

**Naval Historical Center
Oral Interview Summary Form**

Interviewers:

CDR Michael McDaniel
CDR Carol O'Hagan
CDR Karen Loftus

Interviewer's Organization:

Naval Historical Center
Naval Historical Center
Naval Historical Center

Interviewee:

HMC Darrell Hamilton

Current Address:

OPNAV N122

Date of Interview:

16 OCT 01

Place of Interview:

Navy Annex

Number of Cassettes:

1

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:

Interviewee Information: In the Navy for 18 years, Quad Zero General Administration Tech, last 10 years in Physical Therapy. Just off the USS Enterprise as of 4 August.

Topics Discussed:

Was in Quantico the day of the incident. Heard a loud boom, didn't know what it was. Went home to Silver Spring, MD and volunteered his services to Bethesda. Most casualties were going to civilian hospitals so the next day he went to work at the Annex to try to help out. He, LCDR Nordholm, Senior Chief Green and Petty Officer Powell got involved with working with the remains. He had been involved with working with the dead before, but this was different since the remains were charred and there was little to identify them as bodies. He was involved in plane crashes on the USS Enterprise and hadn't seen things like he saw during that day working with the remains.

On Sep 12 he went right to the crash site. He talked to a few security people and they let him in. They were turning volunteers away. There were many segments working together, civilians and military. It was difficult to tell who was in charge. The Defense Service Protection Police appeared to be the buffer between the military and the FBI with the FBI giving directions.

He feels he was chosen to help because of his outgoing personality and ability to talk to many people. He also has the medical background and is able to respond to emergencies. He went back to where they said they were going to be putting the bodies for the identification process. That changed, and he got involved with the remains removal.

The FBI was inside when they went in to begin remains removal. There was debris. Their focus was to get in, get the bodies out of there so they could be identified. IT could have taken days if they waited to properly prepare the area, but they were focused on just getting the remains on. It took awhile for them to realize that they would be recovering bodies that loved ones would not even recognize. It wasn't something a person could be prepared for.

Got his strength from professionalism. There's a reason for it. It's expected and you have to find ways of coping. Previous experiences in his life helped him, such as experiences on the ship. The ability to separate yourself from the experience helps. Belief in a higher power.

Lessons learned:

We need to understand Islam. The whole concept of what the religion is. Right now we are ignorant about where these people are coming from. During his cruises on the USS Enterprises at port visits Americans were not well liked. There was a lot of tension.

People need to be aware of their surroundings.

Educate people so they can understand what they're up against.

Change our tactics. They know they can't fight us at their level. They know how we think.

The triage was set up at Henderson Hall, but nobody ever got back there. In this type of explosion, there was a lot of smoke. Anyone close to the fire never made it out, they were overcome with smoke. That was the new wing, so a lot of smoke was trapped. So because of the design of the building the smoke and heat were trapped. That was a down side because people got caught because of smoke inhalation. So we didn't get to treat the second and third degree burns because the people were killed by smoke inhalation. A lot of people with smoke inhalation that did escape got better once they got in the open air.

The remains were just charred bones. There was nothing else. It was hard to make out male and female.

Providing people with emergency survival training similar to what is given on ships could have saved a lot of people.

Abstract by
CDR Carol O'Hagan
October 19,2001

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CAPT(s) Mike McDaniel
CDR Carol O'Hagan
CDR Karen Loftus

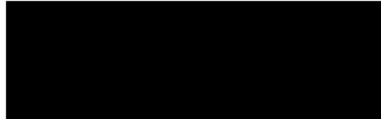
Interviewer's Organization:

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Interviewee:

HMC (SW/AW) Darrell Hamilton

Current Address:



Date of Interview: 15 October 2001

Place of Interview: Navy Annex

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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

Interviewee Information: Born and raised in [REDACTED] New Jersey. Enlisted in the Navy in 1983, looking of a job skill. He is a Hospital Corpsman. He's been a physical therapy technician the last 10 years. He's currently assigned to OPNAV (N122). He just checked on board, having left the USS ENTERPRISE on 4 August 2001. Was in Quantico on September 11th.

