

**Naval Historical Center  
Oral Interview Transcript**

**Interviewers:**

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CAPT Rushand Tate

**Interviewer's Organization:**

Naval Historical Center  
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Office of Family Policy OSC

**Interviewee:**

Mary Margaret (Meg) Faulk

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Pentagon

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**Transcript of Interview:**

**Interviewee Information:**

Born in [REDACTED] area of Michigan; middle of three girls. Became a teacher after college; taught in private school and then the University of Detroit. Eventually went overseas and taught in Department of Defense Schools in Okinawa and Germany. Returned to US to finish Master's Degree at Wayne State University in Detroit while serving as a teaching assistant. Was nominated by the University for the President Management Intern Program (PMI); was selected in 1980. Came to Washington in this two-year program designed for people with public sector focus. Was selected to work in the newly created Navy Family Program. Became one of the original planners and developers of the Fleet Family Support Center. Worked for Navy in the capacity for about ten years. Worked for Admiral Bird who enthusiastically supported family assistance. After Persian Gulf conflict was hired by OSD to work in Office of Family Policy in Pentagon. Currently has a staff of four plus two Captains assigned during the 9/11 attack.

**Topics Discussed:**

Q. (110) So resume then back as of last summer so what would a typical day in August or very early September.

A. Well what we were doing then is looking at the social compacts issues. I don't know if you're familiar with that, but DR. CHU who's the Undersecretary of Defense felt that we needed to do something in the Department that showed the reciprocal commitment on the part of both the Department to the service members and their families and vice versa. So we were in a major push to look at everything you know, indicators that we have of those things that support or do not support that mutual pact if you will between service members and the families. In fact, we were discussing some of the meetings that were going on on the 11<sup>th</sup> during our staff meeting, but we'll get to that.

We were working on upgrading our sites database which has all this information on different installations around the world so that when people would relocate – International (\_\_\_ Inaudible) actually is the one who started that. It is, the technology that we use for that is now outdated. It's not as attractive or as meaningful as current technology could make it. So she was working on that. Spouse employment's a big issue. We continue to work on that.

Then we were in the process too, of updating our casualty instruction and procedures, because we always want to improve that part of our responsibility. So that's a daily, you know was just doing that kind of thing. Doing policy, answering a gazillion letters on funeral matters, because last summer the Parade Magazine ran an article about funeral matters and then they give our address. So all of these thousands of letters, how'd you guys miss that? (laugh)

Actually CHES (phonetic) was wonderful about, CHES is part of our staff too, our administrative assistant so he got it down to a system, because a lot of them were just standard letters. Some of them weren't. Some of them we had to do research on.

Q. (137) Always the case.

A. So that's what we were doing' what we were working on last summer.

Q. (138) I neglected to ask you one other question which is regards you mentioned, you sparked it by saying the social compacts are cradle to grave, is there any connection to the Navy or the military that sort of persuaded you to do this? Anyone in your family in the military?

A. Well, actually after I came to Washington, I had my five years teaching overseas with military children and that was very, very much a learning experience for me in terms of military families and how they move, and how they lived, and some of the challenges they had.

Prior to that I had no experience with military, but that was like an immersion and my father was working on something related to the Manhattan Project during World War II. He was exempted from going into the military so he was not in the military. I literally did – I had an uncle who served, but that was remote. So then when I transferred to the Navy from Justice, I met a Navy Commander to whom I am now married, a carrier pilot. He's now retired. Since that time my stepson is a Marine Corps pilot. He was in the Osprey squadron 'til they had to stand it down. So he's getting ready now to go back in December. Then my nephew and his wife are both Navy doctors so we're a sea service family.

Q. (152) Yes, sounds like indeed you're –

A. And they give me all kinds of unsolicited feedback. (laugh) Like when my nephew and his wife were stationed in Naples, they were trying to adopt a child from Russia, and they're going, "How come we don't..." so anyway they keep me honest. They keep me honest.

Q. (158) Fair enough. So the issues that you were dealing with then were more administrative, routine –

A. Policy issues.

Q. Policy issues.

A. Big policy issues, yeah, and we have regular board meetings for casualty and you know keeping those current and on target and so on, and updating our instructions because you know how long it takes to get instructions and directives out. Trying to keep them, yeah, CAPT TATE nodded, so yeah, the normal kinds of stuff that would go on in a policy office.

Q. (164) And if you were given a policy then would you have actually gotten involved or would your workload have increased during the time of a crisis. I'm thinking of say October 2000 with the bombing of *USS Cole*?

A. Absolutely, that was during the bombing of the *Cole* I was regularly sending updates up the chain of command to just let them know what was going on from the family support perspective. Of course having come from the Navy, I'm very connected with the folks down in Hampton Roads area and I have great respect for them. They're exceedingly good and professional at what they do. So I would get regular updates from them; get you know updates from Dover and put them in a daily briefing that went out as far as the SECDEF, I think, and because of my professional connection with the Fleet Family Support Center down there I could hear what they were doing and so on.

A similar kind of family assistance operation happened after Khubar (Khubar Towers attack), too, in 1996. It's part of our tradition if you will when we have these kinds of incidences, and

unfortunately Norfolk has had a lot of them. I mean we had the *Iowa*, which was you know they had to set up an Assistance Center for the families there. We had the, they didn't do the *Stark*, the *Stark* was done in Florida, but whenever there is a major kind of multiple or mass casualty event traditionally it's just been with one at the service.

So, but that has been part of the tradition and it's part of the tradition since the early 80s when the Family Support Centers, Family Centers started being established by all of the services.

Q. (187) So walk me through a typical morning and sort of start out the day as September 11<sup>th</sup> started for most people I think, you know.

A. A beautiful perfect day, and we started, I was having a staff meeting because we had to deal with some of the social contact issues and decide who was taking what part of it. So we started the meeting at nine o'clock and of course we didn't have TV or anything. We knew nothing about the World Trade Center. We were sitting there and all of a sudden – we were in the next wedge from where the plane came in, plane came in this way. Actually when we saw the graphs a couple of weeks later, the nose of the plane was headed right toward where we were having our staff meeting.

Anyway we're sitting there fat, dumb and happy –

Q. (190) What room was that meeting in?

A. That was in 1B700.

Q. 1B700, OK.

A. Where we used to be, and all of a sudden there was this huge thud and the building shook. I said to the staff, "That sounds like a bomb."

One of the staff said, "Oh, you know, there's so much moving going around with the new wedge and so on, probably something really heavy fell off a truck or something above us."

Somebody else said, "I think that's one of the those guys doing one of those bulldozers, probably ran into one of the walls or something."

So I kind of looked at them and I said, "Oh, I don't know." So we continue with the staff meeting. Ever on target, and then a couple of minutes later somebody came in and said we were being told to evacuate.

Well one of the things that I've learned in working with SHARON BRYSON (phonetic) over at the NTSB, is that she's in charge of family support in the aftermath of an airplane accident, and what airlines teach their personnel, whether they're ticket takers or baggage carriers, whatever, if there is an accident the first thing they do is they are required to call home. Call their loved ones and let them know they're OK.

Well oftentimes prior to that I'd be outside and look over the Pentagon and see these planes flying off and would say to myself, "You know, one of these days there's going to be an accident and I know exactly what I'm going to do if I make it, and that is call my husband."

So the first thing I said to the staff was, "Ok, we're being told to evacuate. I want each of you to call your loved ones. Let them know you're OK, and then we're out of here." So I go to my desk and my computers on and at that point I see an email from the front office that says, "We just got word the Twin Towers have been attack."

I'm going, "Weird," you know. So I'm calling my husband and at that time it's kind of chaotic. I said, "No matter what you hear, or what you see, I'm OK. I've gotta go."

