

**Naval Historical Center
Oral Interview Summary Form**

Interviewers:

Capt Gary Hall
Capt(sel) Michael McDaniel
Capt(sel) Carol O'Hagan

Interviewer's Organization:

Navy Historical Center
Navy Historical Center
Navy Historical Center

Interviewee:

YNSN Cean E. Whitmarsh

Current Address:

██████████
██████████
Work – OPNAV N76

Date of Interview:

29 Oct 01

Place of Interview:

Navy 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: YNSN Whitmarsh was born and raised in ████████, Texas. He wanted to get out and see the world. Married his high school sweetheart. Joined the Marine Corps at age 16. Found out the Marine Corps wasn't as willing to send him overseas as he wanted. He spent a year out of the Marine Corps and decided to join the Navy. Many of his uncles were in the Navy and his dad had wanted to join the Navy. This is his first duty station in the Navy. He is an administrative clerk doing flag duties for two admirals. He works for a Chief Krause, above him is LCDR Chadwick, CAPT Coznick and two admirals, ADM Wilson and ADM Belile(spelling ?).

Topics Discussed:

His office in the Pentagon was on the fifth deck in the B ring. The plane hit about 150 feet behind his office. Office 5B4.

At about 0830 someone told the people in his office that the World Trade Center had been hit. Some people from the office went into ADM Wilson's office to watch the news coverage on television. They were watching the live feed. At about 0930 Capt. Coznick came by and said "If they hit us there's nothing we can do about it". Just after that the plane hit the Pentagon.

When the plane hit you could see the walls vibrating as the shock waves went through. The drop ceiling came down on a few of them. YNSN Whitmarsh went to try to get the front door of the office space open, but the ceiling tiles had jammed it shut. He kicked the door open to find

smoke filling up the passageways on the other side. The metal fire doors started closing and people were getting trapped. YNSN jumped in front of one of the fire doors to hold it open so people could get by. Chief Krause told him they needed to go down the fire escape so he left the fire door and started that way. ADM Belile realized he left some things and they followed him back in to retrieve his things. They got the things and followed him back out. As they were going out the fire escape and walked out the bottom deck into A and B drive (between B and C rings) there was a chain link fence about 12 foot tall. There were two gaping holes with flames billowing out of the windows. The fence was locked. They got the fence open and they started running people out. YNSN was getting maintenance carts to evacuate people. The Chief was pulling people out of the rubble.

A LT came out on fire. YNSN put out the fire with his shirt. The LT also had a metal brace from the drop ceiling that had been blown into his back and wrapped around it. It was burning his skin so they needed to pull that off him. They got him to medical triage. There were people jumping out of the second deck. There were people bleeding and with smoke inhalation and burns. They were able to get ten or twelve people out.

There was no rank structure. They just knew they had to get everybody out. All military services were helping. They helped for about 4 hours until the EMT crews told them they could leave.

They set up a small command post to get everybody mustered – took about 2 hours. YNSN and Chief Krause then went over to Crystal City to try to start to set up an office. They keep their recall roster on one of the Pentagon's local server drivers so they were able to use that to contact everyone about when and where to report for work.

His whole command talked with the SPRINT team. He didn't want to do it at first but in retrospect he thinks it was a good thing.

Lessons Learned

Emergency lighting wouldn't have helped; the light would have bounced off the smoke.

Equipping the offices with CO2 masks, oxygen, etc. would be great but access to the offices might be limited. There also needs to be emergency stations outside. There need to be emergency stations in many locations. Everyone should have access to a fire mask.

Emergency fire damper doors were helpful in keeping the fire contained. The smoke got through the ventilation system. People got trapped behind the fire dampers. People didn't know that the fire dampers had emergency releases to open them.

Have more fire prevention training for all services. The first aid training and damage control training YNSN had just kicked in for him. Army and Air Force personnel were standing around unsure of what to do.

People risking their own necks to save others were a big reason more people were not killed. The fire prevention training and damage control training Navy people have helped them to take appropriate action.

Many civilians didn't know what to do. It would be better if civilians had to go through some type of emergency certification.

Leadership did not necessarily follow rank structure. Personal initiative enabled people to join up and groups and get things done.

Abstract by:
CDR Carol O'Hagan
31 OCT 01

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Interviewee Information: YNSN Whitmarsh was born and raised in ████████, Texas. He wanted to get out and see the world. Married his high school sweetheart. Joined the Marine Corps at age 16. Found out the Marine Corps wasn't as willing to send him overseas as he wanted. He spent a year out of the Marine Corps and decided to join the Navy. Many of his uncles were in the Navy and his dad had wanted to join the Navy. This is his first duty station in the Navy. He is an administrative clerk doing flag duties for two admirals. He works for a Chief Krause, above him is LCDR Chadwick, CAPT Coznick and two admirals, ADM Wilson and ADM Balisle.

