

**Naval Historical Center
Oral Interview Summary Form**

Interviewers:

Capt Michael McDaniel
Capt (Sel) Carol O'Hagan

Interviewer's Organization:

Naval Historical Center

Interviewee:

IT1(SW) Michael A. James

Current Address:

██████████
████████████████████
████████████████████

Date of Interview:

16 Apr 2002

Place of Interview:

Pentagon

Number of Cassettes:

One

Security Classification:

Unclassified

Name of Project: Pentagon Terrorist Attack Incident

Subject Terms/Key Words: Eyewitness; NAVTELCOM; Navy Command Center; Pentagon; Terrorist Attack; 11 September 2001

Abstract of Interview:

Interviewee Information:

Born in ████████, NE but raised in Denver, CO, where he attended high school and college half days and received an AA in Audio Visual. He worked with his father at the bookbindery and held several other positions prior to joining the military. He entered the military under the delayed entry program and performed his boot camp in San Diego, CA. After boot camp he was assigned twice to the *USS Nassau* (LHA 4), Norfolk, VA. He was also assigned to the NAVCOMU CUTLER, and then the *USS Wainwright* until it was decommissioned then to the *USS Kalamazoo*. In 1994 he transferred to OPNAV TCC at the Pentagon and continued his Naval career overseas in various capacities. Then in December 2000 he returned to OPNAV TCC and was stationed there the day of the incident.

Topics Discussed:

On 11 Sep IT1 James started his day at the Anacostia Naval Base to participate in a PT test. He was assigned the watch that day but the test was mandatory or he would have been at the Pentagon. When he returned home he heard the news about the first plane crashing into the Towers. He telephoned his office to tell the Yeoman that she should let the Commander know about the crash in New York. As he was getting dressed he caught a glimpse of the second plane hitting the second Tower. He called the watch deck and told them that this was probably a

terrorist attack because of the second plane purposely hitting the Towers. He also informed the Yeoman of the second attack.

He and his wife immediately left for the Pentagon. As he approached the light between the Navy Annex and the Pentagon he heard a loud noise and glanced up to see the nose cone of a plane flying in the direction of the Pentagon. The plane was flying low enough that it bounced his car from the street into the median. He watched the plane hit the Pentagon from a nearby service station. After he figured out what had happened, he put on his strobe lights on and went to South parking but was unable to gain entry due to DPS taping off the street.

Since he was unable to enter the parking lot he telephoned his mother to let her know that he and his wife were fine. He then called his supervisor at the Watch Deck on the opposite side of the building where the plane hit. He was informed that they were preparing for evacuation.

He went back to the DPS to see what if anything he could do and was told by the DPS to block off the traffic. However, two DPS and one Arlington policemen had the intersection blocked off so he was instructed to block off the intersection near the Navy Annex. After sending his wife home an hour after he blocked off the intersection he stayed until 9:30 pm.

As he watched he knew that the D and E Rings of the Pentagon were gone. Especially as the flames started to subside you could see through D and a portion of C. He had a pretty good idea that anybody in the Navy Command Center, his office and the Navy switchboard was gone. He had two petty officers in his watch crew down there but one had gone out to the courtyard and was not injured. The other petty officer and six other members of his command lost their lives. If it had been ten minutes earlier he too would have lost his life because he would have gone directly to the Admin and Watch offices.

During the period he was blocking off the traffic there was a generous outpouring of help and support by the Red Cross and others,

His hometown newspaper, the Denver Post interviewed him six hours after the crash. The interview went well except when he was asked if he felt lucky to be alive? This was upsetting because he had no idea how many people of his command were missing. About two hours after the crash he was able to reach the Commanding Officer of NAVCOMTELSTA. The CO informed him that they were able to track down, either by sight or phone or verbal confirmation, members of the command. The only injury IT1 James sustained was third degree sunburn due to the long period he stood at the intersection.

