescue circuit for National Airport. They work in conjunction with the harbor boats and the divers. There are no weapons on the aircraft; each officer carries an H&K P7 M13. When fully staffed work four ten hour days with three days off.
4. Speaks of interaction with other agencies. 60 different law enforcement agencies operate in Washington D.C. City only 48 square miles. Interact with all the police agencies and the fire departments. They are constantly training with these other agencies that made September 11, 2001 easier to handle.
5. On 11 September they were preparing for the World Bank protests. On duty was SGT Marsh the rescue tech; Ron Galey the pilot in command and John Dillon was the third crewmember onboard. He was assigned to riot training in the field adjoining the hangar. Duty crew told them that a crew had hit the WTC. He went inside to see the TV. Heard the impact; it was a low thud. Saw smoke rising from the area of the Pentagon. Footmen thought it was in the area of Haynes Point. Crash horn went off from National Airport. Ron Galey took the call. Said there was an aircraft down and requested them to launch. Duty crew launched immediately. He took the second aircraft with another off duty pilot. Grabbed two DoD medics from the riot-training group. One was a medic and one a

physician's assistant. Aircraft can routinely take two patients, but the mass casualty kit allows them to stack patients and hold up to four. The mass casualty was installed quickly. Knew a plane was down but did not know it was the Pentagon yet. Thinking terrorism/attack. Duty crew was asked almost immediately to start down linking information. Various operations centers were trying to get information. They took over initial command and control of aircraft. Heard there was other aircraft inbound. Mission changing from MEDEVAC to rescue mission. Move people from building. Directed to land, access situation in terms of MEDEVACS. Thinking in terms of hundreds. As they pass over it the attacks appears unsuccessful. Looks like a fuel truck crashed into building; building still attack with a hole in it. Landed in the cloverleaf between the Annex and the Pentagon, on the west side of Highway 110.

6. Amazed at how calm the Pentagon people were. He found the triage officer to determine how many medevacs there were. He knew him; it was a part of their disaster plans. This was inside of ten minutes of the crash. He was told there were eleven to go by immediate air. The Incident Commander in a mass casualty situation assigns the triage officer. It is a fireman. Part of the Incident Command System. Some departments have it predetermined for a different shift. Told the duty aircraft to contact Maryland State. He thinks this eleven is the tip of the iceberg. At this point the FAA had locked down all flying. State pilots believed they were unable to respond. John Marsh started to call other helo operations to get more helos in. Sent their physicians assistant to the triage area – he is the most highly trained to respond so far. Goes to work with fire dept. Keep remaining medic for their aircraft. Load the first two on board – horrendous burns. No more patients ready to go. Both were conscious. Two-minute flight to the Washington Hospital Center. Brought patients in. Asked who was in charge at the hospital. Asked how many patients they could take. Important for helos because they could shuttle patients to more remote facilities. He was told they could handle as many as he could bring. Doubted that; took it to mean at least ten, so that next two loads of patients could be brought there. As they neared Memorial Bridge, heard another aircraft was inbound. Given timelines. Plane 5-10 minutes out. Told to deploy to some cover so that serviceable aircraft remain. Landed at the west end of Memorial Bridge at the circle. Hovered next to the trees to get blast protection. Sat there for a minute, then went back to the Pentagon. By this point Fairfax police and Fairfax hospital helos had arrived, and Medstar. Met with triage again; multiple layers of triage officers. Things working well, but patient had expired. Request to fly back to the White House, known as P56. Prohibited area 56. Launched again; as they launched checked Washington National airport. At 390' passed an Air Force jet coming the opposite direction at that altitude. They checked each other out. Very close. At this point he is looking at a fighter aircraft, low level, armed and next to the White House. Knew this was big; it was history. Air Force jet at one point locked on to the Park Police helo.
7. Went back to the hangar and picked up Secret Service agent. Saw flight of five UH-1's coming up from Fort Belvoir. Now there were 4-5 helos on ground at Pentagon. Only three patients were medevaced. Medstar helo took the third medevac. Duty crew had picked up the Arlington County fire chief to do command and control on the Pentagon from the air. Skies getting crowded with military aircraft. They staged back at the squadron at that point. Took an FBI team to Dulles airport. Cleared directly to land at the base of the tower; no aircraft or personnel moving. Very odd feeling.