So we tried to call the Army. The Army is the executive – and then we're being told, you know rumors are flying and we're told that a plane had hit us. So we called the Army who's, that's the Executive Agent for Mortuary Affairs (\_\_\_\_ Inaudible 230) Hockman and said, "Hey can we join up with you guys, you know, we've got stuff to do?" Well they were being evacuated. So we could not join up with them.

So we're grabbing telephone numbers and other things we thought we might need. There was no – nobody was panicked. It was amazing. Nobody was panicked. Staff was just trying to do things and so we couldn't join up with the Army. So we decided well let's get our stuff and by that time the staff had disbursed. I knew they were all OK. Mark Ward, and Jean Marie Ward with me – no relation. We walked out into the center courtyard and we saw all this billowing black smoke just coming out of the Pentagon.

I remember saying to them I said, "You know, we've got casualties. We've got to do something. I don't know what it is right now, but we've got to do something." So then we subsequently started walking out to North Parking. Again nobody's running out of the building. The only people running were the medical people running into the building. Out in North Parking is where they had set up the triage. So we walked passed that. Walked down by the Childcare Center and you know people are just standing around, I think dazed. I think we were kind of dazed. Saw this smoke coming up and I turned to the two of them and I said, "Well, not much we can do here. Let's go over to the Air Force Services Command," which is a couple minutes away over in Crystal City. It's in Crystal Gateway North, and their, and the folks who have responsibility for Dover among the Port Mortuary at Dover, and of course we work with them regularly on funeral matters and so on.

So we went and got my car. Fortunately it was in North Parking and we were probably one of the last cars out of North Parking, and we just drove a couple of minutes the back way, you know the back way to Crystal Gateway North. Went up there and said, and that was when we saw the TV for the first time.

We go, “Oh, my God!” and that was when the towers were starting to fall and all these hundreds of firemen and police officers and then we saw the Pentagon.

So what we did was, we established squatters rights on people who were on travel (laugh) and just sat down. Of course they welcomed us in. I think everybody’s in a state of shock and we just started calling people and I called my husband and said, “You need to call everybody and just tell them I’m OK.”

Then by virtue of calling around, I called my immediate boss the Deputy Assistant Secretary, well his, well first of all he has a principal director. I tried calling her at home. There’s no answer, because everybody’s evacuated and then the DASD for whom we work as well as the ASD. They were in Far Pacific. So that’s the chain of command. So I ended up calling –

Q. (271) I’m sorry, one interruption. Which assistant secretary and which DAS –

A. The Deputy Assistant Secretary for Military Community and Family Policy is ME MOLINO (phonetic), and then he works for the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Force Management Policy, CHARLIE ABLE, and they were doing the Far Pacific trip. OK? And then I called JANE who is MR. MOLINO’s, JANE BURK, MR. MOLINO’s principal director at home and she was probably still on the highway trying to get home, because I guess it took hours for people to get home that day. I don’t know, we were all there.



So then I called the principal Deputy to the Assistant Secretary of Defense, Mr. ABLE's principal deputy at home. Her husband was there and then he said, GAIL MC GINN that's the name of the person, she's at this number over in Rosslyn. So I called GAIL and she's giving me an update about what they know and it was during the course of talking to her I said, "Oh my God," it finally hit me what we needed to do, we needed to set up a Family Assistance Center. Then I said to her, "I can't do this without authorization. I need to get somebody to authorize us to do this."

She knew where the Undersecretary was, DR. CHU, he was over, at that point he was at the alternate Commandant's headquarters at the Navy Annex. So she got a hold of him. Then she got back with me and he said, "Do it."

So my next call was to, I knew immediately we could not have it on an installation because there was no way that people would be able to access it, if they didn't have the proper ID. Then even if they did have the proper ID, they'd have to wait these long minutes that would seem like hours trying to get in. So I knew that was out.

So I called my husband who worked for Arlington County and I said I need to get in touch with the Arlington County Manager's office. We've got to find a place to set up a Family Assistance Center, and so within minutes I was connected with JOHN MAUSSERT MOONEY, M-A-U-S-S-E-R-T, last name M-O-O-N-E-Y, because RON HARLEY, the Arlington County Manager, he was out of town. So JOHN was in charge and I said, "JOHN, this is what we need." In my mind's eye I'm thinking well maybe there's a community center or something we can have at Arlington with plenty of parking, large meeting room, small rooms for counseling. Those were what my needs were.

So he said, "Let me see what I can do." In a half-hour or so he called back and he said, well, we found a school that's going to be renovated and it's not occupied but it's only got room for about forty parking places.

All I could see in my mind was these poor grieving families sitting in these small you know school desks, and plus it wasn't enough parking. Then one of the CHARLES E. SMITH over in Crystal City offered us like twenty thousand square feet in Crystal City, but no furniture. Same thing with another owner over in Balston. Lots of parking, and lots of room but no furniture.

DR. CHU wanted this set up the next morning. So I said, "This is not going to work." I said, "Let me call you back. I've got to get a hold of the Under again and see if we can go with a hotel."

So DR. CHU, God love him, not a pause. I said, "We've got to go with a hotel."

He goes, "Whatever it takes."

So called back the Deputy Manager over at Arlington, said, "We can go with a hotel."

He's back within ten minutes and said the Manager at the hotel at the Sheraton Crystal City, PERRY AHMET – A-H-M-E-T, said to come on over. Well, what I subsequently found out was that when JOHN MAUSSERT MOONEY called PERRY. PERRY said, "Fine, send them over, but are we going to get paid for this or not?"

He goes, "I don't know."

And he said, "I don't care. Send them." And the rest is history. He's my hero. I mean he is my hero, period. Oh you know, of course he eventually got paid but it's one of those things.

So at that time COLONEL MARCUS BEAUREGARD (phonetic) who works for OSD, Air Force Colonel had stopped by the Services Command because he wanted to know what was happening. He had no idea we were there. Then he joins forces with JEAN MARIE and MARK and me and we start plotting this thing out. I mean from Norfolk I said, 'Fax me your plan from

the call.” Of course the computers were not, the email wasn’t working. I said, “Can you fax it to me, and let’s get going here.” Of course the fax I only got half of it, and my email was all screwed up and oh, God, because that was something of a crisis day.

So I sent MARK and COLONEL BEAUREGARD over to the Sheraton to start getting things and then I had already gotten permission instead of trying to lug computers here from the Pentagon, they said to rent the computers and then we just started putting things into action. So they went over there and said, OK, we need PCs, and all this went on the hotel bill, the PCs, they called Verizon. Get the phones in, then have a call center. What else, I don’t know. Just started putting things in motion.

Q. (355) Was that call center including a 1-800 number?

A. Oh yeah, we had a 1-800 number. Then I had JEAN MARIE who stayed back at the Air Force Services Command starting calling people at home and saying, you know, “Can you be there at seven o’clock tomorrow morning at the Sheraton?”

At that point, we didn’t know how many casualties. We didn’t know how many services were effected. We knew we had casualties and we just said, “Can you come?” and they started calling other people. It was wonderful.

Q. (364) Now you said she called people. Whom did she call?

A. Well she called the people with whom we work in the services. Like our counterparts in the services for whom we had home phone numbers. So we called, we called LINDA STEVENS JONES at the Air Force and started calling people. She was at the Assistant Secretary of the Air Force’s, that’s where she works. We just, the people for whom we had home phone numbers.

So anyway then I started getting panicky. I go, "I have never done this before. I am a policy person. I don't know what I'm doing."

So I called back down to Norfolk and I said, KATHY STOCKO (phonetic) who's the Director in Fleet Family Support, I said, "Kathy, I need you and I need your key staff. Can you come?"

What's the name of your Admiral and what's his number? I'll call him right now."

So I call the Admiral and of course I get an answering machines. They probably had all evacuated, too (laughing) I'm going, "Oh, gosh."

So I called Kathy back. I said, 'Kathy, I got an answering machine."