He was relieved and went home, however, he received a telephone call informing him that he had over 2,500 messages and needed to return with his people to take care of the backlog of messages. At about 2150 he returned to the Pentagon. He did not encounter any problems getting through the checkpoints. Upon entering the building he noticed there was about a six to twelve inches of black smoke rolling across the ceiling. As he walked he could see his footprints on the floor and the higher he went in the building the thicker the smoke. When he reached the fifth floor (5A910) there was about 24 inches of black smoke but the Message Center was quite clean. He and another petty officer start bringing up the servers and proceeded to process the messages. The messages varied, however, they were pretty much pertaining to the incident of 11

Sep. At 0200 they deactivated the CARRP (Communications Alt Route Rescue Procedure) started bringing the traffic back to the Pentagon and received another large surge of messages. Once the CARRP was deactivated he instituted the emergency recall bill and called in the mid-watch that would normally come in at 1800 that night. He and the other petty officer stayed until the full crew arrived and did a pass down before he left at 0245 on 12 Sep. He did not return to the Pentagon the next day.

He did not want to return to work but felt he had a job to do and crewmembers to assist so he sucked it up and went back into the Pentagon. He still flinches when he sees a plane overhead that makes him think about 11 Sep. He now looks at life differently and it is not as much as a rush-rush. He has slowed down and takes his time rather than rushing through life.

Abstracted by:
YNC Ann Alston
21 Apr 02

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Topics Discussed:

Q. (24:05) Your role there is what?

A. When I first got there I was the communications watch officer for one of the watch crews that's on a twelve hour rotation.

Q. (24:13) Doing mostly what?

A. Overseeing and supervising and acting as Traffic OPS officer for all the message traffic that goes out from SECNAV CNO. We do it a little bit differently now, since we have email and the SMAILNET (phonetic). They can email it to us and we process it via electronics and then we turn it and transmit it via electronics without even having to touch paper or touch a diskette, which is a lot nicer than from the last time I was here.

We process outgoing net, the general messages like the ALLCOMSNV ADMINS. (both phonetic) things of that nature. We also handle trouble shooting, software-wise, equipment-wise for a little over 5000 end users on either the classified or on the unclassified, if they have problems with message prepping programs or just soft, you know Microsoft software in general. You know, if it's something that we can help out. If not we can at least point them in the right direction. LAN support help desk, or the DMS folks over at the Yard or if it's during the day watch we can put them in contact with our DMS folks that are stationed here at the Pentagon.

Q. (25:35) What interface do you have with the NMCI folks?

A. Would you like the truth, or would you like a lie. As little as possible, because right now really nobody really wants to talk with them.

Q. (25:45) Really?

A. For the simple fact that the Navy Marine Corps Internet (NMCI) think they own everything. When it comes to computers and equipment, yes, they may do, but when it comes into need to install a rack or something like that, they need to realize that they don't own the space. They

need to talk with the people that own the space, and they need to quit changing policies every time we turn around as far as who's going to get, who's getting what and kind of like ask us, well how many terminals do you need? Or how many classified terminals do you need. We provide the information, you know, we expect to get the same amount of at least what we have now. Well then they come back with this list all chopped up and red ink saying, "We don't feel you deserve that many classified. So we're only going to give you three."

I've got nineteen classified terminals. Where's the justification in taking those? NMCI is not a very good household word around the Pentagon right now. They've been doing good on a lot of other things, trying to get people relocated for temporary offices and things like that, but when it comes to the upgrading to the new systems and things like that they're being very demanding where they shouldn't be.

Q. (27:14) So you think there will be a lot of growing pains still?

A. Oh yes, and you'll see a lot of pains even well after I'm gone. Of course they'll be yelling. More likely they'll be yelling at me by that time, because I'm looking at possibly accepting a proposal with them, to start working with the (_____ Inaudible 27:40)

Q. (27:37) Then you'll have to talk nice about them, right?

A. Huh.

Q. (27:39) Then you'll have to talk nice about them, right?

A. No, I'll still stand up and speak my mind. If I don't think something's right, I'll tell them.

Q. (27:48) Well, at least you'll understand both sides that way.

A. True and if I can get this job then maybe I can turn around and try and allow other people to see what we were having to deal with. So maybe the working relationship can smooth out a little better than what it is right now.

Somebody calls up and says, so and so wants to talk to you from NMCI, we all run. I mean we don't even want phone calls.

Q. (28:19) Tell us about 9/11, your experiences on the 11th of September. Kind of walk us through that day, your recollection.

