

## LESSONS LEARNED (10-23 Oct 01)

Information Source: 13 taped interviews conducted with Navy Pentagon personnel, including officers, enlisted, and civilians. Interviews conducted by Naval Historical Center/Naval Reserve Combat Documentation Detachment 206 personnel.

Additional findings:

- 1) Personnel available for triage and first aid were not as efficiently used as they could have been. One triage was set up at Henderson Hall but was not utilized. Some worked long hours in around the clock shifts where others, ready, willing and wanting to help, were not effectively utilized.
- 2) Fire/smoke dampers (blocks) in the newly renovated section appeared to contain the majority of the smoke in some areas, however, smoke still came through the ventilation systems. The dampers/blocks did help to contain the fire, but some were trapped by the closing doors. In general, there was an unfamiliarity of the override safeties for the fire/smoke dampers for people trying to escape the burning areas.
- 3) There were repeated accounts of the teamwork displayed by military personnel in the evacuation and rescue efforts. Many described personnel of all ranks and services working together to get done what needed to be accomplished. Leaders led, and in the absence of a clear leader, someone “stepped up” to take the leadership role and coordinated necessary support efforts. In all cases, incredible teamwork was reported.
- 4) Almost every navy member interviewed stated the value of the training they had received in the military in firefighting, damage control, and first aid, mentioning how techniques and procedures trained proved invaluable during the evacuation and rescue efforts. Firefighting, damage control, and first aid actions were almost instinctive – indicating the value of the training.
- 5) N131 stood up a watch at the Navy Annex to track personnel casualties and to keep CNP informed. Building on lessons learned from the USS Cole incident, watch bill procedures, software capabilities and other SOPs were used that were implemented. The Navy appeared to have a much better system in place than the other services.
- 6) There were several accounts describing the CNT uniform melting and causing burns when exposed to fire or intense heat.
- 7) The damaged spaces had no emergency lighting due to the secondary power source being damaged as well. Some suggested the use of battery powered back-up lighting, such as battle lanterns used aboard U.S. Navy ships, which could be used for search and rescue efforts as well.

- 8) In a mass casualty situation like this, the first 20-30 minutes are critically important. The need for stretcher-bearers and people with emergency first aid knowledge and experience is immediate. Having military personnel on-scene with advanced (more than the basic first aid) emergency first aid training proved invaluable.
- 9) It was important for the community and nation to see military personnel in uniform during and after a tragedy like this. Seeing people in uniform at funerals, in the market place, and during normal daily routines brought assurance to American citizens.
- 10) Local schools that closed on the day following the Pentagon terrorist attack created hardship for personnel working and dealing with the aftermath of the tragedy. In many cases children were alone at home watching the continuous re-runs of the New York and Pentagon attacks.
- 11) The reconstitution of commands, especially for the Navy commands hardest hit (i.e., N3/N5 and the NCC), has been exasperated by manning shortages they had prior to the incident. Some areas of responsibility had only one individual with certain areas of expertise and will prove to be difficult to replace in a timely fashion.
- 12) Another matter repeatedly mentioned was the need for a more structured plan for mustering personnel after such an incident.
- 13) The importance of the Special Psychiatric Rapid Intervention Team (SPRINT) continues to be mentioned.