She goes "Don't worry. I've already talked to the CO. They're already writing our orders and they told us to take the staff down." Not one thing in paper. Not anything in paper. Norfolk just said, "Go."

So we are subsequently getting things organized for the rest of, well into the night and I'm calling home to ■■■. I go – ■■■, my husband does photography as a hobby, "gather all the phone cord in the house, all the magic markers, the laptop, the easel, put them altogether, ready so I can put them in my car," the next morning, because what if that's all we had?

So at any rate I subsequently then, this is, oh golly it must have been eight or nine o'clock at night when we finally left Crystal City Air Force Services Command and I drove MARK and JEAN MARIE to JEAN MARIE's house, then JEAN MARIE was going to drive MARK to the Metro, either to the Metro or to where his car was.

Anyway I come home and I'm just, it must have been ten, eleven o'clock at night and there was no traffic by then, so it was not, I was trying to get home. Then what we did I was getting calls at home. KATHY called me when Norfolk arrived. The hotel was waiting for them. We had told

the hotel who was coming in. They were waiting for them. When she finally drove in, the hotel staff met her and said, “You must be KATHY. We’ve been waiting for you.”

Then the Norfolk staff that night started telling the hotel staff where to put the family intake table how to set this up, etc. etc., so they were already there at the hotel.

I went home. Tried to sleep but it was hard and then I was up – oh and a couple of other things we did in the afternoon, is I said, “We’ve got to have Defense Protective Service there right away. We’ve got to have Public Affairs there.” Because I knew that DR. CHU wanted to announce it the next morning at the Pentagon brief and I knew that the media would be all over the place. And one of the things we have learned, you have to protect the families from the media. You just, have to just broker that out.

So we called DPS, Public Affairs, what else. I think that was pretty much it. Then I asked for “I need an officer in charge.”

I was talking with GALE MC GINN about that, “ I said, “I don’t know who?” and we just started throwing some names around and I said, “Well we need that.” But then we got so busy with other things and so we didn’t have one at the end of 9-11 that day, an officer in charge, because it was very important it be a senior military officer who could work your red tape, pick up the phone, say, “I need this. I need this.” And it had to be a military person. There was no doubt in mind. And of course that’s what they did in Norfolk too. The Admiral down there after the *Cole* was the spokesperson to the families. So that’s what you needed because this was the Pentagon that got hit.

Up the next morning, I’ll tell you a little anecdote here. A little anecdote, about 4:30 in the morning the next morning, or five o’clock, JEAN MARIE calls me and she’s gotten a call from Public Affairs office – that night of course I was talking, our intern at that time, our Air Force

intern was a Chaplain. He was out working the temporary morgue and he called me that night, and I said, 'OK, CALVIN, we need you there first thing in the morning,' and he told me about the Chaplains meeting there and so on. So the next morning, I guess it was 4:30, no maybe it was about 5:00, JEN MARIE calls me. She's gotten a call from Public Affairs, and said, "There are family members at the Pentagon looking for their loved ones. What do we do?"

I said, "Tell them to go get the chaplains. They're right there at the temporary morgue, and have the Chaplains bring them over to the Sheraton."

"Fine I'll do that."

I get a call from her back about ten minutes later, now maybe this is not something you necessarily want to put in, because it doesn't make Public Affairs look too good. "The Public Affairs officer told me that he wasn't authorized to do that."

I'm screaming into the phone, "He's an idiot! He's an idiot!" You believe –

Q. (456) This is what time in the morning?

A. About five o'clock in the morning. Five o'clock in the morning. So anyway my husband saw my reaction he goes, "Stop! You can not do that. The people are going to be looking to you for calm."

I said, "But he is! He is!"

(all laugh)

So he calmed me down. He's a therapist now, naval aviator, turned therapist. It was great you know, you have your own in-house calming effect. So anyway I calmed down and just took off for the Sheraton. Then they're already, by the time I got there at seven o'clock in the morning there must have been thirty people there, twenty to thirty people there with everybody kind of

going off, and of course we had the key Hampton Roads staff who had done it in the aftermath of the *Cole* and they started getting us organization with what we needed to do, because we're all policy people. What do we know?

Q. (474) Sure, How many people in the Hampton Roads staff?

A. Six. Six came, KATHY and the five, the key people who had worked the *Cole* Family Assistance Center.

So at any rate DR. CHU wanted me over for the Pentagon briefing that morning. So I had to get over to the Pentagon and fortunately what was nice is the Sheraton is a perfect place, because it's right half a block from the Metro stop. It was wonderful, the hotel staff from the beginning, nothing that we needed would they not gladly accommodate. They were absolutely phenomenal. So by the time I get over to the Pentagon to get ready for the Pentagon briefing GALE MC GINN the principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense said that GENERAL VAN ALSTYNE had volunteered to go over and see whether or not he would be the officer in charge. By the time the briefing was over he had already called back to say yes, he would do it, and he wanted permission to pay for the meals of the families and staff that volunteered, which he got immediately.

Anyway so the Family Assistance Center was announced that morning. Where it was located and encouraging family members to go there. Giving them the 800 number and that was how it all started.

Q. (504) Had you arranged for any food before that?

A. Hadn't even thought of it. But the General, now let me talk about the General. LT GENERAL JOHN VAN ALSTYNE was the heart and soul of that center. He was a leader. He was a combat infantry guy. He ran it like a military operation, but the families never thought of it as a military operation, because what we did is we created a very safe haven for the families. The General would brief everyday at the beginning twice a day, he would brief the families. He initially started off with saying, "I'm LTGEN. JOHN VAN ALSTYNE. I've been an infantry officer for thirty plus years. I am not a Public Affairs officer. I will not put any spin," and he's got this Texas drawl now. I mean you've got to get the Texas drawl, slow deliberate, OK?

Q. Yes.

A. And he goes, "and I'm going to have to tell you some really hard things, but I'm not going to tell you anything but the truth." And that's all the families wanted. We've learned this. All the families want is accurate information and he was so respectful of those families, and yet his commanding presence, his authoritative persona if you will, the families trusted him absolutely. Because each day he'd do a series, you know he would start off with the briefs and then he would, we would have music, a soothing music and then he'd take questions and answers. He was so respectful of the families.

Let me just share, he had his connections with the operations that were going on at the Pentagon with GENERAL JACKSON who's the Military District Washington. He had his connection up to Dover, and he would get all of this information, with a lot of help from the staff, of course in terms of what was going on.

So he would brief that, you know, how many, where we are with the recovery operation. How many identifications had been made etc. etc. So he did that and the families revered him. After



the Q&As sometimes lasted as long as two, two and a half hours, and we're talking very tough questions here.

“What if I never have my loved one? What if no remains are found?” And all of that, and so he was so profoundly respectful. Now some of the families, with the Q&As –

Tape one, side one stops.

**Tape one, side two begins.**

- were so choked up when they tried to ask the questions, he would leave podium and come down and sit next and soothe the person until they could get their questions out. He was just remarkable.

So the General was in fact, because of, he became such a source of support and strength of the families, that you know they asked if he couldn't speak on their behalf at the one-month memorial.

Another thing he did after the Q&As, any family who wanted to talk with him one-on-one, he'd invite them down to the front chairs and they would meet with him one-on-one, and go over whatever the issue may be.

We had all kinds of subject matter experts there, but the General was the one who spoke to the families, the only one unless he personally invited someone else, because you have to have one source of information. You don't want all kinds of other information out there.

One of the things I will share with you, because it is the truth. Like the second day of the operation, there was a politician who came and asked to speak to the families. Now these families are in shock and loss, and this politician talked about retribution. It was and it was that point on that the General said, “I am the only one,” Of course there were exceptions to that like

when MRS. CHENEY came, and some others, but it was only if the General either invited the person or gave the OK. He was the spokesperson. Because he didn't want either inappropriate information to be given, or any, or misinformation to get out. So that was really important.