Topics Discussed:

Q. (03:09) What's a typical day for you in the office?

A. Typical day starts about 05:30 and we get in and normally have to set up shop and get everything, you know, all the daily taskings done, prior to the Admirals coming in. Then once the Admirals come in it's whatever happens happens, so. I mean we have a set schedule that we do, you know. The schedule goes out the day before but nine times out of ten that's not the way

it's going to happen. Something happens in budget, or you know, there's a crisis with a program or something that somebody needs to be at, so everything gets rearranged.

Q. (03:38) What are the high points of your job?

A. My personal high points, I work with a great staff. I've got amazing people that I work for. My Chief is just an outstanding person. My Captain he's just, he's a go-getter. He's always on the move, you know. There before anybody else. There after everybody else is gone. I mean amazing people. I work, being able to work in DC and being able to work in the Pentagon and see things on this side is a great thing.

Being—going from Fleet Marine Corps to OPNAV staff, and I'm about to go back out into the fleet again. Kind of get more of a well-rounded experience.

Q. (04:22) What are some of the hardest things about your, just your job and this environment?

A. Being from the town that I'm in and how friendly people are in Texas and things like that and coming up here to DC is just a real culture shock. People up here just really selfish and it just bothers me so bad, sir. I mean there are interactions with people, normally you know, you're on the phone and people are cordial and nice and it's when you start getting face-to-face that people start getting belligerent and you just have to keep your calm and keep going.

Q. (04:59) Tell us about the morning of the 11th of September 2001. Just kind of walk us through that day, from getting up to what the routine of that day was.

A. That day I had to open, which means I had to be at the Pentagon at 05:30 and –

Q. (05:12) Excuse me for interrupting. Could you tell us where your office was, what, put it in the –

A. Yes, it's on the fifth deck, top level in the B ring, which is basically where the plane actually hit. It came through the C ring. On the last stop it hit the C ring and our office is on the next ring, top deck. It hit about a hundred to a hundred and fifty feet behind us. So, it was pretty close.

Q. (05:36) 5B what?

A. 5B453, sir. And I got up that morning expecting a normal day at work. Got in and I guess it was probably about 8:30 quarter to nine that we started watching—somebody came in and said the World Trade Centers had been hit and we started the live feed in the Admiral's office on cable boxes.

Q. (06:00) And who all was in the office that morning?

A. At that time when we started watching it, it was myself WM1 Turner who's Admiral Wilson's flag writer. Anita Gardner who's Admiral Balisle's personal secretary. Bert Dodin (phonetic) is one of the other personnel. He worked in Secretarial. And we were watching the live feed and checking everything out. Then Chief showed up. I guess this was probably about nine, nine-thirty, no, about five after nine and then about nine thirty CAPT Kosnik came in and said, "You know," he walked around the front of the desk. That was weird, he walked around the front of the desk, and he said, "You know, if they come and hit us, we're not going to be able to do shit about it." He just walked off and as soon as he walked off the plane hit.

We were just, "All right, look, CAPT stay away from us."

(everyone chuckles)

But when the plane hit, basically I've been describing it when people ask me this, if you've ever seen the Movie "Matrix" when the helicopter hit the building and the reverb and the waves went into the building? That's basically what the Pentagon did. You could see the actual walls vibrating as the shock wave went through. The ceiling came down, the drop ceiling came down and it came down on a couple of us. We were standing like right by the door on the corridor, on the fourth corridor. Part of our office is right there.

Q. (07:19) Were you facing towards the impact, or -?

A. No, Sir, I was facing towards the center courtyard.

Q. (07:24) OK.

A. And when the ceiling came down one of the females I was was with, Bert, you know, she didn't panic. She was like, "Oh my God, what was that?" And then froze for a second, and then I went to the front door and tried to get the door ajar. It had been, the way the ceiling had come down basically jammed it shut. So people started coming back from our part of the, back in the back part of the office in the bay of the office and started coming towards the front door to get out and I had to kick the door through. Once I got the door through then there were other people in the corridor. Smoke had already filled the corridor and there's debris, parts, particleboard all over the place.

The way they've got the thing all set up now is they've just got the fire blocks that stop everywhere, there's a fire block that goes through and then it's just basically like a metal door, and it's on automatic set, and it started, it started closing and people started getting trapped behind that. I jumped in front of one of those and tried to hold it open.

And about the time people started passing him, my Chief was still inside our office space and he was yelling at me to come back the other way, because everybody else had turned around to go out the fire escape, once they see that the door was jammed.

