

**Naval Historical Center
Oral Interview Summary Form**

Interviewers:

CAPT Gary Hall
CAPT Mike McDaniel

Interviewer's Organization:

Navy Combat Documentation Det 206
Navy Combat Documentation Det 206

Interviewee:

CDR George Ernest Navas

Current Address:

██████████
██████████

Date of Interview:

28 November 2001

Place of Interview:

Pentagon, Arlington VA

Number of Cassettes:

One

Security Classification:

Unclassified

Name of Project: Pentagon Terrorist Attack Incident

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

Abstract of Interview:

1. Born in 1956 in ████████, FL. At age of six, moved to Puerto Rico. Attended Jesuit schools with frequent trips to South America. Family in Columbia, Ecuador and Argentina. Enjoyed trips to his grandfathers farm in Columbia; learned to ride horses and shoot there. At sixteen his father had the first of seven heart attacks. Youngest of five. Had to take care of his mother. Mother suffers from a disease that rendered her blind. Sole wage earner at sixteen. Went into the military service. Discovered he was not of age and was given an entry level discharge. Returned home; went to junior college. Started to work full time and college part time. When he was of age he joined the Navy in 1975. Went to Orlando FL for boot camp. Had a private pilot's license, wanted to be a pilot. Entered Electronics Training school and the equivalent to C school to get his technical training. He left the active duty Navy at the end of his four-year obligation and joined the reserves. He received his B.S. degree at the University of South Florida. He returned to active duty as a 1st class EW. Commissioned in 1984. Went to the USS Lockwood (FF-1064) Yokosuka Japan. She was returning to Yokosuka for an extended yard period when they were hit by a freighter. Thirteen wounded. Then to the USS LaSalle in 1985. Worked at the Naval Historical Center before going back into the reserves. Recalled for Desert Shield/ Desert Storm. Also in the Navy Command Center Det 106.
2. Worked for four years with N80 working on the POM. Currently working on the Navy Quadrennial Defense Review on a one year ADSW assignment. Office in the Pentagon. 4D643. Readiness analyst.

3. On September 11th, he heard about the attacks on the WTC. The flag writer (YNC Gordon Sproat) commented, "We are next." He had started to leave his spaces and was at the door heading for the E ring towards CNO's office when the plane hit. Could hear and feel the impact. Alarms started to go off. He went back to the QDR cell, set alarm for spaces and walked down the 6th corridor towards the A ring. Normal escape route was E-ring to 8th corridor. He went to North Parking while CDR Thomas went out South Parking (to find their people). Very crowded going out 8th corridor.
4. He grabbed an Air Force officer and got people away from the building. Stayed with an ATF officer who had a radio. First walking wounded started to come out of the building. People from DeLorenzo came out to set up a triage. Set up under the trees next to the bus stops. Retrieved medical supplies from the building. Went to the center courtyard. Helped people out of the building. At one point he was coughing, getting ready to go back in and saw a severely burned man come out of the building on a golf cart. Triage unable to help this man. Went to the River entrance waiting for helo to transport the injured man. Smoke all through the building at this point – through the ventilation system. Used crime scene tape to keep doors open so that "ambulances" would have unimpeded access to the building. Then went looking for water out of the J8 spaces. Went to center court next. Dropped water off for fire and police personnel. Bottled goods and packages of beef jerky were brought in as well. Volunteered to be a litter bearer. Analog phones worked; digital phones did not. CAPT Toti out there in charge of morgue area. Giant providing a refrigerated truck. Load the bodies from inside the building to the remote delivery facility to keep them away from the press.
5. Saw the Marine Corps E-9 with a flag in his hands that he had recovered from the building, on the fence line right where impact had occurred by one of the firemen. The flag was raised and the crowd cheered. About thirty minutes later the flag was taken down, folded and flag was presented to the Army General in charge at the scene from NDW.
6. ENS Parks remembered a side door he had exited and several of them went back into the building. Worked their way into center court again. Contacted medical; set out body bags. Instructed to lay them out in long rows, marked them in chalk; 1A, 1B, 2A, 2B. Set out 100 of them. Estimate of the dead was 250 at that time. Saw a fire truck from College Park MD. Knew the firefighter. Firemen said they were having trouble getting inside of the building. Both ENS Kelley and CDR Navas wanted to go back into the building with the firemen. Battalion Chief said he would take one of them in. Did a coin toss – ENS Kelley won. Kelley went to 4th deck to E-ring to place where building was missing, then to 3rd floor and out. Even with firefighting gear and breathing apparatus they ran out of air. Navas went to first floor with the firemen to show where the fire hoses were located. Kelley reported no Navy casualties in any of the spaces he looked into. A couple of the battalion chiefs were on the other side and there was no way of communicating with them. He took the firemen to the chiefs. Walking through 16 inches of water: it was dark and smoky. Could see the missing portions of the building to the right. Water felt like bath water – it was very hot. Going out corridor 4 from the A ring to the E ring. Came out of the building next to the helipad. Battalion chiefs were brought together there. Walked out of the impact area when they got to the helipad. Walked back into corridor 5 to find something to eat. Followed the fire hoses. Found the alleyway between B and C ring. Could see the portion of the wall where the nose of the

plane hit. The last point of penetration in the building. Ran into Chief of Chaplains for the Navy. Asked if they needed to talk to anyone. Discussion why they weren't removing bodies – fight over jurisdiction of who had authority to remove bodies. Evident to him that Navy khaki took responsibility on scene.

7. Unfettered access to any portion of the building until 2100-2200. He was telling DPS what to do. Helicopters were brought in to take people to the alternate Pentagon site. Pick up point was the lower parade field. His question: where to go next to help?
8. Phone in room in inner courtyard. He told Kelley to call the VCNO to give them information. Realized timely reliable information was key at this point. Wanted to pass information to the emergency command center at the Annex. He spoke directly to VADM Tracey that evening. Left the site at 2100-2130. Went to the Annex on the way home. Briefed VADM Keating; then to VCNO. CDR Thomas had gone to the Annex and briefed them as to CDR Navas' and ENS Ennis' acts. VADM Tracy, N6, N7 were all there. Following his brief he was dismissed with a thank you.
9. Lessons learned: No one followed an evacuation plan. No one pulled rank that day.

Abstracted by:
CDR Loftus
11 December 2001

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Transcript of Interview:

Interviewee Information:

CDR Navas was born in 1956 in ████████, FL. At age of six he moved to Puerto Rico. He attended Jesuit schools with frequent trips to South America. Family in Columbia, Ecuador and Argentina. Enjoyed trips to his grandfathers farm in Columbia; learned to ride horses and shoot there. At sixteen his father had the first of seven heart attacks. He is the youngest of five children. Had to take care of his mother, who suffers from a disease that rendered her blind. Sole wage earner at sixteen. Went into the military service. Discovered he was not of age and was given an entry-level discharge. Returned home; went to junior college. Started to work full time and college part time. When he was of age he joined the Navy in 1975. Went to Orlando FL for boot camp. Had a private pilot's license, wanted to be a pilot. Entered Electronics Training school and the equivalent to C school to get his technical training. He left the active duty Navy at the end of his four-year obligation and joined the reserves. He received his B.S. degree at the University of South Florida. He returned to active duty as a 1st class EW. Commissioned in 1984. Went to the *USS Lockwood* (FF-1064) Yokosuka Japan. She was returning to Yokosuka for an extended yard period when they were hit by a freighter. Thirteen wounded. Then to the *USS LaSalle* in 1985. Worked at the Naval Historical Center before going back into the reserves. Recalled for Desert Shield/ Desert Storm. He also served in the Navy Command Center Det 106.

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Topics Discussed:

Q. (16:06) Take us into the day of 11 September. First of all tell us where was your office located? Where were you physically located?

A. My office was Quadrennial Defense Review which is where I was doing the recall is located in the Pentagon, Room 4D683, which is on the 6th corridor right of the 6th Center. The door faces the 6th corridor, right across the street, as we call it from the old Navy Command Center. Right across the hall, one corridor in from CNO's office.

