

**Naval Historical Center
Oral Interview Summary Form**

Interviewers:

CAPT Michael McDaniel
CDR Richard Fahy

Interviewer's Organization:

Navy Historical Center
Navy Historical Center

Interviewee:

CDR Karl Van Deusen

Current Address:

[REDACTED]

Date of Interview:

04 Dec 2001

Place of Interview:

Naval Annex

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:

Interviewee Information:

CDR Van Deusen grew up in [REDACTED], attending parochial schools. He attended Marquette University. His ship tours included USS Miller, USS Simpson (CHENG), USS McCain (CHENG), and USS LaBoone (XO). He was an Admiral's aid as a junior officer, attended post graduate school at Monterey, was the Admiral's aid for COMSURFPAC, received a second masters degree from the Naval War College, and received a CNO fellowship on the strategic studies group to study the DD-21/DDX rotational crew concept. He is currently working on the Navy Appropriations Committee as the Budget Liaison for Congress. He is slated for CO of USS Gonzalez in 2003. He is married with 5 children ranging from 2 to 10 years old.

Topics Discussed:

Leading up to 11 September, the budget cycle had been "especially crazy." The primary reason for this was the new administration and then the Senator Jeffords political party change which "re-racked" the committees. In a way, the budget process was in a little bit of a lull as Congress was getting focused.

On 11 September, it was a normal day arriving at the Pentagon at about 6 am. His office was 4D463. It is outside of the D ring looking into the E ring. As people in CDR Van Deusen's office watched the WTC attack, his thoughts were that "the Pentagon is a prime target." He was concerned about his brother in Manhattan (he turned out to be okay).

When the plane hit, CDR Van Deusen had his back to the window. He saw a bright, white flash, then felt a blast that "hurled" him a distance (3-10 feet) and landed him on the floor. Despite the impact of the crash, none of the windows initially broke. In fact, one person claims to have been

looking right at CDR Van Deusen as “this enormous orange fireball consumed the window ... just enveloped the whole window.” Diane Haynes, a co-worker, was in shock. Having watched the 2 planes hit the WTC, CDR Van Deusen knew immediately that a plane had struck the Pentagon. Once he got up, he walked out the main entrance into the 4th floor corridor. People were quickly pouring out of the corridor from other rooms and leaving the area.

He walked toward the smoke in the E ring area towards his Admiral’s office where he thought the Admiral was trapped. The smoke was getting heavier, and he really didn’t have an idea of which direction the primary damage was. The other 4-5 people who responded to the fire to try to save people were primarily SWO officers and comprised the “initial/rapid response team.” This group of people split up into different directions. CDR Van Deusen tried to get to the Admiral’s office, but the door was locked and the smoke was so thick that there was no way that he could force the door open. He thought there were people in the office and that they were dead or at least badly injured (the assumption was made later that no one was in the office during this time and no one was killed in the immediate area since the plane had impacted the lower floors). The deck had buckled at some point during this time. There was some sparking and small fires in the area. CDR Van Deusen continued to yell out that “this way is safe” for anyone coming from the direction of the smoke (no one came).

There was no one killed in the general area of his office. The airplane struck below the floor and a fireball vented much of the force. Despite the crash, CDR Van Deusen doesn’t remember a loud crash, and the commotion afterwards was relatively quiet. He remained in the area for about 20 minutes.

He was frustrated that there was no fire fighting equipment. The sprinkler system never went off. There were no fire hoses. The lights stayed on for the first 15 minutes, and there were siren noises. Emotionally, he wasn’t scared; he was angry. He was angry about the event and the fact that he was vulnerable and didn’t have what he needed to fight the fire and break into the office spaces to possibly save people.

He stayed in the area for about 20-25 minutes before the fire department arrived. He was told to get out by the fire department. The fire department personnel were apparently evacuated from the area soon after this when the news came out that there was another plane that was inbound. This was probably why there weren’t more casualties, especially among the firemen. He went out to the South Parking Lot. He spent the rest of the afternoon manning the “litter squads.” Twenty minutes after he left the building, the floor that he was on collapsed and “it looked like a collapsing sand castle – just like you see a building breaking up on TV.” His office space was right in the middle of the collapsed section.

The amount of volunteerism was remarkable. There was a young, civilian kid who was walking up and down the line of people handing out water and Gatorade throughout the day. Also, the food was plentiful.

At about 4 pm, CDR Van Deusen went to work on the morgue detail. The prospect of this was a little daunting since he had never seen a dead body except at funerals. His rationale was because he was angry, bitter, and frustrated and wanted to contribute. At the time, he thought he could contribute. The morgue detail was formed up into 5 teams with 8 people per team. Most of these teams were Army personnel, with some specialists (i.e. EMT, nurses). They were briefed about what to expect. They were given body bags and told to retrieve anything they could find.

The FBI was on location. Unfortunately, it was too hot at the scene, and it was still a crime scene, so no morgue teams were actually utilized, and they were disbanded at 7pm.

There was no work for the rest of the week. When CDR Van Deusen read a newspaper the following day that was the first time that he realized where his office had been in relationship to the impact area. If the plane had impacted 10 or 15 feet above, it would have wiped out his whole office.

The office/department reconstituted on the following Monday in Crystal City. It took 2-3 days to see where their offices would be there. They eventually returned to their original office spaces that they had been in prior to the move to the Annex. In March or April, they will move again. Interestingly, he never actually saw anything first hand, although he was right in the middle of the event.

In his capacity, CDR Van Deusen's job has not changed considerably – no direct impact on his programs. The process has been delayed, obviously, but not changed remarkably.

From a historical perspective, he doesn't think this is enough of a wake up call for the nation. He believes that the US is still very vulnerable and things will get worse before they get better. He doesn't think we've embraced the full impact of what has happened or what could happen. One example is that the Pentagon security is still "lousy." Americans simply don't want to be inconvenienced. It hasn't changed our national psyche. The American pain threshold has not reached a spot where Americans don't want to change their life style. The way the government's distribution of funds is going to be implemented is the key. He's still pessimistic.

If we want to enjoy our freedom in the US, we have to earn that freedom and be prepared to sacrifice. We also need to be careful that we don't "water down" the definition of a "hero."

Abstracted by:
CDR Richard Fahy
4 Dec 01

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CDR Van Deusen grew up in [REDACTED] attending parochial schools. He attended Marquette University. His ship tours included *USS Miller*, *USS Simpson* (CHENG), *USS McCain* (CHENG), and *USS LaBoone* (XO). He was an Admiral's aide as a junior officer; attended Naval Post Graduate School at Monterey, was the Admiral's aide for COMNAVSURFPAC, received a second masters degree from the Naval War College, and received a CNO fellowship on the strategic studies group to study the DD-21/DDX rotational crew concept. He is currently working on the Navy Appropriations Committee as the budget liaison for Congress. He is slated for CO of *USS Gonzalez* in 2003. He is married with 5 children ranging from 2 to 10 years old.

Topics Discussed:

Q. (12:33.9) Well, tell us some of the key issues that you were working on at the time of 11 September. What were some of the "hot burner" issues?

A. Well, everything was so crazy this year because the budget cycle was completely out of whack. It's just been a unique year for the whole budget process. In September, we were still trying to figure out the way ahead. We weren't sure; we knew the budget might be delayed. We

were still trying to do some more program briefs. The staffers in both the House and the Senate asked for the Admirals to come over and say, “We want an update on this program. How’s the program going along?” So that they can start making their marks and they can start marking up the budget and figure out where they want to add money or subtract money. So that is really where we were. We knew they were formulating their marks and we were there to respond. Leading up to that, too, I was traveling a lot. When I was hired I was told I was probably going to be traveling with CHAIRMAN YOUNG because my predecessor did. As it turned out, he was actually my Congressman from St. Pete. His wife went to high school right near my wife. My wife grew up in [REDACTED]. My wife and I are high school classmates. So it’s really funny that now I’m traveling I’ve traveled five times now with CONGRESSMAN YOUNG. I’m traveling again this week with him and the following week. It’s almost a new small family I’ve inherited by virtue of this job. It’s been very rewarding in its own way.

That’s really what we were doing. September was a little bit of a lull because we were trying to figure out where we were going to go with the budget and we were waiting for Congress to do their thing. In fact, that’s where we still are today. The House is marked, but we’re still waiting for a budget.