A. Well, I was up at 5:30 in the morning. I grabbed a cup of coffee and after I got done taking a shower put my sweats on, and I headed over to Anacostia to the naval base over there. We're doing a –

Q. (28:48) What area do you live in?

A. I live just off of Little River Turnpike in Backlick (phonetic) Road, not Maningdale (phonetic). Went over to Anacostia for a mock PT test. Ever since the standards have changed for the PRT, I've been just a little short on my runs so, I've been on mandatory PT for a while. I went over, conducted the run. I guess it was about 8:15 or so when I left the yard, left Anacostia, headed back to go home. I was supposed to have been on watch that day in the Pentagon, but I had to take the test so I was going to be running a little bit late.

As I was pulling up in my driveway, or in the parking lot -

Q. (29:45) Otherwise you would have been on watch?

A. Yes, if I didn't have to take the test I would have not only been on watch I would have been in the office that we lost.

Q. (29:54) Wow!

A. Got home, as I was pulling in I heard the first report of something hitting the Tower. They weren't sure what it was at the time, and I was thinking to myself, "How stupid can somebody be to get that close to the Towers," or that close to two buildings that big, to get caught in the updraft, down draft whatever it was that threw them into the building.

Shut the car off, went inside real quick. Turned on the news, which my wife had already had the news on, and started watching that for a minute. Picked up the phone and I called our Yeoman to let her know that she might want to let the Commander know that something was going on. He may want to walk out into NCC and watch the TV. Went upstairs,

Q. (30:47) NCC being?

A. The Navy Command Center where the Duty Captain sits at in the new, what used to be the new wing.

Turned the shower on. Got ready to take a shower. I was listening to the TV upstairs. Was in the process of shaving and out of the corner of my eye seen the plane hit the, come out of the corner of the screen and hit the second tower. Stopped what I was doing. Picked up the phone, called the watch deck over at the Pentagon and told them that this was more then likely a terrorist attack, that a second plane purposely slammed into the second Trade Tower. Hung up with them. Told them that I was on my way in. Called back down to the Yeoman to tell her that a second plane had just hit the tower, another tower, and that I was on my way in. Wiped the shaving

cream off. Didn't even bother taking a shower, jumped into my uniform, yelled at my wife, "Get in the car! Let's go!"

At that time of the morning I knew—I guess it was around 8:30, quarter to nine or so—I knew I wasn't going to get down 395, not at that time in the morning, so since Columbia Pike ends basically at my back door, I took Columbia Pike all the way in. Traffic was a little heavy on that. I guess it was around 9:10, 9:15. Come around the corner of the bend down here, as I was coming up to the light in between the Navy Annex and the Pentagon and I heard a deep, loud rumble. Happened to glance up; all I seen was nose cone, and before I could really say anything, about eighty feet above my head, the plane flying as I came up to the red light down here between the gas station and proceeded to sit there and watch the plane. Looked like it, it sounded like it picked up speed. Like they had gunned the engines. It hit to the right and I thought it had taken out a pole, but I wasn't sure. It looked like it had clipped a car, but I wasn't sure. I didn't hear about, until later that it had actually clipped a taxicab, and then swerved back over to the left and proceeded to slam into the building. I'm not sure, I heard reports that it had possibly skipped off the helo pad area, but I'm not sure if it did or not. It looked like it went straight in. That was all in a matter of about, a little less then five seconds.

Q. (33:34) Were you viewing the plane from the back or at anytime did you see it from the side so you could see the windows?

A. What I was looking at was nose cone, the underbelly and the tail section as it flew right over the top of us. The plane was low enough that it bounced my car from the street into the medium, into the grass area. I've got a Chevy –

Q. (34:00) From the impact you mean? The impact, or -?

A. No, from the plume coming off the, off the engines.

Q. (34:05) Really?

A. It was that, it was low enough to take and move the car over.

As soon as it hit and I real—I came to my senses of what actually happened, I reached down, hit my strobe lights, ran the red light. Got down to the intersection going into, where it bends around to go to South Parking, and the DPS was already taping off the street. So I stopped down there.

He was absolutely, he was not letting anybody in whatsoever. So I stood there for a minute.

Grabbed my cell phone real quick. Called my mom. She answered the phone. I said, “I’m alive, we’re OK. A 747 just hit the Pentagon. Love you, bye.”