Q. (16:45) Describe your role there and kind of give us some of the things you were –

A. In QDR I was recalled at ADMIRAL SESTAK's request because I had done the POM and understood the program objectives memorandums, understood the programming phase of Navy establishing a program where we need to as I put it, need to buy, you know for the next year and five out years, for a program, anything from throwing paper aircraft carriers and anything in between. So I knew programmatic, he needed somebody that knew that. I also am a Techie. My training is in XEW and I worked in the computer field as the business manager, and Y2K manager from Montgomery County, Maryland, on their project. So he needed somebody who knew computers and databases and such. I seemed to be an ideal candidate.

So I was there nominally as the Readiness Analyst that did a lot of financial spreadsheet and database work for ADMIRAL SESTAK while in QDR.

Q. (17:53) Walk us through the day of 11 September.

A. 11 September we were dealing with contracting issues for some special studies that were done by MIT for QDR and other contracting matters. I had gone to the office of K8USN as they call it, Admin. Assistant for the Under Secretary of the Navy to deal with why some of the people that we have contracts with were not getting paid. So while there we got word that an airplane had hit the twin towers in New York. The security which works up there went to the CNN web site, and turned on the radio on the desk. In fact we heard a report that the plane had hit the World Trade Center in New York City. Concluded my business, was returning to the office, heard other people in the passageway speaking of the events. As I got to the office I told the flag writer for ADMIRAL SESTAK, GORDON SPROAT, that I'd heard a plane had hit the World Trade Center.

He said, "Well we have it on the Admiral's office on the TV. Right now the Admiral was out of the office with a Lieutenant which normally acted as his aide, although he did not have an actual aide assigned to him. He was doing a speech out of the office.

We watched the replay and some of the pilots that were in the office looked at the TV and trying to guess what type of aircraft had hit the building, and so on. Speculating as to why the events were unfolding as they were unfolding.

I also had heard that a second plane had hit the World Trade Center, talking to CHIEF SPROAT. We saw that on TV as well. Once they had played that a couple of times, Chief made the offhanded remark that we were next. Some scoffed at that.

Q. (19:57) What did you think?

A. Entirely possible. It was painfully evident after the second plane hit that it was a coordinated attack and there was no doubt that if they were going to go in grand scale that yes, we would be a target.

I then started to leave the office, was out in the passageway heading for the E ring when the –

Q. (20:22) To E, or I mean where were you standing.

A. I left the QDR office and after the 6th corridor turn right toward the E ring, toward CNO's office. Got almost –

Q. (20:32) Where were you heading? Where were you intending to go?

A. Oh, I saved that. Going out to the E ring pass, Vice-Chief's which is where the N8 Secretariat was and we were part of N8, dealing with issues down there, because we were using some of our money to fund N8 purchases and other things for Office Service Supply. They call it the OSD officers account, monies. So going out there to talk to them about that, as I'd gotten an additional amount of money given to us. Normally our budget was up to one million dollars, but we had not been given the entire million dollars yet, at that point, to run QDR. So, we had been given, originally about a hundred fifty thousand and as we developed through the year what we needed and discovered, well we needed another study, or we needed to get some more equipment or some other software, etc. then I would have to go and get the incremental funding for all those purchases.

I had just been granted an additional fifty thousand dollars for my quarter for the services account, but I was going to purchase equipment for N8 out of account. I was going to them to discuss what the needs and wants were by the N8 staff at that point.

Near the junction of 6th corridor and E ring when the aircraft actually hit the building, we could feel it. We could hear it.

Q. (22:09) Did you hear the plane?

A. Did not hear the plane. Heard the actual impact. You could also feel the overpressure on the passageway. As it, you know, the blast of air pushes down the passageway and then once, obviously the aircraft, I didn't realize that's what it was at the time, had gone past then you could feel it go back the other way, as it released pressure where a portion of the building was missing at that point.

Knocked into the wall, turned around, the alarm started going off. The LTjg KELLEY ENNIS which runs the Secretariat for Vice-Chief of Naval Operations was leaving his office going down the passageway telling people to evacuate and went back to the QDR cell, entered the office, ran into CHIEF SPROAT and LCDR TED VETTER (phonetic) which is one of the other five reserves that was recalled for QDR, in the office. Told him to get out. TED at that point was talking to his wife on the phone, telling her was all right. That he was getting out. That something had occurred.

I was standing there watching people file out. Had several others who were out of the office, and immediately picked up the phone as I said, felt the pressure and all you could see at that point was smoke also coming down the P-way and I returned to the office, picked up the phone and called my wife. Left a phone message, very short, very curt, she replayed for me later saying "I'm OK. We're evacuating the building," and just hung up.

At that point the phone rang that I was using and I picked it up and it was the wife of LCDR DRUGGAN, she had heard and that's why, I was quite surprised that she had already heard that something had occurred. But apparently she had and asked if everybody was all right.

I said, "Yes, TOM's OK. He's evacuated the building," and hung up on her. It wasn't 'til later that I realized that I didn't know where TOM was and he wasn't in the office at the time the plane hit. Lucky enough he had survived the incident.

We were sitting there watching everybody go out, as I said, at that point CAPTAIN BARBER our deputy, TRIP BARBER, which had been the PA to Vice-Chief of Naval Operations, ADMIRAL PILLING, came in to get some things out of his office and said, "Get out."

At which point I said, "Yes, sir, we're waiting for the last folks to get out of the office."

Although we were only allowed to have eight analysts for QDR as the effort had begun, Admiral SESTAK talking to his other friends on the Navy staff and all had gotten officers to be sent to him on a loan basis, quote unquote, from the different encodes, and we actually had about twenty-four people assigned to the cell in there working. Though on paper we were only, officially always had eight.

CAPTAIN BARBER came out of his office. I was standing there waiting for then COMMANDER THOMAS, now CAPTAIN THOMAS. He's now ENA to N3/N5, Division Director, to get done doing whatever he was on the computer. It looked like he was sending an email at that point. CAPTAIN BARBER told him, "DAVE the building is on fire, get the hell out now, and that's an order." CAPTAIN BARBER turned around and walked out.

About, I'm guesstimating now, thirty, forty seconds later COMMANDER THOMAS got up from his desk and started to walk out. We were the only two left in the QDR cell at that point.

Went out, grabbed his cover, stopped, set the alarm on the door. We both walked out, closed the

door, waited for the alarm to set in the spaces, because we still had power. When we heard the beep, signed off on the sheet. So we secured the space and started walking down the 6th corridor towards the A ring.

I asked COMMANDER THOMAS, “Well, which way are we going?” Because our normal escape route per the evacuation plan was to go to the E ring to the stairs right next to the CNO’s office, and then go down to the first deck and evacuate out 8th corridor to past the POAC, Pentagon Officers Athletic Club, out there over to the highway.

As were walking down the P-way, he tells me, “Well, I’m going to South Parking.” He says, “Why don’t you go to North Parking?” Because he knew that probably some of our people had gone that way, in case somebody else that had not been in the office had gone out to South Parking, he was going to take care of that issue.

We got to the A ring, he turned right toward corridor 5, I turned left to go to corridor 8. I went down to corridor 8, dropped down the first floor, started to walk out with everyone else. At that point it was just crowded as hell. People getting out of the building. As I was walking out, there were already thousands of people out there. Couldn’t tell you how many. I’m standing there surveying everything that was occurring and everybody seemed to just want to walk out and stand on the walkway over the highway. It seemed like a pretty bad idea to me at the time, having lived in Columbia and seen some of the things that have occurred there with bombings and other things.

So LCDR KELLIDIE (phonetic), now CDR KELLIDIE (phonetic), Command 35 out there on the bridge, here’s the opportunity to tell to him and say, “You know, I think that standing on a bridge over a highway where somebody can just come right under you and detonate a truck bomb would be a bad place to be standing right about now.”