Q. (021) Would he interview people to see what they were going to say if they wanted to, just asked to address, or did he just simply make a decision about who the person was and say yes or no.

A. Well, one of the things he wanted was somebody from the Air Force Services Command to describe what the operation of the Dover was, the need for DNA. You know, what they did up there. How it would happen and so on. So he asked COLONEL TOREGSON (phonetic) to please prepare a brief. He looked at the brief beforehand to make sure it was appropriate, and actually we've continued that on to this day. If any organization wants to send anything to our families, which we will forward on, we review any for appropriateness and then it goes on to them, as well as protect their privacy.

One of the other key decisions that was made the very first hours of the center was that there would only be one person who would deal with the hotel staff. We did not want five different people telling the hotel staff, "I need this," or this or this. Well that person then had substitutes when he wasn't there, but it was like a key part of the operation, the logistics is you only have one so that all of these other you know people wouldn't be making all of these demands on the hotel staff. That was real important decision, real important.

Q. (035) Who was that person?

A. That was JAY DORHETY (phonetic) MR. JAY DORETY (phonetic) from the Air Force.

Q. I'm sorry, please continue.

A. So we then, all these organizations started showing up. The therapy dogs, did you hear about the therapy dogs?

Q. (039) Heard a little bit, but please talk about them.

A. They're wonderful. You know I walk into the hotel lobby and this was right after, I can't remember if it was after the Pentagon brief or what, and the way the, it was actually the second floor, the first floor was like the lobby and then the second floor were our major operations, and they were up on the second floor. And it was one of your, the Intern (\_\_\_\_ Inaudible 043).

I go "What, what's going on. What are these animals doing?" I had no idea about them.

He goes, "I don't know."

I said, "Please find out."

(laughter)

As it turns out these dogs are all trained to soothe, to comfort. They go through very extensive training, very well behaved. You know the kids who came loved them, the adults loved them.

They just needed to comfort. The kids would pull their tails and pull their ears and these dogs wouldn't even blink. I swore they were on Prozac, all of them, they just didn't even blink back.

Anyway they were very good.

But of course all the other organizations started coming, Red Cross, the relief societies, USO, FEMA. VA was great. Social Security Administration was great, and in the ballroom, this much of it was for the family briefing room and then this much we had all of these different

organizations. FBI with Victim Witness, the Virginia Criminal Compensation Fund, they were all right there. USO, all of them right there.

Q. (056) So half and half split in the ballroom.

A. No actually two-thirds and a third. The third was for the agencies, the government, non-government agencies. So people would come to the brief and during the brief the General would say, "Now here's this. Here's this. You take advantage of this."

Then we had the other important things we did that first time was our childcare people set up kids play, so that the hotel cleaned out rooms on the third floor. It was made into childcare. We got our licensed, credentialed childcare providers around the installation and they staffed it.

Our therapist showed up, therapy dogs regularly visited them. It was a place where people would go just to hear the sounds of children's laughter, because we all needed that. We all needed that.

We had the civilian employees' compensation people there. In fact they were one of the people I contact the afternoon of 9-11, because I knew we had civilian casualties, and that we needed that you know, the benefits, not only from labor, but also OPM. We needed our own experts there.

They set up, we had the casualty people. Then we subsequently found out that our casualties were actual Army, Navy DIA and the passengers and crew on the airlines.

That was the other thing. Almost from the beginning I said, "We've got to have American Airlines here. It's a must." So we finally brokered that out. American Airlines sent us an accident investigator initially.

(interview must have indicated something with facial expression about this)

Oh, actually it turned out, it was OK, and then he left and the care provider showed up and then they were laying off people and they got laid off, so they brought in a more seasoned person who

actually was wonderful. CARLENE HAGEN (phonetic) She might be somebody you might want to interview sometime. CARLENE was great.

So we finally had and of course after I was able to sort it out a bit we were able to get the airlines – what had happened is normally in the aftermath of an airline crash, SHARON BRYSON, my colleague or at NTSB would be right on site. The Airlines would be responsible for setting the Family Assistance Center, but because this was not an accident, it was terrorist attack, the NTSB was told by the FBI, this is ours, we'll do it.

Of course they never invited the families into it because they were afraid there might be some terrorist still among the family groups. Go figure.

At any rate, long story short, we ended up working with American Airlines, NTSB, the FBI and all of those folks. So the families started coming to the briefs, the passengers, some crew and they set up, they were part of us because they all lost their loved ones at the same place, right here at the Pentagon. So we had American Airlines there.

Donations were a big, people started donating things immediately from teddy bears to flags to quilts. The family briefing room started getting filled with all of these posters from all over the country with all of the people just wanting to let them know how they supported them.

We had food available twenty-four hours, thank God, because we worked 24/7. We had three shifts. We basically had a management component, and administration component and an operations component.

The management component consisted of the General and those of us who were key on the staff. One of the key people on the staff was one of the lawyers who worked for the General here at the Pentagon and he was wonderful, absolutely wonder. TOM. A Lieutenant Colonel.

What he helped do among a whole lot of other things was the family members said, “My loved one who is missing, cars in the Pentagon parking lot. How can I get it?” Because you know at that time everything was all secured off. So TOM worked with DPS got licenses and so on and we helped the families retrieve their cars.

They also arranged for legal assistance. So we had I think it was about September 18<sup>th</sup>, the Army Reserve Legal Services offices from Richland was activated and they came up as well as the Coast Guard Legal Assistance people. They all came up and they had rooms up on the third floor of the PFAC, the Family Assistance Center and they were doing everything. Of course the guys from Richland in particular were all skilled in wills, and powers of attorney, and getting access to checking accounts that were in the other person’s name. They knew the judges. They knew the law, they knew probate. They knew child custody issues. All of those things that were right there for the family.

You should really – I need to give you their address. They were phenomenal, phenomenal what they did. So we had Red Cross was they're writing checks on the spot to these families. I mean they were you know, who showed “I need this. I need that.” They were all there. We had DNA collection. AFDNAIL, Armed Forces DNA Identification Lab, they were there. We were collecting appropriate family blood, reference samples from them.

We were collecting medical records and dental records to help in the ID process out in Dover. I mean we, everything, it just sort of – the way I described the Pentagon Family Assistance Center, it was extremely responsive and very organic. They way is just kind of grew. When a group would show up and then the General said, and I totally agreed, “We’ve got to have a Casualty Liaison cell here, with the respective casualty offices right there, right at the center. See that was something the previous Family Assistance Center did not have.

The Family Assistance Center would be here. Casualty would be over here, and as much as they talked they weren't co-located. So the Casualty Liaison Office was very, very important. We set that up and these things, the intern helped set that one up.

The services were very, very, always very territorial about the names of their victims and the next of kin and getting a master list together was like pulling teeth. And because we had casualty and mortuary responsibility it was critical that we have that. Plus we're getting calls from the State. I got a call from the State Department said, "We're already getting passport applications for some people who were killed at the Twin Towers, in their name."

It's called identity theft.

"Could we have the names of yours so we can mark them so if somebody under that name applies for a passport, that yeah, there's no identify theft here." I mean you just can't believe the things.

So it was critical that we – finally after, you know, a lot of gnashing of teeth, we finally were able to get you know – and now here in this office have the master lists and it's updated daily. Daily, because it's very, very critical to –

Q. (145) The master list of -?

A. Those who were killed and the primary next of kin and the addresses, and emails and all of that which we keep very, very protected because it's by policy and statute we're required to protect the privacy of the families.

Now the Public Affairs Officer also did a wonderful job and the first one there, he got told, he was up all night, he got told to report to this woman who could be a real pain in the neck called MEG FAULK.

Q. (150) (laugh) Kind of hard to believe.

A. He told me that two weeks later, about two or three weeks into the center. He goes, “You know, it’s just like whenever people tell me people are a pain in the neck, they don’t turn out to be that way.”