8. For following fourteen days, flew routine, high visibility low altitude patrols of the White House, of the Vice President's home, the bridges, the rail lines, and the airport – all potential targets. Stopped a lot of Rider trucks. Worked mostly at direction of Secret Service, but supporting multiple agencies. Every agency had slightly different focus. Right after the incident, the smoke was so heavy that the tower controllers at National had to abandon the tower. They turned over flight control of the area to Eagle one, the Park Police duty crew.
9. Lessons learned: everything they have done in emergency services over the last 20 years played into this. The lesson from the Air Florida crash resulted in a larger aircraft. Individual rescues have caused them to get different pieces of equipment, such as the mass casualty kit and the radio system they use. Helo has to talk to the people on the ground that need them. This was the big call – the one you practice for. Amazed at the conduct of the people at the Pentagon. The only crowd he has even been exposed to that when told to back up two feet responded immediately. Needed to secure the landing zone. 7-8 military folks started to spread out around the aircraft. His LT asked what they were doing. They responded they were securing their landing zone. He was amazed by this level of cooperation. None of them were below the rank of major. In one case a backboard was delivered to every person there. Regardless of rank or position. Marine Corps Captain called from a hotel in Rosslyn- said he was a helo pilot and offered to fly. Navy squadron called – offered 2 C-46's and a couple of Seahawks. Calls from aviation units all across the country offering mechanics, services. This was the moment he realized this was the best people can be.
10. Homeland security has not impacted their mission dramatically. It is expanded in terms of number of missions, but not from type of missions. DoD should take credit for his going to the Army flight school. Pilot with him went to Pensacola. It was a grant through DoD to train pilots for the police force. The medics in the second aircraft were DoD medics, part of an MOU (memorandum of understanding). This was an example of a direct integration of DoD personnel and local law enforcement that has been ongoing for over a decade. It worked because the day of the incident was not the first day they had trained together.

Abstract by:
CDR Loftus
27 November 2001

**Naval Historical Center
Oral Interview Summary Form**

Interviewers:

CAPT Gary Hall
CAPT Mike McDaniel
CAPT(S) Carol O'Hagan
CDR Karen Loftus
YNCS Kathleen Wright

Interviewer's Organization:

Navy Combat Documentation Det 206
Navy Combat Documentation Det 206
Navy Combat Documentation Det 206
Navy Combat Documentation Det 206
Navy Combat Documentation Det 206

Interviewee:

Pilot/SGT Kenneth S. Burchell

Current Address:

United States Park Police
Anacostia, Washington, D.C.

Date of Interview:

20 Nov 2001

Place of Interview:

U. S. Park Police Aviation Squadron,
Anacostia, Washington DC

Number of Cassettes:

One

Security Classification:

Unclassified

Name of Project: Pentagon Terrorist Attack Incident

Subject Terms/Key Words: US Park Police, Medical evacuation, Air control, Pentagon; Terrorist Attack; 11 September 2001; triage; lessons learned; FBI; carnage

Transcript of Interview:

Interviewee Information:

Born and raised in [REDACTED], MD. He was a firefighter during and after college. He started out in the Coast Guard reserves and was called to active duty for Desert Storm. Deployed to Ottoman, Saudi Arabia. Graduated from Warrant Officer candidate school (Army). His reserve unit folded, and due to time constraints, left the reserves. Learned of the Park Police – a small federal agency that is limited to Washington, New York and San Francisco. He has been with the Park Police 16 and-a-half years. First served on patrol duty, transferred to the SWAT Team, then to the aviation section. Originally he was a rescue technician for three years (flight paramedic) and then was selected to become a pilot. He attended flight school for one year at Fort Rucker, Alabama through the Park Police. After four years of in-house training, he became a pilot for the U.S. Park Police.

The U.S. Park Police was formed in 1791, and are the oldest federal police agency. They were formed by George Washington to protect the parks around the White House and other federal buildings in DC. The Park Police come under the jurisdiction of the Department of the Interior and the National Park Service, but they are not Park Rangers. About one third of DC is federal land and come under their jurisdiction. The White House sits on park service land and Park

Service personnel maintain the grounds. Camp David is also in a federal park. It is actually a Naval station within a national park so the outside of Camp David is protected by U.S. Park Service SWAT teams.

The Park Police are a full service police department. They have patrol, detectives, identification technicians, motor, SWAT and hostage negotiators. The park police is divided into branches; criminal investigation, detectives, service, patrol, special forces. Under the special forces are the SWAT teams, motorcycles, special operations (bomb dog unit) and aviation unit.