At which point a lot of people obviously as I yelled that out loudly, heard that and kind of made their own mind to move off, and go beyond the POAC. Which is essentially what I'd intended. Not everybody was moving. An Air Force officer came out of the building, then grabbed him and said, "I need some help. Got to get these people out of here, and away from the building." We did so as we were walking past the quad, asking everyone, "Please get out." PETTY OFFICER LATINO came out. I know him from my days in N3/N5 in the Command Center as well, and he helped us push everybody back.

There was a lady which I believe was with building maintenance, I'm not sure, with a walkie-talkie, talking to somebody saying, "Well, I'm trying to get them away from the building, but they're not moving." At which point then all three of us, again, started to push the crowd back and told them, "Go out to the parking lot, or to the other side of the road, past where the bus stops and the drop offs are."

Right about that point, when everybody was getting pushed back, guy from Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Fire Arms showed up in his vest with his badge and a radio, and a couple of the Air Force security folks from the 11th Air Squadron, I guess they're called here in the building. They were looking for Air Force General officers.

Anyway, the security folks stood around for about a minute. Walked back out towards the parking lot. The ATF guy, stayed with us. I said, "Well, you know, you've got a radio, would you just hang around here?" Because obviously he was on the highway when he heard or saw something occurring and decided to pull in and lend assistance.

"Why don't you stay here, you have a radio. You're talking to folks and we could use that to figure out what the hell's going on at this point." That's when the first walking wounded started coming out. There was an African-American lady came out. Pretty bad shape. PETTY OFFICER

LATINO and I went over there helped her out. At which point we realized that, yes, we're going to have a lot of people come out of this building, may be in bad shape. Need to do something, what are we going to do?

Right about the time that I'm standing there wondering what's going to occur next, people from DeLorenzo Clinic came rushing out. A, young enlisted folks, you know, looked to be Air Force, in the greens coming out and said, "We need to set up a triage."

Well, since we had already cleared the area out to the road, there was a stand of trees and all right there, so "Why don't you put it right over here?" So they went up and started setting up under the trees, right next to the bus stops.

I went into the building to help them bring some things out. Bringing out blankets, gauze, I mean all kinds of medical equipment, supplies and all, and staging it, when I'm standing in the entrance of the DeLorenzo Clinic, a Navy Captain, Dental Corps actually, mentioned that, "We've got to get the wounded out." So we go out there and get the volunteers and all. So I went back out just started addressing the crowd in general, you know, "Anybody with any medical training, who would like to volunteer to help the wounded out, just follow me." Came back into the building in through the 8th corridor all the way out into center courtyard. I didn't make it quite to center courtyard just between, I guess B and A ring, on the first deck when they were already coming back out, more ambulances and more wounded. We just started grabbing people and taking them out of the building. Helping them out.

Went back and forth, two, three four, who knows how many times, and counting. Bringing the wounded out. At one point I stopped. I was gagging on the smoke. I remember standing outside coughing and I was getting ready to go back in when I saw them bring out a gentleman with a little ambulance as we call them, like little, like flat golf carts, flat beds. I realized I couldn't

recognize what type of uniform he had on. Just that he was male. Severely burned, I mean he was charred, still alive. Very badly burned.

Brought him out, triage couldn't do anything with him. By then we knew that it had been an aircraft. It had been from the time we went in and out of the building, the ATF guy kept getting messages on the radio that "another plane is inbound, another plane is inbound." There were several false alarms of that nature, that another plane is inbound to the Pentagon.

Q. (33:45) Was that word being proliferated? I mean –

A. Yes, oh yes, he was getting on the radio, telling, you know, I mean there were, it just seemed to be, just be spreading like wildfire and the rumors were rampant in the first hour to hour and a half of the incident. Saying that well, you know, one of them hit the State Department, another one hit, you know, Camp David, and there were planes hitting everything everywhere all of a sudden. If you listened to all the rumors.

So I was standing there trying to catch my breath again when he came out. He was brought out. They realized they weren't going to do anything with him and asked for a hand to have stanchions blocking off the walkways out there. And they were going to use the lower parade field out there as a helipad, because the helipad was out of service on the other side. That's where the plane had hit. So four or five of us just grabbed the litter, picked it up, walked over to the steps that go up into the building by the lower parade field to go up to the upper parade field and then I guess they call that the River Entrance, at that point.

Q. (34:58) Where they had the memorial service.

A. Right exactly. So we're in the lower portion of that and waited probably about fifteen minutes. While we were waiting for the helicopter to come in and pick him up and take him out, wherever they were going to take him, I remember military aircraft flying overhead, coming by. Don't know, couldn't tell you what it was, just heard it. Everybody pointed out and said, "Hey the Air Force finally made it here," as they went by.

We got the guy in the helicopter. Got him out. Went back into the building. I don't know why. Just went back into the building. They'd already gone back out and asked for two more rounds of volunteers to help clear the wounded and all. Well we were standing there and I watched the group go in. Went back in, they were coming in with another group of volunteers. They seem to go out and get fifteen, twenty people to come in. Those would bring some people out. Stay outside, then they'd ask for another group, and then the groups seemed to get progressively larger as they asked for more volunteers to go into the building to get folks out.

One of those, I went into DeLorenzo, because by then the smoke was really terrible coming through the passageways. I mean it was everywhere in the building. Forget blast orders and all that, I mean it was just proliferating through the ventilation system. The police officer that was there, OFFICER KEIRNEN (phonetic) I remember got me some "police line do not cross" tape. They were having a hard time getting the ambulances in and out because there's like three sets of doors there that they have to go through. At that point they didn't have any power to power the doors.

So I took the tape and I taped the doors open, two doors, and on the other door I tried to wedge some, the tape and stuff under the door so we would have another feet of access with all the doors open. So people could just run in and out with these little ambulances.

I went into DeLorenzo got all the masks that I could find, you know, and every volunteer coming in, because everybody at that point using our t-shirts over our faces for the smoke. Started handing out the masks. Ran out of masks and it was like, OK, I'm out of masks, the doors are open. They're going in and out, what's there left to do. I turned around and went, started to go back into the building. My intent was to go all the way through to center court and see what I could do there.

As I was going in, come back the other way, and I—his name escapes me off the top of my head and it shouldn't, he's a Rear Admiral-select now. He was head of the programming division, I worked for him in the Navy. He's now working on the Joint Staff in J8. He's coming with one of the carts. So a couple of the guys in the Army green pants, and I recognized that they were officers, because they had the black strip down the side. Later found out they were Colonels that worked with him in his office, looking for water for the rescue crews and the firefighters.

When he asked for water the first time I thought he was looking for something to irrigate the wounds of the burn victims and so on and so forth. So I know where that is in DeLorenzo, because I saw that stuff when I went to get the masks. "Come on."

We went back in, started getting the liter bottles of sterile water. I brought out the first box and he stood there and said, "No, you know, that's not we're looking for. What we're looking for is water for the crews to drink."

Ah ha, OK, I thought about it and thought well, "you know, the kitchens up in, off 10th corridor, you know where we go to lunch everyday, have to have water."

He says, "Yes, but we don't have anyway to carry it. At which point I said, "You know, we have a water mess up in our office, but you know we're not going to get up to the 4th floor at this point to get any of that stuff."

At which point he said, “Well, you know, we have a water mess, too.” So I asked him if I could go with him. He said, “Yes.” I jumped on the cart and we’re hauling down the E ring right there from the 8th corridor on the first floor all the way down to J8 spaces. He opened his space. We had about fifteen five-gallon water bottles out of his office, loaded them on to this little cart. Then went zipping back. Went back into center court. At that point it was the first time I’d been in center court proper and saw the smoke and fire trucks and all there. There were no wounded out anywhere in center court. They’d all been taken to either the triage by North Parking, or by South Parking out by the helipad.

We went through, helped some people in wheelchairs out, and had these huge fire hoses all over the place. It was tough to get this little cart to go over these loaded with all these bottles of water.

So we’re wondering what to do at which point I said, “Well, let’s pick up the hoses.”

He said, “Do you know how much a six inch hose weights full of water and pressurized?”

“Yes, but you don’t have to pick up the hose. All you have to do is somebody get a bend in it.