Because we had a very good relationship, and I said, “Well, I’ll tell you why I’m a pain in the neck because every time, because of our casualty responsibility, every time there’s going to be an accident investigation released, I’m always down at Public Affairs saying, ‘Don’t you dare release that to the media until the families have been informed first.’ And I said, “That’s why I’m a pain in the neck.” (laugh)

Anyway PAO was perfect, absolutely wonderful. Then he was joined I think during the second week by another Public Affairs person because it was very important, because what the Public Affairs, and DPS did was keep the media on the first floor. Those families who wanted to talk to the media, they were more than able to, but we kept them down there. When the families weren’t there like during non-brief times, Public Affairs Officer would bring the different TV and print media people upstairs so they could see the operation. They could see what we were doing. Very, very important. Very important Public Affairs Officer.

Right now I’m going to tell you about one of the things that we started almost immediately, and that was in the main ballroom where the family briefings took place. Again I think it was MAJOR DORETY (phonetic), I mean he always had great ideas. There was a table set up, a memorial table. Have you heard about this?

Q. Yes, but keep telling me that’s fine.



A. A memorial where families could bring in pictures of their loved ones. Where they could bring letters, flowers, momentos of any kind and it was incredible. I mean my husband came to the Center and he goes it took his breath away to go in there and see that.

Q. (175) Can you describe it a bit? How big a table is it?

A. Oh, it's huge. It was probably twenty feet long and then we had to add another one on the other side of the doors on that table to accommodate all the pictures. And this is everybody. This is not just DoD. The passengers that were on the airlines. One of the first ones to show up there was a wonderful couple from China who had come and visited with their daughter and son-in-law and they were on their way back to China and the beautiful write-up on this wonderful Chinese couple (Editors Note: Reference is to Shuyin Yang (mother) and Yuguang Zheng (father)). It was sacred ground, that's what it was. It truly was sacred ground.

I and the General would encourage the staff everyday to walk by to remind us of why we were there. At the same time that that was happening our wonderful graphics, DOD graphics was setting up a American hero's board, and as the obituaries appeared in the paper they would mount them in a Velcro billboard so that we eventually had a bio on everyone. That was very important. The graphics, Pentagon graphics, DoD graphics were absolutely wonderful

When the families early on wanted to know exactly where their loved one was, our logistics operations staff worked with graphics so that we could get these big charts that showed from the first to the fifth floor exactly where DIA was located, where the Navy Command Center was located where the desks were in all the different offices, and I'm telling you that was really important. In fact we had a chaplain standing by those charts so that the families in case they broke down when they looked out, they would do it.

The other thing that you may or may not have heard is that from the very beginning almost the second day, the families were asking could they not please go to the site. It was all cordoned off, as you know. Twenty –seven, there was no traffic on twenty seven, and we kept being told that it's you know it's a recovery site. You know it's not appropriate and then what happened – did you hear this?

Q. (203) Keep going please.

A. One of the family members said to the general, “How come the media can get closer than we can?” Well that was it.

Q. That did it.

A. So the General went toe-to-toe with the other General, who happened to be a two-star. He was a three-star. When a three-start goes against a two-star, we generally know who prevails. So that first weekend we had the first site visit.

Got buses, again all on the hotel tab. It was probably one of the few companies that got actually business during that time, because you know, tourism was down considerably. We had nine buses I think that first, at that first site visit. Somehow or other somebody got a hold of all these roses that each of the families was given. JACK MATSLER (phonetic) the Superintendent of Arlington personally drove over in his car with hundreds of these small American flags, so that people could bring those with them. The people on site built an observation deck and they also working with our logistic people built a memorial table so that people could leave things on it. That was subsequently taken to the Center for Military History.

We had a Chaplain and a mental health person assigned on each bus. We had Kleenex on each bus. I will never, and that first visit was back away, but it still you could see the effect and it was so important for some of them. Oh, and a therapy doctor there too. It was so important for these families to go to the site and another thing the Old Guard did down there is they had these charts out there and I was amazed at the number of families members who wanted to know every detail. They described to them how the plane came over the Navy Annex into the building. They showed on the charts exactly what happened. What's key to all this is families need as much accurate information as they can possibly get. No matter how hard it is you've got to give it to them. You don't dance around the truth. You give it to them straight, unequivocal and that's what these Old Guard members did. Families were allowed to stay as long as they wanted at that site.

And what happened was the Red Cross showed up with all these blankets based on their experience from Oklahoma. They showed up with all of these blankets, because as the day went on the day got colder and then family members who wanted to stay and there be, they had these blankets that were there. They got to take them with them, and the Red Cross had enough foresight to see that, to anticipate that need.

So that was very powerful that first site visit. Then we subsequently had site visits too. We even had one special site visit for American Airlines pilots and flight attendance who were friends of those who were killed. We got those, and then later on the last site visit before the center closed was closer, because by that time they had, it was safe to move in closer.

Q. (245) How close did you get them the first time then? Where would they have been?

A. It was out on Highway 27 almost. It was a couple hundred yards away, which is -

Q. Well, that's not actually –

A. Less than that.

Q. About a hundred yards away. That's not bad.

A. About a hundred yards away.

Q. (247) That's not bad at all.

A. And then the next time we were able to get much closer. The other thing that happened was we worked very closely with OSD protocol for the one-month memorial. So we were, we set up another cell there to do all the coordination for the Pentagon memorial. That was important. But yeah we just kind of – we were like an amoeba. We just kind of grew as people showed up and just kind of made executive decisions.

I'll tell you what was really very key and I mentioned early on that the General ran it like a military operation, and that it at the beginning we had two family briefings a day and two staff meeting a day, early in the morning and usually generally well into the evening, where the key people from the center, the key staff would come together and say, "Ok, what have we got." This would be the legal, the deputy OIC, GENERAL STYVY (phonic) Reserve Chaplain, wonderful man. The people from the intake desk. The people from the logistics side, the casualty and Public Affairs and we'd just sit around and say, "OK, what's happening."

Then the general would say, "OK," a certain family was having problem. "OK, what are we going to do?" And people would be assigned to go take care of them.

Another one would be, I remember this one Public Affairs Officer would usually say, “Well, Miss American wants to come.” So how we going to handle that. LINDA CARTER, you know, came regularly.

Q. (272) Really?

A. Oh, yeah, she because she lives right here, you know LINDA CARTER, and she came regularly and she just would quietly sit with the families, different families with whom she got to know and was just a real comforting presence for some of these families. So when people would come, you know like a lot of leadership came, you know. All members of Chairman, you know the Joint Chiefs, their spouses were all there. MRS. POWELL came. MRS. COHEN came, JANET COHEN came.

Q. (280) Must be wife of the former Secretary of Defense.

A. Correct, but she’s always a big family supporter you know, the whole time he was SECDEF, she was there.

We had the Queen of Jordan came. The head of the Red Cross came, at that time. What was her name, BERNADINE HEALY (phonetic), We had all kinds of Congressman and Senators came. Oh you know who came was SENATOR CARNAHAN. She called and wanted to come and she said, “I don’t want to come to speak. I want to come to work, to volunteer.”

So I went home that night and was talking with ■■■ about it, my husband, and I said you know we really need to give her something worth while to do, and so what he and I collaborated on that night, you know she had just lost her husband and her son in that horrible accident during the campaign.

Q. (295) Plane crash yeah.

A. A year before. I said why don't we have her talk to the Casualty Assistance Officers to say what was meaningful in support of her during that time of loss and that's exactly what we did and she was really, very well received. So that was another thing we did.

So all of these you know public figures showed up, and genuine from their heart. I can't tell you how many times they showed up. Just were there as a presence and as we would say – I'm going back to the staff meetings - "Ok," so and so "wants to come." And the General would often say you know because we really didn't want all these people getting up and talking to the families because we don't know what they're going to say.

