

**Naval Historical Center
Oral Interview Summary Form**

Interviewers:

CAPT (S) Mike McDaniel
CDR Karen Loftus

Interviewer's Organization:

Navy Combat Documentation Det 206
Navy Combat Documentation Det 206

Interviewee:

Mr. Rick Sandelli
CAPT, USNR-R

Current Address:

Navy Command Center spaces
Pentagon

Date of Interview:

15 Oct 01

Place of Interview:

Navy Annex

Number of Cassettes:

1

Security Classification:

Unclassified

Name of Project: Pentagon Terrorist Attack Incident

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

Abstract of Interview:

1. From ██████████, N.J. A third generation Italian American. Graduated college in 1975. Brother in Navy; dad Army. Brother a Blue Angel. By 1978 he was in AOCS in Pensacola. He flew CH-53E's. Thirteen years of active duty. Promoted to CAPT October of 2000. Currently an IMA with Army DoD DOMS – Director of Military Support. Provides DoD service support for FEMA. A joint crisis response cell set up in the basement of the Pentagon. SecArmy has executive agency support for many years. EPLOs were brought in immediately to stand watch – Emergency Preparedness Liaison Officers – 24/7, for approximately three weeks.
2. Mr. Sandelli was beginning that coordination. He was called on 11 September after the second aircraft hit the WTC to report to DOMS for active duty. He started to make those calls to start the 24/7-watch bill when the plane hit the Pentagon. He doesn't know what his status was, if he had died if he'd been considered on active duty.

3. As a civilian he is responsible for continuity of operations planning, and support of DOMS. N32 was responsible for interagency support/anti-terrorism and force protection. He was in the interagency support branch. Spoke here about N32 organization and command structure.
4. On day of attack, in the new Command Center for about three weeks. N323 morning meeting at 0730 with CAPTs Panches, Henson and the staff of 7. About 0800 the meeting broke. Watched CNN in the Command Center – saw planes hit the WTC. Went to his desk – told to report for duty to DOMS. Started making phone calls approximately 0915. Told CAPT Henson that he would be going down to DOMS shortly.
5. Walking in to the command center, most of it lay to the right. His office was in the far right corner, on the same side as the entrance. Adjusting his clock when the airplane struck. He was the farthest point away from the point of impact in the command center. Which isn't very far away. Can't describe the sound – more like what an earthquake would sound like – a deep rumble. A feeling that building was moving underneath your feet. Room went dark- he fell forward. He surmised it was accompanying the terrorist attack in New York. Instant smell of AV gas and room filled with smoke very quickly. No flash or burn. So much stuff on floor. After the initial explosion he heard the sound of glass tinkling from the ceiling panels. He heard nothing else at that point – thought he called for Mr. Brady and Mr. Lloyd. Crawled over debris to where his cubicle was – saw a small fire in the ceiling. Saw the plastic sheeting. Room filling with smoke fast. Biggest concern was suffocation. Made a right hand turn toward an emergency exit in the back of the office. Impact zone was from the entrance – split the command center on a diagonal. Folks in the right corner lived. Anyone to the left of that imaginary line died. He crawled through a 3 ft opening between the floor and the ceiling. Felt something wet dripping on him – it was water. Walked out door – CAPT Jeff Borough went out that

same emergency exit. He was out of the spaces in 30-40 seconds. Saw the black smoke rolling down the hallway.

6. Now in opening between D and C corridor. IT – Intel plotting folks were in the opposite corner from where he was. They had their own entrance and exit to the space. A wall collapsed and some people literally walked from that empty space into the corridor between D and C. The Army personnel on the 2nd deck were throwing themselves against the windows to break them so that the smoke could be released. They were virtually trapped in their office.
7. Mr. Brady and Mr. Lloyd came out then. Army folks lowered themselves. We made a ring of five-six people to help break their fall. One woman half-jumped, half-fell and broke her leg. We moved her to the side to be evacuated. At that time LT Schaefer came out, in uniform, looked relatively unscathed except for a reddish flash burn on his face. He said he was hurt, and he was standing, and he looked okay except for a burn. After they caught 6-7 people they formed a stretcher for the lady who broke her leg and began to take her out. They carried her to center court where triage was occurring. They put her down and started to go back into the building. He was still trying to get to DOMS – he was going to the 8th corridor, toward DOMS, and it occurred to him the basement was not the best place to go. He went out the POAC entrance; saw N3/N5 folks. Could not see – had left his glasses. Made his way across North Parking. One hour passed until he got on phone. Got an outside line and called his wife.
8. Did not know what to do yet. Continuity of operations plan had only gotten through the Vice Chief, and since the Command Center had been hit there was no ground zero from which to plan. Saw AF helos land; thought Joint Emergency Evacuation Plan was activated but learned later it was not activated by Secretary of Defense. So plan was not in place; no connectivity. He ended up walking the whole nine miles home. A young

woman handed him a bottle of water in Crystal City as he was walking home. He walked with a Marine LtCol about five miles.

9. Got home and neighbors were pouring in, calling. Fences were mended immediately.

Arrived home at approximately 1630. Got several calls from Jack Panches son, Jeremy. You either walked out of there or you did not. It was not the type of situation you could be rescued from.

10. Some folks went up the hill to the Annex. It makes sense now – he didn't think of it then.

Did a recall from the Marine Corps Annex – cobbled together a watch team. Computer had us on global, so he thinks that is where they got the information for recall.

11. We should have had a common muster area. Should have backed up the info to another

command center, to the alternate site or to the Annex so that you could go to another command center, pick up your recall roster and start calling. That was done, but it was not planned out prior to the event. As for continuity of operations, there is a whole workgroup now – Secretariat Advisory Group (SAG). The SAG's charter is to get the instruction redrafted with lessons learned, alternate headquarters, etc. We had an automated recall section that was wiped out that had not been hooked up yet. It goes through an automated recall and even tells you where to report. It was destroyed in the attack. He recommends not putting it in the command center; that it be placed in an alternate site. There needs to be a redundancy in the system.