Tried to call the watch deck. I got through forth or fifth ring. Told CHUCK, which is currently my boss, which is MR. WATKINS. Reason I call him CHUCK is he’s my boss. He’s a civilian, but he was also the best man at my wedding when I got married in ’97. He was prior military. I was his boss when I was at the Pentagon the first time, and that’s kind of ironic that he remained there the whole time I was gone and I come back and now he’s my boss as a civilian.

Q. (35:33) Where was he located when you called him?

A. He was up on the watch floor.

Q. (35:39) Which is?

A. Opposite of, the opposite side of the building where the plane hit, which is up in the message center. One of my other guys that was up there, it was just him and PETTY OFFICER JORDAN

that was trying to shut everything down, grab all the classified materials that needed to go, inventories and stuff like that, just as if we were initiating the Emergency Action Plan, Emergency Destruction, whatever we needed to do. And they were getting ready to run out of the building.

Hung up the phone with them and I looked at my wife and I said, "I'm not going to sit here for whatever and not be able to do anything." So I went back over to the DPS that was standing there. I took my badge out, identified myself as, for what I do, which is a Reserve officer in security and he said, "Well, if that's your car back there, " excuse my language, but he said, "Get your ass up to the intersection and block off the traffic."

So I ran back to the car, told my wife to get in. Spun the car around, went against traffic. Got up to the intersection, there was already two DPS and one Arlington that had the traffic blocked coming into the South Parking, but they still had people trying to get in to South Parking on the opposite side of the street, coming from the Navy Annex. So they sent me up to the intersection, or to the Navy Annex side and told me to block off the road there and do not let anybody except for emergency vehicles come through, which I kind of figured that, and direct everybody else south on Columbia Pike. So I did that. Up until roughly about 9:30 that night, from that point, I didn't move. I and my car proceeded to just sit there.

A female Sergeant, never did get her name, asked how she could get out. I gave her directions on how to get out and I asked her if she wouldn't mind taking my wife home, and she said, "Sure." So about an hour after the plane hit, the Sergeant took my wife home, and I proceeded to stay there and direct traffic and try and stay out of the way. Wasn't much else I could do and I sure wasn't going to go home and just sit there and not do anything, not knowing how many people from my Command we've lost.

I've spent enough time in the Pentagon and enough time on the outside of the Pentagon to know what corridors are what, and what's located where, and I knew right away when the plane hit, where it was and what was gone.

My first time being stationed at the Pentagon, the catwalk closest to where the impact site was at, was corridor 3. That's where we used to come in and out of the building on the first floor. This corridor 2 wasn't open. So that's kind of a dead landmark as to where things are around.

Excuse me, I just wasn't sure how far the plane had actually gone into the building, but I was almost a hundred percent sure that the E ring and the D ring was gone, and especially as the flames started to subside down, you could actually see through E and through D and into a portion of C. So I had a pretty good idea that the Navy Command Center, anybody that was in there, and my office and the Navy switchboard which is another portion of my command, was gone.

I had two personnel in my watch crew, which was PETTY OFFICER HARDIMAN and PETTY OFFICER BISHUNDAT that were down there. For some reason PETTY OFFICER HARDIMAN, instead of normally having her cigarette in between the two corridors of C and D, she decided to go out to the courtyard area. That's the only thing that saved her.

PETTY OFFICER BISHUNDAT, unfortunately did not go anywhere. He was still in answering phones, along with six other members of our command.

If I would have been ten minutes earlier to the Pentagon, I wouldn't be here either, because that would have been my first stop, would have been the Admin office and the switchboard areas before heading upstairs. But as I had, I wasn't there, as far as being in the building, but I was there enough to see it fly over the top of me and actually strike the building.

I had, during the time that I was directing traffic, all the, the outpour of help and support that was going around from the Shriners, and Navy Relief and American Red Cross, you know, they kept us watered and fed all the way through the day and the days to come.

I gave my name and phone number to a lady and gentleman that were driving around. Part of the Arlington Police Department as a Emergency Response Team, or Unit for aid and relief of other officers and for search and rescue or fire, or whatever. Whoever needed relief and they were to the point that they didn't care if you had the training or not, as long as you were an able body to get in and help. So I gave them the name and number of that. Couple of times I was called back to help direct traffic or nothing more then sit up on 395 and make sure nobody ran the barricade and the cones.