Topics Discussed:

TAPE ONE—Side one.

A. The day of the incident I was in Quantico playing golf. Heard a loud boom. We didn't know what it was. At that time, we were discussing the World Trade Center. I immediately went home to Silver Spring, Maryland, and volunteered my services to Naval Hospital Bethesda. No patients came through. They were all absorbed by Arlington County Hospital, a civilian hospital. The next day I came in, but there were no patients to help. I came on site and got involved with Commander Nordholm [Alan F.] in

assisting in taking out the remains from the Pentagon. Primarily, the operation was, we just wanted to record data and send it back. But then we got involved as a team, four Navy personnel: Petty Officer Powell, Commander Nordholm, Senior Chief Greene, and myself. We were involved in removing remains.

I had been around deaths before from the USS ENTERPRISE, and throughout my time in the Navy as a Corpsman in hospitals and dealing with patients. This situation was a little bit different due to the fact that these were charred remains—you couldn't even call them bodies. It was something you had to get your frame of mind situated to work with. There was no flesh. Nothing to identify the bodies. It was kind of rough dealing with that. It was a whole different perspective—a whole different outlook on things.

I was involved in plane crashes on the USS ENTERPRISE flight deck and had seen some grotesque things, but nothing as close to what I saw at the Pentagon on the 12th of September. That is a very sobering experience. It was with me for the first couple of weeks, just trying to get situated; to put things into perspective and compartmentalize it. Me getting back into a normal routine. It's something that just takes getting used to.

From time to time, I'll think about it. There's one particular case where I saw a woman. She had flesh from her nose up to her eyebrow, and that was it. That was it. The rest of the body was just charred. I saw part of a brown shoe on her foot, on the lateral side of her foot, and that was it. The rest was just charred. It gave you some sense that this was a human being, but that was it. It kind of hit me for a second. That could have been me.

That was my peer. This was especially so when I actually saw a Navy person there. It was even closer. The whole magnitude of the situation. Experiencing that, and the fact that we were attacked. What was going to happen next? The country's whole response to this whole sobering experience. In a sense, it's kind of over whelming. The sense of insecurity at the train station. It's constantly in the news.

It was a very big experience. I saw the Secretary of Defense, and the Chief of Staff for the President. The President was actually there. He came on the site and we met them. Seeing everybody there, everybody trying to sort it out in their own way. It hit everybody. The fire departments, the police, the special police for the Department of Defense, the FBI. Everybody with their own look on their face—trying to figure out what had happened. This had happened on our home turf. Everybody had a way of dealing with it. Some people were more up beat. They dealt with it at home and then came back out the next day. But everybody had that look on their face—wow, this actually happened. No matter who you were, from the President on down, and his staff, everyone had that look of trying put on their smiling face to cheer the next person. It was interesting to sit back and just observe the whole aspect. The way everybody got involved. Home Depot, people sending out food, the spirit that started to come into play immediately. That was an effect.

When it happened, that evening, when I came home from Bethesda Hospital, I rode my bike. That's what I do to unwind. People were driving home at a slow pace. It wasn't that busy rush-hour traffic. People were just absorbing the shock. Coming to work the

next day, some people stayed home. But others came to work and said, how can I get involved? I'm not going to let the terrorists keep me from doing my normal routine. Everybody was trying to get back to their normal routine. It was different trying to watch the whole situation.

Q. Let's go back to when you first heard about the incident. Did you hear about the World Trade Center first?

A. Yes.

Q. What went through your mind when you heard that?

A. Wow! The first crash—you thought, wow, the World Trade Center. You didn't want to think it was a terrorist attack, but you kind of had it in the back of your mind. I knew there was tension because of current events. For example, we didn't participate in the peace talks in South Africa. When you heard the second one crash, wow, there was a second one that happened. It was a terrorist attack. How could it happen? We talked about it. This is incredible. Then boom! You heard the boom in Quantico. Then we saw the smoke. Everybody just dispersed to the Pentagon; still thinking this would hit us. What's going on? We don't know what's the magnitude--