Q. (14:25.2) What was so unique about the budget process this year?

A. It was just by virtue of a new administration. With the JEFFORDS issue in the Senate, first you had a Republican controlled Senate and all of a sudden--or it’s shared in a lot of ways, too-- you can say Republican control with CHENEY--you had spent all those times sorting out how the committees would be shared and how the power would be shared and all of a sudden you had

to switch and now it was all “re-racked.” So that took a little while to sort itself out. Thankfully, the staffers themselves, the worker bees pretty much stayed. They didn’t change. In fact, very little did they change the make-up of committees. The people we work with are the professional staffers the most so there was some continuity there. It was certainly--things were going to be slower this year than previous, before even 9/11 and, of course, now we have even more complicated budget issues.

Q. (15:24.8) Did the delay of the election process add some uniqueness to the--?

A. No, I don’t know that that did. I can’t tell you affirmatively. I don’t think that really was a key reason. It was more the latter that I spoke to.

Q. (15:48.3) Okay. Tell us about your day 11 September. Just walk us through your day from leaving home--

A. If I can remember that. I live 60 miles south of here.

Q. (16:00.7) Sixty?

A. Sixty miles. We hadn’t owned a home before so when we moved from Norfolk we had never been to D.C., and we thought, okay, now where are we going to live? How are we going to do this? Of course, I start at Springfield and then realize how the prices work and so slowly I’m migrating south and farther and farther south until I can find something. We knew we wanted to buy a house so we did. By the time I got to Woodbridge I figured, well I could afford something here for the kids. Then I realize this place called Spotsylvania, I just happened to pick up a real estate brochure, found this house and it looked very nice for a lot less money. Shoot, it’s only

another 25 miles south. As long as there is public transportation--I take the bus in. National Coach and Greyhound buses provide almost 14-15 round trips a day. There is a huge commute that goes from the Fredericksburg area that goes up to here. It's surprising how big it is. It's getting more and more. The buses are continually getting more and more full. So I'm 60 miles south of here and I got on the bus that morning. I really don't remember anything unique about getting up. I get up at 4 and I'm on the bus at 5 and we pull in the parking lot at 6. So it's an hour ride. It's my time to sleep. Of course my wife accuses me, "You've got it easy. You sleep in the morning." You're right. It sure beats driving. I don't know how good a sleep it is, but I try.

Q. (17:23.6) What time do you normally get home each day?

A. Normally, a good day is 7:15 or 7:30 in the evening and at times--the one thing that's nice about living in that area is that the last bus leaves the Pentagon at 7 o'clock at night so if I'm not on the 7 o'clock bus then they have a guaranteed ride home program. They will guarantee they will get you home four times a year in an emergency and I've used that. They'll get you a taxi and actually get you all the way home. You don't pay for it. So I've used that, but typically I know if it's going to be a really, really long day and, there are not many of those, then I'll drive in. Normally I take a 5:50 bus or a 7 o'clock, worse case, bus. That gets me home about 8:30, quarter to nine. Those aren't the best days. So it's a good commute, but it's not bad because you do just get to relax and let them worry about the traffic. The ladies in Springfield take almost just as long to get home and they live half the distance of me so I can't complain about that. But, that morning I guess I don't really remember anything unique except our Deputy was retiring so I was filling into the Deputy roll. We had just moved into the new wedge several months earlier and I decided, well, I'll just sit at his desk because everything is right here, my bosses, the

ADMIRAL(s) BOSEN [phonetic], his office is right next to where the Deputy's office or little "pooka" was. Instead of sitting at my normal desk, I just sat at his desk for the week because he was going to take that transition course that week. So, that's how the morning started.

Q. (18:53.4) Where is the office physically located?

A. The fourth corridor D-ring. The office number was 463 so 4D463.

Q. (19:04.5) Okay.

A. So when you walk down the fourth corridor, you hang a right on the D-ring. They were great. They were new offices. It was nice. We missed our old office, which we're now back into. We're in 5B741. What was nice about our old office is, there's only eight of us in the office and we could all sit around, everybody hears each other's business, which is actually good for our job including our boss because we can hear when he talks to the more senior members. Everybody hears everybody's discussions and so by osmosis almost you pick up everything. In our new office, we were more spread out. There were a lot more divisions. The Admiral-Select was quite a ways away. We couldn't hear his conversations, couldn't eavesdrop, so in some ways it was frustrating. It was nice; better computers, better layout, you didn't have all the bugs and all that kind of stuff, but on the other hand, you missed the camaraderie when they shoe-horned us into this small office and we all sat within arm's reach of each other.

I was at my Deputy's desk, TOM GOODWIN; service warfare guy who I had known for a long time off and on. We all did eight tours together. It's funny how we all meet back up at one time or another. But he was gone that week so I sat at his desk. The first thing that happened, I recall,

is that ADMIRAL GREENER, who is a submariner who works in FMB, he came in and he started playing around with the TV because we always have a TV in our area for listening to the Hill, stuff on the Hill. I was like, "What the heck's he doing? He doesn't normally come in our area. Why's he playing with our TV?" He brought up the news that he had just seen. He didn't say anything to anybody, he just started playing with it and said, "Come on we need to see this," after he finally brought it up. Then all of a sudden, of course, a little crowd started gathering. We saw the first tower on fire. We were all just trying to figure out, of course, like everybody, what happened. Did the plane just accidentally hit it? Did a helicopter? What the heck--how'd this happen? Was there a gas leak or whatever? We were like, I'm sure like most of us, we didn't put two and two together at the time because there was no footage of the first airplane or anything. As we sat there and watched it, like so many people, we just watched the second plane fly right into the second tower.

Q. (21:19.7) Saw it live?

A. Yeah, saw it live. It's just--my gosh! What in the world is going--

Q. (21:25.7) Describe, if you can, just some of what was said in your little group, if you can remember.

A. I think it was just dumbfoundedness. I just don't recall much conversation. I think everybody was just so--your mouth kind of dropped open. Two thoughts went through my head I can still pretty much remember. My first is: I wonder if my brother is okay. My brother is not in the tower, but he works in Manhattan. I didn't remember how far away from the building he was. It turns out he's about 10-12 blocks away. That was my first thought was gosh, I hope GLEN is

okay. I have two older brothers and he's the middle one. So my first thought was I need to call and see if he's okay. Then the second thought, oddly enough, was we're a prime target. Something told me, immediately, that, I thought, if this is a terrorist attack and they're hitting that just something told me; I wonder how safe we are right now ourselves. I watched the events on TV for just a few minutes; walked over to the telephone and called my sister-in-law in Connecticut. My brother actually has a longer commute to New York City than I do from Spotsylvania. I called her and she said GLEN is okay. She had just heard from him. He was okay. I didn't talk to my brother. Oddly enough, he was working out, which he's not a real work out buff, he's not bad but he's just trying to get better. He just has some back issues so they have him on this new routine. He's not heavy or anything. He's slim built but he told me he was on top of the roof of his building, which I think is 20-odd stories. He works for Sachi & Sachi [phonetic], an advertising firm. He said he was on the roof of the building in the workout facility and actually watched both planes fly into the buildings. He was an eyewitness from 12 blocks away, albeit, but he actually watched. He was obviously greatly--you could hear his voice. He knew that-- my gosh! I said, "Well what are you going to do, what are you going to do?" He said, "I don't know. I don't know. I've got to get out of here, I guess!" Come to find out, later, he ended up walking for four and a half hours in this trek of people. He said it's just a sea of people and nobody is taking the subways. Everybody's walking. It's just an ocean of people walking everywhere out of the city. He just joined in and walked four and a half hours until he hit the Merrit [phonetic] Parkway and some stranger gave him a ride. Actually, I'm sorry, the company sent somebody to pick him up, I guess. He got a cab or something. He had a long walk. I hung up the phone with him thinking, well, at least he's okay. It was good to know he was okay.

I walked back to the TV and I was standing, about roughly how far I am right now, away from the window. I'd say more or less six feet maybe plus or minus a foot. I was about that far away from the window. The way the window is--this is the Deputy's window basically. When you looked out his window on the D-ring, we were on the outside of the D-ring. Of course you had an inside aspect of the D-ring and an outside. We were on the outside of the D-ring looking into the E-ring. So as you looked out our window you looked right into our Admirals office, ADMIRAL CHURCH. So that was our view. You had just the openness because there was just a big gap between the rings, it was just air. So between our ring and his ring there was this big gap of air that you could see through about 20 odd feet away to his window.