So Chief and I made sure that everybody was out. We get to the back and then Admiral Balisle realized that he had left some stuff that he needed to have for work, so we followed him back in and he got his stuff and then we went back out. As we were going out, went down the fire escape to the bottom, the bottom deck. We walked out the bottom deck which comes out onto A and B drive, which is an open-air drive, and it's actually between the B & C rings.

So you come out the door. Not two feet to the left there's a chain link fence where they've been doing the remodeling, and it's probably a twelve foot tall fence, on, you know, from one wall to the other. And there's two gaping holes in the wall. Just massive holes, I'd say probably ten foot wide. There's flames billowing out of all the windows, and glass has been shattered where there'd actually been people that had been blown from their office space into the B ring, and bounced off the B ring walls. The fence was locked. Admiral Balisle started trying to, you know, orchestrate getting people into—get those personnel safe, and after about ten minutes we had to convince Admiral that he needed to get out of there in case of any secondary explosions or secondary attacks that he needed to be gone.

So we got him out and then Chief had told me to go find a pair of bolt cutters so I could get the chain cut on the fence. So I ran back into the building and tried to find a maintenance cart. I finally found a maintenance cart, I got back and the fence was open, and we got, once that fence got open, we started running people in and out and we had to go back in. There was CDR Perez and CAPT Croy run in leading fire teams and going into the building to get fire extinguishers.

And I was going in to get carts for, to evacuate personnel that had been injured. Chief was, Chief

was pulling people out of the rubble and he pulled out this one lady that had, her head had been gashed open. She was bleeding real severely from her head, and she basically had gone into shock. So he brought her out and set her down and that's when he started to get her treated. There was a Navy Lieutenant that came walking out that was on fire, and I lost my shirt, only part of my uniform that I didn't keep, because my shirt, and I had to take it off to put him out. He had like these drop ceilings, these metal braces that go in the drop ceilings he had one of those imbedded from his left shoulder all the way down into his right abs so we had to pull that out.

Q. (11:19) Going through?

A. No, it was like, what happened was the impact had basically blown it into his back. It wasn't actually like it didn't go into the shoulder and out. It was like all wrapped around his back. And we had to pull that out, because he was still, I mean it was still burning and you could just hear the skin sizzle, and it was like either we let this stay in there and he's just gone forever, or we take it out, and just hope for the best. So we got it out, got his shirt off and then we got him to medical, in triage unit that they had set up in the courtyard.

And we came back and there was people that were jumping out of the second deck, and there was other personnel that was down, I think there were two Army 05s that jumped out of the second deck. There was six or ten Navy personnel down there that were using themselves as basically a cargo net for these people to jump so they wouldn't get injured.

Everybody was either bleeding or smoke inhalation. There was—CAPT Kosnik was basically, CAPT Kosnik was orchestrating, you know, “all right, you go here, you go here.” He was leading the whole thing. He won't take credit for it, but he was leading it all. He was just saying, “We've got to do this, we got to do that.”

We got, overall I think we got about ten people out. Ten or twelve people out, and some of them had smoke inhalation, some of them had burns, but from what I understand most everybody that we helped are they're good to go, they're all living. Some of them, you know, obviously have burns and cuts and abrasions, but they're all still OK.

It was a lot of smoke, a lot of fire. We watched, there wasn't really any rank structure out there that day. It was just, as far as the Navy is concerned we are the only ones who get fire DC training. And you could tell that the Navy personnel were in it. "We got to do this." And then everybody else was like, "OK, we'll follow you." And there was, Marine Corps was out there. The Army was out there. I don't remember seeing any Air Force personnel, but enlisted, officer, like the rank structure just wasn't there. We had to get everybody out.

Once we got—we were there, I'd say we were probably there four hours. Four, four and a half hours, and then we finally got, the EMT crews had finally gotten to us and told us "Look you all need to get out of here now, before we have anything else happen."

So once we got out of there we had to go set up command posts and get everything else going. It was a pretty, pretty hectic day, experience.

Q. (13:45) what were some of the things going through your mind at this time?

A. Well, personally I was just like, look, these people need to get out, you know. I wasn't I knew I wasn't hurt, you know, and everybody else there was people that were walking out that had burns. People that, you know, clothing had been ripped and their socks and their shoes had been gone, you know. Burns on their feet. People with smoke inhalation, blood everywhere. It was just like we got to get these people to first aid. I wasn't personally thinking about myself. My

wife as a matter of fact got mad, because I didn't call her 'til like two thirty. But she was just frantic.

Chief and I were, Chief was working side-by-side with me. There was, there was a lot of people, I would say there was probably twenty people down there helping overall, and Chief and I just kept going back in and getting people out. Running into the corridors to get fire extinguishers and medical evac carts, and whatever we could think of to get people out and get them to the first aid units.

Q, (14:44) And where were the first aid units located?