12. Joint Emergency Evacuation Plan is designed to implement succession. It moves senior

leadership, groups of succession, to the alternate site and to various areas. It was not executed. He does not know why it was not implemented, except that perhaps it cannot be implemented piecemeal.

13. Lessons learned – have an alternate site for our service headquarters. We don't have

anything equivalent to the Marines' Quantico. We do have a Navy Yard, Anacostia, but

both are very small. If we are to move the ops and service headquarters to the alternate site our footprint there must be enlarged. Need an alternate ops center in one location, and alternate headquarters space at another. This is all a part of the SAG.

14. LT Nancy McKeown, DM1 Gaston and LT Schaefer were the only one who walked out alive from the middle of the command center spaces.
15. As for communications, there is a GETS card, an emergency access card. It is a part of discussions now. Flyaway kits to include blackberries, portable VTC kits.

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Transcript of Interview:

Interviewee Information:

From [REDACTED], N.J. A third-generation Italian American. Graduated college in 1975. Brother in Navy; dad Army. Brother a Blue Angel. By 1978 he was in AOCS in Pensacola. He flew CH-53E's. Thirteen years of active duty. Promoted to CAPT October of 2000. Currently an IMA with Army DoD DOMS – Director of Military Support. Provides DoD service support for FEMA. A joint crisis response cell set up in the basement of the Pentagon. SecArmy has executive agency support for many years. EPLOs were brought in immediately to stand watch – Emergency Preparedness Liaison Officers – 24/7, for approximately three weeks. Mr. Sandelli was beginning that coordination. He was called on 11 September after the second aircraft hit the WTC to report to DOMS for active duty. He started to make those calls to start the 24/7-watch bill when the plane hit the Pentagon. He doesn't know what his status was, if he had died if he'd been considered on active duty. As a civilian he is responsible for continuity of operations planning, and support of DOMS. N32 was responsible for interagency support/anti-terrorism and force protection. He was in the interagency support branch. Spoke here about N32 organization and command structure.

Topics Discussed:

TRACK ONE

Q. (12:13) Could you tell us about what happened that day when you first went in?

A. Sure. So Tuesday was a pretty standard day. I went in my civilian attire. Everybody was pretty much in the office by about 7:20. We were in the new Command Center where we had been there for maybe three, four weeks. It was very tight in there – very close. They really jammed us in there, but it was a new space. At least everything worked. That's a big deal in the government. Each morning at 7:30 we had a sit-down meeting with the N323, and Jerry, Jack, and the staff of seven sat down in the conference room and talked about the day. I typically did not attend that entire meeting because most of the meeting was about counter-drug. I typically would either go in first at 7:30 and speak first and leave, or kind of make my way into the room maybe at quarter to eight after they had gotten some of their initial stuff out of the way and I'd let them know how my day was going. It just gave me more time instead of sitting through something that was not quite germane to what I was doing. So we had our 7:30 meeting that morning on Tuesday, the 11th. As a matter of fact, Jack Panches and I had just met a week prior and spoken to some individuals from the joint staff and from N4 about mass migration issue in Cuba. They were having an issue with the Haitian and Cuban refugees. So Jack and I were working on a new project together. We discussed that briefly at the Tuesday morning meeting and then I would suggest somewhere around 8 o'clock or so the meeting broke, which is pretty normal. Jack and I talked about Monday night football game, that was pretty typical. We're pretty much sports nuts so we talked about the game and then I went to my desk and as typical in

the morning, you usually run through your e-mails, make some phone calls in case you need to contact some folks to start the day. The typical administrative things that you start your day off. “Do you want to know everything I did that morning for the most part?” When I was doing this on the computer the other day to try to write it down, I would say somewhere around just before 9 o’clock or so, I went to the Concourse. I mailed a bill and I went to the card shop to buy a birthday card for a cousin of mine, which she never got. And while I was buying the card, the woman in front of me in line was speaking to the clerk and they were talking about an airplane hitting the building, but they were not specific about what airplane, what building. They had been having the conversation as I walked up and so I got this feeling that something had happened some place, but I didn’t really ask them what they were referring to. I just didn’t. I was in a hurry. And I got back to the office somewhere around a few minutes after 9 o’clock. I think the reason I know that was I believe the second aircraft hit the second tower a little bit after nine because when I got back to my office, back to the Command Center, as I walked through the Watch section I saw the World Trade Center the one building burning on the large-screen TVs. I stopped and of course asked what had happened and somebody had told me an aircraft struck the tower. And then I saw the second aircraft strike the tower. Now I don’t know if that was the original video or if that was a replay. I just don’t know ‘cause I didn’t wait. I mean I saw it and I guess I just didn’t ask and I went to my desk. As soon as I got to my desk the phone was ringing and that was DOMS – the Army Director of Military Support calling me saying, “We’ve had a second tower strike in New York” and he wanted to know how soon I could report down here for duty. I said, “I’m on my way. I’ll be there in about 45 minutes to an hour. I need to make some phone calls to let the other EPLO ?? and other people know that we may need to support you.” So I’m going to guess it was maybe 9:15 thereabout I started making phone calls,

collecting my things at my desk, my brief case – that kind of stuff. Talked to Jerry Henson, our branch chief, and told him that I would be going down to DOMS to do the support based on what had happened in New York. I saw Jack, he was out in the corridor – we were walking in opposite directions and as he went by me, I yelled to him, I said, “Jack, I’m going downstairs to support DOMS.” He said, “Okay.” He gave me a thumbs up and I told him I would let them know later what the schedule looked like, ‘cause at that point I didn’t know what we were expecting, how much time would be involved. Went back to my cubicle area which was in the far – well, as you came into the Command Center most of the Command Center laid ahead of you and to the right. From the front entrance you walked into a rectangular room, the main entrance. Our offices were in the back, right-hand corner. My wife called, my lovely wife, “What’s going on?” like I always know and like they call and tell me first. I said, “I don’t know. I can’t tell you.” But my phone didn’t ring at my desk. My phone rang at the desk next to mine because our lines had been crossed, they had not straightened it out yet. That was one of the jokes in the office that one thing they had not done was got our phone lines uncrossed.