I was interviewed by my hometown newspaper, six hours after the crash, which is the *Denver Post*, and it kind of struck me as odd as how he realized I was from Colorado and I forgot that I had one of those little license plate frames and it said, "Go Denver Broncos" on the back of it. It's kind of a dead giveaway.

So I gave a brief interview on that, and the interview went pretty good, except I about cold-cocked him at the end of it, because he turned around and asked me if I felt lucky not to be in the building. And I just spun around and turned around and said, "No, I don't feel lucky, because I still have no idea how many people of my command are missing." Which was kind of a lie because I already knew the names of the individuals we had not been able to contact and I had a pretty good idea that they were, that they were in that area. We just didn't have any confirmation.

Q. (43:43) How did you know the -?

A. I guess it was an hour, maybe two hours, I guess about two hours after the, after the crash at the Pentagon, that I was finally able to get through on my cell phone to the CO of NACCOMTELSTA, which is COMMANDER SONYA KIM and she answered the phone, or not—the XO answered the phone and then the CO was placed, was put on the phone, and I had told her, up to that point she just knew the Pentagon was hit. She didn't know where the Pentagon was hit until I was able to talk with her, and she goes, "Well, how do you know," and I said, "Ma'am, because I'm standing in the middle of the intersection up by the gas station and I seen the plane hit the building. I'm directing traffic right now. I've been snagged by DPS and the federal guys to help direct traffic."

She goes, "OK, well just stay where you're at."

I said, "I ain't going nowhere," and that's when she told me that they had been able to track down either by sight or by phone or other people saying, "Well, yes, I seen that person. They were in North Parking," or "I seen this person, they were in South Parking."

I still didn't have a full account of my watch crew until two hours after that when I finally was able to get a hold of my second in charge in my crew, and that was after all the phone calls and stuff started dying down and we could actually get through on cell phones.

Within five minutes of the crash, the only thing that was working was two-way radios and pagers. Cell phones was ridiculous. I have a 900 megahertz scanner install in my car, and it got to the point that I had to turn the scanner off because it was being locked on one channel. It was picking up so many cell phone calls and so much interference. People trying to dial out and it was ridiculous. I couldn't even listen to the police band because it wouldn't scan up to the police band.

I guess it was about 9:30 at night when the Fairfax County showed up and asked how long I had been there. I said, “Oh, I’ve been here since the crash.”

He said, “Go home. I’ll sit the intersection.”

I asked him if he wanted me to come back. I said, “I’ll go home and get something to eat. Get cleaned up and jump into civilian clothes.” That was the other thing, I was still, I was in my whites, directing traffic, which I presume was a bad idea, actually, because I ended up with second degree burns from –

Q. (46:46) The sun?

A. Sun. I was close enough to where the helos were being landed to be able to wear my hat, but didn’t think about the fact that I had a baseball cap, which would have put me out of uniform, but it was a little bit tighter than my dixie cup. So I probably could have put that on, but I ended up getting second degree burns on most of my face, and the top of my head and my ears from it, and at some points right at the tiptop was almost third degree burns.

When you’re standing on blacktop and whites, it acts just like a mirror and does not help at all.

Of course, I looked like a raccoon for four days after that, because I did have my sunglasses on, which proceeded to just—two white marks around my eyes.

He said that wasn’t necessary, “Go home and get some sleep,” as far as you know, coming back to relieve somebody else.

I got home probably about ten minutes after that. Got out of my uniform and was throwing some cold water on my face when the phone rang and it was MR. WATKINS, saying that he had received a phone call from MR. OWENS, which was the overall civilian that’s in charge of the message center in the Pentagon.

He said, "Air Force is on their way in. Army is already back in, and you've got over 2,500 messages in backlog. Can you get your people in here?"

Out of our whole command of OPNAV TCC, I and PETTY OFFICER JORDAN are the closest ones to the building. So ten minutes to ten, I was dressed in blue jeans and black boots and a t-shirt and back out the door. I think that was record time making it into the Pentagon. Traffic was just ridiculous. Three ninety-five looked like rush-hour traffic and if I'd of had foresight, I probably should have gone down Columbia Pike, but that didn't work.