So he goes, "Well, let's use Linda Carter model," which was quietly sit with the families. Be a presence. He would always introduce them and show that they were there and that was very important. So it was the Linda Carter model, which was very sensitive and supportive and elegant in a lot of ways.

Q. (311) Interesting. Just a quick question about the 1-800 number. You haven't mentioned about it. Could you tell us a bit about it actually?

A. Well, they wanted a call Center. We needed to set up the call center. So we needed to have a number where families could call in. I can't tell you the number off the top of my head. We had it all staffed and the people who were at the call center, this is another big help, that the Hampton Roads people did. You trained everybody before they would answer any phones and in that room there'd be all kinds of information up on butcher-block paper for the staff to see, to call in. When certain things were going to happen, for example, when the site was changed from rescue to

recovery, that was something that they had to be informed about. When the FBI was turning it back to the Pentagon, that was another something they had to be – so as families called in. And we always tried to get that information to the families prior to being released to the media. But they would call in. It changed as the time went on. Initially the call center was you know, “I haven’t heard from,” so and so, you know, concerned. One mother from the Midwest called and said, “My son works at Pentagon City and I haven’t heard from him.” So we’d end up sending the Arlington Police, “call your mother she’s worried about you.”

(laughter)

And later on people, were emerging out of their shock. We would calls about “I want to join the Army. Where do I go?” But it was also good for family and relatives from out-of-town to call in and find out things about the memorial services, you know and so forth.

Q. (336) What could they arrange for people who were say coming from out-of-town? What could they do for them?

A. Well they could give them information but then if the families wanted them to come in for the memorial service and you know we were working arrangements for transportation and hotels and lodging and all of that. So that was good.

Getting back to the staff meetings. They were very good and the other really, wonderful leadership quality about GENERAL VAN ALSTYNE is he had a wonderful sense of humor. As intense, you can’t imagine the intensity of what we were going through. The operations, the grief, the sadness, the loss and nobody was more serious than the General in terms of dealing with this, but then he would know when we really needed some humor.

Like we heard, just as a little anecdote, one of the families was squabbling among themselves about what should go on the headstone. So he turns to TOM, and he goes, “TOM, remind me when this is over, that I have in writing exactly what I want on my headstone. Because if ANNETTE is ticked with me when I kick the bucket, I don’t want her to put ‘JOHN BOZO VAN ALSTYNE’ on my headstone.”

Well of course we were all just cracking up, and he would intersperse that humor. That was so important. He said that next to his two times tours in combat, it was the most stressful thing he’d ever been through.

Had you heard that before?

Q. (361) I heard something like that –

A. That’s what he said, and then he also said, and you’ve probably heard this, “If this ever happens again, just make sure that whoever they select for this job is mean, ornery and expendable.” I will never forget that.

Q. Expendable.

A. Well, he considered himself expend – he didn’t care. He picked up the phone; he didn’t care.

“I don’t care. This is what we need and I’d like it now. Thank you very much.”

Q. (368) An expandable and self- effacing three-star general is not as common as –

A. He didn’t say self-effacing, but we would all say that that’s what he was.



Q. But I think, the humor you were describing, very self-effacing. Nobody describes himself as Bozo.

A. JOHN “Bozo” VAN.... I don’t want that on my headstone.” He says. He was wonderful. He was marvelous.

Q. That’s great.

A. But I’ve got to tell you it was pretty, pretty, pretty intense. And nobody could have been better with it.

Q. (378) When would you say that the families in the center sort of hit the peak moment of pressure; when the flow of things was just at it’s most intense? I’m sure it ebbed and flowed throughout the course of –

A. No, it didn’t.

Q. It didn’t?

A. I didn’t think so.

Q. (379) It was continuously at a high pitch?

A. It was continuous high pitch. The only ebb and flow that I might say and again, because of my interaction with the NTSB is that they always give twice briefings a day and then after a while they go down to one briefing a day. I was saying to the General; maybe about not quite two weeks into it, I said, “General, we could probably go down to one briefing a day.”

He said, “Not until the families are ready for it.”

So what he did is that when we realized that you know a lot of ideas had been made and a lot of things had been attended to, he broached it with the families because they were coming in twice a day. Most of them living awfully close were having to come in because they didn't want to miss anything. So then he discussed it with them you know, how many would be in favor of one briefing a day? You know, most of the hands are up.

So what would be the best time? And then he got that from them. He was like consensus from the families who were there, that they move it to one. So the intensity of the two briefings, two staff meetings a day went to one, but it didn't last long in terms of that ebb and flow, because then we were all gearing up for the memorial service. So the tempo, the operational tempo went right back up, because we had hundreds of these casualty officers coming in, escort officers for the passengers and crew on the airplane and so I mean that just ratcheted it right up. That was the most intense part of the operation, right at the end. It was the memorial phase, and getting ready for that. So that was pretty -

Q. (413) So that was when you were dealing with the largest number of people for example, not only victims but their escorts and everything else, and that made it busier. How controlled, how well controlled would you say the count of dead and wounded was in the initial stages, in say the first two weeks?

A. Well initially you know, I understood since then \_\_\_\_\_(419) BRIDGES (phonetic) the Public Affairs guy over at Arlington County. The Arlington County Fire Chief will never give out an estimate again. Because when he kept being pushed and prodded, he said six hundred, there could be as many as six hundred and we heard that of course over the PFAC, and but we just kept on going. We didn't have time to think about it.

I'll tell you what use to hit you once in a while as we were operating was how is New York handling this, because we had one hundred and eighty-four and it would hit me I'd go, "I don't know how they're doing it?" And then I'd have to keep on going.

We had the numbers within what, a couple of days. A couple of days we had the right numbers. Then of course we lost ANTIONETTE SHERMAN a week later at the hospital. Then we heard about LT. SHAFFER, he was on his death's door and then he rallied back, thank God.

I think he's the only one from the Navy Operation Center to make it.

Q. (437) Yes, from that particular spot, yes.

A. From that particular spot.

Q. The twenty-four people close to him were all killed.

A. Yeah and he's still going through a lot of surgery from what I understand.

Q. (440) Yes he is. As for some of the distinctions that we've heard about in other discussions, distinction between the survivors and the families of people who were killed and then the families of those who were wounded. Can you tell us a little bit about the difference in how -?

A. A decision was made early on that, the General made the decision that it was probably not a good idea to have the families of the survivors come in with the families of the deceased, for all the right reason.

"How come your loved one survived and mine didn't You know it would be those things, but I'll tell you in retrospect, those families of those wounded needed many of the services that we were

providing and even though some of the organizations were actually going to the hospitals where they were located, it wasn't quite the same thing.

You know in retrospect for something like this, Meg Faulk says that those wounded, those seriously wounded, I'm not talking about the ones with maybe just a broken arm, unless they were seriously traumatized, the seriously wounded should have something like a Family Assistance Officer to work with the family and the unit from where they came and all the organizations that so readily stepped up to the emergency.

Q. (469) Right, OK. And did you ever feel, did you ever notice rather that some service that you would have wanted to have around for the survivors of the people who were killed were not there and did you ever have to go and say, "Let's get this and arrange this."

A. (\_\_\_\_ Inaudible 474) Other than American Airlines now. We had the Chaplains there the first thing in the morning on the 12<sup>th</sup>. Mental health people started showing up and medical support because we had medical support there at all times too.

Did you hear about, oh, God, thank God we had medical people there. I wonder if they were, like the second day of operations – did you hear about this?

Q. No.

A. Some kids set off the fire alarm in the hotel. Oh my God! I said, "I don't believe this." Well as you know what the height and state of anxiety was at that time. We had a couple of family members absolutely lose it. They thought we were under attack again. So we all slup out to the sidewalk and wait 'til the fire engines come and find out it's a false alarm and, but this is like the

second or third day, and we have this going on. Everybody's gone (she must have made a face)  
It's crazy.