Q. You were at Quantico?

A. Yes.

Q. You heard the explosion?

A. Yes.

Q. And you saw the smoke? What did you think? Did you have a radio with you?

A. They had radios. People were watching TVs.

Q. What were they saying?

A. I can't remember. Everyone was in shock.

Q. What did you do when you realized that the Pentagon had been hit?

A. My response was to render aid. But you couldn't get in because everything was blocked off. I went to Bethesda Naval Hospital. That was my next step. Plus, I live in that neighborhood. I thought we would catch the residual patients there, but nobody really trickled in. I went home and came in the next day to see what needed to be done. That's when I went down to the site.

Q. Where is your actual work site?

A. Right here in the Navy Annex, N12.

Q. This is where you came the next day?

A. Yes.

Q. What happened when you reported in the next day?

A. I was trying to put things into perspective. What do we do? Everyone was trying to do work, but you couldn't do work because a lot of our work is tied up with the Pentagon—systems and what have you. We were going through the motions, because that's how we're trained. Eyes were glued to the TV to catch the latest developments. Going through the rosters to make sure that everybody had checked in. I couldn't sit idle, so I went down to the site to try and help from there.

Q. How did you get selected for the recovery effort?

A. Commander Nordholm was there. He saw my Navy uniform and he told me to come over and help.

Q. Did you realize what you were getting into?

A. No. I thought I was going to help with paperwork.

Q. Was that just for the 12th, or did you continue in that role?

A. No. That night, they made the determination that they just wanted the 33rd Infantry and 54th Quartermasters from the Army to undertake this tasking. There were just us four Navy personnel that were involved in this as far as the remains removal. We were gone all night. At this point, they decided that these two units were going to handle the tasking from that point forward.

Q. When you went to the Pentagon on the 12th, what kind of organization did you see going on? Was it pretty much outside in the parking lot? Where exactly did you go?

A. I went right to the actual crash site. There was security. I just talked to a couple of people and got in.

Q. Was there somebody in charge of volunteers showing up?

A. Really, they were turning people away. Everything was designated. You had your typical political issues; who's going to be in charge? What are the standard protocols as to who's going to run this? That was going on.

Q. Who did it appear was in charge at that point? Could you tell?

A. No. It was kind of funny. You never had that many segments at once working together. Normally, all our military events happen overseas so you are automatically in charge. You don't have the FBI. This was domestic, but it was at a military site. So you had the military, which normally take charge. You had the FBI and various segments within that. You heard "I work for Admiral So-and-so. I work for General So-and-so. He wants to get reports. I work for so-and-so." That was going on.

Q. What kind of direction did you get from the FBI as far as what actions you should take to protect the scene?

A. The FBI was talking with somebody. I had nothing to do with who they were talking to directly. From what I could tell, it was different for them too. The Defense Protective Police [DPS] was taking orders from them too. They were like the buffer between the FBI and the military. The FBI was really into investigating the area as a crime scene. They were kind of standoffish.

Q. Did DPS talk to you about what they wanted you to do?

A. No. I went in and said, hey, how you doing. I have an outgoing personality. Just rolled in and talked to people. I'm trying to gather what my role could be. There were people from all over. The Red Cross had folks there instantly and was set up. Support units. Makeshift this, makeshift that.

I went back to where they said they were going to be putting the bodies. But once we got suited up, that changed. They were supposed to go back to a tent and do the identification process, but that changed. They went down to some big freezer in the South Parking lot. Once we were involved in removal of remains that took up the time for the rest of the time there. We went from one end of the building to the other.

Q. When they selected you to be part of the recovery effort, was it just because you were at a certain spot at a certain time, or did they identify something in you that they specifically needed?

A. It's kind of strange. There were a whole lot of other people there, prior to me getting in. They just told me to get dressed and do it. That's it. It's in my nature. I'm medical. Medical emergencies; respond, be there, let's make something happen. Let me get in there and see what I can do. But I didn't know that it was remains that I would be moving.

Q. Did they give you any kind of brief before you went in about safety, what to be looking for, or to prepare you for what you might see?