Q. (49:08) This is at ten at night, that night?

A. Uh huh, and it was, they were shutting everything off. The people that were still there, they were still trying to redirect off and out of the way. Probably did something I shouldn't have, but I went ahead and turned on my strobe lights and ran the emergency lane all the way down and got there in just over ten minutes. It was like ten o'clock, 10:01 when I walked through corridor 2.

Q. (49:31) Any trouble getting through?

A. Once I got off down by Macy's, I ran into a little bit of traffic down there, but the first check point I got to what is just after Macy's and that was to come into South Parking. I showed my military ID. Showed my badge. Said I'm part of the, told them I was part of the re-manning crew. Needed to get back in to bring all the computers and stuff up for communications and they went ahead and waived me through.

Parked in the parking lot just off the steps in corridor 2, and fortunately, it was a flag space, but that was pretty much the only space, and I really don't think they were going to worry about ticketing or towing at that point. Jumped out, ran in. As far as check point going into the

Pentagon there was none. There was a guard sitting there, but “OK, Military, “ let me go, and that was about it.

There was still a good six to twelve inches of black smoke rolling across the ceiling. I was walking and you could actually see, running, but you could see my prints on the floor and ash would, some ash was actually poofing up as I was going. The higher I got, the thicker it got. By the time I got up to the fifth floor there was probably good twenty-four inches of black smoke still rolling across the hallway and an eighth to a quarter in some spots of soot and ash and dust. Got into the message center and surprisingly the message center was actually quite clean. I was quite surprised. Either they didn’t completely shut down the message center when they evacuated, or it’s just sealed up that tight that smoke didn’t get in. I would rather believe the first one, this clean, because I could go like, run my fingers over the desk and I wasn’t getting any black. So I think because of the positive ventilation, with all the AC units that were blowing in there it was keeping it out.

I guess I was in there about ten after, about five after ten, PETTY OFFICER JORDAN showed up a couple of minutes after that and we started bringing all the computer systems up. Luckily, the servers that were located in the basement of the Pentagon were still up and running. As long as they were up and running we delivered message traffic throughout the rest of the Pentagon into all of our –

Q. (52:28) Tell me where you were again.

A. 5A910, which is fifth floor directly opposite from where the attack is, or attack was.

Once we got the computer systems up and we verify—we did a couple of ping tests down to the servers to make sure that they were responding correctly and that we weren’t seeing a false

image, we went over to the PACs, which is the main Army computer where all out message traffic comes in at and proceeded to start processing the 2,500 plus messages that were sitting there waiting for us.

Q. (53:12) What kind of messages?

A. To be perfectly honest with you, over a thousand of them were OPREP3 NAVY BLUES (this is all phonetic).

Q. (53:23) From all over.

A. There was OPREP 3 NAVYBLUES (All phonetic) coming from commands I've never even heard of. Embassies, Admin missile center –

Q. (53:37) All about the 9/11 attack?

A. Yes, all dealing with the Trade Towers, attacks against the Pentagon, all the commands in the Pentagon pretty much sent something out from one point or another. Commanders throughout the United States were sending OPREP 3 saying they had gone into Condition Delta, because of the attack and just everything imaginable. Got all those processed. Most of those, almost all of those were coming flash and immediate. Once we got those done, then we started getting to the little less significant messages. There was a couple TSs and which at the time to me was probably the most, least important message traffic to be handling at that time. Some mill strips, supply type messages, "Personal fors". Most of the day-to-day traffic that we usually see and handle, but over a thousand of all those messages were OPREPs.

Took us right about forty-five minutes to get all that done. Talked with COMANDER DAVIS, DAVE DAVIS, who was over at the Yard, who was at the Yard and couldn't get out because they chained and locked the gates. Our XO, which is Commander SONYA KIM, couldn't get in, because they had padlocked and locked the gates. So she ended up turning around and going home.

Kim and I had set up a bunch of discussions as far as dropping the CARRP, which, the CARRP is where we out route or we give another station the capability of handling what we have to do and it was done that way because at the time when they set it up, they didn't know what was gone and what was there. So they had the Emergency Relocation site, which is two and a half hours north of here, pick up all of our traffic and be processing that at the same time.