So when the phone rang on the next desk over, I got up and answered it because Dave Orm, who usually sits there – the lieutenant was on travel – and I figured that I would pick it up because that was my phone number. It was my wife and I explained that I didn’t know. The reason I know exactly about what time it was I had just that weekend prior, purchased a clock for a whole fifteen dollars from a local department store because we had a 24-hour clock in our office and I hate 24-hour clocks. And so I kept telling them I was going to get rid of the 24-hour clock and bring in a big industrial clock, which I did. That Monday, the day prior, I came in with this big, typical black and white, round industrial clock. I stuck a battery in it and threw it up on the wall and tossed the 24-hour clock some place. But it kept sticking. Probably because I spent so much

money on it. The clock read twenty minutes to ten. So I know 9:39 is the official time that they say this aircraft struck the Pentagon, but I had everything packed up. I had made my phone calls. I told my immediate chain-of-command I was going down to work in the DOMS, which is over on the seventh corridor in the basement. And I walked up to the clock to tap it to get it going again and that's when the airplane struck.

When I walked to the far side of our little area of pukas ? I was, introspect now, as probably the farthest point away from the impact point in the Command Center, which really wasn't all that far. The Command Center was probably only maybe 70 feet long – I don't even know. Not very long. Had I left when I was first called I wouldn't have been there. If I had finished up and started to walk out I wouldn't be here. I walked up to adjust the clock, and Paul Brady was to my left. Mr. Brady does the counter-drug money and "Tripp" Lloyd (Editors Note: reference to Mr. Wallace H. Lloyd) who is the contractor that helps him in that endeavor was to my right. I literally walked up to the clock and as I was getting ready to adjust it, I can't even describe how it sounded. I've tried to come up with something that describes how it sounded when we got hit. I would assume it was more like what an earthquake sounds like. More than a boom. I didn't hear an explosion like you think you would hear and expect an explosion. It was much deeper. It was more of a rumble. That's the only way I can describe it. Very, very deep rumble. But with that rumble there was a tremendous feeling or force of the building moving of the ground moving under your feet. Fireworks don't explain it. I know somebody said it sounded like a five-inch shell. I don't know what that's like; I've never fired a five-inch shell. But there was this deep rumble, but a sense of the building moving which was odd. That's the odd part of it. And I fell forward, caught myself. Something hit me on the right hand side and left side of my hip. I suspect it was probably a table or chair. And my left side was probably Mr. Brady's desk.

I was that close to his desk. And I fell forward and the room went dark. And, of course, the first thing was what was that? And then obviously we've been hit. It's either a bomb or another aircraft. And it was pretty quickly surmised that something had taken place here that accompanied what had happened in New York. At that moment I did not know.

The room became dark and instantly smelled of gas and started to fill with smoke very, very quickly, which was pretty surprising because I never saw a flash of light. I never saw a flash burn or anything like that. I don't know that there was, but I never saw anything like that. I stood up and turned around, but you couldn't really stand because there was so much stuff on the floor and whether it was the pookas?? Or the cubicle walls, chairs, desks, ceiling panels, and lights. Right after the initial explosion the room was deadly silent and the only thing I could hear –it sounded like if you grab a Christmas tree when the needles get dry. I guess it was glass from the ceiling panels. You could hear this schhhhhhhhhhhhh; as glass crumbles or breaks like gas filled tubes and they have a tendency to pop and crumble. That's how it sounded. I don't really know what it was. I heard nothing. I thought I called Mr. Brady and Tripp's name. They say they never heard it and I don't really know that I did, but I couldn't see them and they were right next to me. I turned around because as a pilot from pilot training – point of reference – never lose your point of reference in the dark. I knew my cubicle was behind me and I started to crawl over whatever was in the way and I just don't know what that was. As I got to about where my cubicle was I saw a small fire in the overhead. The ceiling panels and the suspended ceiling panels were down. I don't think the concrete floor above had fallen, but just those panels and cells. And above that I could see a small fire and I could see the plastic sheathing that they put behind it maybe for dust or whatever, and the room was filling with smoke so fast I was bound and determined I wasn't going to die in there. I wasn't going to suffocate in there and that was

biggest concern – that I was going to be trapped in there. You could see the black smoke rolling through the office. When I got back to my cubicle area, I made a right hand turn ‘cause I knew there was an emergency exit in the back of the office. Now just a couple of days prior I had asked what that door was and somebody said that was an emergency exit, so I knew there was one in the back of the office, although I got confused as to which one it was. I’ll tell you about that in a minute. I went past where Mr. Henson and Jack Punches’ office was, but I didn’t see an opening. It was dark. There was nothing discernable about where the entry was to their office.

Q. (25:29) Was their office to the right? You said yours was the farthest right.

A. I was about as far right as you can get. Their little office was tucked further into the far right hand corner. I this rectangle desk was the you entered from the far corner and the lay in front of you and to the right, Mr. Henson’s office was in the far corner and my little area was right in front of that.