A. Actually, the FBI was in there already. It was dangerous. The building wasn't stable. It was jagged. There were safety issues. Had they tried to resolve all that, then it would have taken days. If you think about the whole mind set at the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, the whole mindset was to get the bodies or the remains out so we can immediately account for everybody. Period. That was the whole mindset. That was our mindset. Get the bodies. Get them out so we could move on. Everybody wanted to move on. So we didn't look at it from any other aspect.

There was water as deep as this table, with all sorts of rubbish and debris, 4 feet, 6 feet high, up and down. You had piles and puddles of water. In between those you had bodies and remains. It could have taken days if they wanted to properly prepare an area. That wasn't my—especially that day, the 12th. You had the President and the Secretary of Defense come down, and all those folks. We thought, hey, let's make things happen now. We started getting them out, even though the process was a lot slower. But you had to put yourself in the shoes of the families. You could sympathize with the families. We had families outside wanting to know, where's my loved one. It took us a while to realize that there wasn't going to be a body or remains they would recognize. It was a situation where you would come to remains and there would be three legs—two left legs and one right leg. Actually, you had to know your body parts to even know what you were doing. It was one of those things that I don't think we were prepared for. The initial explosion, if you think about, was like a nuclear explosion. You had people sitting

at their desk, and they had seen the blast. They were still just sitting at their desk like this, looking at their computers. You're looking at that type of situation. Body parts were blown all over from the force.

Q. What do you look at in your lifetime that prepared you to be able to make it through a day like that? Where did you get your strength?

A. You look to your professionalism. It's almost like it's expected, and you have to find your ways of coping. I went through some situations early on in my life so I had a coping mechanism. It's like when I was on the ship. You see certain things and you have to sit down and think about it, and look for a little strand to separate you. I'm a Play Station freak and that separates me from that reality. I went home and was doing that for a while. I would ride my bike with my headphones. I can ride for 40 or 50 miles at a pop. Again, it's that separation. Then you come back and deal with reality. It's a constant coping mechanism. You think of a Higher Power. Currently, I'm in school. It's a separation. I also have the kids. I just got off the ship so this kid thing is a traumatic thing in itself.

Q. How old are your children?

A. 15 months, a 6-year old, and a 14-year from a previous relationship.

Q. Have you had a chance to talk to them about it?

A. No.

Q. What kind of questions have they had?

A. My 14-year old son wanted to know if I was okay? He was glad and was like, wow. But I didn't talk to him about it. I just never did. My daughter, whose 6, I never talked to them in depth about it. Maybe, when there's an opportunity. But with children, I guess I'm not ready to. You have to look at it from a different perspective and deal with their emotions. They are going to have a lot of questions. As I'm talking to you, they're going to have 20 more questions on that one statement. What does this mean? Why did God do this? What's the whole ramifications of this? So, you just kind of keep it general.

Q. Those are hard questions to answer.

A. Right. They could tell from my behavior that I wasn't going to go any further. They were probably ready for me to tell them more about it, but they could tell.

Q. Does you little girl help you, just cuddling with her?

A. Yes.

Q. As senior enlisted leadership, if you were to be in an instructor or leadership role, what have you learned from this that you would impart to young Sailors or young people?

A. I teach Navy Rights and Responsibilities. One of the topics we talk about is ethics. I bring up the issue of Islam. This dates back to when I was talking about the Oklahoma City bombing. Everybody's first assumption was Islam. Just understanding Islam. Some day, that could be our enemy. It's the fastest growing religion in the world, right

now. In fact, I think it's the fastest growing religion in the United States. At one time it was number two, behind the Latter-day Saints [The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, also known as the Mormons]. Understanding the whole concept of what that religion is. Right now, we are learning on the go. We are really kind of ignorant. We keep asking why? You have to understand where these people are coming from. There's a lot of finger pointing—if the military wasn't downsized; if this hadn't happened, if that hadn't happened. Just understanding the religion, its surroundings and current events.