A. We took—the personnel we were taking were into the center courtyard, which they had, I'd say they probably had eight makeshift units set up there.

Q. About eight. Ok. How was the, while you were doing this how was the, you mentioned there was smoke and when you first got down there you had seen flames and everything. How was the smoke there? I mean how did you avoid smoke inhalation yourself?

A. Put your shirt up over you. Get your shirt wet and put it up over your face and just dive in, sir. We didn't really have, I mean, we didn't have any protective gear ourselves. We didn't have any masks or anything like that. There wasn't anything laying around other than CO₂ cartridges for putting out the fires, and basically you just, you cover your face with your hand or you try to get some cloth or something to try to prevent as much smoke inhalation as possible. And just –

Q. (15:46) Could you see or were you going by hearing people or how were you finding the people?

A. There was probably about eighteen inches of visibility, Ma'am. You know, you go in and of course when you're in, in, in the smoke it's all, you know, the corridor's completely filled with smoke top to bottom. You could see shadows. You could see black moving around, but as far as like actual visibility you couldn't see more than about eighteen inches from me. You could hear a lot, though. You could hear people screaming, talking.

Q. (16:19) So would you say that was the primary way you were finding People was -?

A. Yes.

Q. Would having emergency lighting helped?

A. I don't think so, Sir, because it's like with fog, unless you use something like fog lights, because you know, when you're driving in fog then basically the light just reflects off the smoke. So I don't think, I personally don't think that emergency lights would have helped. Unless it may, maybe if it was on the deck like track lighting like they have on the planes. Something like that, but it goes up in the air with, like they have those big halogen fog lamps. I don't think this would have done anything.

Q. (16:58) What would have helped?

A. As far as seeing Ma'am, the -

Q. (17:02) As far as anything.

A. If we had been equipped, with, see if we equip the spaces, like the office spaces with the things like, you know, smoke masks or more CO₂ cartridges or emergency flashlights, or

anything like that, that'd be, it would be great, but if you can't get into your office, like we, we evacuated our office, and got downstairs and realized that people needed help. So unless it's stationed outside, there wasn't anything being used for it, if it's in the office. And I know now that they're talking about, in my office they're talking about setting up like basically an emergency closet for a fire locker.

It's going to be great as long as our office is, you know, if it can be gotten to. But there needs to be more than just a couple of emergency stations here and there to get things. Fire masks or at least breathing masks. Those little dust masks that they have. That should be something that everybody should carry.

Q. (18:09) What about the fire dampers?

A. Fire dampers, I don't understand, sir. What might that –

Q. (18:14) Doors, fire doors, you said that you were trying to hold open.

A. Yes, sir.

Q. (18:18) Was it helpful or was it more an obstacle to keep you from getting out.

A. As far as the people, I think it was helpful over all, because I mean the fire didn't get to like in our spaces, we didn't, we didn't really have anything but smoke damage, and I think that was through the ventilation system. But there were people that were actually behind the fire dampers.

Q. (18:39) Trapped?

A. Yes, sir. We were having to pry them open to get them. Like I had to jump in front of one and brace myself so people could get through the thing. And you could hear people banging on them and screaming, and it's –

Q. (18:55) If there were closed could you get them open?

A. Yes they had emergency releases on them.

Q. (18:58) They did, OK.

A. But people were panicking and I don't think they thought about it.

Q. (19:05) Is that something that you knew about. Did you know that the fire block was there?

That those doors were there? How did you know that?

A. I've done a lot of contracting work. I mean, you can, when you walk through a space you can see. Like they've got basically, it's probably about 12 to 14 inches wide, and it's a metal casing inside the wall, and you can see where it actually opens up and doors come out and you can tell they had them, because every ring was separated by one in the renovated area. And, I mean it's a great idea, it's going to keep the fire prevention, prevent the fire from getting to other parts of the ring, but with everything there's a good side and bad side so.

Q. (19:43) And that's part of the renovation, with the installation of these. Was it, you've been in the building for a while?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. (19:48) Was there, I mean did anybody when you first got there explain that to you or do you just know it from -?

A. Yes, I just saw it, sir. I just saw it.

Q. (20:00) You know one of the things that we, we were asking the folks that we interview, and you've maybe, and I wrote down some notes, told us some of these things, but what were, what are the lessons learned from this from your perspective? If you want to, if you can try to summarize some of them.

A. I think that they ought to have more fire prevention training throughout all the services. I mean the Navy's got a great program, because as soon as we hit our first aid, personally my first aid training, the fire, the DC training that we got, just kicked in and it was like you know what you have to do to get to where you've got to get, but there are personnel like Army personnel that were just basically standing around waiting for somebody to tell them, "You've got to do this." And there was a lot of, a lot of high ranking naval officers that were in the leading fire teams, telling people we've got to go in. If fire training was more throughout the services, probably better off, sir.