At about that same time my boss, ADMIRAL BOSEN [phonetic], ADMIRAL(s) BOSEN [phonetic], who had been watching the news like all of us said, "Shoot, I've got to get to a meeting. I've got to run. I'm already late." He no sooner walked out the door than the phone rang and I went and picked it up and it was his wife. She just--"How's he doing? Is he around?" I said, "Jeez, you just missed him. He just walked out the door." She said, "No, that's okay. That's okay. I just wanted to talk to him. I can wait." I said, "Yeah, he went to a meeting." I thought he was going to a meeting in my Admiral's office. Being the Deputy, I should know exactly where he was going, but I just assumed that's where he was going. I didn't pay close enough attention to the location. So, I took that call, walked back over, stood by the window again and within minutes, it seemed, I don't even know the exact timeframe of when I hung up, that the plane hit.

My recollection is, I remember pretty vividly, my back was to the window so in a lot of ways I didn't see what a lot of other people saw in my immediate area. I was standing next to a lady

called DIANE HAYNES [phonetic]. She works in our office as a civilian. All I recall is out of my left eye just a bright flash. You know you didn't feel the impact. I saw the flash before I felt the impact. I saw the bright white flash. Instantaneously, we felt that over pressure; even though I've never really experienced an explosion before. It just hurled us, I still don't know how far. I don't know if it threw us three feet, 10 feet. The next thing I remember was getting up from the floor. DIANE was next to me and a couple of other people were in the general area. What I can remember seeing is--DIANE is, I don't know how old she is, mid-50's, but she just had the most--I don't know how to describe it, just a strange, strange horrified look on her face. Her face was all--I can still remember it. I was like, "Gosh, what is wrong?" She was just so-- she didn't know what to do. She couldn't really move. She was just panicked. She was almost hysterical. She seemed like she was hurt a little bit. So, anyway we just grabbed her under the armpit and said, "Come on DI. You got to get going. You got to get going. We've got to get out of here!" We got up and walked out the building, walked out the main entrance, really the only real exit of our spot. There was another exit; no one ever used it. It was an emergency exit. We went out the main entrance into the fourth corridor. At the time as I was walking out, all I could think about was--I knew in my mind--again, maybe it was because after the fact, I really wanted to believe it, but I really believe that I knew it was a plane. We just watched two planes now we felt this explosion. This was a plane. In the back of my mind I thought about it this is a plane that just hit us. I walked out to the "p-way" with DI, DIANE and said, "Okay DI you've got to go. You've got to get out of here." At this time all these people were streaming out of the corridor going in to ground zero, toward ground zero. The smoke was just starting to pour through the corridor but it wasn't too bad yet. At that time there was another person there named GENE ACRE [phonetic]. He came and grabbed DI as well. I said, "Hey, listen, I've got to go. I'm going to go

into the E-ring because our boss was in there.” I said, “DI, you go. GENE, take her.” I said, “I’m going back into the E ring. I’ve got to go find CAPTAIN BOSEN [phonetic].” So GENE was like, “Well, if you’re going, I’m going to go.” I said, “No, no you don’t need to go.” So anyway we both ended up going toward that area. It started to get pretty smoky and GENE went back with DI.

Q. (29:08.5) Who was GENE again?

A. GENE ACRE, he’s a new pilot we just had brought on.

Q. (29:13.3) Commander?

A. Lieutenant Commander.

Q. (29:14.9) Lieutenant Commander, okay.

A. Yeah. He ended up going back and help DI to get back to ground zero. So I went back into the E-ring area. I ended up right at the head of the E-ring where you would go right or left at the end of the fourth corridor on the E-ring. The smoke was really started to get pretty heavy there but we had still no real idea where the heck the damage was. What I remember most was that the people I bumped into it seems--I told a story when I spoke in San Diego to a couple of people, I had a dinner with CHAIRMAN YOUNG was, I said, “I’m not trying to be too [inaudible] but all the guys there were SWOs.” There was one enlisted OS2 PAZ [phonetic], I still remember his name, worked on the CNO Security Staff. He was there and along with two other SWOs that I had known; I had worked with at different times or have known. I knew who they were. So it was all like being on the ship, where all the SWOs run to the scene. To this day I’m convinced--

and I'm not begrudging people that went the other way, but I'm just saying that it's almost instinctive. How many fire drills have we done where--over and over and over again? So I like using the analogy that we were like the rapid response team. That's what we did. We ran there, but the smoke was really getting pretty bad. I remember I took off my tie and threw it in my--I left my jacket, my wallet, everything. I didn't bring anything out with me. Everything I had left on my desk. I left there with no jacket, no wallet, which I came to regret, with just what I have on now, just my tie. Took my tie off, threw it in my pocket, was going to take off my ID's. I took off my ID, in fact, I had a little loop thing. I threw down that stuff on the floor, thinking no, I'm not going to need this right now, it's just getting in the way. I picked it back up, thankfully because all the security problems thereafter. I'm really glad I kept my ID. I put that back in my other pocket and just undid my thing. That day, it was also funny because I don't normally carry a handkerchief, very infrequently. I had a handkerchief that day. I had put one in my pocket because I wore my favorite suit that day, which was a black suit. I'm thinking okay I'm glad I brought this handkerchief so I put that up against my face but it didn't help much because it really wasn't wet to absorb anything. I found out that it was useless. The smoke basically just kept on getting worse and worse. It was getting heavier, thicker. The visibility went from--you could see everything but about two feet off the ceiling and it kept on getting lower and lower to the point where you actually had to crawl to see through it. This group of guys I was with, I'd say a total of about four of them, there were about four there. I'm trying to remember--I wish I could tell you. DENNY WETHERALD was there. He's a fellow Commander. He's a SWO going out to command pretty soon. Goodness, JOHN KIEFFER, he was there. So JOHN, DENNY, OS2 PAZ, and myself--and it wasn't like we were working as a team. We all just met there by fate. Each of us tried to do something different. I don't know whatever happened to

JOHN. I'm not sure what direction he went. We basically were sitting there looking down the E-ring yelling for people. DENNY ended up going into the E ring more and basically vanished in the darkness, into a haze. I don't even know what ever happened to him or how he ended up getting out. So he went through there and me and the OS2 were crouched right by, trying to get into the Admiral's door where I still thought my boss was. All I kept thinking was, my boss' wife just called. If I had just grabbed him he wouldn't have been in there. I thought people that were in there were dead. I knew it was so dark that I thought for sure that they were dead in there or at least badly injured. The door was locked. It was so thick you couldn't even see at that point. The deck had buckled; the floor had started to buckle. I was like, okay, we could try to bust this door down but then there is a fire in the--I don't even know what it was, like a locker area or door or something, but it was some sparking and stuff to the left of us somewhere on the E-ring. I don't even know--I said, "Yeah there's a fire in here." So something told you, you might get in there or you might not and if you do, are you going to be able to do--I don't know. There's a lot of thoughts going through your mind quickly. What do I do? How do I do this? You want to do as much as you can but yet you always want to have your exit route. I felt like I could always still go back left and get my way out. In the meantime, we were sitting there yelling up and down the corridor, "This way is safe! Come this way! Anybody down there, come this way!" It was too thick to walk through, in my opinion. I don't know. Like I said I don't know where DENNY ever went to, but I don't remember him coming back that way but he ended up making it out. I saw him. He's around. Bottom line is we stayed there for as long as we could.

Q. (34:23.8) What did it sound like? Describe the sound. What were you hearing?

A. There wasn't really a lot of sound. It was just the yelling of guys like us just trying to shout for people. We heard some voices through the smoke, but it was really indistinguishable what they were saying. You didn't know if they were calling you to come that way, it was safe or you were just calling them. Literally, we just stood there yelling, hopeful that people would come your way. As it turned out, as I've come to find out, no one was killed in that immediate area. This was the E-ring, fourth floor. The plane had gone, literally, right underneath us and had vented. The fireball that went behind me, by the window, was just as the plane passed through underneath and just vented through that area. That was the fireball and that's what caused, of course, us to get thrown.

At that time everyone who had been there had gotten out. Everybody in those offices had already left. In fact, like I said, the Admiral's office that I was trying to get to, that was completely evacuated. So fortuitously, we didn't spend a lot of time getting in those spaces because as I'll tell you—anyway, it was real quiet. A couple thoughts went through my mind--before I get to the next part--very frustrated because, once again, being a SWO, we're all running around like--I need a fire hose. I need to set my boundaries. There was not a darn, not a blasted thing in the building to help you. The sprinkler system in the roof never went off. To this day, I don't know why. I know there was a recall or some lawsuit against the company that made those. I'm still curious whether that was those because I didn't think the fire maintenance was always cut off or maybe it was. I don't know. So I'm thinking, okay, I'm sitting here, I can't put out the smoke barrier. I don't have anything to block to knock the smoke down. I can't find a bloody fire hose anywhere. I go in a closet where the main fire main pipe was and all it is a bunch of isolation valves, no hose again. All we can find are the stupid little portable extinguishers that have

already been depleted. We were like, “This is ridiculous! We can’t do a thing if we wanted to. We are of no use! There is nothing we can do.” It just reminded me of how valuable we are on the ship. We over do it, some people might say, but you actually have what you have or what you need when you need it. Everyone was really frustrated. In fact, at that time, my old branch head CAPTAIN STEVE STRAUSER [phonetic] had come into our group. He had made the remark, “What I wouldn’t do for an OBA right now!” I was like, “Yeah, no kidding! This is ridiculous to be able to get down this p-way.” So we stood there, like I said, it was just a small group. It was basically me, CAPTAIN STRAUSER [phonetic], and OS2 PAZ.