Now the other thing you probably hadn't heard about either, you probably heard about all the  
volunteers we got, the donations and that –

Q. (493) Keep talking about them because you confirm –

A. We also whenever these kind of things happen you can be a magnet for what I call the “loony  
tunes” Did you hear about the “President-elect” showing up at the Family Assistance Center and  
she requested to be taken over to the Capital so she could be sworn in. She showed up, so we  
called out Arlington Emergency Services, got her taken, although she showed up again at the  
end.

This happens in these kinds of things.

Q. (504) When did she show up?

A. I can't remember.

Q. First day or two, or -?

A. No, no.

Q. Ok, a little later than that.

A. Then we had a “call” from Attorney General Ashcroft's office telling us that so and so was  
coming over and to be sure to take good care of her and make sure she gets in the hotel and she's  
been through these kinds of things before. She'll be a big help, etc. etc.

Ok, so she shows up and then she starts talking about being the former girlfriend of one of the descendants and the second or third cousin of another and then we start putting two and two together. So I told the Lieutenant Commander who was there, I said, "Call Ashcroft's office and see if they have ever heard of this person."

She goes, "The Attorney General's office?"

I said, "Yes, the Attorney General's office. Call him, because we don't know." And of course never heard of her. So we got her out of there. But these kind of things happen when you set up, you kind of get the, those are just two, two of the more odd. Sent her, laughing.

Q. (526) You mentioned working a lot with Arlington County, had you ever thought about it, or every considered it? You called them –

A. No, it just came out of my head.

Q. You just sort of figured the jurisdiction you were in and said.

A. We were in Arlington County. We're going to call, I don't know – actually originally we called the local Red Cross and they were all out on the site so they couldn't help us whatsoever. So I just said "Hey, we're in Arlington County. I'm going to call Arlington County." I don't know where that came from. It just popped into my mind and then of course my husband works for Arlington County so I go "████, ok. I need some help. I need a Family Assistance Center. Can you contact whoever I need to contact at Arlington County?" And he went right to the top.

Q. (541) Sure. Do you have any questions?

Q. (another) (542) Yeah, I just wanted to ask you but there was an initial family assistance center centered at Fort Myer. Would they overlap?

A. The Army and the Navy started setting up their own assistance centers on the bases of course, on the installations, and DR. CHU said the morning of the 12<sup>th</sup> even, I was there when he called SECRETARY WHITE, who unfortunately was unavailable, and said “Stand them down, we’re having one.”

Well, eventually about three or four days later the Army eventually closed theirs down, but that wouldn’t have been any good for the Army civilians because the families would have had the ID to get on.

Q. (555) And you mentioned about organizations showing up. Were they invited by you and your staff or were they people who thought they could help, like the Red Cross and such?

A. No, they just showed up. We didn’t invite.

Q. Would that include the therapy dogs for example.

A. Example. We didn’t invite. They just showed up, the Salvation Army showed up. People just showed up to help, and the VA. The VA showed up.

Q. (564) Now there's a DOD office and these people show up and there's some DPS officers standing there and they say, “We’ve got these therapy dogs.” How did you get them in? How did you admit them? How did you credential them and say they’re entitled to be in the PFAC and this sort of thing.

A. Hey, I've got to tell you Randy, this is not a very bureaucratic operation. In fact that was the genius of it. There wasn't one piece of paper signed between the afternoon of 9-11 and when we started taking over that hotel 9-12. There probably wasn't one piece of paper signed until several weeks into it.

The Air Force fortunately –

**Tape one ends here.**

**Tape two side one starts here.**

A. (continuing) JAY DORETY, MAJOR DORETY had an impact card and we just started putting everything on the impact card. I don't want to talk about, we don't even have impact cards. It would have been a lot easier.

Another one of the volunteers who showed up the morning of 9-12 used to work in the Air Force Family Programs, now works over at the FDIC, Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation. She's there the first thing in the morning. She sees my measly collection of magic markers is not going to very well do it. She calls back to her office. She goes, "We need paper, we need pens, we need" you know Xerox paper, that sort of thing. Paper, "we need staples." They cleaned out their whole supply cabinet and brought it over to the center to get us going. Amazing, Amazing, everybody wanted to do something.

Q. (011) Sure, sure, excellent.

A. So that's how those things just kind of work. And I've got to tell you something else. I, it's true that we had the idea on the afternoon on 9-11, but what happened the start of morning of the 12th was nothing less than people using their incredible skills and competence and unmatched



caring to make all the right things happen. I mean all these discrete operations were set up and complete with standard operating procedures and you know who does what and shift assignments and training and all that. I didn't do any supervision of that at all. They just, the leadership was just incredible. Not only our leader, the General, but the leadership in these respective, the respective parts of the whole operations. They were just, you just stood back and said, "I don't need to mess with this. We're doing everything just fine."

Q. (022) It's working. Don't fix it. Yes. Fair enough. So very early questions that arose out of what you narrated. Just going right back to the instant that you're in your meeting in the B ring at about 9:38 in the morning.

A. Actually it was 9:37. Did you know that time?

Q. (026) Well now, I've been going around back and forth with that all the time and people, I heard 9:42 from other people, but I'm wonder about.

A. JOHN CHESTER (phonetic) just made that final –

Q. Determination.

A. Yes.

Q. OK.

A. You know who JOHN is?

Q. I know who he is. I need to talk to him I think.

A. He's the head of DPS.

Q. (029) Yeah, he's been interviewed by the office of Secretary of Defense History office folks. I have not met him. I need to read his oral history, but we've been arguing that one back and forth quite a bit, not with him. I mean –

A. Public Affairs has been putting out 9:38 but it's going to be 9:37.

Q. Very good.

A. Part of the reason is that's what's on all the death certificates.

Q. (032) OK, that makes a good bit of sense then. Did you notice though at the time any sort of flickering of lights?

A. Nope.

Q. Any movement of the ceiling tiles, any wind? Fire alarm?

A. Nope.

Q. (035) OK, none of those things.

A. No fire alarm. No public announcement. No nothing. That's why we kept on with our staff meeting.

Q. (036) That was my guess. It seemed like a safe bet, but I wanted to make sure that was the case. How long do you think you waited before you decided, before somebody came in and told you it's was time to evacuate the building them, because -?

A. It was about five minutes.

Q. (038) Five minutes. And how long to get to the courtyard after that?

A. Well that's after we you know we've calling our loved ones to say they're OK. Take MARK WARD's wife was already hysterical. She works over at the Treasury, by the time he called he because she had just seen – By the time we sort of, I don't want to say, we didn't, we just kind of were dazed and we're trying to be deliberate. You got to be very deliberate with your actions to make sure –

How many minutes, did you ask me?

Q. (043) That was what I was asking. You say it was about five minutes afterwards that you got a - told –

A. Then I think it was probably another ten minutes before we left. Just because we knew we had to do something. Just didn't know – and that's when we called the Army and nobody was home at the inn and just collected our stuff and say, “Ok, what do we do now?” And of course you know we still didn't know what had happened. We still didn't know.

Q. (049) So about fifteen minutes or so after the, you hear the noise, you're in the courtyard? Would that be a fair guess?

A. Yes.

Q. And then how long to get to North Parking beyond that?

A. Well, how long to get to North Parking? That's what about five minutes?

Q. (052) Five minutes OK. You're just walking. It's not crowded. It's not –

A. No. But I'll tell you what we did. Just before we left the building I said to MARK and JEAN MARIE, "Stop! I'm not going anywhere 'til I use the bathroom." You never pass up an opportunity, because you never know when you're going to have the next chance and at that point we didn't know when we were going to have the next chance. So, yes, I know I tell people that story.

Q. That's very appropriate.

A. They go, "I can't believe that, Falk."

Q. Perfectly appropriate and I understand exactly why.

A. It was the right thing because we had no idea, what we you know we'd be able to access again. We hadn't you know, OK, the building's burning, but this part of it isn't and I'm not going to pass up you know an opportunity like this. I keep telling them that. They go, "I can't believe that, Falk."