Q. (21:01) And you said, you're first aid kind of kicked in too.

A.. Yes, sir, you know like you see somebody coming out that's got abrasion on the head, you know they needed to be set down and treated for shock and make sure they're OK before you can get them to an actually EMT station.

Q. That's something that, when you were getting that training in boot camp, you thought about using at some point, or is that something that reflectively you think, "Geez, I'm glad, glad I have that."

A. I spent the better part of my youth in—I sound like an old man—I spent my teenage years in Boy Scouts. I was a Boy Scout and we'd have problems with people, you know, twisting ankles or falling off a tree, that you know, doing stupid stuff that teenagers do, and you know, you're—when you see things like that, you know you're, when you're going through classes for first aid, you don't think about using it, and then as soon as something happens it's automatic. You start doing CPR, or stop the bleeding, you know, the four steps, and it's just something you're got to do. I think reflectively looking back on it, if I hadn't had any prior experience with using first aid, then I think I looked backwards, and say yes, I'm glad I had the training.

But being in Boy Scouts and having to deal with, being in Boy Scouts, it's like, you know, you know what you've got to do, because you've been through, going through it annually. You have to do it all the time. It's just something that you're glad you do .

Q. (22:40) Any other lessons learned?

A. I—something—my personal opinion, you can't—this isn't something you can prepare for, but it's as far as what happened, I'm glad that the way things happened, as bad as it was the way it happened was, it was a good turn out. I think we had a lot less casualties than we could have had.

Q. (23:02) And what do you attribute that to?

A. People just going, you know risking their own necks and don't worry about it. Knowing that it's—because I personally knew some of the people that were in the COM Center when the plane hit, and they didn't have a chance as far as they were concerned, but people that were in the office around them, you could hear them screaming, and you could hear them, you know, see the fire. It didn't matter, you're still going in and get them. It's just something you've got to do. I mean you can't really be prepared for it, but at a certain degree with the training you get with the fire presentation and the DC and the first aid, at least you can take in stride what happens. Get better results out of it than just being dumbfounded and.....

Q. (23:58) Did you notice a distinction between military and civilian?

A. Most definitely, sure.

Q. (24:00) Can you tell us a little bit about that?

A. Most of the civilian people, there were some civilians that were actually prior military, but they, you know they were pitching in and helping, but a lot of the civilians were just, I mean I've got one memory I've got, we had four people on a cart and they didn't have anything, some minor cuts, you know, clothes torn and things like that, but this guy we asked this civilian that was just standing around if he could drive this cart out to the first aid center. And he got all bent out of shape about it. He's wearing his suit and he's all dressed up nice, and he had actually gone to find something to sit down on the chair so he wouldn't dirty his suit. And I was like, "You got a problem?" These people are sitting there bleeding, and that's a personal thing, but it's—there were a lot of civilians that were running around that didn't really know what to do.

I think they ought to go through some certification in anyway that was mandatory thing, they'd probably be better off.

Q. (25:06) Kind of related to this, and again, you may have told us some things, but if you can try to help summarize for us, but what good examples of leadership did you see from, and perhaps from people who weren't necessarily in a leadership position?

A. Well, I mean there wasn't really any rate structure, but you saw the ones, the ones that took charge. People that were in, like CAPT Kosnik. He wasn't actually on a fire team. He wasn't actually, you know, following people into the building to get people out, but he was orchestrating. He was telling people, you know, "You've got to go get some fire extinguishers. You all need to go in there. You need to pull out the debris. You've got to get that area a little less blockaded so we can get more personnel out."

But there were people that were leading fire teams that just, it's like, as far as military personnel go there was anybody, "Here you're designated leader." It's are—"I'm going to tell you we're going in to get—you, you, you and me are going in to get this guy out," and they said, "OK, let's go." And I think that basically comes down to personal initiative. Like Chief, there was a lot of enlisted personnel out there, Chief wasn't telling anybody what to do, but he was right there next to me saying, "All right, look, we ought to go do this."

I was like, "OK, let's go."

Q. (26:34) That's Chief Krauss?

A. Yes, Sir. I don't think as far as being a leader there was anybody as far as, because I don't remember—a lot of the enlisted personnel had been injured and there was, as far as the Navy

goes, and myself and Chief were obviously not injured and we just, we weren't telling, you know, we weren't telling the officers what to do, but we were you know, "OK, you all go do that. We're going to do this." Just trying to get things going.

Q. (27:13) And what—you know, the military's a very structured organization. Was that a good thing or would it have worked better if there had been more structure to it, or do you think -?

A. I think it would have made it more chaotic, because, base—everybody knew what had to be done, it's just they needed somebody to tell them, "OK, let's go now." Of course, you can step up and say, "All right, let's go."