Q. (26:30) The impact was where?

A. Up here at the entrance. If you take our and draw a diagonal line from about here forward, everybody died, except for one person. One person is in the hospital and I don’t know if he’s going to make it nor not. Folks in this corner lived. You can almost draw a perfect line – 28 people from here forward. When I went around the corner from my cubicle area towards the emergency exit, which would have put me in front of Mr. Henson’s office as I made my way to this emergency exit, there was something on the floor. They had some wardrobe cabinets that people hung their jackets and stuff and I assume that’s what I had to crawl over. Something was on the floor in front of me and much higher than what I had crawled over before, and the ceiling

was much lower in that area than before, so the opening I had was maybe three, three-and-a-half feet between the floor and the ceiling. And I just crawled over whatever was there. I felt something wet dripping on me and again, being an ex-pilot, the first thing I did was smell it. I wanted to know if it was fuel. It didn't have a smell and I assumed it was water. I assumed it was from the sprinkler system. It wasn't spraying like you would normally expect; it was just this dribbling and maybe because it had been destroyed or ruined. I got through that opening and started into the far, far reaches of the Command Center, the hallway was relatively unobstructed except for some ceiling panels and some wires and such. As I went down the hallway, I looked to my right and saw – I thought the emergency exit was straight ahead – I saw a door to the outside and walked out the door. And Captain Jeff Boroff was out there. His office was in that back part of the Command Center and he was able to literally walk out his office and out the emergency exit.

I was probably out of there in 30, 40 seconds. When I got out, I turned and looked back into where I had just come out of and you could see the black smoke rolling almost down the hallway. It was rolling across the office. I had some smoke ingestion, but very little. You could taste it in your mouth. My point is that it came through the office that quickly. Now I was in the opening between the D and C ring and I see Jeff Boroff and behind us, not from behind me, well it gets kind of fuzzy. Jeff and I were in the area between the D and C rings and the IP – IntelPlotting Office – was in the opposite corner of where my desk was and those folks were part of the Command Center but never counted as part of the Command Center because they had their own entrance/exit lock secret space. A wall had collapsed in their area and some people were literally walking through this opening in the wall to this space where we were between the two rings.

Above us, the first thing I noticed, were all the windows in the second floor were filled with Army personnel and they were literally throwing their bodies against the windows, trying to break them because their office was filled with smoke. You could see smoke bellowing out of the windows; the windows were open a little bit. They were virtually trapped in their office. They literally kept throwing themselves against the window until the windows broke and glass fell and as soon as they did that smoke bellowed out of the room. Somewhere in that timeframe, Mr. Brady and Tripp Lloyd came from the same way I did and at least two of my office mates had gotten out. I subsequently found out that the wall that was holding the clock that I was going to adjust collapsed sometime after I turned and exited, because they both had been knocked to the ground and crouched under their desks and waited for whatever was falling to stop falling. When they were able to stand up and, I guess, the smoke cleared or started to clear, it was filling with smoke. They literally walked through the wall into the indoor corridor. We had the fourth corridor then there was an inside service corridor and they walked into that service corridor which paralleled with fourth corridor and they walked out down the corridor and out into this opened area between the D and C ring.

The Army folks broke through the windows and started to lower themselves and we started gathering work groups together of about five or six people making a ring and catching these big Army people that kept falling. We kept breaking their fall, more than anything else. We had everything from guys that were pretty good size that would lower themselves and fall, and we would break their fall to there is always someone who jumps on 'ready set' instead of 'go'. We had a woman who fell – half fell half jumped – and she broke her leg and it was obviously broken. It was twisted and turned in an odd position and we moved her off to the side and we needed to evacuate her and at that time, Lieutenant Schaffer, who was one of the only folks in

the front part of that Command Center that I know that walked out the same way we did. He was in uniform and actually looked relatively unscathed other than he had a very reddish flash burn on his face and he said, "I'm hurt." And I asked if he could see me and he said, "Yes." I was concerned about his eyes. But he was standing there and he looked pretty much like he was okay except for this burn. We had so many other people that were – a woman who had jumped and came out and was just hysterical, curled up in a ball on the ground. Then we had this woman with a broken leg. You start your own professional triage and you think 'well he's standing, he looks okay, I'm going for this person over here', so after we caught maybe six or seven people, I found a 4 x 8 sheet of plywood. I didn't know where it had come from. There has been a lot of construction. It could have just been spare wood. I dragged it over to her and three or four of us rolled her onto this board and picked the board up to take her out.

At the same time there was a fence that was locked between the C and D corridor and some people tried climbing it and some did and some didn't. Some security guard from I don't know where came over and he didn't have the keys and he ran back someplace and came back and opened the gates. However, in retrospect, if we had gone that way we would have been going the wrong way, I believe, because we would have been going between the fourth and fifth corridor, which was the strike zone. We were already at the fourth corridor walking that way may have been okay because we were between C and D, but in retrospect it seems kind of funny that we would have tried going that way considering the fourth corridor was right there and leads to the center courtyard. If you cut across the courtyard you can exit the building. In the confusion it was perceived that we could have been trapped in that area. In retrospect, it became clear when we started to exit that area with this injured woman that was not the way to go. So we carried her past the new escalators and that whole new section. There were people streaming

out of the building and we took her out to center court where they were triaging folks. It seemed to me not to be a good area. It seemed to me that it's likely there could be another aircraft that could impact the Pentagon. I don't know why I thought that way, but I did. We put her down under a tree in the shade as we were instructed to do. We did go back into the building and at that time there were security guards because now ten minutes had passed or so. They did not want us to go back in. Some people ran around them. I stopped. And the reason I stopped was that I was going to go to DOMS thinking that's where I should go next. I thought we would be coordinating something here in the Pentagon. So at that point I elected to leave, cut through the courtyard and do out the eighth corridor. And when I got to the eighth corridor there was more security making everybody go out. I broke off that group and started to go down towards the seventh corridor and then it dawned on me that I was going to go into the basement 'cause that's where they're located. And I thought, 'Well, let me think about this. I don't know they're down there for one, because they could have evacuated the entire building; two, I don't know if something else is going to happen; and three, I don't know if the basement is the best place you want to be.' So much for being a hero. At this point, I felt like I had done what I could do for the woman jumping out the window, so I left the building. I decided that was not the prudent thing to do and went back to the eighth corridor and out near the POAC (Pentagon Officer Athletic Club).