Q. (37:13.5) Could you see at the time? No back up lights, obviously, but was there any outside light or anything?

A. That’s interesting. The lights stayed on for quite a while. It was about three quarters of the way through when I remember the lights going off. You could still see. You had all those siren noises and stuff. You saw that stuff, but it was oddly pretty quiet in the big scheme of things. Once again that area had mostly now been evacuated. The big herd of people going toward ground zero had left. It was literally just a few of us left on the E-ring just trying to be helpful, trying to put yourself in a position where you might be of service to somebody. Oddly enough, we didn’t do anything in that regard. I tell people--afterward people would come up, “Oh you did something so heroic!” I said, “Honestly, I didn’t!” I said, “I didn’t carry anybody out on my back. I didn’t pull somebody out from under a desk like other people I had met--somebody saved somebody’s life. I put myself in a position where I tried to do something like that if the opportunity presented itself, by just instinct, doing what I typically thought would be the right

thing to do.” But I said, “I didn’t actually perform any heroic act.” I said, “I went and did the rapid response team. I set my boundary.”

Then, at about that time--now we’re about 20 minutes in post-blast time plus 20 is my recollection, about 20-25 minutes I had been in the building now, then the fire department came up the stairwell right next to us. Of course they came with all their apparatus on, their breathing apparatus. They were like, “You guys have got to get out of here!” I said, “Okay, this is just like the ship again. I’m rapid response and they are manned up and now they’re here.” I said, “Okay, it’s good.” I said, “Do you guys--do you know the layout of this space? Do you know what you’re doing now?” The guy wasn’t real clear that even he was familiar with the layout of the Pentagon. I said, “Okay, well let me tell you what’s going on.” I did the old “turnover”. I said, “In particular, please try to get into that office. I think my boss is in there and other people. You probably have injured people right in there. You need to get in that room.” I said, “Down the corridor you can see how bad it is.” Like I said, that area you couldn’t even see down the E-ring now. Behind us you could still see some. So you knew, it was thick, but you knew where you were and you knew that wasn’t--it was obvious there wasn’t as much damage behind you. Once again, I knew I could get out.

Q. (39:34.5) Were you scared at all?

A. I can just remember being angry. I was angry because you knew what happened. I honestly wasn’t scared. I was frustrated only because I couldn’t find fire-fighting equipment. I just remember being almost--

Q. (39:50.7) You were angry at the attack? You had put it together that it was associated with the World Trade Center?

A. Oh, yeah, I had no doubt in my mind from the immediate impact when I went flying. As soon as I got up, I knew exactly. I said, "That was a plane. They're doing it again." The anger of being vulnerable basically; knowing you're vulnerable. Then being angry because you didn't have what you needed to do your job; to help somebody; to do more. Then, profoundly, really disappointed with myself because when I left, I left without my boss. So I did this turnover. I said, "Okay now they're the ones that can really do something." At that time I exited and I went down the stairwell, which oddly enough, was right by where the plane went in because that stairwell remained in tact. That was really incredible to me because I was like, okay, we saw sparking. We saw a cracked deck. I said, "But, here we are!" I went down the stairwell after we turned over to these fire fighters and the stairwell was normal. There wasn't anything wrong with it. It wasn't even hardly any smoke in it. It was a perfect buffer zone, your dead space. It was perfect. Went down that and as we exited, as I recall, it was just me, PAZ, and CAPTAIN STRAUSER [phonetic] who exited. We ended up--even though I didn't know it, if I had gone right I would have ended up right where the impact was. We headed left and that was where that old trailer was and that was all on fire and stuff like that. We weren't in any immediate danger there. We just literally hugged the side of the building.

Q. (41:29.4) Where are you now?

A. We're on the ground floor. We had left the fourth floor, turned over to the fire fighters, walked down the fourth floor--it seemed like this place was pretty intact--got outside. I don't even remember looking to the right but that's where everything was. For whatever reason, I was

just guided to the left and we walked out. From there, we all split up. CAPTAIN STRAUSER [phonetic] said, "I'm going to head this way." I don't know what happened to OS2. I just went over to the hill, just walking around looking for somebody, or to do anything like a triage. They were trying to get everybody away. Before I go any further, are there any questions about in the building because that's pretty much what my experience was in the building? The only thing that I'm thinking about I'll tell you though is, why didn't the window shatter? I never remember the window shattering. I kept on thinking, I got thrown. If it was that big, why didn't the window shatter? That was my building experience. Stayed in about 20 minutes post-blast, 20-25 minutes, and in the end I left thinking, my boss is probably dead. I never got him out. I was really frustrated, really, really upset. I wasn't sobbing or anything like that, but just frustrated and mad because I didn't do what I could have, should have done. I kept thinking how am I ever going to tell his wife that I didn't just run down the corridor and grab him on the way to his meeting and say his wife wanted him on the phone. How am I going to break it to her that if I had done that, he wouldn't have been where he was? In the end, he was in a completely separate corridor of the Pentagon. Those were my thoughts.

I went on the hill area where they started setting up triage and stuff; surprised that I didn't see a lot of casualties. As it was, the casualties were mostly at ground zero, I guess, and North Parking.

Q. (43:16.0) Ground zero being the center courtyard?

A. The center courtyard where all the people immediately ran and the North Parking area. In our area and the other side, the South Parking, where we ended up exiting, the south and the highway, there was just people setting up to do stuff. I still remember--I don't know if I had a

dumb look on my face or what, but I was walking around and looking to try to help. One guy came up to me and wanted to put a little casualty band on me. Some yellow, I don't remember the color, strap and said, "Here, you need to sit down. I'm going to put this on you." I'm thinking what are you doing? There's nothing wrong with me. He goes, "No, no you look like--" because I kept on looking back in the building just dumbfounded, post-trauma stress or whatever. "You need to sit down." I let him walk away from me and I just ripped it off and kept going. At that time people were just trying to set up stations, triage. You just put yourself where you could help. I met up with an old buddy from N76, oddly enough. I spent the rest of the afternoon just sitting with everybody on the highway. Then they would say, "Okay, we need all the stretcher barriers to come now," and we just kept going back and forth to no avail. We never were used. We just sat there all afternoon. A couple of thoughts about that though, I'd say within 20 minutes, 15 minutes of being out of the Pentagon when I told you I left and started walking up the hill, I watched the E-ring collapse. It just seemed like a sandcastle or something. It literally looked like an implosion you see on TV of a building collapsing. I sat there and watched within 15 minutes of the E-ring collapse. Still you didn't know; is that my affected area? Because even though we were in the blast area, we didn't really know where we were or where the damage was. Afterwards, as it came out, where I said the deck was crumbling right where we were, that was the dividing line of the section that fell. My boss, that Admiral's office that I talked about, his was right in the middle of the collapsed section. Then I started thinking of those firemen who were in there--

Q. (45:20.3) Now did you know at the time that he was out?

A. No.

Q. (45:23.1) You saw that. So, you thought he could have still been in there?

A. Yeah.

Q. (45:25.9) Wow!

A. Yeah, but I knew with the smoke that it wasn't going to be possible to get in that door.

Somebody said--I think PAZ might have said, "I yelled in there and I didn't hear anything."

There was no way I'm going to be able to get in and get done what I need to do so that's why I was relieved to see the firemen because I thought, "Okay they'll be able, at least, to do something," but then we saw it crumble and you think, "Oh, my gosh. There were firemen in there." The only reason--I still don't know, but I'm pretty sure to this day what happened is those firemen--there was a second warning of a second plane and everybody was told to get out of there or run away so we all ran back toward the Annex. They must have pulled the firemen out because they were all going down that E-ring, the part that collapsed. Based on my little instructions, and I'm sure they would have done it anyway, but what they ought to concentrate on, I'm thinking, "Man, now those guys are right in there," but they must have pulled them out.

TAPE ONE/SIDE TWO

Q. (46:26.7) You must have looked disheveled or something. Something must have struck the guy that gave you that orange armband.