I was just on the ENTERPRISE and we were not very well liked on this cruise, except for England. In Greece, they walked up and yelled, Americans go home, blah, blah. There are a lot of issues going on in the Med [Mediterranean]. I know that sentiment. In France, Islam is very big. There was a lot of tension there. When we went through the Suez [Canal], we were armed and ready to go, expecting something to happen. You knew it was there. Be aware of your surroundings. Educate people. This whole process is about education and us being in our little cocoon. Knowing about Anthrax. Everybody was really upset about the vaccination. You no longer hear that.

In 1987, I was in an admin office, and I worked in medical intelligence at Bethesda. Something we call "low intensity conflict." Low intensity conflict has been on the table since that time. You talk about the doctoral center out in Monroe, Virginia. That's been there. You just couldn't get the funding. You couldn't get the powers that be to buy into it because of the money and politics involved. If you look at now, how we're fighting

this particular war, it's low intensity conflict. All you hear people talking about is special ops, biological, the whole nine yards.

In fact, Techtronics, the company who designed the equipment that tells you whether you're positive for Anthrax, they are from BDRP biological out of Naval Medical Research Institute in Bethesda, Maryland. I know who the guys are. Dr. Mull and Dr. Nelson; they're all Navy people. Tom O'Brien who founded the company. The Navy did all that. But every year, they had to fight for funding for these various things. Things didn't work out so they took it on the outside. Everyone thought it would fall on its face and bam! The number one thing we have to prepare for now is Anthrax. Now, we in the Navy no longer have license to that because the guy took all his stuff and went out and started his own company.

The way we do business really hit home. We have to pay attention to certain things that make sense to me. Like this bombing [in Afghanistan]; is this a good idea right now? Causing people to be our enemies versus making friends. You do that on the ground level. Send in your Green Berets and work with the indigenous people instead of making them enemies. With bomb strikes you're going to hit innocent people and that gives them propaganda.

It changes the way we do things. I know this time we had some FBI agents. It's impossible for me to think that they were geared for this antiterrorism. What were they geared for before? There are lots of questions and we have to be educated and prepare, to

stop and to understand what is going on at our level. You know when the situation will come when we have to give an answer, or stop and prevent a situation. It's being more educated. These groups have been documented and followed, but nothing was ever really taken seriously. We just moved on. We're trying to move on now, but we just can't. Not with the Anthrax. We're starting to look at these guys now as serious adversaries. We're the ones that have to change our tactics. They know they can't fight us at our level. They've studied us, they know us, and they know how we think. It's a different concept.

Q. You said there was a Tom O'Brien? Is that the one who left the Navy and started the—

A. He was a civilian the whole time. He first came in as a contractor, and then they gave him a GS rating. They wanted to promote him because he was outstanding in his particular project. But because he didn't have his masters or Ph.D, they said they couldn't give it to him. In hindsight, these same people are regretting that. After the Desert Storm War, the Marines immediately started funding this project. They saw a need, but then it died out and we stopped supporting that. We don't even have enough Anthrax vaccinations for the military. Myself, I only got 3 or 4 shots and you're supposed to get 6 to complete the series. Our entire battle group only go that much.

Q. Do you know if our forward deployed people have received all 6 of the shots?

A. No ma'm. I *was* forward deployed. I was forward deployed for my last cruise. And on this cruise, we didn't get *any* Anthrax vaccinations. Whether or not they have sent

some out since September 11th, I don't know. But I know they stopped it just before our last cruise ended. And that was on our 3rd or 4th vaccination in a series in 6. So that never happened.

Q. Regarding some of the other HMs that you've talked with throughout this ordeal—I went and did the interviews for the USS COLE. We learned that some of the basic first-aid the Sailors had learned all the way through their careers came into play for triage and other things that they needed. Have you heard any other discussion from the Corpsmen and the medical side of the house regarding the Pentagon incident?

A. The triage was set up, but nobody really came out. Then they were whisk away in the ambulance. We had a lot of Corpsmen set up at Henderson Hall, but nobody really made it back there. There were only about two people. A lot of the Corpsmen said they never really used a lot of their skills. Same thing with myself. I went to Bethesda Naval Hospital, but the need never materialized.