I say over the next five, ten minutes I saw different people from N3 and 5 that I recognized. I guess I looked shabby compared to them. I was filled with white dust. I don't know if that was from the ceiling panels or what, but I know that when I looked down at my clothes I was covered with dust and the back of my shirt was scorched. I don't know where that came from 'cause I don't remember a fire but it was scorched. I couldn't see. I had left everything on my desk. I

was getting ready to go so my new glasses, my briefcase, my jacket, but I did have my badges with me. I had nothing. I know Dave Thorson, Captain Thorson, gave me a 20-dollar bill. It was just in case. He didn't know if I was going to have to take a cab or make a phone call or whatever.

I eventually made my way across the North parking lot and as I got to the far end near DPS is a trailer. I think DPS owns that – that's protective service, I think. And there were people milling around trailer and, of course, you turned and looked back at the building and streams of people standing out on the lawn and getting into cars, some trying to leave, some just standing there in disbelief, people crying. And there was this huge bellowing of black smoke from the aircraft. Maybe an hour had passed by the time I got on the phone because I asked them if they had a dial tone. Of course, a lot of people were trying to use their cell phones. We learned in Oklahoma City and I've tried to tell our senior management that having a cell phone is not going to work during an emergency. It happened in Oklahoma City, it happened here – all the lines get jammed. They had a LAN line. I dialed '9' and I got an outside line. I called my wife at her office and the secretary answered and I got no farther than, "Hi, this is Rick." and she said, "Hang on." Usually they ask who it is because they're pretty busy – mortgage business. My wife got on the phone and she was pretty hysterical. By now my brother, sister, friends had called because they couldn't reach the building and she hadn't heard from me, but her daughter Sandy, had come over to her office to be with her, so after a few minutes I talked with my step-daughter cause she was more together than my wife was. Within about an hour, my family knew I was okay. I told them I didn't know what I was going to do because under continuity operations planning that we worked – our plan had only gotten through the vice chief and because the Navy had been directly hit, we didn't have that ground zero to plan. We always talk

about if we have to do anything, the Navy Command Center will notify the people, but now we have no Navy Command Center, so there was confusion at that point. I saw the Air Force helicopters arrive, which is a part of a Joint Emergency Evacuation Plan. Only later learned that the Secretary of Defense did not initiate the Joint Emergency Evacuation Plan, which gets our senior leadership out of here. He purposely did not do that that the Air Force called them in on their own to move their senior people to Bolling and the Army also called in some folks to move them out of the immediate area. The sense of confusion was high and the sense of disappointment was high because we did not have the plan that I had been working on for all this time was not complete. It was complete to a point, but we did not have our Command Center. I had no connectivity with anyone to know – I couldn't call the Air Force or go back into the building to talk to the Air Force or Army or OSD operations center so I was very disconnected at that point. I decided after sometime that I would leave because what I thought I would do is get to my home and be able to start calling or at least find a place where I could get to a phone and start calling. Obviously, that wasn't going to happen. To my mind at least and maybe I wasn't thinking straight. That wasn't going to happen within so many blocks of the Pentagon because of phone traffic – everything was jammed. As I started to leave, I walked around the Pentagon. As I started to leave the area of the Pentagon, I came across a navy captain and for some reason he and I started talking and found out that he was on SecDef staff and I spent about five minutes talking to him about emergency evacuation that these Air Force helicopters had shown up. I don't know if there is a Joint Emergency Evacuation Plan that has been enacted. I told him that I was from the Navy Command Center and there wasn't one any more. He was going to a meeting with SecDef; they had picked an area where they were going to meet and they were going to have it right on the grounds and do some planning. I gave him my name and number and said

that if you need to reach me here's how you can either at home or eventually cell phones may work; but I tried to give him whatever information I could.

Q. (42:49) Do you know who the captain was?

A. No, I do not. I made plans with my wife that I didn't know – she wanted to pick me up. I told her, “You'll never get up here to this area so I'll start walking and call you from time-to-time and if I reach a point where I can wait and you can get me.” I live nine miles. I walked it. I walked right through Crystal City, right down route 1. Along the way I would stop and borrow somebody's phone, like a phone at a place of business, get a drink of water. When I left the grounds at the Pentagon, they had a triage area and I found a lot of clean towels, they looked perfectly clean. I don't know what they were using them for, but I picked one up and just threw it over my neck cause I had dust in my ears, nose, eyes and hair, and it seemed clean and smelled clean. I wanted something cause I was dirty. And I'm glad I did that because it kept me a lot cooler. It was a pretty warm day if you remember. I got into Crystal City and a young girl walked by me and she had bottles of water and she was giving them to people. I asked her if she wanted something for it and she said, “No.” and handed me a bottle of water, which was great because maybe now people wouldn't just take from a stranger but it really helped because I was thirsty. I walked through Crystal City, down Route 1 towards Old Town and met up with an Air Force Lieutenant Colonel – I don't know his name and he was real tall and walked a lot faster than me – but we walked together for about four or five miles, and then we realized that Metro was open. We went over to Braddock Street Metro. I didn't have anything except that 20 dollars, but he had a couple of Metro passes. We got on the Metro to Huntington, which is about a mile-and-half, two miles from my house. I got off at Huntington and walked the last couple miles to my home.