Just pick it up like an arch and just drive through it.”

So we picked it up. We got it between the two Colonels and I and picked it up and got in to drive through, drove out. At that point, I guess it was Bosom Boulevard that runs out there by the side by the helipad?

Q. (40:49) Washington.

A. Washington Boulevard. Sorry. That’s the first time I saw the actual impact area out there. Got out there, dropped all the water off. The guys were very grateful for it. One of them just actually took an axe and cut the top off of one of the bottles. Just poured it into buckets, and these guys were dipping into it with cups and buckets, and all. About the same time, volunteers with their

personal pickup trucks started showing up from the Navy Exchange, I was told. I don't know how true that is, with bottle goods like ice tea and sodas, and they had coolers full of beef jerky. Just tens of thousands of packages of beef jerky in this huge cooler. So we had the Jersey barrier, we had the equipment by that point breaking the Jersey barrier down so you can get across. Equipment everywhere on Washington Boulevard. Couldn't get anything else through there. So we started pulling all the stuff out of there over the Jersey barrier. We took a couple of these huge plastic dumpsters on wheels that they use for the trash, got, I don't know, I guess KELLEY ENNIS got somebody to come up with the ice. Showed up with bags of ice. We said, "Well let's just take the big five gallon water containers, throw them in the bottom. Throw bags of ice on top and then throw all the other bottle goods on top of that, but don't take the ice out of the bags, because you'll contaminate it, in case you need it for something else. Once it melts, you've got cool water in the bag." Just, I'd seen that at Fort Benning when I went to training before going to Bosnia, where they would hang up what looked like a sea bag, and they would put a huge block of ice in it, and have a spigot on the end and you just drink right out of that.

Well, the intent was as this stuff melts, once it, you know, kind of melts, you can just hang the bag that the ice was in, cut a corner, and just fill other things up. So we got all that set up and they said, "Well, we need litter bearers."

"OK, well, here we are, let's go litter-bearers." I had spoken to the gal that had come out of the Intell Center, Intell portion of the Command Center, and they were counting some dead, wounded, she couldn't account for three of her folks. At that point it was becoming evident, you know, who was missing, who was not. They were already taking counts.

So anyway, we went to do litter-bearer duty. We're standing around, waited twenty, thirty minutes and I saw at that point where THOMAS had come out from his side of the building and

we met there with another guy in the office and we said well, “The boss is trying to get a headcount. He’s calling around.” Have you seen so and so? Have you seen so and so? Everybody at that point was trying to do head counts. You could see them all over borrowing cell phones from each other. Trying to make calls. Initially we couldn’t get through on cell phones. At that point we were getting through. Especially the people that had analog phones, had dual modes, to go to analog mode. The digital phones weren’t doing very well, but the analog phones were. So when anybody had an analogue phone, they’d say, “Let me borrow your phone. I want to make a phone call.”

We accounted for everybody in our office at that point. It’s the first indication I had that everybody in the office was accounted for. Looking for stretcher-bearers, were given some training on how to roll the victims onto the stretchers and how to, and what to do for them until someone get them out of the building.

TED ENNIS and I were standing around and saying well, you know, “There’s got to be more to do then just staying out here wait for, “ you know, “litter duty.” CAPTAIN BILL TOTI was out there. He was in charge of the morgue area. Understood that we had a truck from Giant Food on its way, refrigerator truck. Was going to be used for the victims. Yes, because you don’t want the flesh to spoil in the heat and all.

So, they were going to bring that up by the remote delivery facility. They were trying to figure out where to put all this stuff. It was like by the remote delivery facility. That way you can take the bodies, keep them internal, you know inside walls, so the press doesn’t you know, get a picture. They were worrying about the PR portion of it at that time. We don’t want the press to see all these, you know, bodies sitting out and take a picture of this, of news, and put it on national TV, you know, body bags and all that stuff. So we bag them up and take them from

inside the building through out to remote delivery facility and loaded them onto the truck, nobody will ever see them, you know the general public.

So WMATA, Metro had brought a couple of buses at that point in for people to sit down in air conditioning out of the sun and rest. I went in, sat down, was there maybe a couple of, five minutes, maybe. Had something to drink. One of the battalion chiefs ALEXANDER was on the bus. Was surveying it and watching the smoke come out.

I said, "Well, how long have you been doing this?"

"About thirty years."

I said, "What do you think?" You know. "How long is it going to be before the fire's out?" It's still raging and all.

He said, "Well," said, "It's probably going to burn about twenty-four hours before we finally get it all out. We're having a problem above the fifth floor." There is a peak, or A-frame type area over the Pentagon, where they renovated all the way up to the fifth floor, and they had firebreaks and doors and all, he was explaining, but in that peak area under the slate roof, which is wooden rafters that went all the way around, there was no break anywhere. So the fire had gotten up to there and was spreading along that area to other portions of the building. They were having a hard time breaking the slate to cut off and make like a firebreak to stop the fire from going through the entire building, essentially.

So, I thank him and walked back out at which point, Marine Corps E9 had brought out a flag and a stand that had come out of the building some where.

Ha, I remember now.

Q. (47:40) Let me switch the tape real quick.

A. Sorry I'm running too long, I'm done.

Q. (47:47) No, no, no.

A, It was a flag that had been put on the fence line right where the impact had occurred by one of the firemen. And when it went up, everybody applauded and cheer, crazy out of the crowd.

Shortly after that, about thirty minutes—my timelines may be off, as I'm just going by events and not thinking about the clock. They had taken the flag down and Marine E9 had brought it near to where we were. Had some other Marines with them, and they folded the flag and we kind of parted in a corridor so the flag could come by. Soon as it came by he presented the flag to the Army General that was in charge from Military District Washington, I presume, who was in charge of the rescue efforts overall for the Pentagon. At that point presented him with the flag.

At that point ENNIS and I and ENSIGN WILT PARKS, now LTjg WILT PARKS and a Second Class Petty Officer that works in the Vice-Chief's office kept looking at each other wondering, you know, what are we doing just standing out here?

I made the comment that, "Yes, they're talking about bringing the honor guard from Military District Washington to do litter duty and all, so this is stupid. These guys all lined up here. Everybody standing there, you know the litters, and the boards, stretcher boards and all this other stuff. We're just going to be standing around for a couple of hours. Get sunburned, in a day they're going to send them home, say, 'thank you very much' and they're not going to do anything."

We were all itching to do something else. PARKS said, "Well you know, I came out of a side door over by the mall entrance to the building, so I can get us back in." So we skirted around security around the building, and just passed between the mall and River Entrance there's an

emergency stairway exit. We walked down there. The chair was still there that he'd used to prop the door open to get out of the building. We went in through there, worked our way into center court again. We got there, went up and talked to medical personnel, and then asked them, you know, "What do you need?"

They said, "We need help, the people are getting ready to go in and start taking casualties out. Need help with that." So we set out the body bags. We were instructed to set them out at, you know, ever about three feet set one out. Put them in long rows, one after the other. They marked in chalk on the road bed inside there, 1A, 1B, 2A, 2B, 3A, 3B, like lanes so you had lane 1A, 1B, 2A, 2B, and so you can identify what went into each lane for the bodies when they came out. So we set out probably about a hundred body bags. There was a discussion as to how many bodies were actually going to come out. The estimate that we had at that point was about 250. There were several people beside the medical folks from the other services standing around and waiting to go in and get the bodies out.

As I looked over at the juncture of corridor 5, 6, saw the fire truck from Greenbelt, Maryland. I live in College Park. I saw one particular individual and I said, "You know, I know that guy. At least I think I do. So I walked over there and KELLEY went over there with me. I talked to him and sure enough I've been Little League coach. He had a son who played in Little League and all and we played you know teams against each other and I did in fact know him from seeing him on the ball field.

So anyway, so we got to talking and I said, "Well how are things going? What's the progress going?"

He said, "Well you know we have a problem getting through the building." Apparently, Arlington, was the fire department that always responded to all the emergencies and all that.