On this particular type of bombing, when you think about it, when it exploded, there was a lot of smoke. A lot of people were overcome by smoke. Anyone who was close to the fire never even made it out. They were just overcome with smoke. How they responded was they panicked. In a big building like the Pentagon, it's easy for anybody to get lost. That had a lot to do with it. Also, that was a new wing so a lot of the smoke was trapped and people were overcome. So that's happened. Normally, you can treat some 2nd and 3rd degree burns, but those folks never made it out. Even if you had 2nd or 3rd degree burns, you weren't going to make it out because of smoke inhalation and the amount of

heat that was trapped. The way the new building was designed was a pro and a con. Some of the windows withstood the blast, but they trapped the smoke in and it wasn't able to let a lot of that smoke out. That was the down side. Smoke inhalation and then the immense heat caught a lot of people. That's the down side. Therefore, we weren't able to treat as many people as you would think from a blast like that. The renovation prevented the building from collapsing, so that was a good point. There's pro and con to everything. In this situation, we never got the chance to treat the 2nd and 3rd degree burns because the smoke got them before they got out. There were some people who were fine—just the smoke inhalation alone killed them, just that alone.

Q. You either made it or you didn't? There just was not a lot of middle ground?

A. Right, and if you didn't lose your bearing, which would have been very easy. You train children to hit the ground and crawl out, but how often do we do it as adults?

Q. Did you actually find people who were not burned, but who you later found out died from smoke inhalation and you knew they'd been trapped?

A. We didn't get that far in. We didn't even get to those people. The FBI made it further back. But we only got about 20 remains at that time. We didn't make it that far back into the building. There were a lot with smoke inhalation that did manage to get out. Once they got outside in the fresh air, they got better, if they were still conscious. There were a lot of windows in that building that were still intact, which meant that the smoke couldn't get out. It just bellowed around in there.

Q. From what you heard and what you experienced, what was the coordination effort between the civilian EMT folks from the various counties? Did you have any involvement with that?

A. I talked with some from Arlington County. They didn't get a lot of the burns either. The two bodies that we found were the two Navy. They were still intact, more or less. After the first day, I didn't go back in the building.

Q. Personally, I don't know how I would have coped with what you walked through. Did you know any of the remains that you found? Did you know who they were?

A. No. You would have had no idea. If you've ever left a piece of chicken on the grill for three hours, that's how the remains were. That's all you saw. There was no flesh, no inner meat, just bones. You could look right through the ribs. There was nothing there. Nothing,nothing. That's what made it kind of—there was nothing. You might see some nail beds. You might see some charred teeth. No hair. It was hard to make out male from female. It was that type of party. It was like wow. It was sobering. That took some getting use to. Sometimes you'd just stare just to try to say, okay, let me be able to handle this. Then you would look at it for a couple of extra seconds so you'd know what you were dealing with. It may have been the Corpsman in me, but I've never seen anything like that before. Never.

Q. I'm imagining you went in teams? How many people were on the team?

A. Yes. There were four.

Q. You said you weren't aware, that you didn't really know what you were getting into when you went into the building. Did you feel anyone on the team was prepared for what you were going to find?

A. No. No, ma'm.

Q. Were you given any directions on what to do with what you found?

A. No. All they said—this Sergeant Major who was conducting the whole thing, who was in charge of it—said this will change your outlook for the rest of your life. It wasn't anything intense. It was just the Infantry mentality of let's go in and just do it. We just kind of assimilated ourselves to this group. Their mentality was, this was a task. If you have a problem, go see the Chaplain or a crisis team manager afterwards. That was put out constantly. By the end of the evening they were insisting. If you had participated, you must see a chaplain the next day or that evening. If you showed any weakness, they took you off immediately—they'd say no, you're not going back in. The Army had a big division, so the guys were able to rotate one team one day and another team the next. They were bringing in 40-50 guys at a pop. We only did it that one day and then they said just these two divisions were going to do it.