I didn't have house keys or anything although we hide a key. By now it was 4:20 or 4 something in the afternoon because I remember looking at the clock when I got in the door. And many of my neighbors had been let out of work to get home early, so I must look terrible. I was walking down the street not by the seat of my pants, but the back legs and pants were ripped and my shoes were all ruined and my shirt had holes and scorched. Like I said I must have looked terrific and I thought I looked pretty good until I started to talk to them and they looked at me like, 'what the heck happened to you?'

As a matter of fact there is a neighbor who I hadn't spoken to in many years over one of these stupid little things in the neighborhood, and all that kind of stuff just vanquished away. He wanted to take me to get my car, which was at the Metro, but I didn't have any keys with me or anything with me. It was nice. It was one of those fences that got mended immediately. It was probably 4:30ish when I got home – 1630 – and my wife got home probably within 15 to 20 minutes of that because I had been calling her along the way. Once I got home I started making phone calls and started receiving phone calls. Unfortunately, I got several phone calls from Jack Punches' son, Jeremy. Jack was my best friend. He kept asking me if I had seen his dad and I had not. For that matter, I hadn't seen Jerry either, although I got a phone call from Mr. Lloyd and Mr. Brady got home right away. When they got out they had nothing, but Paul had his car keys and they made their way to the car and eventually got out of the parking lot and got home. Somehow Tripp Lloyd had found out that Jerry had been rescued and was in the hospital, and he did not have any information on Jack and I just knew immediately; it was obvious to me based on what I saw that day that if you weren't accounted for right away they weren't going to account for you. You walked out of there or you didn't walk out of there. There was very little

of in-between. In other words, you weren't going to find somebody. You weren't going to rescue them sometime later.

Q. (47:16) But yet he was in the part of the building where he should have lived.

A. If he had been at his desk. He was not at his desk. He had been at his desk and Jerry had asked the two Petty Officers who were in the main Command Center to come in and review a travel claim with him and Petty Officer Williams – matter of fact, I was talking to her this morning—she said that when she walked in Jack walked past her and said, “I’ll be back.” and I guess he assumed that if they were going to do some business he was going to go wherever; the restroom or to watch on the large screen. I don’t know where he was going. He left his office area and I don’t know where he was found, but when Jeremy called me it was pretty tough. He said, “Have you seen or heard from my father?” and I had assumed that most people carry some kind of identification or at least badges that you could have called a hospital and they would have said ‘Yes, somebody named Jack Punches was here.’ I never had a good feeling from the very beginning. That was really the day other than the multitude of phone calls from family, friends, work; people trying to do recalls and check with people, trying to call other people to let them know where you were.

Q. (48:36) Can you tell us about the recall procedures and who called you and how they were trying to get together the muster?

A. The way I understand it and again I didn’t have much insight into it, some folks, which is really smarter and I should have done it myself, some people went to the Annex. I don’t why it makes sense at that point, I just don’t know, maybe I was too close to think straight, but some

folks went to the Annex, they went to the Marine Corps Command Center and put a footprint there and started to do a recall from there. They just gathered together a watch team. I don't know what they used to call or use for a recall. I know it wouldn't take very long to put out a 1-800 number in Millington where people could muster. I had a difficult time getting through to that number. Actually, it may have been that night. I don't remember, but I was trying and could never get through. I got a phone call from some of the guys that had worked in the Command Center who weren't there at the time. At any rate, Calladay called me who had been up there and how they got the numbers – well, either the computer still had us on the global and you could still log on so I'm assuming they went through that. They were going through the global, which has recall and stuff. I think it has some recall information. I really don't know. I got the impression that's how they did it, but I really don't know. There's no reason for me to surmise.

Q. (50:24) What are your thoughts about lessons learned? How would that have worked better as far as evacuation procedures and mustering?

A. I don't know that the evacuation could have been any better. I don't know. DPS has an evacuation plan for the building and all it really intends to do is to get as many offices to utilize as many as stairwells as possible so people don't get too clustered, but you know what the Pentagon is like. You never know where you are going to be at any given moment, so each office has to come up with the fastest evacuation based on where your office is located. For example, we had the back exit as well as the corridor. I think probably in retrospect the easiest thing we could have done was to have a common muster area. We have been working this group on this instruction ever since. Before it was one person working it and now we have multitudes

of people working it. Obviously, it would have been nice if there was a way to have said 'all Navy personnel muster at the far side of North parking lot' or 'along the river front' or something like that. We didn't have that. There is nothing you can do about not having a Command Center. Obviously, some of the other services were able to tell people to go home. They had their recalls intact. They were able to account for their people quickly and the Navy did not have that. So it was probably worst-case situation for trying to recall or account for people.

Another lesson learned, of course, is to back up a lot of that stuff to the other s or to another area whether it be an alternate site or that be at the Annex so that you could feasibly go to the Marine Corps Command Center, sit down, and pick up your recall roster and start to call or start to account for people. That was done, but it was done by people just thinking smartly. There was no plan in that sense. I mean those are very, very simple – the cognizant operations plan as a whole work group now, Secretariat Advisory Group or SAG they call it --has been chartered to get this instruction redrafted with some lessons learned and some alternate headquarters identified and things like that. But those very simple steps of having one common meeting place and having your recall list and such backed up some place in the immediate area would probably have been very helpful. Of course, we had just moved to the new. A lot of things hadn't been established, we had an automated recall system that was destroyed that had not been hooked up yet, we got it from OSD. Purchased them for all the services, the dialogic – it's supposed to automatically call. You can set it up so it goes through an automated recall or tells people where to report. We got it when we were leaving our old Command Center. Of course, nobody was going to buy the new phone lines to make it work in the old Command Center and we had just been in the new Command Center, and it had not been hooked up yet. So that \$50, \$60,000

piece of equipment was destroyed and part of our work group is to try to get another piece of equipment like that.