Q. (27:35) And how did they know what to do do you think?

A. It tends to stick out in my mind there were Naval Officers, an 05 and 06, that I think they knew what to do because they're both, you know, prior command and they've had the experience. They've had the training and it's, they just jumped up and siad, "All right, we've got to do this."

Q. (27:58) Do you have their names?

A. It's CDR Perez and CAPT Croy.

Q. (28:05) CAPT. Croy?

A. Yes, Sir, C-r-o-y.

Q. (28:19) After, you said after you got as many people out as you could then you had to go set up a command post or, -

A. Yes, Sir.

Q. (28:25) Could you tell us a little bit about that effort and, and I guess how you, how your office tried to reconstitute itself.

A. Well, after, immediately after we left the area, we went out to North Parking of the Pentagon out by the flagpole. CAPT, CAPT Kosnik basically said, "We've got to muster everybody." So I went around and started walking around and finding, you know people from our office so we could get a head count of those who were, those who were there and those were weren't. And once we set up, and that was a small command post to get everybody mustered. That took, I'd say it took about two hours. And then once we got done with the—myself and chief we started walking over to Crystal City to our—we have some other offices that were already in Crystal City. And then we went over there to set up, you know, that's going, we knew that was going to be our new office. We had to set up command there and started getting on the phone and CAPT Kosnik and CAPT Swift and Chief were just basically, "Well, we've got to start going through the social roster, calling people, leaving messages." Can't get a hold of them, you got to get muster count.

We knew, Chief and I knew that that was going to be our office so we decided that we were going to go ahead and try to set up shop. Once the CAPT came there and said, "All right, look this is where you're going to be." We had to do it.

Q. (29:53) And how did the muster go. I mean did you identify most people or, -?

A. Yes, Sir. We got in touch, I'd say we probably got in touch with about ninety, ninety-five percent of the people immediately. And those that we hadn't gotten in touch with, had either been out of the building on business or were on leave or something like that. We got a hold of them within, I'd say four hours, four, five hours after getting to Crystal City.

So the muster system in my opinion, is a great system. As bad as traffic was, we had, you know, we had cell phone numbers and pagers and everything like that we need to get, so –

Q. (30:33) How did you have all that?

A. We –

Q. (30:37) I mean did you grab a list on your way out or how, how did that –?

A. We had, we have, the Pentagon has a network with local drives on it, which you get anytime you log into that in gear. So because of that, and all of our files weren't deleted and destroyed. Since we have, we keep our social roster and our recall roster on it, our local drive so we can get to it anytime we need to.

Q. (31:08) So you got that through one of the computers in the office in Crystal City, or-?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. (31:12) OK.

Q. (31:14) (another) Tell us about your phone call to your wife, when you did finally call her.

A. I got—I was walking—it was after we got somebody to the triage unit in the courtyard area, I was walking back and CAPT Kosnik and the Chief were walking in front of me, and I stopped, I

saw a payphone and I stopped off, because I'd been trying to call her on the cell phone and it wouldn't work, and all the cell phones were jammed. So I saw a payphone and I stopped and I called her. I gave her a call, I said, "Look, I'm OK. Going to be here helping people. I need you to call John's wife. I need you calling Mom and tell her I'm OK." And then I hung up the phone, and about ten minutes later we went back. The CAPT and Chief had both followed me back so they could call their wives, and the phone wasn't working. So I thought it was pretty cool, because I actually had, I got to talk to my wife.

She was crying and she was, you know, she was freaked out because she knew where our office was and she knew where the plane hit.

Where we're at, the part of the E ring that was actually destroyed was about three offices down from where we just moved out of. My Mom didn't know where our office was, she just knew that the Pentagon had been hit.

They handled it pretty well, though, they're strong women. They know what they've got to do, I mean, they know you're part of the military. It's like you sign a contract. You know what you got to do. Something's going to happen. You know, if you've got to go out, if you've got to go afloat and something happens then something's going to happen. If it happens here, which it's not thought of. I didn't think it would ever happen, but it did. They know that risk, military dependents, military families. My mom grew up in the military so, you know.

Q. (32:52) So you've had that discussion with your wife?

A. Yes, Sir.

Q. (32:55) Before this incident, or -?

A. Yes.

Q. (32:58) Post incident?

A. Yes, before the incident.

Q. (33:03) What did you learn about yourself through all this?

A. I learned that I'm not as scared as I thought I would be. You know, I thought , I thought if something like this would happen, I'd probably be one of those ones, that you know, booking, running down the freeway, but then I realized, as soon as I came out and saw those people hurt, you know, it was like, you know, I can't leave. Got to go do this, so. My mom raised me right. That's what it comes down to, and she did a good job. Lot better than I thought she did.