The aviation unit has pilots and rescue technicians. Sergeant is the highest rank for the two positions. The aviation unit operates two Bell 412's and one Bell 206L3. They operate 24 hours a day, seven days a week with one crew. Prior to September 11th they operated with a crew of two persons, a pilot and a rescue technician. Since the 11th they now operate with three-person crew. With a combination of two pilots/one rescue technician or one pilot and two rescue technicians.

The launch time for the helicopter is about three minutes, if the weather is cold it takes longer because the oil has to warm up. They have a crew on duty all the time. They have about 400 medical evacuations per year, 175 search and rescue missions around the rivers and some work in the mountains. They do about 600-800 police missions per year. That can be high-speed chases, jailbreaks, and roof top searches, working with SWAT teams, and moving tactical teams.

They do about 300-400 missions a year for the President of the United States. For all Presidential motorcades they provide overhead protection. They have Secret Service radios and an agent onboard for these missions. For all arrivals and departures from Andrews AFB they provide base, route and zone security. When a visiting head of state comes to Washington they will also provide security if there is a specific or perceived threat.

The helo is equipped with advanced life support medical equipment and medications. The rescue technicians are national certified paramedics. They have a full complement of rescue equipment onboard; all the rescue technicians are trained for white water rescues. They have a 38 million-candlepower searchlight, a Forward Looking InfraRed Flare for searches and they can convert to a video down linking capability. They can down link video images in real time to command posts of various government organizations. They navigate by Global Positioning System (GPS) and also have a moving map system onboard. They have a direct phone line to National Airport in case of a plane crash. In case of a plane crash in the river they regularly train and coordinate with the harbor police.

The Park Police normally work four, ten-hour days with three days off. Since Sept 11th they have been working twelve hours on, twelve hours off with a three-day break. The first fourteen days after the 11th they were working twelve hours on, twelve hours off. Their crew rest requirements for flying is very similar as the military. They can't exceed fourteen-hour shifts, which includes six hours of flying. Since most of their flying is short trips they never get close to getting six hours flying per day.

Washington DC is a very complicated city from a law enforcement perspective. There are 60-63 law enforcement agencies in the Washington Metro area. There is the DC Metropolitan police, which have about 3,000 officers. The Capitol Hill police that work a nine city block area and have 1,500 officers. The uniformed branch of the Secret Service work the White House, the Vice Presidents mansion and embassy row. The Metro transit police; the Zoo police; Bureau of Printing and Engraving; Library of Congress; Supreme Court and the FBI all have uniformed police. This is in a city of 48 square miles. That's not counting the local county, city and state police from Virginia and Maryland. They interact and train with all the local police and fire departments. The plus for them was they are use to working with them all the time. On the 11th it was an extension of their normal routine procedures, only on a larger scale.

Topics Discussed:

TRACK ONE

Q. (20:46) Tell us about the day, 11 September 2001, just walk us through your day.

A. On 11 September, we were actually preparing for the World Bank demonstrations. The on-duty crew was Sgt Marsh, the rescue technician. Ron Galey was the pilot in command and John Dillon, who you will speak to you later, was the third crewmember onboard. I was actually assigned to riot training in the field adjoining the hangar. We were preparing – the whole city was gearing up for another World Bank riot and I was to train officers how to extinguish themselves if they got hit with a Molotov cocktail, so I was out in the middle of the field with gasoline and fire extinguishers. The duty crew came out and told us that a plane had hit the World Trade Center. So we came in briefly a couple of us, saw what had happened.

Q. (22:02) How did they get the word? Was that just by watching the news or did they get the report?

A. Actually, the information loop was that somebody's wife was watching 'The Today Show' when they got it live and called here and our guys turned on the television. And that was for World Trade. Now, keep in mind all the people that were in this riot training were assigned day-off people. They wouldn't have been working normally. So this was kind of good fortune in

that we had these extra bodies available. And I think that is a common thread throughout the response you'll find that agencies will say – like Arlington County had I think their command staff in training so when they went to their mass casualty situation, they had all these bodies ready to go – all in reserves. So good fortune kind of shown upon them.

We are in this riot training, we come over, we see the second plane hit. I go back out-----

Q. (23: 18) Did you think terrorist activity between the first and second plane? Were you thinking that?

A. After the first plane – as soon as they said hit the World Trade Center, we said – you know everybody thought – well, a plane ran into a building, they must have bad weather; there must have been a system failure. As soon as we saw the television and it was clear, blue sky, we said there was no way. It was a problem -- a hijacking or whatever. The second aircraft hit it; clearly everybody understood the gravity of it. As I walked back across the field, I heard a low thud. I wouldn't say it was an explosion. It was a thud and I turned around towards the Pentagon and you could see the smoke just starting to come up and from the airfield. We don't really have a view of the Pentagon or the airport, but that area there is nothing blocking the area between us and there. We could see the initial fire, the top of the fireball, and the smoke coming out.