When people from other areas responded that had never been into the Pentagon, they didn't quite understand how to navigate the hallways. The puzzle palace truly became a puzzle palace for them. They weren't quite sure where they were, the impact that occurred and what they were doing.

So I said, "Look, I've got an easy way to help you out there. Here, come here." I went up to the wall and as part of the renovation they changed the old huge paper layouts of the building and made them like 2 by 3 little color laminated maps that they had at the entrance to the building on the A ring. So I just grabbed one of those, came over to him and said, "Do you have a grease pencil?" OK, so I took it and laid it down and turned so, I said, "OK, you're sitting right here. This is your truck." And I "X'd" it, OK, and I pointed out, "The airplane hit here, between these two corridors here and then went into here and so on," and explained to him where they were, and I said, "You know, I've been to the outside and I can tell you that hoses are running out through here, and so on." Gave him a layout of what we'd seen from the other side. Apparently these guys were not talking to each other between the guys inside and outside the walls, if you want to call it that.

So he said, "Oh, yes, great." At that point KELLEY mentioned, said, "Well, you know, we had the issue that we had SCIFs and some of these SCIFs, you know, are set up to be self-contained for a specific period of time, just in case something like this actually happened."

I said, "Yes, I know, I work for N8, I know that they have a space that's like a vault that they use on the D ring," you know. I said, "Somebody could be in there for all we know." So the decision was made that one of us would suit up. We both wanted to go, so we told the fireman what we'll do is, we'll both suit up. We'll go down. We'll take you up to Navy spaces, and then when we get up there, KELLEY will take the spaces to the left of corridor 6 as we went down corridor 6,

i.e. the Vice-Chief's office and all that stuff all that way. And I would go up and turn right and go down CNO's corridor and all those spaces down that way looking for Navy casualties. See what occurred.

The battalion chief said, "No, I've got one suit. One of you's going to go. I'm not going to take two of you with me."

I said, "Fine." So I pulled out a quarter. We flipped, KELLEY wins the toss, so we got him suited up and he went up to 4th deck and walked down the passageway to the E ring, went down up until the point the building was missing. Came back down to third floor and then walked back out. That's when he was out of air. They walked back out and came back outside.

Q. (55:14) They had breathing apparatus on?

A. Huh.

Q. (55:15) They had breathing –

A. Oh, he had complete fire fighting suit, OBA, hat, I mean the whole nine yards. They gave him a complete outfit. They put him in the middle of the pack and like about eight firemen went with him. They went down knocking doors down.

He later made the comment, because we had an opportunity to brief the Vice-Chief N3/N5, ADMIRAL TRACY and several other flags that were at the Command Center, makeshift command center at the Annex, he made the comment that he was starting to run out of air when he got to N3/N5 spaces. Said they knocked the door down, opened it up. He walked in, took the mask off, took a deep breath and had air conditioned air. No smoke in the space. So he took three or four deep breathes there, put his mask on and that's what he used to come back out to

the passageway and get all the way out to the E ring away from the heavy smoke, before he had to take the mask back off, because he was out of air, and get out of the building.

While he was doing that, I went down on the first floor with firemen and showed them the runs of the hoses, and where the hoses were so they could see where the disconnect was, because they needed water, and they couldn't get hoses long enough from where they were to get where they needed it. We were trying to figure out, well, you know, they've got hoses from the outside coming up through the third and fourth floors and you're sitting here on the first floor and you're running hoses up to the second floor, where you know exactly where you are. If you've got a hundred fifty foot hose, you can splice from this hose down to this hose going down this ladder well and so on, and tell them like that so they can essentially just start snaking hoses everywhere and get water where they needed it.

So I'd been in and out a couple of times with the firemen there, when KELLEY came back mentioned what he'd seen, and basically we had no casualties in the P-ways, no casualties in any of the offices he went into. So that was good news.

There was a Lieutenant from Public Affairs office that was out there. About every thirty minutes or so he would come and ask me what the latest is, because I was talking to the firemen. I didn't quite understand why he was asking me. I guess I was the senior Navy guy there with the firemen, so I guess he presumed I had some knowledge, you know, more than, anyway. I kept thinking why doesn't he just ask the fireman what he wants to know, but he kept asking me and I kept giving him information and he was sending that back to Pietre (phonetic) Paloli (phonetic), which is PAO, Navy PAO, and that's how they were getting the word back.

At one point through that COMMANDER THOMAS showed up in center courtyard to also help with the casualties and I started giving him briefs on what we'd been finding out from the

firemen as we went in and out of the building and we asked them specifically, you know, need to help us out. Can you send somebody to this space or that space? We knew that there wasn't a Navy space that we hadn't been in, because they were spray painting on the walls and marking on the walls where they'd been, and how they'd, you know, maneuvered through the hallways. So they wouldn't have to do the same thing twice. So kept feeding him information as well as to what we were finding and what was going on.

I don't know what, he was senior to me, so I figured, you know, that I needed to report to somebody superior to me what was going on.

Right about then a couple of battalion chiefs, when KELLEY and I came back from our forays into the building with reports of where the hoses are, where we don't have hoses, or anything, where we haven't been. We could see and we'd been told by the firemen who had seen, He said, "Yes, that's great, you know, but this area here is the responsibility of these guys and their on the other side, so we need to get the word out to them. We have no way to talk to them right now. I have no spare bodies to send."

So I said, "Well, maybe you guys need to get together and talk, you know, that's what you ought to do."

He said, "Yes, what's the quickest way to get there?"

I said, "Well I'll show you, come on." And we started walking out corridor 4 on the first floor.

The plane hit between corridor 4 and corridor 5. I didn't know that. I still did not know that at that point. We just started walking through the building. We were probably in 16 inches of water when we walked into the building. We were walking through debris everywhere. Dark, obviously, still smokey.

Q. (59:56) Did you have flashlights or what?

A. No, sir.

Q. (59:59) No.

A. See that's, I think that was my mistake because I just said, well you know, "I know how to get you there right now and quick. Follow me," and started to walk. The two battalion chiefs fell in behind me, and KELLEY fell in behind them. We started walking in, you know, I thought nothing of it. I just walked into it. KELLEY stopped, "Commander."

I said, "What?"

"I think I'm going to stay here."

I said, "Why?" You know.

"Well, you know," and he started looking at all this stuff.

I said, "Ah, come on KELLEY," you know, "Screw it. It's a pair of shoes. You worried about your shoes getting all hosed up. Come on." You know, "Got to get these guys through here."

"Oh, OK." So he kind of jumped in on the bandwagon. All four of us started trudging through there. Went out, as we walked through, you could see off to the right the portions of the missed building. I mean missing portion of the building. You could see portions of fuselage and you could see still some of the fire fighting guys fighting fire. It reeked of airplane fuel really bad. Which I later found out, which is why I lost some of my nails are falling off, and I had a bad skin rash—from the exposure to the fuel, walking in it. The water felt like bath water. It was hot. It was really hot. A lot of debris and fuel and crap just floating in the water as we walked through it.

I banged into a couple of things in the dark. Had a few more bruises. Walked out and got to an area and it looked like we couldn't make it through. At that point there was nothing off to my right. I was just, it looked like, just dark, you know. I could see nothing off to my right. I could see off to my left. Everything was burned charred black, and stanchions and supports missing.

Q. (01:01:51) Where were you at now?

A. I'm going out corridor 4 from the A ring towards the E ring, outbound towards the Washington Boulevard from the inner courtyard out corridor 4. The firemen were kind of looking at each other and they mentioned the fact that, "Hey maybe we should have brought a light," you know. "It's too late now, we're this far. Let's just keep going."

We pushed on further and we came to a standstill. I'm sitting there and there's light fixtures and wires and all kinds of things hanging around me. I go, "Where do we go now? What do we do now?"

KELLEY came up behind me and said, "Well, look off to your left. Can you make it through off to the left?"