(everyone chuckles)

Q. (33:47) Where do you go from here?

A. I'm going to sea, Sir. I'm going, I— long before this happened I negotiated orders for a Pre-Com unit and I, I'm ready to go. It's just, it's going to be a great thing to actually see a ship, you know, from the laying of the keel to just going all the way through the steps and being on that ground floor and getting out there for the first deployment. Watching it happen. It's going to be, it's going to be a good thing.

But as far as like, does the Setpemembr 11 thing change me personally, no. I don't' think it did, because you've still got to get on with your, like I've still got three kids and a wife and I got to take care of them, and I've still got a job I got to do.

Q. (34:33) How old are your children?

A. Four, two and six months. All girls too. My dog is even a girl.

(chuckles)

Q. (34:45) What ship you going to?

A. *USS Mason* (DDG-87) The newset one out. It's going to be cool.

Q. (34:56) Right now do you plan on making the Navy a career?

A. I didn't plan on getting back in the military when I joined the Marine Corps, sir. I mean each stage in my life is going to be a different, different question. It depends on what's happening when it happens. Right now I'm here, I'm here for a minimum total of four, so as soon as that happens, if I want, if I get the chance to re-up, if it's that point in my life where I can then I probably will. Most of my family are career military.

Q. (35:32) Who else should we interview?

A. I think, a lot, I can give you names, Sir, but they'll probably tell you that they don't want to do it. CAPT Kosnik is one of those guys that, you know, he doesn't want to be, he doesn't want to have anything to do, he did what he knows he was supposed to, but he's not a glory hog. He's one of those guys that just likes to sit back, do his job and let everybody else, you know, get the "Atta boys." But he, he's a great guy. He's a, a great guy to work for and he's just, I mean he's an amazing person.

He's little, little bitty guy, but, he's probably about five foot one and he's full of fire, and he's -

Q. (36:12) I definitely want to talk to him. (Everyone chuckles) He'll like our, our, -

A. Yeah, he'll probably want to talk to the dog, Sir.

Q. (36:21) Our low ceiling.

A. And as far as other, CDR Perez, he's a great guy, too. He's from my home state. We talk about Texas all the time.

Q. (36:33) That's right, yes.

A. CAPT Croy, is, he was one of the guys that was leading the fire team. He was ducking in and out of the building trying to save people. I'm sure he's got a story that he could tell you. I wasn't there beside him. I could see him. He was off, you know, twenty yards away from me, but I could see what he was doing. I just wasn't there right by him, and you want to get, like a personal perspective from people that weren't actually, you know running back in the building, then Anita Gardner and Bert Dodin (phonetic) are two people that work with us in the Secretariat and they're, they were both affected personally very deeply.

Q. (37:170) How were they, I mean, they're back at work and functional, or ?

A. Yes, Sir.

Q. (37:22) Did it take a while?

A. They're a little more timid than they were prior to the—they're strong women, too, they're very head strong people, so.

Q. (37:31) Had, did anybody in your office take advantage of any of the counseling available from the SPRINT Team or was there any followup?

A. Yes, everybody did.

Q. (37:44) Everybody did? So you too?

A. We all, we went, it was basically put out that they wanted to get it done, because they knew that everybody, our office knew that everybody had been involved and said that, "We want you to go and at least talk about it at least once." So those of us that chose to only go once, only went once, but there were some other people that went more.

I mean there was people that, in my group, my personal group and there were people that were there at the building with me, and there are people that were in Crystal City and you hear about it from everybody's different perspective, and it's like a puzzle coming together. You just see it all. I think it was, I think it was pretty, it was a pretty enlightening experience sitting there and listening to people's stories.

Q. (38:30) So you did it, this was a group thing?

A. Yes, there was, fifteen people, fifteen to twenty people.

Q. (38:39) They also offered individual if you wanted it?

A. (didn't answer out loud, must have shaken head in the affirmative.)

Q. (38:48) What's you, can you share with us what your, what your thoughts are about that. You said you thought it was a good thing. Did you think it was a good thing before you did it?

A. No, I didn't want to do it. I didn't, I personally didn't feel the need to do it, but its, you know, be able to talk and talk with other people that were there with you and you get their side of that story, and you put in your side of your story. It's, it brings, you know, it creates a better workplace, in my opinion, because everybody else in the office is like, you know, everything, they did the same thing, everything that they were working with. You feel a little more secure working with people.

Q. (39:27) Is that, and this is your opinion, is that characteristic of the type of individual, type of military person you have in the office. I mean is that a surface warrior kind of –

A. (chuckle) I don't think it's a SWO I don't think it's SWO. I think it's just everybody in general. There were civilians in there that, you know, we have a civilian that just came from the Naval War College, that never dealt with SWOs before. She was right there, and we've got contractors that never done anything with the military 'til two or three months ago. There, it's just, it becomes more of a close-knit environment.