Q. (24:30) Did you realize it was the Pentagon at that time?

A. No. As a matter of fact, foot patrolmen were coming on the radio yelling there has been an explosion, but it was very unclear. They were giving the location as near Haines Point. The footmen who were downtown to them it would appear to be in the area of Haines Point. I came

back, ran through the door – I’m not sure what I said – I’m sure it revolved around “Come on.” The crash horn went off from National Airport and I think Ron Galey took the call. He is also the guy that took the call for Air Florida when Air Florida crashed into the 14th Street Bridge, so again, the odd things stack up; but they said they had an aircraft down north side of the runway and requested us to launch. The duty crew ran out right away and launched.

I came back in and there was another off-duty pilot coming out of the back and grabbed him and said, “Let’s go. Let’s take the second aircraft.” Again, neither one of us was scheduled here.

We just happened to be here. I asked him to start the aircraft. Now here we had two pilots but no medics. I ran back to the riot training and got two DoD medics. We have been in agreement with USUHS (Uniformed Services University of Health Sciences) – the military medical school at Bethesda for about ten years to provide medical support to the Park Police operationally and we do a great number of exchanges.

Q. (26:30) As part of the crew or as-needed basis?

A. They provide ground support. They provide tactical medics on the ground and they have flown with us and provided physicians with us, as a MOU (Memorandum of Understanding) for over a decade. We actually conduct a course that mends military special operations medicine with police special operations. So these guys were in the field. Now these are DoD civilians. One was a medic and one was a physician’s assistant. Grabbed them, threw them onboard the aircraft along with our lieutenant and our administrative sergeant. The aircraft, which you’ll see later, can routinely take two trauma patients. But we have a mass casualty kit that allows us to put in a total of four patients by stacking them. So in the chaos of trying to get all these people suited up and organized to go, Tom Greer, who just passed through, is our maintenance

supervisor, is trying to install this mass casualty kit 'cause he realized as all of us realized, this is going to probably be a lot of people, so we want to get that kit in.

Q. (27:55) And you knew it was the Pentagon by that time?

A. Still didn't know it was the Pentagon. We knew a plane was down and we're going too quickly to know – we knew a plane was down from what the airport had told us. Where it hit we didn't know. Got everybody onboard ---

Q. (28:16) Were you thinking terrorism?

A. Absolutely. Absolutely. Well, we were thinking attack. I don't know if terrorism or a formal attack – it was the big one. That was the bottom line. In my mind, this is it. This is it. This is the big one.

Q. (28:35) Were you tying it to the World Trade Center?

A. Absolutely. The minute the explosion went off we tied it to that. And even before then, we better start gearing up. As we got airborne – and the other aircrew will give you a better description –but basically they were asked almost immediately to start downlinking information. People wanted to see what was happening. The various FBI, White House, all the various operation centers were trying to get information. Everybody was desperately starved for what was going on. So our first aircraft got overhead, started orbiting and starting downlinking the signal. They took over initial command control of aircraft. We launched almost immediately as we got air borne they said other aircraft inbound, unidentified, not answering aircraft. So almost immediately you couldn't help but think about what you had just seen at World Trade. They tell

you another aircraft is coming. So now it is moving from we're going on a medivac mission to this is a rescue mission; everybody that you get away from that building, you're probably going to save. Even if they are badly hurt or not hurt, if you can get them away from that building, don't delay transport.

So, as we got close our aircraft directed us to land and find out what the situation was in terms of how many medivacs. We're thinking in terms of hundreds. We're just envisioning that they'll be hundreds of people to be medivac'd or at least to be transported in some way.

As we pass over, it looks like the attack hasn't been all that successful. As we first came around the side of the Pentagon, it looked as though a fuel truck had crashed into the side of the building because there were huge amounts of fire, but the building appeared intact. The roof was fine. It looked like there was a hole in the side of the building. We landed in the cloverleaf, between the Pentagon and the Annex, just on the west side – I guess that's 110 (Editors Note: it is Route 27 - Washington Blvd) – landed in the cloverleaf because that's a place where vehicles weren't crossing and it looked like there was certainly enough area for us to land safely. Landed, got out with the medics and we walked and ran across 110 (Route 27) back into the debris field outside the Pentagon and I'm looking for the fire department triage officer and I was amazed how calm – and one of the feelings I came away from this was – how calm the Pentagon people were. For what was going on, they were walking and doing their things. There were people still on fire coming out of the building; people who were physically on fire. And I remember seeing people that I'd describe as clerical employees in shirtsleeves running towards him to help him. They weren't panicked; they were just doing it.