A. Yeah, I don't really recall, but yeah, it could have been orange.

Q. (46:40.5) Perhaps you had soot all over you and--

A. It was funny because my clothes reeked and stuff like that but I was wearing a white shirt that day and that smoke wasn't as staining as you would think. I don't know, maybe I was more. It's hard because I don't recall a lot of that.

Q. (46:59.2) It's funny that he would just come up to you and--

A. Yeah, because I was loitering about. He was like, "Hey, you need to sit down." I was not real happy with that guy. But, yeah, you're right. I don't know how I appeared to him. What I was going to say, too, before we really got formed up in stretcher barriers, I watched that section collapse and I thought, "Great, now my boss--if he didn't die, he might have been in that section." That is the section that collapsed. I still wasn't aware that was our--when you look at the Pentagon, where is our office again? How does that work? As it turns out, now that that section collapsed, you can look right at our office because you had a perfect view of our window. The window I was standing right next to was right there. So that collapsed. Now my office window looks right out onto the highway. I didn't know that at the time but that's actually where we were. Then the other thing I remember vividly was seeing--you probably saw the pictures, on the fourth floor, my boss' floor, the Marine Corps Council Office, where the building fell, he had his flags in his office and the Marine Corps flag was just sitting there waving on the fourth floor. It was just--not looking marred or anything, just standing there waving, just draped there, still in its stand, untouched. I thought "Wow, that's really profound!" That's stating, you might have done this, but you didn't knock that down. We're going to get back at you. In fact, a buddy of mine, I showed him. He said he saw a photographer and he said, "You've got to get a picture of that. You make sure you go get a picture of that because that is awesome!" The fire hoses were

going and everything, but that flag was just sitting there just flying. It could have been an American flag and that might have been a little more spectacular, but it was a Marine Corps flag and that was good enough for me. That was really pretty awesome! Like I said, watched the whole building crumble.

I spent the rest of the day really in these various--“we need volunteers for this” and you were trying to, once again, be in the right place to help, but in the end, we weren’t even used. I guess what really struck me, too, was the amount of volunteerism at that point. There was one young kid, obviously not in the military or anything, kept weighing himself down like a camel with water, juice, food. I mean he just kept on walking up and down the line because we were all formed into lines of four people on a stretcher. It must have stretched 50 people, 50 rows across, just so many people. This guy would just keep walking up and down the line spending hour after hour handing out refreshments saying, “Stay hydrated everybody!” The amount of food that came in, it was like somebody went to Cosco and just raided the entire store. There was more food--you had cashews, you had everything. We had all the good stuff; bottle after bottle and crate after crate of Gatorade. I never ate so much in my life. It was silly, almost like a nervous reaction you were just eating. This is okay. I can sit here and wait. That’s really how I consumed my time just sitting there eating and watching and trying to help. Then it got to be, I don’t know what time, maybe 4 o’clock in the afternoon. The fires were still burning, of course, working their way down burning. The same buddy of mine, GARY ENGLISH, CDR GARY ENGLISH, he used to work in my office with me. It’s so funny because he and that CAPTAIN STRAUSER [phonetic], who I met on the E-ring, and this guy, GARY ENGLISH, CDR GARY ENGLISH; the three of us were the three officers that sat in one little office when we worked in N76

together. So, here we are back--we had all been in different jobs or at least I was and we all met together again that day. So GARY and I just hung out, did a stretcher together, realized we weren't going to be used and looked for other assistance. We got scooped up to be in the morgue detail.

Q. (50:45.8) How did that happen?

A. We were just trying to walk around, "Does anybody need help?" "What are you doing?" just trying to insert ourselves. So, somebody said, "Hey I need some people to volunteer for morgue detail." I looked at GARY and I'm like, "I don't know" and he said it to me like, "Hey, we might as well. We're not really being actively employed here," because false alarm [inaudible] but as it was there weren't any survivors at this point. Those that had gotten out had gotten out pretty good in the other direction. Nobody was going to come out the E-ring into this part of the street. There was not going to be any survivors walking out or being carried out that way. So we just said, "Hey, we'll go." For me, I wanted to do that. I've seen two dead people in my life and those were both at funerals. That's my only experience, you know, relatives. I've never first hand seen anybody die. I've never first hand seen somebody that had just died or never really experienced that. My bitterness, frustration was with my boss. I thought my boss was. I said, "I need to bring this together, bring this whole issue together, and bring it to closure." That's why I volunteered and GARY went with me.

Q. (52:00.0) Were you thinking mass casualty? Were you thinking hundreds?

A. Yeah, I would say at least in the hundreds, I was thinking, with no doubt.

Q. (52:12.2) Was that the word that was going around on the ground?

A. Yeah, of course, everybody was gossiping up and down the stretcher barrier row. Nobody was really talking about casualties. I mean there were so many litters that we certainly had enough to help out, but more, the gossip was, "Hey the towers just fell." That was when we heard for the first time the towers fell. That's when we heard for the first time that the towers fell. That was the word up and down. I heard this just happened! I heard the State Department just got hit. I heard this--just the run of the mill rumors back and forth. My wife will still say, "So what did you think about me?" The one thing I've always cherished about my wife is that she is a very strong woman and not just because she had five children. She was in the Army. My father-in-law is a retired Sergeant Major in the Marine Corps, sons that are Marines. My daughter was in mental health. She was a Captain in the MEDAC [phonetic]. So, I don't know, maybe I give her too much credit. I know she can always deal with stuff. It wasn't until I had got out of the Pentagon, I walked around for a while and I tried to be involved in a litter. It's not like I didn't think about her. But I knew that, hey, she's a long way away. She's safe. She is in Spotsylvania for crying out loud, nothing happening down there. My first thought wasn't to go find a cell phone. I didn't have my own first of all. People that were using them were all blocked. Nobody could get out on cell phones because--but then when I bumped in to GARY ENGLISH later on, and this is probably about two hours afterwards, he said, "Hey, have you talked to [REDACTED]?" I'm like, "No, I haven't." He said, "Well, I'll try getting through." He ended up getting through to her. She was a little bit frustrated with me later on. She was just scared to death, obviously. She didn't see it first hand on the TV. She had heard about it and turned it on. Then everybody started calling, all the relatives, constantly. She said the phone wouldn't stop ringing. "They said on the TV it was the new wedge. KARL wasn't in the new wedge, was he?" Then she'd just start

getting really emotional, saying, “Yes, he was in the new wedge.” “Well have you heard from him?” “No, I haven’t heard from him.” Call after call after call went on like this for two hours and she hadn’t heard from me. I’m thinking, “Hey I’ve got to be doing what I’m doing and she’s safe and that’s all that matters,” not really thinking through that she’s being peppered with phone calls and now thinking that I’m a goner. In fact, my brother-in-law from West Virginia, they figured I was a goner, too, based on that it’s been a couple of hours. [REDACTED] hasn’t heard a word. They drove from West Virginia nine hours to be with her figuring that she needed us. So I got home late that evening and they were at our house. It was very nice of them. My wife didn’t know for several hours that I even made it. I should have probably told her a little sooner.

Q. (55:03.9) What about your kids? Were they in school? Obviously, they were.

A. Yeah, they were in school and see, that’s what [REDACTED] said was the hardest thing. First of all she said, “I just didn’t know how I was going to tell the kids,” and they go to St. Patrick’s School in Spotsylvania right next to the battlefield there at Chancellorsville. She just said, “I didn’t know how I was going to pick up the kids”. She went to pick them up still not knowing. Obviously, that was very hard but then she got the call and she was able to tell them. That was her biggest concern was, how were they going to react? To this day, it’s funny, the 10 year old understands it more, the eight year old, he just asks more questions, why, why, why, why? When he was doing prayers for the first month--we say nightly prayers--my oldest daughter--we have a standard prayer we do and part of it is pray for our enemies as well that one day they’ll be our friends and that whole thing. She’s like, “I’m not praying for them.” She started immediately after that, “I’m not praying for them because they tried to kill my father. I’m not praying for them, they tried to kill Daddy.” So we’ve got to try to work through that. I don’t think she’s still

convinced we ought to be doing this today. Today's enemies, but tomorrow they might be our friends. We've got to work hard at this. That's how she reacted. The other ones are just too little to really comprehend it.

Q. (56:33.9) Did they hear anything at school?

A. No, I don't think they did. They kept it quiet at school. Yeah, I think they did. I think they did is my recollection.

Q. (56:47.8) That's been an interesting part of the story, different people telling about what their children heard. One actually told the school came in and said the Pentagon had just been blown up. That was all they had for several hours. It varied what those different schools did.