Q. (55:56) That Site R?

A. Yes.

Q. (55:57) OK.

A. Once we were sure a hundred percent that we were up and running, delivering traffic and everything was still connected and we had connectivity short of the computers and the desktop units, laptops that were in that area. Everything else was delivering fine. Even if those weren't there we were delivering at least to their mailbox on the server.

About two o'clock, we deactivated the CARRP and started bringing all the traffic back to us. So then we got a big, another large surge of message traffic.

Q. (56:41) Who's CARRP? What's the acronym for?

A. Communications Alt Route Rescue Procedure. Yeah, Communication Alt Route, I think believe it's Rescue, but the P is Procedure. And it just, it sends basically, sends it in another direction to somebody else and they process or send it, they send it back to us.

Once we were sure that was deactivated and we were back up and running then I instituted the emergency recall bill and I called in the mid-watch that would have normally come in at six o'clock that night.

JORDAN and I stayed there up until the time that the full crew got there. Turned over and passed down to them what they needed to know and what was going on, and then PETTY OFFICER JORDAN and I left, which was an endeavor in itself trying to get out of South Parking.

We ended up having, if you know anything about the Pentagon, which I'm sure you do, when you come from the Annex and come down, it's all a one-way road through there. Well, it was a bi-directional road that night, ambulances, motorcycles, police cars. So I went out the only way I knew I could. Turned on my lights, turned my strobe lights on and just followed an ambulance that was going out. Until I got all the way up to the Navy Annex and then cut back over to the side of the correct side of the road.

Took him home. I got home probably around three o'clock, and went and got me a couple of cups of coffee and sat down and watched the news the rest of the night. No, huh, the rest of the morning. And then, was it the next morning? I think it was the next morning I actually had gone back to work for a little bit. No, the following morning, but I had stayed, that day I didn't go anywhere, I stayed home and all we did was watch the news and answer phone calls. Relatives were able to get in touch with us to see that, everybody was OK, and what was going on and answer emails that were, I don't normally get any email on our account, we had well over three hundred and fifty emails, and from looking at the times, there were all sent within an hour to two

hours after the attack. Even had emails from people I don't know, but apparently they know my mom and dad.

So, called them back. Talked to my mom and dad for a while. Let them know that they'll probably be seeing something in the Denver Post, next couple days, interview I gave. About a week after that, life was kind of back to normal, but yet it wasn't back to normal, because I mean we were still having to identify the remains of our lost co-workers, help set up, make funeral arrangements, and the CACO routine.

Still trying to help people and co-workers that were in the Pentagon. Make sure that every time they come into the Pentagon they don't crack up. You know, one of our young—PETTY OFFICER HARDIMAN she had a real hard time even stepping foot back into the Pentagon. She had flat already told them, "go ahead put me on report, send me around Admiral Mast, I'm not ever, I'm not going to step foot back into the building."

What can you do? I mean you can't blame her. I didn't want to go back in the building. I'd always felt safe in the building, but I still had a job to do. So I kind of grit my teeth and bear it, drink lots of coffee and hopefully make the day go faster.

I don't know, it's, there's still little things around the Pentagon to remind folks of what had happened, and when you're out in the courtyard having a cigarette or having something to drink, you still see people flinch every time they see or hear a plane. See eyes cast upward and they just, "Keep on going." They don't kind of, they don't kind of relax until after it's well past the Pentagon.

Q. (01:01:49) You know, I notice just as I walk and see those planes in the flight pattern as I park out in North Parking when I'm over there, you feel like watching that plane coming into glide

path and you can just picture what it must have been like to have seen that airplane come in. I bet you'll never look at an airplane again the same way, having seen it.

A. I still remember markings on the underbelly of that plane that you don't normally see unless you're actually standing on the ground underneath a plane. It's just, I mean, it's kind of hard to describe, you know some people will say "tunnel vision" or "enhanced tunnel vision." You know before something unfortunately bad happens, everything's like slow motion and you know it's, something that's fifty feet away seem like it you know ten inches. You know I still remember seeing the cargo hatches on the plane as it fly over, as it flew over the top of us. When you could see where the latches were at that they would use to unlatch it. I mean, it's weird. It's hard to explain, but it's definitely not something that you're going to forget.