I find the triage officer and said, "How many patients to be medivac'd?" And he recognized me. Again, one of the advantages of this being hometown and us doing this is, the big disaster plan is

you meet with the triage office and he called me ‘Kenny’. So we are ready, overcoming a certain number of hurdles.

Q. (32:50) How long did it take you after the crash to get this point, where you met up with the triage officer?

A. I would probably say six or seven minutes. They were probably three minutes to get there, while we were probably five minutes to get there, and then another minute or two to land and then run across the street – inside of ten minutes. He said, “We have 11 patients to go.” And I said, “Eleven by air?” And he said, “Eleven for immediate air.” I called back to our other aircraft and said they had 11 patients.

Q. (33:33) Who is the triage officer?

A. A fire department and I don’t know.

Q. (33:39) Is it a certain person within a fire department?

A. No, it’s assigned. In a mass casualty situation the Incident Commander will hand some official a vest that says ‘Triage’ and they’ll take over as part of the Incident Command System. Somebody will be supply, somebody will be communications, water supply, whatever. And some departments have it predetermined for giving shift and they might be one. Again we have the opportunity to support all these different departments so we are used to working within this system. We know to look for the vest that has the triage label. He said ‘eleven’ I called up to the aircraft and said, “You had better contact Maryland State” meaning Maryland State Police, they

have eleven to go. And I'm thinking that's the tip of the iceberg. These are the eleven that are so critical that this guy believes they're going to die if they don't get immediate care.

We call Maryland State and by this point the FAA had locked down all flying; nobody could fly. And this was a terribly upsetting thing for the state pilots who wanted to respond, but basically they told us they were unable to respond. John Marsh, who is the left-seater, the rest technician of first aircraft, started calling other helicopter operations to try to get aircraft in. They're trying to find other helicopters, and we need to collect our wounded now. We send the physician's assistant we had over to the triage area because he's a physician's assistant – he's the highest level of medical training that's responded so far that we're aware of, so he becomes the Triage Officer and helps the fire department. We keep the remaining medic for our aircraft. We load the first two onboard, very, very seriously burned – horrendous burns. We load two and remember we have those extra two stretcher slots and we are still working under the belief that if we can get them out of here, anybody away from this building, they'll live; but they have no more patients ready to go – they're still working on the others. We decided that these people, their only chance is if we get them to trauma care.

Q. (36:21) Were they conscious?

A. Yes, but in very bad shape.

Q. (36:26) Could we ask you a little bit about that because we heard the story from other people, and we probably have a good idea who it was. Was one a black man? One of the stories we heard was that he was so badly burned that his corneas were burned. And the second one was a black female and her name was Antoinette Sherman. Is that correct?

A. I don't know.

Q. (36:47) Was she a large woman?

A. Yes.

Q. (36:53) Then that fits in with what we've heard from other people who were at the triage at the time.

A. That would make sense. The male – I couldn't identify – race or features. His burns were significant. Significant facial burns. We load them onboard. It's about a two-minute flight from the Pentagon to the Washington Hospital Center where we landed, got out, brought the patients in and obviously moving more quickly than we normally would because we knew we needed to get back there. And it was pretty chaotic. They had brought in all their resources from other parts of the hospital. So they are all jammed into the receiving area and I asked after we gave the patient report, I asked, "Who's in charge?" And the crowd kept wandering around and not being completely new to this I said, "Well, who wants to say they're 'in charge'?" One woman dutifully raises her hand and I said, "Terrific. How many patients can you take?" This was going to be important in terms for helicopters especially because we could shuffle them all the way to Baltimore if we needed to go that route. We could go to Andrews and to Bethesda Naval and more remote facilities. And she said, "We can take as many as you send us." I, of course, was skeptical, but I took that to mean at least ten. So, I figured that was good for the next couple of loads of patients. We got back in the aircraft, I broadcast that information that they could receive more patients and we started back.