So I turned to the left, went around and said, "Yes, there's an opening over here. Look you can just, come here we can get out this way. Come on over right here." I walked through and came out the other side, you know. It was out right next to the helipad. We walked out. There was a portion of fence. Walked around some burnt equipment, which I later found out it was the fire truck that sits on the helipad. We came out and we turned around and we went and walked, just went straight out. There were two fire trucks on the helipad. Said, "Well, where are the battalion chiefs?"

So the other two battalion chiefs came out. I still had my little Pentagon map with my grease pencil marks and all that stuff on it under my arm that I walked out there with. Set it down and said, "Look, this is the story. This is what we got." So we had the two battalion chiefs that are outside and two that were inside, all sitting there with KELLEY and I, telling them what we'd seen and what we knew to be from walking in with them. His walk through to my walk through, what we need to have. OK.

At that point we're getting hungry. It was later afternoon, probably two, three in the afternoon. Maybe later than that. So we're looking for something to eat and as I turn around I saw people with chicken dinners. "Hey, where'd you get that?" You know.

As we tried to figure out where some of the people were getting the food, I turned around to look and realized that if you look at the pictures after the fact, looking at the impact area, off to the right there's a portion that hangs like a ribbon across, like a ski jump, you know. Up, leaning up against the building. We'd walked out right under that. What was blocking us was all that collapsed portion that we had to go around to come out. So you're coming out, if you think of it as looking at a triangle, the 90-degree angle being at the bottom right, the collapsed portion is the hypotenuse of the triangle. Well we came out where that 90-degree angle was. Right under there, right under the collapsed portion of the building when we came out.

We hadn't realized that when we walked through there. We had walked out through the impacted area to get out to the helipad. So at that point after briefing those guys, I said, "What are we going to do now?" I said, "Well, we left WILL PARKS, and we left the PETTY OFFICER in the inner courtyard, we've got to get back."

So we went to corridor 5 and walked in where they'd run hoses into the building. It was still—nobody was asking any questions of anybody, what was going on. We walked in and it started

getting dark. KELLEY's following me again and you could look off to the right at that point, and still see the whole area that was gone where they impacted. Again, now you're looking from the opposite side where they're still fighting the fires where the plane had hit. We walked through and he said, "Well, I can't see."

I said, "Just look down and the fire hoses are a lighter color than the burnt area, just follow the fire hoses. The fire hoses are going through. So, if you can't see the fire hose, just tap it with the side of your foot and just follow the hose as you walk through." Because we were getting back in water. Came through and there's a portion, I guess, I don't know if it's between B and C or C and D ring, that's open air. It's like an inner, you know, driveway ring. As we got to that point and we looked off to the right you could see the wall with a portion missing where the nose of the plane had hit and that was the last point of penetration in the building, at that point. So we were right there about, what? Fifty, seventy feet away from it as we walked through. Seeing the guys surveying it. "OK, well, you made it this far," and so on.

We went back inside, got there and then ran into Chief of Chaplains for Navy, I presume. He's a one-star chaplain for Navy and a Coast Guard Captain who wanted to know if we needed to talk to anybody.

"No, not really."

Q. (01:06:52) Counseling, talking, everything.

A. Right, so, not really.

Q. (01:06:54) Was it ADMIRAL BLACK? REAR ADMIRAL BLACK?

A. I don't know his name.

Q. (01:06:58) African-American?

A. No, no he was not. So he was there. I said, Coast Guard Captain African-American was there, Chaplain corps. Had a lot of chaplains at that point in there. There was a discussion why we weren't removing bodies as quickly as we could, because there was a fight between, you know the powers that be over who had jurisdiction to remove bodies and who didn't and who had the final go-ahead and so on. So while the elephants fought that out we were down there –

Q. (01:07:28) Who was in charge from your perspective?

A. Eventually, well see it's an interesting question and I hate to say this and I've said it before as much as I hate to say it. It pains me to speak this way in general terms about fellow military officers, but it was painfully evident on the day of the attack, that the people who took charge of the situation was Navy Khaki. Regardless of what the instructions say. A lot of the Air Force and Army officers went the other way. The people that you always saw up front doing something, taking responsibility and so on were Navy khaki. Granted the other services, a lot of their enlisted, particularly the Army who wanted to lend a hand. Air Force and Army enlisted were great at lending a hand, but you did not see officers, a whole lot of officers from the other services out there at all.

Q. (01:08:32) What do you think might have -?

A. I don't know if it's because we're trained to respond and go to the sight. Just like you hear at your leader's school, and everything you're always taught is go to where the problem is and see what you can do about it. I mean we train that way in the Navy, you know. Send your inspectors

out to survey the damage and your repair locker with them, you know. Get the firemen out there, get the lead man, you know, nozzle man on the fire hose and so on, you know. It's just the way we do things. I guess the other services they have professionals or particular MOSs or whatever, AFFCs, whatever they want to call them that do that kind of stuff. If that's not you, you pull back and get out. I just don't know what the mind set was, but everywhere you looked pretty much out there on the field that day, with the exception of medical personnel. I've got to give them that. They had their doctors out there in South Parking, but with the exception of medical the guys who were down there running morgue, running the, you know, the Captain from J8 getting the water, you know. The people that were actually taking action and getting people moved and to do things were Navy Khaki.

I was really, I didn't think about that 'til after the fact. Almost everybody I ran into that was doing something, involved some who were in the rescue and all that was Navy khaki. It's just, I don't know why that is.

Q. (01:10:07) Once they were on the scene did the fire battalion chiefs take charge of that operation or -?

A. Somewhat, yes. Very early on, on a note, actually you had, again Navy was directing guys where to go. You know, once they got in then Navy pulled back, but it was very strange to see, very good feeling to see, but it was very strange to see that you would look over this whole sea of people for example, on Washington Boulevard and you would see invariably three quarters of the officers out there were Navy khaki and all the rest were other service enlisted. You didn't see a whole lot of sea of blue and a lot of Army green or anything out there, you know support.

Q. (01:10:57) Did you have fairly easy access to go where you wanted to go?

A. Yes. The whole time, there was –

Q. (01:11:02) The whole time.

A. Until about nine or ten o'clock that night, it was unfettered access anywhere I went.

Q. Really? So you didn't, DPS wasn't keeping you from going where -?

A. No, as a matter of fact I was telling DPS officers what to do in corridor 8. The guy that was on the job had only been on the job for like ten days. He said, "I don't know what to do."

I said, "I'll tell you what to do. You stay in here and anybody that wants to come in the building, you say no, say hell no, and send them back out the other way."

Q. (01:11:31) Well, what if it had happened—nothing happened to you.

A. I had no idea, it seemed just to be that way and officer KIERNAN was the same thing. He was also DPS out there. Whatever I wanted to do was fine with him, you know.

Q. (01:11:45) I mean, do you contribute that to, maybe to the fact that you kind of took charge and acted like you should be out there?

A. It just seemed that anybody, it appeared that anybody who found that niche and realized that "here's something I see that needs to be done and this is the way I think we ought to do it," and we just started telling people, "You come here. Do this. You there, go do that."

Q. (01:12:05) Taking charge.

A. People would just do it. Nobody, there were no questions asked. I mean we had the Air Force police out there for a while and as I said, early on, you know, with their weapons and all that stuff and they're the security guys for the Air Force and, "Oh yes," no questions asked. "Whatever you say, sir. Yes." You know, "There's a package over there, nobody's looked at. Why don't you go take a look at that and see what it is?"

Q. (01:12:35) So you didn't run into any instances where DPS was redirecting folks, from, we heard at first people were trying to get out that corridor 8 by pro-acting, and we heard that at some point the DPS folks kind of sealed that off and turned people around and sent them back in through the Pentagon and into the courtyard.