Q. (40:16) Shall we try to talk to Admiral Balisle?

A. You can try, sir.

Q. (40:20) Is he tougher than Kosnik?

A. He'll probably be tougher to get a hold of. He's, he normally holds a pretty booked schedule, Sir. I, personally, I didn't see him there that long, because after, once we got downstairs, before we got it open, we made sure that he had gotten out, because we didn't want any secondary

explosions or anything going off and having him injured beyond incapacitation, so we made sure that he booked.

Q. (40:44) Where'd he go, do you know?

A. I don't honestly. Couldn't tell you. I think he came here to the Annex.

Q. (40:55) Anita's last name again?

A. Gardner, G-a-r-d-n-e-r, Sir.

Q. (41:03) Anybody else?

A. LT Goodman, as a matter of fact. He's talked to me since, Greg Goodman.

q. (41:10) We talked to him.

A. He is, he's another spitfire guy. He was just right there. He was driving carts right behind us.

He's an amazing person. To watch, you know, you go through your daily routine. You work with all your, everybody in your command and you see all this and then something like this happens and you see the true character of people pop out. I mean those that could help, that stayed and did help and those that could help and just left. It's like, you know, you're glad you're working with that guy, because you know if something comes down to it, you can trust him. I think, over all, as devastating as it was (unintelligable,42:01).

Q. (42:01) Anything else you'd like to say for the historical record?

A. Yes, all these interviews that I've done, I tell everybody the same thing. I wasn't the only one down there, and you all know, you all know that I wasn't the only one down there. Being an E3 you don't have anybody else you can say, no, why don't you go let him do it, so. And all these people that were down there, they're, they're some amazing, amazing people in the military. I'm inspired by watching them. People just, they don't know, I mean, they know that there's people in there. They don't know who they are. Perfect strangers, never ran in to them, never talked to them, never, not even professionally. You just go in and help them, and I think that is the military, military trait. By even those that, like the firemen up in New York City most of those, as far as my understanding goes, most of those were former military people, and most of them even in the military rank structure, the camaraderie that just goes through it is just, it's just worth it, you know.

You hear a lot of stuff, you hear people like complain about military being over paid and underworked and then you see things like this, and it's like shhhft (makes a noise), all the bullshit aside, I'm glad I'm here.

Q. (43:20) Can you tell us about some of your interviews?

A. It's been, they've been an experience. Everybody, everybody has a different view of everything, but they all, they all ask basically the same question, but you know it comes out in a different way. And I'm not one of those people that, I don't, I was told to do most of them, so, it wasn't like something I really wanted to do, was my mom asked me to do one for my hometown newspaper. And that's just because she asked me I wanted to do one for them but all the other ones it was like, "Will you do this," and I was like, "Well let me check with my boss." They said, "Yeah, you need to do it." I said, "OK."

And all the bad publicity that the military gets, you know, the press likes to focus on all the negative, but with something like myself, or Chief or CAPT that goes through, and they have a good story to tell, I'm glad that the press can actually recognize it, you know, and be put out there.

Q. (44:24) And do you think that's not what you get now?

A. I do, Sir. I've got a cousin that just enlisted. He just left for boot camp last Wednesday. Twenty-six years old and never thought about the military and now he's going. He's just enlisted in the Navy, sir. I think it, I think it, and that's down in Texas. I know that it affected people down in Texas, but I'm sure the story got out here good too.

Q. (44:46) What is his name?

A. Chris, I think it's Cortez. I'm not sure what his last name is. It got all the way down there. Good publicity, we need it every once in a while. We've got to have somebody doing it, our public affairs people might, you all work with the historical scene, people at CHINFO they just, those guys work all the time. I'm sure you all do too. They work all the time. To be able to sit back and have a good story, to be asked about. It's a good thing for them. I'm glad to.

Q. (45:30) I was going to say, it must make you feel good that you're able to be part of that.

Getting the good message out.

A. Yes, sir. Yes, sir I worked for, in '79 when I first got to DC, and they were part of the people that wrote the programs for, you know, the incoming sailors and OPS programs and things like

that and you see all this stuff being written that's supposed to be good for the Navy and nobody every wants to talk about it. Now that they're talking about it, it's well worth it.

Q. (46:05) Well thanks a lot for taking the time to be with us.

A. Not a problem, Sir. Hope you all got what you all need.

Q (46:14) Any hope that you will give any interviews while you're on vacation?

A. I have to, _____(everyone is talking at the same time) have some more assemblies. My day's full.

Q. (46:26) Well good luck to you I hope you get some time to enjoy your vacation.

A. Thank you, sir.

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