As we get to Memorial Bridge, they said there is another aircraft unidentified and inbound, and they were giving time-lines. They were giving time-lines in the earlier part of the flight but we were way too busy to care. Okay, the plane's 15 minutes out. We can't go any faster than we're going, but now they were saying ten minutes out, five minutes out. One of the command aircraft said and I don't remember what the instruction was, but basically it was clear – try to deploy to some kind of cover or at least spread out so that when the second aircraft hits, they'll be some serviceable aircraft left to continue the mission. We landed at Memorial Circle on the west end of Memorial Bridge – that open traffic circle – we landed there and hovered over next to the trees to try to get some blast protection. We sat there for a minute or so and they called us for another medivac at the Pentagon so we had to take off again. We flew back to the Pentagon, landed. By this point, other helicopters had arrived. Fairfax police helicopter, Fairfax hospital helicopter, and MedStar, I think, had all arrived.

We landed. I met again with the Triage people and by this point there were multiple layers of Triage Officers and really seemed to be working very effectively. But the patient we had come back for had either – I'm guessing – expired, but whatever, didn't need a helicopter at this point. And we were getting requests now to fly back to the White House, which is perimeter area 56, P56. As we launched from the Pentagon, we decided we were going to check Washington National Airport first, just to see if there is any kind of problem going on there. And we're not really sure what we're even looking for at this point. You know, whether there is a ground assault on Washington, car bombs – we don't know, but we figure we'll look for anything out of the ordinary. We're very low level. I think it was about 390 feet and we passed an Air Force fast mover – a jet – coming in the opposite direction at our altitude. Nothing unreasonable. He was checking us out and we were checking him out, but very close. And really I think that was

the point in my mind where I'm looking at a fighter aircraft clearly armed and operational, low level, next to me, right next to the White House. And realized that this is really the big one. That this is history. So they cleared us, told us to fly back here and there were some initial concerns between the different units. You know the attack aircraft -- we're trying to figure out who is who. At one point, the aircraft controller is saying -- our call sign is 'Eagle' -- he locked onto somebody, presumably us, and the tower controller is pleading with him, "He's Eagle, he's Eagle, he's a friendly, he's a friendly". And I wasn't sure how I was going to express that any more clearly, but I was certainly trying.

Q. (42:36) The Air Force jet locked onto you?

A. Well, I'm sure he locked onto everybody 'cause he's trying to sort out who's who. They were very professional, but clearly they were trying to sort out just like we were, who's who and what's going on. And since all other civilian aircraft were grounded, we were it. There was us and the zoomies. That was it, over Washington. We came back. We check the White House area, came back here, picked up the Secret Service agent. And by that point, we saw a flight of five UH-1 -- Army UH-1's coming from Ft. Belvoir. Now there were four or five helicopters on the ground at the Pentagon. There were no more patients to be medivac'd. There were only a total of three patients air vac'd that we're aware of.

Q. (43:35) The other crew medivac'd the other person?

A. We took the first two med. We believe the MedStar helicopter took one. While we were doing that medivac, they landed, picked up the fire chief from Arlington County who needed to do command control. And think about the size of the Pentagon in terms of commanding a fire.

It's geographically so huge. Even the fire departments here who are very talented and professional, they are generally used to working with vertical numbers perhaps; but this is a building that is so big you can't see both sides of it no matter what angle you stand at. He went up in the other aircraft and literally did command and control from our aircraft. But we think MedStar took that second patient. Now as the military started coming in – and the Air Force came in with the 1st helo squadron, doing their role, which you have to talk to them about. By this point, the skies are getting pretty crowded with military aircraft and the plus' – everybody did a great job – now all the plus' for us routinely working with these people, routinely working in these areas, knowing all the landmarks, were not an advantage to some of the incoming units. So it was a good time for us to come back and stage here. There was nobody to be medivac'd and it was good to get back here and try to gear up for whatever the next attack was going to be. After that we flew one mission to take a special FBI team to Dulles Airport because by the point all the roads are clogged, there is no ability to move people to any conventional means. We flew them out there. Dulles is one of the busier airports that pilots fly into. National certainly, but Dulles also tremendously busy. We flew in and normally you will go through all these procedures – hold here and turn there and do this – they cleared us directly to land at the base of the tower and there wasn't anybody moving. And it was absolutely unbelievable time to be in the middle of this huge airport with not a single person moving on the field. It was very strange; it was ghost town-ish. We off-loaded and I remember there was a guy walking towards the aircraft on the flight line and I'm sure he had proper identification, but it was a very different time. You just weren't sure who was who. I motioned for him to stop with one hand and started to draw my weapon with the other hand. Until we got the agents off and away from the aircraft, and he clearly understood that he wasn't coming any closer, but a very strange time when you

truly didn't know. And in police work you're never sure who the bad guy is, but in this case, you really weren't sure. And you weren't sure to what level of threat; whether the guy was wrapped in explosives, and you had to be careful not to let your mind get carried away with all the potentials.