Q. (54:04) Would it have been destroyed by the aircraft anyway?

A. Very likely it probably would have been, but I have been recommending that we do not put it in our Command Center and instead put it into one of our alternate sites, or some place else rather than in the Command Center, so that you have a redundancy of systems or backup. But it was there and my guess is they would have hooked it up in there and would have been destroyed, but again, it's a lesson learned that if you are going use something like that there has to be a redundancy in systems.

Q. (54.44) Did Site R come into play?

A. You know as much as I wish Site R had come into play, I wish people would stop talking about Site R. We throw that around so much that eventually it's not going to be any more protected than any place else. You are going to have to interview someone that came up here. I don't know. Eventually, Site R, Mr. Belangie and his four civilians and one military person they were all on site that day. The NCC 104 group out of Harrisburg, PA, that supports them, they had some folks show up assumption being that we were going to activate the site so they immediately started to double check, log on, that kind of thing to the machines and stuff. We have a very small budget and over the last few years we've been rebuilding it and we did build a pretty good Command Center up there. It has some limitations, but still it was neat, clean, functional to a point, it doesn't have the mirrored image that you want to have and eventually will have. Whatever it didn't have was because of funding, not because of the capability of the

people. It was a funding issue. With our small budget, each year we would try to add more and more capability to the site and make it more habitable.

I understand each service on the Joint Staff sent a small contingent of folks up there for about 24 to 48 hours. I think the fact that SecDef did not initiate the Joint Emergency Evacuation Plan, and if he did I think there would have been a much greater presence there. But because he did not the people went there I think, just again, that common sense thing, let's put some people some place just in case. So it came into play in that they were ready to receive anybody who came. A few people did – reservists – and eventually some people from the Pentagon within 24- to 48-hour-period. They did not fully man in that sense. The Joint Staff did not relocate up there. The chairman did not move. Once the chairman doesn't move, then all the service chiefs stay in place. The service secretaries didn't move. Everybody follows their lead. Because they all stayed in place they moved a small group of OPS folks up there but I would say that within 48 hours most had come back, because the Marine Corps at that point had said they would sponsor you here. And so they felt they could put the footprint down here and we'll study to see what we think needs to happen, not knowing if something would happen over the next several days. For the last month Site R has everyday been trying to put in more and more computers on the desk get more connectivity established in case there is some follow up or case somewhere along the line they decided to put people up there.

Q. (58:11) Do you know or have heard why the SecDef did not put into place a Joint Emergency Evacuation Plan?

A. I do not know. The Joint Emergency Evacuation Plan is designed to guarantee succession and it moves a lot more people than just senior leadership from this building to the alternate site.

It moves groups of succession to various areas, and I'm going to assume -- I don't know. My assumption being that I don't know that you can pick and choose pieces and parts of that. I don't know that you can say 'I'm going to initiate this, but I just want this piece.' I don't know if it's broken down that way. And maybe they felt that it would have added more confusion to the continuity to government if you started to move too many people around. I don't know, I'm surmising.

Q. (59:07) Other lessons learned from continuity operations?

A. Well, yes. The plan has already been altered and we continue to work it. We have a first draft due to the Under Secretary by the first of December. Alternate headquarters other than Site R? Site R exists because it is where the Joint Staff will reconstitute and you will then bring your service chiefs as a member of the Joint Chairman's staff. What we've learned is that we have no other place for our service headquarters to go. Where do we reconstitute the rest of the Navy staff? Whereas the Marine Corps would use Site R for an operations center and then move everybody else to Quantico so their headquarters would go to Quantico, their Ops up to Site R. We Navy don't have that. We don't have something that close. Air Force could do the same thing. They could send a piece up to Site R and they could go to Bolling or Andrews, or something like that.

We don't have that. OSD could use DIA. We navy don't have that. We have a Navy Yard, very small, and Anacostia, very small. Maybe those areas need to be reconsidered and we are looking at them, but what we have learned it that if we're going to move our OPS piece and our headquarters piece to Site R, we need a larger footprint. We need more capabilities. The Marine Corps says, 'We're good to go up here', but they don't have a crisis-response cell. It's harder for

Navy to say that because you're going to bring so many more people up there. You're not going to bring everybody, but you're going to bring a group large enough so you can do your mission essential functions. It's like when the weather gets bad – nonessential personnel stay home. The prime example would be my office, the counter-drug folks. The counter-drug folks, if you had to, put in Crystal City, Navy Yard, Norfolk, Dahlgren, Pax River, because you can manage that program with phones and computers. It's much more difficult to support a headquarters or support the service chief in his role as a member of the Joint staff by being that far away. So you have to keep this core group of people, which is a pretty large group, together in order to be able to do your mission essential functions.

But we have learned that it may make more sense to, at least, plan to have an alternate operations center here in this building, the Annex, or it's Site R, and have alternate headquarters space here, the Navy Yard, Anacostia, and then Site R, so that you have something nearby. That way, based on what the incident is and how large the footprint is you can move only as far as you need to move. Those are the kinds of things that are being looked at right now.

Q. (1:02) And that's all part of the SAG (Special Advisory Group) you were talking about?

A. It's all part of the SAG. To look at the instruction and clarify evacuation procedures – make sure that everybody who is part of that core group of continuity of operations personnel – know who they are. Theoretically, when you muster everybody you can cull out all the nonessential personnel and I use that nonessential personnel just as a euphemism of way easier to describe them – but everybody who is not responsible for or part of that continuity of operations and minimal essential function group that you need to do your basic core service issues with. You can send them home and then you take that core of folks and move them wherever you need to

move them so you can remain operational. Those are the kinds of things we are looking at. How do you best get those folks identified, get them trained, get to where they need to go? How do you make sure that wherever they go, when they sit down and log on, they see what they were doing the day before, or hours before? How do you make sure that something larger than what happened you have full capability at an alternate site, a permanent alternate site. It's a pretty big project. Of course, now there is money and now there is interest, you can only hope that they maintain that level of interest.