Q. (064) Moving then to the time that the PFAC set up here. Your typical schedule, what time would you get in in the morning and what time were the briefings with GENERAL VAN ALSTYNE, and the staff briefing I mean here and how late did you stay? Talk a little bit about your routine, day-to-day.

A. Well, the routine was, I was there by seven o'clock every morning and get any input from the people that had been on the night shift. We usually have our morning briefings eight o'clock.

Eight o'clock would be the morning briefs, and then –

Q. (070) That's the staff meeting right.

A. Correct, the staff briefing in the small room on the second floor and then that's when we all get out, what we need to do, our marching orders and so on. That was like the smallest staff and then we'd go out and do what we needed to do.

Now see the thing of it was for me at this we were doing operations in that normally I'd be doing just policy, casualty and mortuary policy and family support policy. So we were doing policy stuff there as well as the operations. We combined the two. You know like things would come up where we would need, where MARK and I would have to sit down and work out policy and get it coordinated, and fax it here and you know wherever.

For example, just as an example, when the remains were returned to the family, would there be a flag on all of the caskets, or would it just be on those who were military? Well, we had to go through all that, we didn't want, see because we own the military funeral honors issue, you have to be very careful that if it's the date on the casket, let's say for a DOD civilian with no military background, not ever in the military or in essence recruit, people would expect the flag to be folded and presented to the family. Well that's only for the military. So we had to set out the guidance that said, yes, the flag could be on the casket. Once it got to the funeral home, it would be folded and placed in the triangle on the casket for the civilians.

You know you think that's, it doesn't seem that big of a deal. It's a big deal because you have to weigh all these things.

JACK MATSLER (phonetic) the Superintendent of Arlington you know was there regularly so families could talk to him about eligibility's. One of the things the families wanted right away was, thank God that wasn't my policy issue was, "Can our civilians be buried in Arlington?" This is a terrorist attack and of course that's an Army responsibility and of course, they had to, you know as much as we wanted to be responsive to what the families need, it's some place that you just can't not, you can not do it. You can say yes to everything that's reasonable and of course the Secretary of the Army said there would be no blanket exceptions to burial at Arlington.

So it was, the day would be interspersed with the intensity of the family briefings.

Q. (100) Which was what time, the first one?

A. The seven o'clock in the morning, I mean eight o'clock in the morning, first. Oh the family briefings in the morning would be like I think at nine and then at two. I can't remember exactly, and then we'd have a late evening staff meeting, too after the afternoon briefing.

But then during the day working with the people of the hotel, it would be working with the families who came in, you know I got to know a number of the families. It would be running interference with this, getting computers for that. It would be doing the policy stuff that would come in. It was just such an extraordinary event that existing policies really didn't fit it all and so you had to coordinate it with the ASD, etc. etc.

Then I never worked so hard in my life.

Q. (109) How late did you stay?

A. Sometime as late as ten o'clock at night.

Q. And be back in at seven in the morning. How'd you eat?

A. I didn't. I lost a lot of weight. I've gained all of it back. Actually my husband, my husband for the first time that we've been married, my dinner was ready for me when I came home.

Q. How appropriate.

A. I didn't even have time to eat. I said, "That's a first and it'll probably be the last." But anyway he did it. He was very, very supportive, but when I was right there, of course you know I would go at lunch and grab stuff off the buffet, but I would just take it up to where I was working and handle it, but I didn't even taste it.

Q. (117) Of course, no, no, you didn't.

A. But I've got to tell you. I don't know if you've heard this, but I was talking to one of the family members and she said, she had lost her husband, two little kids, she said, "Food," you know I never even thought of this. Did you hear this?

Q. No.

A. She said you know, just having the buffet there was so supportive. "I couldn't even have even have focused on a menu let alone select something to eat." She goes, "I don't even know what I eat. It's just that it was there. I didn't have to think about it and then when I'd sit down to eat, I'd sit and talk with one of the mental health people, the chaplains." She said, "Just having that and not having to think about it."

I go, "Oh, Gloria, that is incredible." I never even thought about it. I just thought it was fuel there to keep you going you know. Just fuel, but for her it was one less stress. And I never thought of it that way.

That would probably give you, she wrote up a whole series of things of how important, of what it meant to her and so on.

Q. (131) So working a fourteen and fifteen hour day, sometimes quite frequently perhaps, you didn't find yourself burning out, or you just kept running, and running and running and that was it. Seven days a week?

A. Yeah, I was there everyday. Yeah. It was, it started off like sixteen hour days and went down to about fourteen and then to twelve. That was probably it pretty much at the end. I didn't burn out. I don't know what it is. I will tell you though that we closed down the operations on the 12<sup>th</sup> of October and then I slept almost the whole weekend when it was all over, because then I could let myself, you know it was sort of like I felt like I'd been hit by a truck. You know I go, "How come I don't have any energy."

Then I was back and ready to rally after that weekend.

Q. (141) Any sort of lessons learned that you'd care to talk about now.

A. Right, Casualty liaison cell from the very beginning rather than having to hit the services over the head and pull it out of them. I mean it was like pulling teeth getting them to set up the liaison, so absolutely.

Casualty Assistance Officers for the wounded, seriously wounded. What would be some other recommendations? I would say, you know, have established relationships with all the



organizations ahead of time, although really the fact, the fact that didn't, of course we work with DA a lot, we you know they showed up but I think it probably would have been even better to have had pre-established relationships of what you would do in the event of a mass casualty. Probably would have been better.

Oh, have a plan. Who would have thought the Pentagon would ever be hit? We asked all of our local people, they had joint plans and you know help one another out, and who would have thought the Pentagon would ever have been hit. A plan ahead of time would help.

And in this case, in this area, the National Capital Region the people from the Family Centers already working on theirs. They started almost right away, right away.

Q. (160) Capt. Tate did you want to say something?

Q. (Tate) No sir, I was just agreeing with her about having a plan.

A. Duhhh. We're the policy people. We don't do operations. Wrong.

Q. (162) I think it's amazing how you pulled it together in light of how you know you were thrown into the middle of something that you were supposed to be supervi – not even supervising, setting up a structure for in –

A. Yeah, we turned from policy to operations at nine thirty-seven, well it wasn't at nine thirty-seven because it wasn't until we gathered our thoughts and the thing that we decided, "We've got to do this." It was –

Q. (167) And an operation of how many people, not including the hotel staff, but just in the actual, you know how many people would you have had staffing.

A. We had an average each day of about a hundred forty-eight people a day, staff and volunteers. But you know we had escorts for every single family. Meeting them on the first floor, bringing them up. We had all of the different people I'm talking about, you know, all the government agencies, the non-profits. We had the staff. We had the volunteers. We had thousands of people and plus we had thousands on standby who wanted to help. It was amazing, amazing.

Q. Very impressive.

A. It was. It was extraordinary.

Q. (175) Any questions I haven't asked that you think that I should have asked?

A. No, but I want, I need to take, I want to show you something.

(they take a short potty break)

Q. Any other thing else you care to add to that list?

A. The only thing is, is that I think that the Pentagon Family Assistance Center probably epitomized the incredible humanity in the Department of Defense. From the top leadership right on down to the ranks. You know we're known as the strongest fighting force in the world and we're also, a very, very humane institutional organization and it was because of I think, I know the support of our leadership and the continued support of our leadership that we were able to provide this safe, supportive haven for the families and continue to do so, you know in our own way.

Q. (188) Very important I think and I'm glad that we have the opportunity and the resources to do it and I'd like to thank you for spending so much time with us. I certainly appreciate it.

A. Your very welcome, probably you heard some of the other stuff before.

Q. That's quite all right duplications never hurt.

A. But I don't think CAPT TATE had heard it.

Transcribed by:  
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