A. Yeah, no, I don't think they did. [REDACTED] just called and told them that she really wasn't sure what was going on, but she needed to pick the kids up early to tell them. In fact, I guess they were dismissing school trying to get kids parents to come get them because they weren't sure who was affected because there are so many military.

Q. (57:16.1) Go back to the morgue detail. What all did you do there?

A. There we went inside ground zero.

Q. (57:24.1) You mean the center courtyard?

A. The center courtyard and we were formed up into groups of, roughly, eight people per team and there were about five teams total. Mostly Army guys, it was interesting you look through the crowd and they were Army and Specialists. What had happened now is they brought all people

from all the local hospitals in, a lot of specialists or at least I think they were. People that ride in the back of ambulances, medical--what am I trying to say?

Q. (58:00.3) EMT's?

A. Yeah, yeah and in our group we had five nurses, emergency room nurses and all that. GARY and I were there. We had one Army guy who was appointed in charge of our group. He had lost somebody in the attack--and then all these nurses. Basically, they told us what we were going to do. They went through the whole thing. Have you ever seen a burn victim? Have you ever seen dismemberment? All this kind of stuff; we were like, "No, no" I said, "I don't know how I'm going to react, but I've got to do this. I've got to bring this to closure. I'm not looking forward to doing this, but this is what needed to be done."

Q. (58:39.5) Did that surprise you, your reaction like that?

A. You know, I don't know. It might sound kind of silly, but I remember being a kid and I think as a kid you always want try to do something heroic. I realized at that point that I thought I had got an opportunity, but I didn't get my boss still. I was really profoundly disappointed. I was really mad, mad at myself. You didn't save the Captain. The ship's going down and you never got the Captain out. So I think that was my way of saying, "Hey, I need to be here." Actually by that time, too, I had just found out while we were there, I think it was while we were there--did I know at that time? No, it was while we were in the courtyard that I found out that he actually made it out. He had called around and called to BETH and stuff later on.

Q. (59:34.5) How did you find out?

A. Who told me? I'm trying to think. I was on a cell phone call. I didn't talk to him. I talked to somebody who talked to him. Because rumors were flying around about who got killed immediately. I just can't remember who told me now. That's what's weird is some of the parts of your memory you don't recall. Somebody told me while I was there that he had made it, that he was alive. I said, "Well I'm here now, I'm going to stick it through. There's a lot of other reasons to stay here." Yeah, I was really just mad. I guess disappointed that I didn't get him, mad about the whole situation and that just felt like the right place. In fact, when I talked to [REDACTED] on the phone a couple of hours afterwards I said, "Hey, I need to stay here. This is where I'm needed. I'm not going to be coming home. I don't know when I'll be home. It might be tomorrow, it might be whenever but this is where I'm needed." I still remember, she's like, "I expect you to stay there. That's where you need to be." That's the good old Army trooper in her. That made me feel good. I think she was just so relieved that she was actually talking to me. She goes, "You better stay there, that's where you're needed." "Yes ma'am! I'll stay here" So that was the main reason I went to the morgue because my wife told me to. She's very good about it all.

We went to the morgue detail and we formed up and they were bringing out the body bags and the plan was that we'd go into the building, pull whatever remains we could find, work with people who are the specialists to put things in bags. Basically, the instructions were just gather anything you can see, anything that could help eventually positively ID. You might find this or that.

Q. (1:01:20) Was the FBI involved with that?

A. They were in there. In fact, they said, “The FBI’s in there and before we let you in the crime scene--it’s still a crime scene so everybody’s on hold” and the FBI was there; there were other people. So once again, I thought, okay, here we are waiting again. It was like the campfire and we all just kind of parked in our little circles. Then they brought in, once again, more food. Then they brought in the MREs. We had a light moment. The Army guys got to show us all how to eat MREs. “Hey, how do you start this little fire thing?” “How do you warm it up?” As we were all passing around food and swapping. It was a lighter moment where it’s like, “hey, we’ll get through this day! This is okay, it’s kind of fun,” a little camaraderie trying to show these nurses how to eat MREs as well. We were all like, “Hey, that’s a good one. Can I swap you Chicklets for that or that?” That was nice. They laughed at me later because one way I always handle things that are more stressful is that my body actually slows down. I respond immediately quickly, but I tend to dwell on things. My easiest way for that situation is I’m just going to take a nap. I’m not needed, things are slow right now and I just laid back in the grass and did the best I could to take a nap. They were all like, “How can you sleep at a time like this?” They were all wired and I’m like, “This is very relaxing to me.” I let my body just say tune everything else out for now, just get some time, just don’t even think about stuff. That’s how I react to most things in life. When things get really crazy like if my wife--I need your help and we’re going somewhere and you’ll slow down. You don’t speed up. You slow down. That’s the way I handle a little bit of pressure. I’ll slow down and I think this is the way my brain tries to put everything in its proper order. It needs time to sort out the boxes or something. Anyway, we stayed there and we ate our MREs and I bumped into other people, shared some stories. Tried to find out who was dead, who was not. One team started in. They all started marching off. “Okay team A, you’re going to go in.” They were waiting there at the entrance. It was all black going into the A-ring and they were

pulled back. What had happened is they just said it was too hot. The dogs couldn't go in. Guy's boots were just still melting. It was 1200 degrees Fahrenheit, on impact, in that area. They just said, "It's too hot. It's basically just too hot. It's still a crime scene." Then we found out there was some team out of Fairfax County, some specialists, I don't know, pathology or whatever, real specialists in this type work. They were coming in that evening and this was at 7 o'clock in the evening. They said, "Okay. Thanks for being here for the last three hours waiting, but we're not going to put you all in after all and bring out any remains. We're going to go ahead and stand down the detail." So I'm sitting there, "Okay, didn't accomplish anything here either," and at 7 o'clock that GARY ENGLISH who was with me, he lives up here by the Annex, in fact, just up and around the corner, he said, "Hey, come to my house and get a hold of [REDACTED]." I hated to have him drive 60 miles south so what we did was we just met half way home. [REDACTED] and the kids drove up and met us at a Burger King off the highway and jumped in. Half the kids were asleep and half were awake, drove home and that was the night. Came home and saw my in-laws and called home and told everybody what had happened, "I'm okay."

Then I came to work the next day. Of course, you couldn't get in. They said you had to turn around, saw the fire still burning. [REDACTED] like, "You're going to go in?" I'm like, "It's 4:00 o'clock. I've got to get up. I've got to do my normal thing. I'm not going to just go away." Then I couldn't get a hold of anybody so I didn't even know if I was supposed to be at work. But as it turned out, I came to work that day and then they turned us around.

Q. (1:05:20) Did you drive in that day?

A. Yeah. No, no, no. I took the bus. The bus still was running. Yeah, it still ran because I didn't have a way home. When I found out I wasn't going to be working, I didn't have a way home. I walked over to the mall and called [REDACTED] from the mall and had her come pick me up, drive up to get me. Got a newspaper and that was the first time I saw it with the newspaper and saw the area, actually the impact area. That was really the first time I truly appreciated where we were in relationship. When you saw it crumble from outside, I guess I didn't know, okay, now I'm looking at my window where I was just standing next to. I looked at it and I was like, "Man!" Because at first we were like, "No, I'm still a little ways away from the impact area." I'm looking at it and I said, "You know what [REDACTED]? I think the plane went right underneath us. Had he just lifted up 10 or 15 feet, I wouldn't be here." That's when it all--She said, "Yeah!" On the way home, she said, "I could tell it was really starting to sink in. At the time you didn't really know how close you were. You did things instinctively, but you really didn't appreciate." You know what I mean? Because the whole time I was in the E-ring, like I said, it was thick. It was smoky, but I never felt like the flames were licking on my feet. I always felt like I have an exit route. You asked if I got scared. I never felt like my life was in jeopardy. The explosion was certainly amazing. To throw people in the air, to feel that force being lifted and thrown, but even then I'm like, "why didn't that disturb me more?" Like that GENE guy I told you, he was walking towards me and he said all he saw, from his perspective, was me by the window and this enormous orange fireball just consume the window, just envelope the whole window; then, me being thrown along with DIANE and people coming through the air. I said, "Well, if I had seen that maybe I would have been more disturbed." I was blah. I was ignorant. I saw the bright flash and I got thrown, but I didn't see anything visibly that would have made me change my perspective a little bit on how I reacted. Like I said, in the end, what would bother me the next

day or over the course of the next several weeks was people, “Oh, you’re such a hero! You ran back in and tried to help people!” I’m like, “Yeah, I did, but you’ve got to understand when I ran back in I wanted to help people.” When you come away with nothing and especially your boss, which is the main reason you went back in, you feel pretty dang low. You feel pretty crappy about it all. In fact, in the courtyard I met this guy, CDR DAVE THOMAS, who, hopefully, you’ve interviewed. DAVE THOMAS was a CO--his XO is a great friend of mine. DAVID tunneled into this little area and pulled this guy out from underneath the desk. He and another buddy lifted him up and lifted the desk off of him. I’m like, “Now there is a real hero! So these people who wanted to say all these things, “We’ve got to write you up for an award.” I said, “Take care of the people that directly saved somebody’s life. They’re the ones that are most deserving.” I’m not ashamed of what I did by any means and I think I did the right thing. I wasn’t--even though I tried to put myself in the right position, I went between the E-ring, the stretcher barrier, and the morgue detail. I came away feeling, in the end, kind of empty, like I could have done more, should have done more, something. I don’t know. So I guess that’s my story.