Q. Did you document where you found different remains? Did they ask you to do anything like that to help identify--?

A. No, we didn't. They had another team out who took the bodies. The FBI was tagging. If you found any identification [inaudible]—

Q. Nothing about location? Was something being noted about where things were being found?

A. I couldn't tell you because that was the FBI and those guys. They even had a team of people from pathology—morticians from AFIP [Armed Forces Institute of Pathology], I imagine. They were in there so I guess that was their task. You could see they were getting burned out because they started putting two left legs in together. They just wanted out. It was something. You'd pick up a leg—okay, this one goes with this one over here—no this one goes over here—all you're looking at is a leg. You'd just stare. Some of these guys were not medical. The large majority that was moving remains—they'd never seen anything like that. So, they couldn't tell the parts of a dead body one from the other. But everybody just dealt with it and said this is what we've got to do.

Q. Are you familiar with the SPRINT team?

A. Yes.

Q. Had you dealt with them before? Had you known about them and their function before the incident? Or did you learn about them post-incident?

A. The SPRINT Team is on our rating exam. I knew that much, but I've never dealt with them. They were always flown out overseas, never domestic. That was one of the test questions too; the SPRINT team will be sent to this LHA or LPD per this incident and they will assist. They always went somewhere else. You never think you'll deal with SPRINT team in your own back yard.

Q. How did it work?

A. It worked. They weren't on the scene, and I probably couldn't see them functioning in that environment. I don't think they would have been effective on the scene. But away from the scene, set in a building with this type of environment would be better. If someone had dealt with their emotions right on the scene, I don't think they would have been able to go back in. Not in that environment, but after the fact. Better to go away from the site, get themselves together and then go back--but not on the scene. No way.

Q. Would it be better to talk to them at the end of the task rather than in the middle of the task?

A. Yes. See, when you're dealing with the situation, you're detached. You have to be detached. You also know that the building could fall, but its like, let's go ahead and do this. That was everybody's frame of mind. Any time you start dealing with feelings, then you start dealing with our family and whatever, then you are more prone to break down. That's my interpretation.

Q. How close were you to the fires in the building. The Pentagon was still burning that day. How close were you to that?

A. Right there. Nobody said, I'm not going in because it's burning, nobody. The offer was always there—you don't have to do this.

Q. Were you given any kind of special equipment?

A. We were given respirators, the suits, the boots, and gloves. We had protective devices. That was no problem.

Q. How did that work with the fire department trying to put out the fire at the same time you guys were going in?

A. They'd put it out and say we could go in, then something would start up. They'd seal off that part of the building and work on that. I think the main priority was getting the bodies out. Especially when you've sent that up the flag pole sir, we're working on this right away to remove the remains. This had gone up to the President and the Secretary of Defense. Not that that was a bad thing, but that's what was happening. There was the fuel and the heat—but nothing happened to nobody, thank god.

Q. Could you smell the fuel?

A. There were so many different smells in there I couldn't tell you.

TAPE ONE—Side Two.

Q. Did you see any parts of the plane where you were?

A. There was one seat, with a torso, a rib, and a pelvic area. She was wearing a G-string. That was the only seat. I didn't see any more. That was more or less to my right. That was all I saw, but that was because I ventured off.

Q. So the rest of the plane was pretty much demolished?

A. Right. They said they had seen something further, but I didn't go further. I didn't venture too far into the building.

Q. Do you know what spaces you were in that day? Have you been made aware of whether it was the Command Center spaces or was it—

A. I have no idea. I haven't researched it, and couldn't care less. I know we might have been near an "N" space, because of this brown shoe that was on a foot was khaki. So we might have been in one of the "N" spaces.

Q. Have you spent any time with the SPRINT team?

A. I talked to someone from pastoral care the next day. That was about it. They were made available, but I didn't.

Q. Have you spent any more time with Petty Officer Powell, or Commander Nordholm?

A. Petty Officer Powell came over to my house with his family. We sat and talked in general. We didn't talk about this too much. Commander Nordholm comes by my office. He says hi, how you doing, how are things going?