We came back and landed. That afternoon we had what our normal day-to-day work would be -- some guy shot in a robbery in the projects behind us and that got flown up to the shock trauma unit. And for the rest of that day and for the following 14 days, we flew routine, high-visibility, low-level patrols of the White House, the Vice President's residence, all the bridges, all the rail lines, all the airports, all potential targets. Very low-level, aggressive patrols, and fortunately nothing came of it. We stopped a lot of Ryder trucks the next day. Heaven help you if you were moving your office. You got stopped every couple of blocks, but again, we didn't really know what we were looking for. We had to stop everything ---

Q. (48:40) Who was coordinating that for you or giving you the direction?

We're mostly working at the direction of the Secret Service, but again, we were supporting multiple agencies. And every agency had a slightly different focus. Certainly the railway police had their issues, Capitol police -- everybody had the same basic goal, but they had slightly different angles. The other thing that I left out that's probably noteworthy is, right after the incident when Eagle One first arrived on the scene, the smoke was so heavy that the tower controllers at National had to abandon the tower and turned over flight control of the area to our first air crew -- to Eagle One. They said, "We gotta get out." and gave control of the air space to our aircraft, so they had to direct incoming aircraft. And when the smoke cleared they were able to get back in.

Q. (49:48) How long a period was that?

A. You know, I'm not sure. I think Ronnie will be able to fill you in.

Q. (50:00) Lessons learned from past incidents that came into play here and also lessons learned from this that you will incorporate.

A. I think that in a lot of ways everything that we've done in emergency services over the past 20 years played into it. You know the reason we have a larger aircraft that was capable of doing this stuff was because of the Air Florida crash that we saw the problems and got a larger aircraft and individual rescues have caused us to get different pieces of equipment; the mass casualty kit, the radio system, knowing that you have to be able to talk to the people on the ground. The helicopter that can't talk to the people on the ground that need them is just no use. It's more dangerous than useful. And all those things in a lot of ways that this was the big call, the one that you practice, the one that you do all those landings for, the ones that your crew standards are built towards those goals. This is why you have to perform to be able to perform in this limited space. This is why you have to be able to operate with multiple aircraft. All of our lives –mine personally –from being a fire fighter to going to the flight training and the Army flight training – everything helped. Being able to read enough rank so as to get the most cooperation out of the people you needed to, all those things played in.

I was amazed and I'm sure the others will tell you, I was amazed at the conduct of the people at the Pentagon. I can't say enough good things about all of the – when we got there it was the only crowd I've ever been exposed to as a police officer that when you said "Back up two feet, they did it immediately.' Usually we have to get out the stick at that point. At one point the aircraft,

we had moved it onto the roadway and I have a couple of pictures that may help to put it into perspective, but we needed to secure the landing zone. Now normally we are very aggressive in moving people away from the aircraft. And there were about seven or eight military folks that all of a sudden just started to spread around the aircraft and my lieutenant went up to one of them and said, "Get back, what are you people doing?" And the guy said, "We're securing your landing zone." And my lieutenant was so shocked and he looked and absolutely, they were doing an excellent job of securing the landing zone. I looked around and noticed that there wasn't anybody below the rank of major in this group that was surrounding the aircraft. It was very impressive. People just pitched in and did what had to be done. In some of the raw footage you can see, I guess at some point they thought they were going to be bringing out a lot of patients, and handed a backboard to every person there. They literally handed them to whoever was there. If it was a clerk, the clerk got a backboard. If it was the legal counsel for DoD, they got a backboard and they lined up, ready to go. So very impressive. I was impressed by everybody's willingness to jump in for that entire time period. We got back, I got a phone call, the guy said, "My name is Joe Smith. I'm a Marine Corps captain, I saw on television that you guys are flying 412s. I'm on leave, but I'm rated in a 412. Do you need help?" I was just impressed as hell, and I said, "Well, actually we got it covered." By this point there were no more people to be evacuated. There really wasn't much flying to be done. I took his number and said, "We certainly appreciate it." I hung up with him and he was in a hotel in Rosslyn and a navy squadron called and these are all people that we've done rescues with or something in the past, so he quietly calls and says, "I've got two C-46s and a couple of Sea Hawks if you need any help." And he told me where he was and I said, "Well, we got it under control here. But, if you need another pilot, there is a guy, Joe Smith, he's over in Rosslyn. Let me give you his number."