Q. (1:08:49) When did you finally reconstitute? Where did you work out of and where did you guys end up going? And, when did you finally--

A. My boss basically said, “Hey, take the rest of the week off. We don’t know what’s going on.” So, okay, that was a Tuesday. Wednesday, I had come in and turned around. Monday, we met back up and went to Crystal City and we were going to work out of temporary spaces there. Spent the better part of two or three days trying to figure out how to set up there just, in the end, to insist that we work at the Pentagon again; and moved back into our old office. That small little

office that we use to so much like because that was going to be in the next wedge that was going to be renovated so they had blocked that off saying nobody could be in there. That's why they moved us out. We were able to have the line redrawn to put that in the non-renovated section. Now that's where we are. We are back in our old office, enjoying it even though it has all its flaws. Now we will move again in March or April back into another new area but we're there and it's kind of nice being "home". This is the office I first moved into. It's nice. The one DIANE lady though, she never quite was the same. I told you that she had such a bizarre look on her face. She's still working out of Crystal City. The rest of FMB is over there and the Admiral. She's the only person in our office that's not back with us. She'll say, "I'm still not right in the head." She comes into the Pentagon very infrequently. She's just not ready to do that again. I can't blame her. She's older. She's never experienced stuff like that. Even though I've never been in combat, you know what to expect or how to react just from all the drilling you do. I think that is really the invaluable part of our training. You do things for a reason. You do things instinctively.

Q. (1:10:43) Would she be a good one to talk with? Would it be helpful for her?

A. I would say try. I just don't know how she would react. She still gets very emotional. I don't know. I would ask her. I think it would be valuable to hear her, but--DIANE HAYNES and I can get you her number. I don't have it off the top of my head.

Q. (1:11:05) That'd be great.

A. She took an injury. She hurt herself falling. It's tough. She'd love to retire early now. That's all she'd like to do. Like I said, too, it's easier for me to deal with it. You see some real victims

and you've seen them in the papers. There are some people that saw things first hand and, once again, I never experienced anything immediately first hand. It would have been nice in some ways to put it to closure like I said and that's why I stuck around for morgue detail. That's how it works itself out.

Q. (1:11:42) Who are some others that we should talk with?

A. I would say DIANE, like I said. I think you've probably already talked with CDR DAVE THOMAS.

Q. (1:11:55) Have not yet, but we've scheduled several times. He's just a busy guy.

A. Yeah, exactly. He's a good guy though, really. He was showing me little burn marks on his arm from when he had to pull the guy out. He said he wouldn't have even pulled him out if it hadn't been for another Lieutenant Commander just popping in there.

Q. (1:12:05) TARANTINO, right.

A. Is that who it is?

Q. (1:12:06) Yeah.

A. They were able to leg lift the guy. I just don't know where JOHN KIEFFER went, but I know he was there initially. K-I-E-F-E-R, I think it is.

Q. (1:12:19) Where does he work?

A. He works in DONPIC [phonetic] N81 or 2? I don't know what it s. DONPIC [phonetic] is the congressional people. They're the ones that process all the paper work, basically. JOHN KIEFFER. He's a Commander. DENNY WETHERALD?

Q. (1:12:39) Talked to DENNY.

A. I'd be really interested where he went when he went down that p-way.

Q. (1:12:43) It's a pretty amazing story, yeah.

A. OS2 PAZ was with me. P-A-Z. He still works--he was in OPNAV somewhere. OPNAV Security, I believe, because I see him off and on. Those are the people I would think.

Q. (1:13:13) Can you tell us some of the issues, the issues that remained the same since then that you've been working with, dealing with?

A. You mean my job issues?

Q. (1:13:22) Your job issues.

A. Yeah, really it does even though there's all this talk about for homeland defense and how much money are we going to put in the budget for this? So and so wants to sponsor this, the different supplementals , the emergency supplementals. We have to be more knowledgeable on what's going on. It's added a new dimension, these emergency \$20 billion here and another \$20 billion, how much is for release and who's it going to. The dollar amounts right now aren't tied, in particular, to a lot of the programs that I work on. Because of this, we're not building more ships, ship "Y" or ship "Z" or anything else. They are not directly affecting any of my programs

that I maintain account. I'm still traveling with the same person I travel with, CHAIRMAN YOUNG; go on trips with him. So no, there is no real--the budget is going to get done finally, but there is no direct impact, I would say, on my programs just as a whole. The whole budget process is, of course, a lot different.

Q. (1:14:21) Right, we talked to a lot of the budgeters.

A. And, it's delayed for so long, but it hasn't changed what I do directly.

Q. (1:14:40) Well, from your background and some of the work you've done at The War College, etc., as well, what is significant about this time in history? It's a big question, but I want to get your perspective. Let's say it's kind of key, you're a war fighter and you're going up to Command. You're in a unique place where you're working, a birds-eye view. You were involved with the actual impact area so that's unique, but also from a historical perspective, where are we? Where do you see the nation going, the military going from KARL VAN DEUSEN's perspective.

A. That's a big question.

Q. (1:15:17) It is.

A. Maybe I'm being cynical, but in some ways, I don't even know, in some ways if this is enough of a wake up call. I think we can all applaud the things we've done so far and they certainly have been good, but I don't think we quite fully know how to embrace this or that we really, in some way, want to. So much of us would like to go back to the way things have always

been, very comfortable. We had our issues and we deployed and we shot Tomahawks and did all that, but, I think, quite frankly, things are going to get worse before they get better.

Q. (1:16:07) Worse from the standpoint of how we address this or worse there'll be more terrorist attacks or more--

A. I think both. You read everyday about well, maybe that's a nuclear weapons or something like this. Yeah, there's still a twinge of anxiety in my head thinking, okay, we're still in a pretty vulnerable area, whether it's the Greater D.C. area or wherever. I drive through tunnels. You go to Philadelphia. You go to Baltimore. You've got these places. I go home to St. Pete and there are some big bridges. There are still a lot of vulnerable targets and I think, in some ways, we don't want to really consider the full impact of what it could be or what it might be. One thing that still disturbs me--people say, "Well, the Pentagon's security is so much better." Truthfully, I don't think it is. I think it is lousy! I really do. I think it is as lousy as the security was or maybe still is at the airports. I don't know, but metal detectors and all that. Even within days of the attack, yeah, you had the 45-55 year old guys now holding some machine guns instead of just standing there but the rigor or the amount that they screen you as you come in and out is just--today one guy's sitting there drinking his coffee, not even looking at the screen. Things are beeping; people are still going through. When the lines first started forming outside the Pentagon, it took forever to get in. People sitting there complaining. These are people that their spot was hit and they're still complaining, "I can't believe this line. This is ridiculous!" We don't want to accept--I'm sitting there saying, "Strip search me if you want. I don't care." Do something. Do something constructive because right now, I just don't think--we just don't get it and we don't want to because this is a nation where we don't want to be inconvenienced. When

you go through your history, more or less, not being inconvenienced, at least, at home. It's a hard change and I don't think, as terrible as all that was, both New York City and here and Pennsylvania, I just don't think that still everybody--it hasn't changed our natural psyche, I don't think.

We're going to fight a war, more or less, with special ops forces, which is great for us. Let them slug it out themselves, more or less. Obviously, we've spent a lot of time bombing and that kind of stuff, but, once again, we're not seeing the body count on our side yet to a heavy extent. It just hasn't --I don't think we've felt--I don't want to feel any more pain, but I don't think we've felt--our pain threshold hasn't reached the point where people are willing to accept a different lifestyle to be inconvenienced. Maybe I'm a little more pessimistic.

Q. (1:18:53) That's an interesting perspective though especially with your background. Do you see any of those conversations taking place at the level of where you're working or traveling with?