A. No, when I got there, it may sound like, like stupid boasting but it's not. I'm the guy that took charge down there and told them don't let anybody back in through here, at that point. Part of the time that I was down there, granted and I deferred to Officer KIERNAN on that, once we got the medical helicopter in and dusted that guy off, got him out of there, there was word that VICE ADMIRAL TRACEY wanted all Navy flags to report to the Annex. We got that word. The word was being spread. There was no official method of happening, you know, but somebody would tell somebody, I mean, people were just, you say one thing and it would spread so quickly through the crowd. It was amazing how well that word-of-mouth worked. Again I think it worked, because it was Navy khaki doing it, because we're used to staying on a bridge wing and talking to our relay officer which relays it, you know, to the helmsman or the lee helmsman or whatever, you know. We're so use to that. Repeat verbatim what somebody on the bridge wing says, so the guys on the helm or lee helm understands it. A lot of that was occurring there. A lot of that. You'd yell fifty feet to somebody and they would repeat exactly to the next guy down the

line and the next guy down the line. I mean that's how we were getting the word around. Forget radios, forget cell phones. I mean the first couple of hours, you couldn't get a call through on a cell phone, you know. The word of mouth was working wonderfully.

I ran into one three-star Air Force that was coming back into the building to go to the AOC, and I was in the 8th corridor when we got the guys off to side R. They brought in the helicopters, had the Hueys out there and they had the gunships behind them flying cover. It was interesting to see. I'd never actually seen it done. Well I mean I don't think we'd ever done it before. You know, we saw that, the Generals, that we were just standing there. Officer KIERNAN from DPS and I telling them, "Lower parade field, lower parade field. Helicopter lower, if you're being flow to side R, go to lower parade field for the dust off. If you're driving to side R can't help you." You know and just point them in that direction and the flags would come out, obviously in trail with eight or ten other folks and what they'd done was they'd taken all the instruction that they needed in the books and just picked them up in mass, throw them in burn bags, folded it, and put it under their arm and just walked out with it in burn bags.

These guys were carrying, you know, you had all these Air Force and Army Captains and Majors and Light Colonels walking out, you know, with a load of books and stuff in burn bags under their arms. We never asked any questions. We just told them, you know, "if you're going to side R," you know, "Helicopters are lower parade field. That's your pickup point. Just go."

They would stop and this and it's like, "No, just go, just go, just go. Get out of the building."

You know, "Move it out." So we got those guys out.

At that point it was like for me, that's why I decided to go back in and see what else I could do, when I ran into the Captain to go get the water, because once that had occurred it was like, "OK, what do we do now? Don't seem like there's anything else to do here."

And there was a lot of that too. “Where do I go next? Where am I needed next?” People were just doing that. Just moving. “Well, we’re done here, let’s go on to the next. We’re done here, let’s go next.”

So while we were in the inner courtyard, I should point out there’s a phone in a little room right in there. Come out and there’s like a door. I don’t know if it’s a switch room for alarm systems, or whatever in there. The firemen were looking at the board and the board was all lit up. The fire alarm’s over the entire thing. But that’s, it’s like a junction box. It’s not an electrical room, It’s for fire alarms and looks like telephones and something else in there. A small little room on the inner courtyard, off corridor 5, 6. There’s a phone on the wall that we discovered while we were there, and I told KELLEY, you know, “Call the Vice-Chief, call the EA to the Vice-Chief. Call whoever you think you need to call and tell them you’re in one piece. Where you are and give them some information.” After about the second time, the PAO Lieutenant he come and asked me for an update to pass on to PIETRE (phonetic) PALOLI (phonetic). I thought, you know, I’ve got the guy that runs the secretary for the Vice-Chief here with me. Why doesn’t he call and tell the Vice-Chief directly what the hell’s going on instead of filtering it through the PAO folks. Now that was an internal thought. I didn’t verbalize that. But that made perfect sense to me. I tried and finally got through to ADMIRAL SESTECK (phonetic), my boss and told him, “I’m OK, CDR THOMAS is down here with me. This is what we’ve got.” We gave them briefings on what we’d seen and found walking through the building before we even walked out the corridor to tell the other battalion chiefs. We’d already passed that word on to Navy.

I figured out real early that the biggest issue they’re going to have is getting good information, reliable information, and getting it now. Just like you would on a ship in a crisis situation where you keep reporting down to DC (damage control) Central, in my mind I’d already made the

connection that DC Center is Emergency Command Center in the Annex and we have to feed the flags information and you know, we're the guys on the scene. So let's feed them information. You know, if they have questions and they need something, they'll ask them and we'll go find out. We've got a phone here and we got a number there.

Q. (01:18:45) This is still in the inner courtyard that you're in?

A. Yes, we've got a phone here and we've got a phone there that we can call, you know, and go directly from the source to them for what they need. Without having to go from me to a Lieutenant, to PIETRE PALOLI (phonetic) to somebody else or whatever to get it up there. Screw that, pick up the phone and call up. You know, you tell the EA to the Vice-Chief, you know that's pretty short done. Nothing gets garbled in route. So at one point I called because we were having a hard time getting through, and KELLEY said, "Well I've got this other number. It's a cell phone."

I said, "Here let me try that." So I'd just got done with SESTAK (phonetic) I was on the phone. So I said, "Just give me that and I'll call up there." And it was ADMIRAL TRACEY's cell phone, she personally answered her phone and I just was startled to realize I was talking directly to the Director of Navy Staff.

You know, I said, "Well ma'am," I identified myself, "I'm down here with KELLEY ENNIS and this is where we are and this is what's occurring. I thought you'd like to know. If you don't want me to call you and give you this stuff just let me know."

She said, "No, no no. Go ahead." So we gave her the rundown of everything that we'd seen, that we knew, that the firefighters had told us. How we briefed them, showed them the maps, the whole nine yards before we walked out corridor 4 to tell the guys out there. So we made at least

half a dozen phone calls that night from the time we got to the inner courtyard until we left that night, passing information up.

Q. (01:20:17) What time did you leave?

A. We left at about 21:30, 22:00, we left the site, at which point KELLEY said, "Just take me home. " He was going to walk to Metro.

I said, "You're not going to get home, because you've got to go through the Pentagon station. Bet you Pentagon station's closed. There's no way, you know, you're taking Metro home. Forget that." So I told him, "I'll take you." By then things were pretty clear. We could get out of the parking lot. So on the way out I said, "Well, wait a minute," you know, "Let's, we need to go and tell these guys," we hadn't spoke to them for about three or four hours. Somebody by then had gotten smart, I guess on the phone issue and the phones were dead.

So, "Let's go up to Annex and see what's going on at the Annex. See what else we hear, and what we can find out." So the police let us through on our Pentagon badge. It was good that KELLEY was wearing his loops, as I said, earlier, I had the Admin Aide to Vice-Chief of Naval Operations, and we're part of the Command Center and all that, you know, and flashed our badges and they just waved us through the police barricades. Got up to the Annex, pardon my French, but we looked like shit. We were dirty. We were smelly. We were in our t-shirts and all. I thought, we can't go up and see the Vice-Chief like this. So we got into the building and stopped at the head and cleaned up a little bit. Got our shirts on, tucked them in, you know, all that kind of stuff and walked upstairs and KELLEY seemed eager to talk, so it's like, you know, let him, let him talk. We go there and ADMIRAL KEATING, N3/N5 was the first one we briefed. KELLEY told the whole story, and then when he got to the point that we walked through

to talk to the battalion chiefs and all, he let me pick up the story, so I did the second half. So we kind of tag teamed. He kind of talked until he ran out of breath and then I'd follow up and tell them what occurred.

We got done there and they said, "Well now you've got to tell this stuff to the Vice-Chief. So they made us wait outside for a few minutes. Somebody else came up at that point. I don't know if it was CNO's communicator or who, and said, "You're either incredibly stupid or incredibly brave."

I said, "What the hell you talking about?"

He said, "Well, COMMANDER THOMAS was up here and told us what you guys had done." Apparently he had made his way up there after I had briefed him several times in the inner courtyard while he was down there with us, and he'd left a couple hours ahead of us and gone up there to tell them what was going on.