So I hooked those guys up. But we got calls from all across the country from aviation units saying, “What do you need? Can we send you something? Do you need mechanics? How can we help?” Just being a History Channel addict, it was the moment where you thought, Wow, this is really the good, the best that people can be. And I think it was, I really do. I was very moved by it.

Q. (55:40) We are going to be taking a look at the DoD perspective of the Homeland Security, some of what the military will be used for. What has changed or what has been a focus or additional focus or shift in what you have been doing since then that might tie into Homeland Security?

A. I think that what we do hasn't changed dramatically. It certainly increased amounts of time put into it. It has expanded in terms of the number of times we do these missions. But we are still flying security, we're still flying river patrol, we're still flying all those things we did before. I think that from a DoD standpoint, I think there are a couple of things that they should take credit for that got us to this point. And I don't know what other agencies do, but I went to flight school because the Pentagon sent me to the Army Flight School. The pilot that was with me went to Pensacola, both of us went as police officers. This was a grant through DoD to train police officers. The medics that we took that enabled us to fly the second aircraft over were DoD medics – part of an MOU. And the people, and I'm sure it's been very unpopular sometimes, the people that sponsored those programs and supported them, should be rewarded. This really works. This was a good investment, and especially the medics. There was a direct integration of DoD personnel and local law enforcement, and it's been ongoing for a decade. And it can't work if the day of the incident is the only day you trained together. It's just not

going to go as well. The fact that we knew those people and we knew each other's capabilities -- that was the big part of the plus.

Q. (57:59) Anything else you would like to say for the purpose of the historical record?

A. No, but I'll hang onto thinking about for a minute in case I come up with something.

Thank you.

TRACK 2

(00:02) Mr. McDaniel: "We are with Sgt. Ken Burchell again, and he is telling us the aspects of his of his military and reserve position".

A. Originally, I was in the Coast Guard Reserve and was called to active duty for Desert Storm much to the shock of most of my colleagues and friends. The Coast Guard actually did get called to active duty and I was deployed to Ottoman, Saudi Arabia. I was a 50-caliber gunner on a patrol boat. I came back after the war -- I didn't mean to imply I did anything important there. I was drilling in Reserve Unit Washington, which was a very small 1950's era patrol boat, which we eventually gave away. They were raider boats that were specially procured for the deployment. They're 20-foot raider boats made by Boston Whaler. They're smaller than they are now. They're 22 feet long, very small. Came back from active duty with the Park Police, stayed in the reserves. The Park Police sent me to the Army Flight School and I went through the whole deal; calling for artillery and so I was in my olive drab flight suit with my police patch on one shoulder and dutifully standing and reciting whatever I was told to recite, going through all the training. I was "winged" by an Army general and came back to fly for the Park Police. And I thought, "Well, I'd like to fly in the reserves now that I have this training." I attempted to transfer from the Coast Guard Reserve to the Army Reserve. They said, "Well, we'd love to

have you, but you can't be an aviator. I said, "Why?" And they said, "You're too old. You can't be any older than 27 in order to go to our flight school." And I said, "Here's my diploma from your flight school and here's my class standing, here's my credentials. And they said, "That's very nice, but you can't be older than 27." I said, "Why is that?" "Well, you can't be older than 27 because then you couldn't get into our flight school. That's why that rule is written." I said, "I understand, but this would be my diploma." About this point, I said, "I think they made of movie about this. Isn't it Catch something?" The joke was not well received. Three years later after literally appealing it to everybody that would possibly listen, they finally said, "This really is a no-brainer." And they allowed me to go to Warrant Officer Candidate School where I was absolutely the oldest aviation warrant office candidate ever to go through that training – folding socks and being brutalized with very young men. I graduated and went on and did several years in the reserves. Unfortunately, my reserve unit folded up and time being what it was, I really couldn't continue to drill, but I still look back on graduating from Warrant Officer Candidate School is one of the greatest, single accomplishments of my life. I really feel blessed for having had the chance to do the opportunity to prove that old guys can still do pushups if we really have to.

Mr. McDaniel: "Well, Kenny, that's a great addition to the story. Thanks."

Transcribed by:
LN1 Carol Hamilton, USNR
10 January 02