You know, I had people in my neighborhood who didn't know I was in the military. I mean they would see my car in the parking lot, but usually when I go to work and come home it's dark both times and everybody just thought I was being over patriotic because I got a ten foot flag in front of my house. It was the only flag I could find at the time, because everybody else was sold out. Of course my wife thought I was crazy for getting a five foot tall flag that's eight feet wide with a ten foot point to point angle, but I flew it, I flew that flag for almost three months straight, I even went out and bought a brighter light so I wouldn't have to take it down at night. Changed out my front porch light.

Had a flag on my car. My wife's got a flag on her desk at work.

Q. (01:04:25) What's the most significant way this has all changed you?

A. I definitely look at life differently. Now it's not so much as a, it's not so much as rush, rush anymore. I used to be the type of person that would, that would turn around and something, or be

working on something, and then it wouldn't be that I worked as fast as I can, but it would be constantly going. I would always have to keep busy doing something, and since September 11th you know, I'd be working on a job, which would normally, what would have normally taken me ten or fifteen minutes now takes me a half hour or forty-five minutes. I definitely slowed down to start enjoying more of what's around me than just there to do something and get in, get out type thing.

Q. (01:05:36) So not as much of a "J" as you used to be.

Q. (01:05:43) In the Meyers (phonetic), Briggs (phonetic) personalities that he's referring to, there's Js and there's Ps. J's have an agenda and they like to get to a resolution, and Ps like to enjoy the ride a little bit more. That's what his reference is.

A. Well, before the attack I was definitely a J. As high as you could go on the J scale probably, because I was, if I started something I wasn't going to quit until it was done, and I'm still that way to a point, but while I'm doing, I kind of slide off to the P side and I still get the job done. Not like I'm slacking off or anything, I'm just taking my time in doing it. I don't know if it has to do with the fact that, you know, this happened on September 11th, you know, one year, twenty-two days away from me getting out and retiring and that probably was the biggest eye opener of the whole thing. Knowing the fact that, you know if I would have been ten minutes sooner, I would have been already dropped off at the Pentagon and in the Pentagon, which wouldn't have done my wife any good, being as we're expecting in May. That definitely wouldn't have helped.

I don't know, it's just opened my eyes in general, excuse me, in general to a lot of things. It's just I don't, my wife would probably actually probably classify me now as lazy, but, because I

don't, I'm not constantly going and doing things now. I get home, I sit down and relax. You know take in what I have around me, and you know, who's with me and everything, instead of just going home, change clothes, go out and I'll go wash the patio, go wash the car, and do it all within about an hour, and then keep on going.

I may get the lawn mowed and the patio washed and not get to the car until tomorrow. I don't know. Does that make any sense? It's hard to explain.

Q. (01:08:17) Where to from here?

A. Well being that I've got a little less then sixty days before I start terminal leave and I still haven't set up my retirement ceremony, probably start maybe getting to go on that. I still need to get a location and do some other things for it, but –

Q. (01:08:38) What are out going to do after the Navy?

A. Well, if I get picked up with this, with the Corporation with NMCI then I'll start working with them, if not I'm working with a Corporation called CACI right now, and if I can get, go from part-time to fulltime with them and get into a LAN install or LAN administrator spot with them, I'm going to transfer down to Texas. And I'm hoping that I'll win a portion of this small little lottery they have going on right now. And if they do, I'll go buy me a small little piece of land, about a thousand across or something like that, and just build me a small little house. And hopefully just stay out of anybody's way for the rest of my life. Raise my kids, play with the dog and spend time with my wife. Maybe get up to Michigan to see my other kids, which I haven't been able to do in about six years.

Other then that, just bidding my time until 24th of June when I go on terminal leave.

Q. (01:09:50) Anything else you want to add for the historical record?

A. Can't think of anything right now. Hope I haven't actually talked too much and gone into too much detail.

Q. (01:10:08. We appreciate you taking the time to talk with us.

A. You're welcome.

Q. (01:10:12) And thank you for all you've done in your years in the Navy.

A. Thank you.

Q. On behalf of the Naval Historical Center we thank you for taking the time to be with us today.

A. You're welcome.

Transcribed by:
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