Q. (1:03) Who are some others that we need to talk with?

A. It depends on what you are looking for.

Q. (1:03) Parts of the whole story. People that were directly affected.

A. Folks like Tripp Lloyd. Tripp was there in our office. He's a Commander in the Navy Reserve. He was there during the incident, but he and Mr. Brady left immediately. They're not part of this on-going operational planning piece, so they could tell you about the incident or their experience of the incident, but because they are not part of that – counter-drug – they did the right thing. They left the area, which was correct, so you can speak to him about the incident.

Mr. Brady is the same way. Mr. Brady was there in the office, as was Mr. Henson.

Q. (1:04) How's he doing?

A. Pretty well.

Q. (1:04) Is he in the hospital still?

A. No, he's been out of the hospital for several weeks. He's in our new spaces at the Pentagon. We have some new spaces over there. I don't think our phones are working yet, but his experience was a little different. He was trapped in the office and so his was much more drawn out. They all can help you build your insight into the actual day or the incident. They do not have the follow-on piece because they're not part of that piece that I'm giving you. Not that it makes me a rocket scientist, that's just what I work in and they don't. I would say, Brady, Henson, Lloyd; they're all folks that were there in the office. I mean there are not that many people that got out of the office.

Q. (1:05) How about Petty Officer Gaston?

A. Petty Officer Gaston was in the office at the time; he's a draftsman who was in the 106 unit (Editors Note: reference to NCC Det 106). I have corresponded with him on the phone and asked him about his experience. Again, he knows of the incident, but not the other issues we talked about. But they all have the experience of being there.

Q. (1:05) Would you be able to give us a phone number for him? I know he was the only person in the who survived, is what I heard.

A. Yes. There are three people forward of the little area we were in that got out. One was Paul Gaston – Petty Officer Gaston –the other is Lieutenant Schaffer, who is in the hospital, and the other one is the METOC or weather person, Lieutenant Nancy McKeown. She was the most far forward person of anybody to get out and her office was right near the entrance. Her cell number is 301-452-1044. I wanted to speak with her and she said that she would be glad to get together, but I have not been able to get a hold of her, and Petty Officer Gaston I can get you his number,

too. I spoke to so many people and got so many phone calls and I just started to scribble names down. This is his number, 703-670-9403. The draftsman's area was just about ten feet closer to the Command Center than we were. I don't know if you have a map of the; I have one at home, but you should get one. Actually, I could probably get you one today. If Tripp Lloyd is in he has a copy, but that would help you understand who's who. (Editors Note: Mr. Santelli is drawing a map of the command area) There was a big square and the front door was here and then you had the METOC office, which is where Nancy McKeown came from – that's the weather guessers – and the TCC – the communications folks here. There may have been another office. There was a large conference room and some offices back here. Miss Watts and her support and folks were here in her office and her support people were all out in this area. Then the 513 folks owned all this in here. The watch floor was here. This was IP (Editors Note: reference to CNO Intel Plot), which was back in this corner some place, I don't really understand how they're set up was. This was the OPS – operations folks were back in this area. Pat Dunn was up in 513. The DMs were here. This was Henson and Panches back here and this is where I sat and Brady and Lloyd. This was the inter-agency counter-drug. There was a conference room here; the one we met in every morning that I talked about earlier, and then there was another office here that had Captain Boroff and he got out and Captain Deconto, who did not. He was up here some place. This was NCC support. Missy lost all her people. Schaffer sat some place in here and I don't know where he was at the time, but he sat there. And Nancy sat here and was at her desk. She dove under her desk and some how got out of there. Two young petty officers who worked for her both died. This was where Gaston was over here in the DM shop because Nokes died and Nokes was standing right here. The guy standing next to him died. Brady and Lloyd went out this way and I went back out this way, which was the normal exit. Petty Office

Lewis and Petty Officer Williams, they were trapped in the office with Henson. They were able to crawl out through a hole in the wall, and Henson was rescued. I don't have their phone numbers, but if you go to the N3/N5 area in this building, you'll very easily find those two folks. They may be working in our new spaces now. That was the layout of the room.

Q. (1:11) Do you know how Jerry was killed?

A. Jerry Deconto. No. I won't use names, but the cause of death on some of the reports that I was privy to was blunt force trauma, explosion – most of the bodies were burned, dismemberment. Any combination thereof I guess.

Q. (1:12) On the communications, some of what you talked about Oklahoma City. What are some lessons learned that are being talked about from the communication standpoint? What can be done? The blackberries worked.

A. Right. A lot of people have been talked about the Blackberry. I'm not a technical person at all. Obviously, the cell phones are an issue. There is something called a 'GETS' card and I don't remember what it stands for, but it's an emergency access card. It allows you to get a priority. I'm not very familiar with it. It's been discussed many times. I've been told that those folks who had their GETS card with them and could reach an operator, you actually get priority to bump people off. There is a lot of talk about fly-away kits for some of our senior leadership that will include Blackberry, possibly portable HF or VH radio type communications. Some of the services even have portable VTC kits.

I think we are going to have to depend on our technical folks to come up with the best equipment that can be used in order to keep those who need to be in contact in contact. I'm not technical

enough to know. We have someone on our work group. We're still working through a lot of the requirement stuff and can't say that we have anything that's very firm yet in that area. I know they have talked about fly-away kits and Blackberry.

Q. (1:12) Any other areas that you think need to be part of the historical record?

A. No I don't.

Q. (1:14) I would like to possibly get back to you further down the road so you can be tucking away some lessons learned for the continuity of operations.

A. That's fine.

Transcribed by:
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