We got in. It was very strange walking into this little office, half the size of where we are now, which was the Vice-Chief's office. Vice-Chief's at his desk, sitting at his desk. We're off to his right at the end of the desk. KELLEY ENNIS to my left and I'm mostly to his right and the Vice-Chief has a picture of the Pentagon on his desk. And we started to explain, "Well, this is where it hit. This is" you know, "And we walked through with the firemen on corridor 4. We can tell you how bad the damage is and where the damage is, because we walked it. We gave him a complete, from a damage control standpoint, status to the Vice-Chief, ADMIRAL TRACEY, N7, that I'm aware of, N6, MIKE CAJOSIE (phonetic) which is the EA to ADMIRAL TRACEY, EA to the Vice-Chief. I forget who else was in the room. It was standing room only in the back with us briefing the Vice-Chief. We were there probably twenty, thirty minutes. He asked several questions. We answered his questions. I don't remember what he asked at this

point. Got done with that, we were dismissed with a thank you. Obviously, Vice-Chief then had decisions he needed to make on how to proceed. It was painfully obvious that they were going to use some of that information for some of the decisions.

Then I took KELLEY home and I went home. Got home about 10:30 that night, 10:45. Missed lunch, I was hungry.

Q. (01:25:03) Had you had a chance—you said you had left a message for your wife? Had you gotten —

A. Yes, while we were, when I discovered that phone, and she kept a chronology at home on a little pad next to the phone. I got a chance to call her at least twice more after that from that phone right there. Maybe it was three times. Twice I recall, and she wrote down the time I called and a one liner summing up the conversation. The conversations were short on that phone because we were using it, you know to call SESTAK, called up the Command Center, and called my wife, you know. KELLEY called his wife, I'm don't know if they were married yet or not, but yes I think he was. Told her, you know, where he was and so on, and PN2 did the same thing, so we're kind of using that for other things as well. So it was like, keep it short, keep it sweet. You know, they hear your voice they know you're OK. Keep phone calls under two minutes, hang up and get the next call out.

So we were using that. When we told the firemen, the firemen were using that as well, because they were having a hard time with some of the radios just being in side the courtyard and all. So I was hacking, gagging and coughing. Went to sleep. Got up the next day took a shower, coughing up some nasty stuff. And wasn't until about two weeks later somebody said, "Well you know, you ought to go and get your lung function test, because there was asbestos and formaldehyde

and smoke and all the particulars and stuff you guys were – because after a while you just couldn't wear your mask, because it just got to be too much. You couldn't breathe it got so clogged and everything else. You just said, "screw it." Standing there without air, and the smoke. So I don't know what else to say at this point.

My son complained that I was all bruised up when he saw me and I was taking my shower.

Q (01:27:02) Oh?

A. Yes.

Q. Now what was that from?

A. Stuff falling around us as we were walking in and out of the building. I had a chunk of concrete land on my foot. My skin here on my legs, looked really white and flaky.

Q. From what?

A. Well, I found out from one of the aviators it was probably because of fuel in the water. You know. So a bruise on my inner thigh. A bruise on my arm, everything else. They just did a follow-up about two weeks ago down at the clinic to see how I was doing. My shoulder still hurts but – I don't know what else to say.

Q. What would you say were the, some lessons learned from your perspective?

A. My perspective? Nobody knows what an evacuation plan is. (chuckle) I mean some people did, but like our office we didn't follow our evacuation plan. We should have gone out the door

to the right, E ring down and out to North Parking. We went the total opposite way. Went in instead of out.

Q. (01:28:17) Was that because you didn't follow it because you didn't practice it, or -?

A. The fact that most people are so used to going out to the A ring and it's the shortest way around to get to the parking lots and stuff, you know. Communications was a big factor. Didn't have enough coms, from a technological perspective. Navy folks, I said at the time, we could communicate, but then we did it by word-of-mouth. It was—I was also very surprised that I could stand there and tell a two-star and three-star, not only “No,” but “hell no, you're not coming in the building,” and he, “OK, “ turn around and walked away. Nobody pulled rank that day. I didn't see anybody pull rank. It's like the old saying used to be, you know, RDMS, Rank Don't Mean Squat.” It didn't. It was who ever seemed to know what the hell they were doing and seemed to be the first on the scene. It appeared that everybody fallen into - you appeared. I know you were on the scene before I was, therefore you must know more then I of what has transpired so I'll do whatever you think we need to do.

That's just kind of the way it ran. Very surreal at this point to look back, you know, that way.

Q. Did you notice some, some, good examples of leadership from junior folks that stick in your mind.

A. Yes, YN2 was with us, from secretariat. As a matter of fact he was the only Navy enlisted man in the inner courtyard with us.

Q. (01:30:09) Who was that?

A. I can't think of his name. He works for KELLEY ENNIS, I know that. I mean, you know, when you're in t-shirts you don't see name tags.

Q. (01:30:18) Right.

A. Sorry, Can't help you that way. I put him in for an award. Put KELLEY in for an award.

Q. (01:30:27) Is ENNIS I-N-N-I-S, or E-S.

A. E-N-N-I-S. ENNIS. He's right up here on the E ring. He was interviewed by the detailer in Norfolk today for a destroyer.

I'm just curious how you got my name. On a list?

Q. Yes, people mentioning it you know. Oh, my next question's, who else should we talk to

Q. (another) right that's one of the questions we ask.

A. DAVE THOMAS. CAPTAIN DAVID THOMAS. He is the EA to N3/N5, ADMIRAL KEATING.

Q. Yes, he's on here.

A. I think he's getting a Sailor's medal. He deserves it.

Q. (01:31:13) Getting what?

A. Getting a Sailor's Metal and he deserves it. He actually was, lifted a desk and got people out from under a desk in the command center. Yes, talk to him. Talk to KELLEY ENNIS. You should talk to LTjg, used to be Ensign WILL PARKS.

Q. (1:31:38) Yes, talked to him.

A, Did you, because WILL was there, too. Will was with us in the inner courtyard, when after about my third call up there, when I finally talked to TRACEY, got her on the phone, she asked me to put WILL on the phone, and WILL talked to her and that's when she said, "Bring me the CACO stuff." That was scary because we could see the flames up there, and she expected him to go up in his office and pull the CACO stuff out and come back with it to the Command Center. So we went, we did it, we went up there, -

Q. She could have meant go out to the Command Center and pull out there –

A. No go to the Personnel Support office, which is on the A ring on the 4th floor.

Q. (01:32:25) Right, right, OK.

A. Where he worked, and pull out the CACO manual and the list of things to do and whatever else they needed because they were starting to think "We have to account for folks, and so on, you know. We get a couple of fireman to go with you and then you just walk up there, just like you are in your khakis and walk in, you know, get the stuff and get the hell out. So I mean there was a lot of that, you know, forget safety gear, and all that. We don't have time, and we don't know where to find it, you know. For the sake of expediency if you have to go in harms way then so be it. Let's go. Let's do. He was very hesitant at first to do that.

I said "Hey, let's go. I'll go with you. Come on. No big deal, it's right there in the E ring, Man.

You can see it from here, look, right there. See that broken window where the smoke's coming

out. Sure right there. Got a problem, stick your head out through the broken window and take a breath of fresh air and go back in. Let's go."

There you go, that's the way it works.

Q. (01:33:30) Anybody else you can think of?

A. People that were there that I saw that participated. So that would be THOMAS, ENNIS, YN2, WILL PARKS off the top of my head.

Q. So YN2, is that LATINO?

A. No, he's YN1.

Q. (01:33:53) OK.

A. Yes, he was out in North Parking. I don't know who he's working for right now. Might be FMB, he was last I heard. Yes, it's the reason I bring YN2 up is because he was the only, as I said, the only Navy enlisted men that I saw in the inner courtyard after the incident, only one. As a matter of fact three of those people I just mentioned WILL PARKS, ENNIS and Bill, I put them in, statements for all of them hoping they'll get an award. They deserve it.

Q. (01:34:38) Anything else you want to add for the historical record?

A. Glad to be here, glad I'm safe. I'm still pissed that some asshole tried to kill me and my friends. I lost sixteen friends and colleagues that day. Yes, yep, sorry.

Q. (01:35:02) Thank you for taking the time to talk with us today.

A. Yes.

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