A. No, I don't. I see a lot of good concern about putting more money into homeland defense and force protection. Yeah, I have no doubt that we have well meaning people in Congress and the Congressmen themselves that really want to put money to enhance stuff. I think there has been positive movement to protect the bridges, protect this, protect that. I think we're encouraged by the FBI rallying up as many people or let's have a better INS system. There's things that have been positive, but I'm just saying the way we carry about our business, the way we implement the money, in other words, are we going to spend that money well? It's like giving a ship--Hey, we're going to give you \$50 thousand dollars in OPTAR [phonetic]. What are you going to do

with it? Are you going to slip over there and spend it on something stupid? Is the Captain going to buy something the crew really likes? I just don't know if that money is going to be wisely spent, but then really implemented well because I don't think we know how to do some of this stuff. Some of the security guys at the Pentagon, I don't think they really know how to do that job as well as, maybe, in Israel. They've been trained to use security at the airports. You go to the Capital, you can't even drive in their underground and they're under your car. They're doing a body weight on every magnetic substance. They're very thorough at the Capital. They're more-
-I think security is tougher at the Capital than it is at the Pentagon, without a doubt. I'm saying why? It should be good all the way around. I'm pessimistic that we still haven't gotten it. We vote to have this thing in quickly and get back to our way of doing things with just minor inconveniences.

Q. (1:20:48) I'm curious, just to put a twist on your question, going through your career and especially going through the operational standpoint and the educational standpoint, a lot of times in the last 10 years since Desert Storm, terrorism has been addressed as our number one issue. We've got to start building up towards that. Did you get a feeling for that? That, philosophically, the military or the nation was starting to gear up towards that or were we still building up for another war as far as where we were putting our funding, where we were putting our assets? When you were going to school, were you thinking in that term?

A. Well, we started thinking a bit little about terrorism, not so much in The War College, but in my XO tour? Not really. We were still doing things pretty much the way we'd always done, cruise missile fall and all that kind of stuff, trying to put the checks in the blocker [phonetic] and then fire support, you're doing your stuff there. I saw a little bit of it when I got into N76 and

writing the Admiral's speeches and working presentations for him. I could still remember the first time I saw the Bin Laden site. It was a new world, new threats emerge and the Bin Laden picture. That's the first time I really understood who he was and what he was all about. In N76, ADMIRAL MULLIN [phonetic] at the time, was talking about it's a new rapidly changing world, new threats out there, but as far as our roll as a Navy against those threats, we need to make a pitch for DD21. We need something to get closer to the beach. I still think our Navy has--we still retain a lot of our extensional work, our missions.

Q. (1:22:40) Once you get CO of a ship you start thinking, philosophically, of a way you're going to command the ship. Has it changed? Did it change at all from September 10th until now in the way you're going to fight your ship or the way you're going to blow your ship or command your group?

A. No, I don't think so. I don't think so. Yeah, we all think about *Cole* and how things could have been done differently. Some people argue, "I'd never let that happen to me." I think nine out of ten of us, the same thing would have happened even though some of us wouldn't want to admit that. I think I'll be more--let me be quite honest. Let me think this through before I just answer it. Force protection wasn't one of my number one priorities either as a department head or even as an XO. You worry about quarterdeck watches; you make sure you screen all the visitors. It was more important for me to do a fire drill than it was to do a security alert drill, quite frankly. We were better at it and we didn't get paid as much attention. Does that mean that I'm not so concerned about doing security alert drills? I don't think it's at the unit level. I still think some of the issues aren't so much at the unit levels. They're at a larger level. I still wonder, in Norfolk, how safe of a port that is. I'm a little detached. It's been almost three years now I

haven't been there. What I hear is the ships are in three-section duty. They've been at three-section duty. They have 30, 40 people at a time topside and doing all this. Every ship has to have a rib in the water, patrolling 24 hours a day, just buzzing around. I'm just trying to think--"Okay, this is the typical, an officer in every boat. We're doing it the same way we've always done things. How proficient--[inaudible]--if you see anybody come--once again, are we just knee-jerking? We're just stressing the crews. We're putting all these assets out there to do something, but will we really be able to do anything effectively? Wouldn't it be better maybe to have this massive influx of Coast Guard auxiliary people or reservists protecting the harbor or something? Part of me, it's not that I'm trying to turn a blind eye towards it, I wonder if we're doing the right thing with our people. One of my fears is somebody might get on one of those tankers and go right down there toward the commercial shipping, where they all float. They go right by the piers. What would prevent somebody from steering one of those right in the side of a carrier while it's sitting pier side, part of the channel. It's so close, all the traffic. [Inaudible] is going to do. I know the Coast Guard is patrolling a lot of those ships and escorting some of those ships through the channel. Part of me, once again, maybe I'm just being a pessimist, but I just wonder if we're doing the right thing at the unit level. I guess that's what I would want to talk to my XO about and my crew. Tell me what you're doing, why we're doing it, and is that really going to make a difference. I'm not trying to make it easy on the crew. I just want to do what's going to, in the end, make a difference. If we're doing it for appearance sake, but it's not ever going to save us, then what the heck are we doing it for? That may be a bigger Navy issue, too.

Q. (1:26:10) Well let me go there for a second. You're obviously a front-runner. You have some great experience. You're in the running to do some great things. Where do you see yourself going? You're going to Command, where do you see yourself going beyond that?

A. I don't know. I just want to do well in Command. I'll have seventeen years in in May. Get to Command at about the seventeen-and-a-half year period and that's about where I need to be when I'm supposed to be there. In the big picture, what I would like to do after that? I like the Pentagon. I like the action. I like the busyness. I like the crazy hours in some ways and being a SWO about all this. We're used to it. We get beat up enough on the ship. It's like we're numb to it. I'm use to that and, in a weird way, I like it. I would like to come back to the Pentagon. Probably have to do joint-tour or joint-staff or something. I'm really not thinking a whole lot about that because, really, what matters is how you do in command. How you're ranked, that will dictate where you'll go. They'll look at and they'll determine whether you're at the top or if you're at the bottom of the heap. That's going to make a difference where they decide to detail you. You almost can't worry about that. You can't worry about where you're being ranked either. The bottom line is you want to go out and make sure you bring the same number of people home that you had left with. Yeah, you want to do well and you want to be the number one guy, but in the bigger picture I think you also--as you start getting closer to the day where you take command, you start thinking what's more important. The most important thing, of course, is to take care of your crew. Just the honor and privilege of being able to do this, there's so many us--I didn't know if I would ever make it. Just being given this opportunity is very humbling. I'm just honored. I want to do what the right thing is, taking care of the crew. That's how I'll approach it and where ever that takes us.

Q. (1:28:10) Anything else you want to add for the historical record?

A. No. Conclusion--I guess I just hope that we just remember those--we'll always remember those that lost their lives, but all of us--we're all changed to some degree. I just hope that--it sounds maybe too corny to say, I hope they don't die in vain. I hope that we, as a nation, come to grips that we've got to change our ways some. I'm not trying to make this a Tierney of any sort or thrill people and persecute people that arrested thousands and thousands. We, clearly, if we want to enjoy our freedom, there is sometimes a price to be paid and we have to, hopefully, accept that. We have to earn that freedom. We live well and sometimes I guess we've got to work hard now to get that back. I just hope that we continue to honor those who really were heroes that day. That's the other thing, I think you've got this hero-thing--sometimes I'm disturbed by it. I think we use that term a little too loosely. It's like giving the Navy Achievement Medals out to everybody. There were a lot of people that did the right thing that day. Like I said, that whole stretcher barrier line, I could have counted three hundred people there, easily. There were a lot of people, and I'll include myself, that tried to do the right thing, but there were only very few, few heroes that day, in my opinion, if I measured them. I just hope that we don't let that water it down. Sometimes I think we water things down a little bit just to help get through this. There is nothing wrong with honoring people and the wonderful pin from the dedication ceremony that day that the President came, the memorial service. That was wonderful. It was great. It was good for all of us. Just try to keep it all in perspective.

Enjoyed it. Appreciate the opportunity. Enjoyed talking about it. Thought a lot about it and every time you hear some spots that you don't quite remember as well, but it was a disappointing day for me in a lot of ways not just because of what happened, but sometimes when you look at what

you come away with. It's almost granted you're going to make it out, but if you didn't bring more people out there is an empty feeling that you walk away with. So just keep on moving.

Q. (1:31:03) Thank you so much for taking the time with us.

A. Appreciate it,

Q. (1:31:08) Appreciate your perspective.

A. Okay!

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