Q. Did you know each other before hand?

A. No. Not at all. I didn't know any of them before.

Q. Were they medical types also?

A. Yes. Commander Nordholm is a research psychologist. Petty Officer Powell works up in the N13 shop, where he's doing general Corpsman stuff. The only one I really had any experience with was Senior Chief Price or Senior Chief Greene (I'm really not sure

which name it is). He works at AFIP. They specialize in dealing with bodies and things like that. That was a political fight. His people argued with somebody else for about two hours about the bodies going to Delaware. There were catfights all over the place. We just kind of sat back from all that.

Q. Is there anything that you can think of that you would like to add that we haven't asked out about?

A. No. I think I've pretty much covered it. It's a long haul prospect. More attention has to be paid to the other aspects. We as Americans thought we had this big shield, that we were untouchable. But as soon as someone knows there is a kink in the armor we can expect more. What types? I don't know. It might be a car bomb, it might be this, it might that, and it might be whatever. Mechanisms have to be set in place to deal with them and then educate people on how to respond and how to deal with it. Like with the Anthrax, I think they are just testing to see how we respond. Then there will be something else. We have to understand our adversaries. I remember a documentary on Pakistan where they talked about the opium. If you read about the Crusades, that type of warfare happened even back then. How they dealt with it was a lot different. We really have to understand our enemy. Everything's going to change, and we have to change with it.

Even now, we are talking about the mindset of the people who did this. I live in Silver Spring, [Maryland], which is right next to Laurel, [Maryland], where they were. I'm conscious now. Anybody I see, I'm kind of looking now, what's going on in their mind?

What are their feelings? I had a conversation with this guy. One of the first things he brought up was that we did not participate in the talks with Israel. I'm like you know this, did you know that this was going to happen, or that something was going to happen? What else do you know about what might happen next.

Q. Was he a Muslim?

A. He was from a Middle Eastern country.

Q. Did he indicate to you that he knew anything?

A. No. No, he didn't. Then my wife's hairdresser said pretty much the same thing. We just have to get a firm understanding of what's going on.

Q. Your 14-year old son comes to you in a few years and says he wants to join the military. What kind of training would you want to make sure he gets, in addition to understanding the geo-political situation out there? What would you want to see him prepared with?

A. A firm belief in God, in a Higher Power. That's a good question. I ask myself if I'm prepared? I talked to a guy that was in Vietnam and asked him what got him through? He said he went to as many schools as possible, he learned as much as possible, which enabled him to survive. That's what I'd tell my son. I would tell him to go into the special ops arena, unless he wants to go into a field that he wants to do for the rest of his life. I'd tell him to go SEALS, because you'll get all the training you'll need to survive. The Pentagon is an example. If you had had any kind of training whatever, you could

have gotten yourself out of that building. A lot of people panicked and succumbed to the smoke. The Pentagon's a colossal building and I'm sure people got lost and confused. But with training, you can deal with that, even if it was pitch black. Like we do on the ship. You had to learn about the ship in case there was an explosion. I never keyed in on it, and thank god nothing happened, but that was the same situation in the Pentagon. You do drill on a ship and with field hospitals, but we don't do it domestically. That kind of training, like we get in the fleet, could have saved a lot of lives and injuries. What to do immediately. You hear a boom; you hit the deck, survey the area, and then take it from there. If you're still on the deck, you work your way out. Keep the door closed. I don't think a lot of things were adhered to. People just took off running. I talked to people who just took off running. They didn't know where they were running to. Some ran into the fire and then ran out. Thank god nothing happened. It wasn't a reasoned response.

Q. What's the greatest lesson you have learned about yourself through all this?

A. I don't know, to be honest. I'm still coping. I'm still wondering if this is going to affect me one way or another. Am I going to break down at some point? I don't think so. I think I can handle situations more. I've seen a lot. I don't think it made me that much different. I don't look at it that way. I'm in the mindset to just move on. I am more aware. I think about it. What if I'm in the shopping mall and something happens and I'm trapped. I have to be able to think and relate.

Q. Anything else you would like to add?

A. No, sir.

Q. Thank you so much for your time. This has been an incredible story.

A. You're welcome.

Transcribed by:
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