

Lessons Learned 24 OCT – 9 NOV

Lessons Learned – LCDR Nordholm

Use medical people to do remains recovery. Non-medical personnel were unfamiliar with dealing with dead bodies and they became casualties as well. The Army and Air Force sent non-medical personnel who had difficulty dealing with the situation. He had a chaplain talk to them prior to their getting to work.

Command and Control. The recovery team had respirators on. They had great difficulty communicating with one another.

There was confusion about who was in charge, The Virginia Medical Examiner, the Army or who and where the bodies would be taken.

Does not feel you can train people to prepare them for this type of situation. You want them acting on reflex. The important thing is that the recovery people are medically trained. If you must have non-medical personnel doing remains recovery pastoral counseling on-site is essential.

Training people in emergency preparedness and including information about how you feel after an experience like this.

Do teamwork exercises at the local command level.

Have the SPRINT team do some treatment 2 or 3 months down the road after the experience has consolidated in peoples' brains. Follow-up action on the SPRINT team's part.



Lessons learned:

- When there is plan in place, all aspects of the plan need to be followed. The officer who abandoned her communications post to go assist at the Pentagon directly contributed to the waste and misuse of medical personnel resources who had no contact with what was going on at the site.

LT(jg) McKeown LESSONS LEARNED:

Damage control – If they had had EBD's to get out of the spaces it would have been better. They work in a vault.

The firefighting training she has had over the years helped a lot.

Physical readiness training, she knew not to take deep breaths. She was trying to take short breaths.

Leadership training- forced her to move, not curl up into a ball. Act, not react.

CAPT William Toti

10 Oct 01

Lessons Learned

1. After the second tower was hit, the Navy Command Center called and CAPT Toti stayed in his office. The EA answered the NCC call, along with the deputy EA; the gist of the conversation was that another airplane was hijacked and heading towards Washington. CAPT Crowder says okay, but that the information was close hold. Don't tell anyone what you just heard. So Crowder and Radi are the only two people who know about an incoming plane. He questions what was close hold about that and why they shouldn't have disseminated that information. 30 seconds after that call the airplane hit the Pentagon.
2. He pulled a fire alarm in the 5th corridor – the first one to go off, and a minute into the event. Peculiar to the Pentagon, the alarm only goes off in that wedge of the building. It is a design issue they are addressing in this next renovation. He found out weeks later that the grayish brown haze they were running through was a cloud of asbestos that had been shaken loose from the ceiling. He knew this because he is part of the restoration crew and environmental health people have been doing surveys all over the Pentagon following the attack. The next time he went into that area he had to wear a respirator and full white suit.
3. At heliport pad all kinds of ejecta from the impact site – pieces of concrete, limestone, pieces of airplane. No people. He thinks where are the people? Fire truck normally kept at heliport for when helos land; now it is on fire. Fireman in it radioing for help. Sees black tower of smoke. No flames yet. Gets to other side of utility building at heliport and sees people and flames. Fire is small, not very big at all. Now 5-10 minutes into event. Second ambulance arriving. No fire trucks except the burning one. One bottle of oxygen for two burn patients.
4. Landlines worked but cell phones would not work for hours. He was able to use his Blackberry.
5. DPS told them to run across the street and line up in front of a concrete wall. He talks of concussion, that it will kill you. Can go behind but not in front of concrete wall. He told DPS he would not stand over there; that it was stupid. A lesson learned: teach DPS how to hide behind shit.
6. Frustrated by slow response of EMT and Fire Department. Before walking wounded exited the building, fire still small. He asked if they could put water on

- it. Told it was a jet fuel fire that would spread; needed foam. Followed the fireman into the utility shed to get 5 gallon blue poly bottles out of the shed and onto the grass by the burning fire truck. They were never touched.
7. Lesson: No coordination set up between the agencies caused problems at the scene. Could have been disastrous if dealing with many wounded or dead.
 8. DPS told them to run across the street and line up in front of a concrete wall. He talks of concussion, that it will kill you. Can go behind but not in front of concrete wall. He told DPS he would not stand over there; that it was stupid. A lesson learned: teach DPS how to hide behind shit.
 9. Other lessons learned – all Navy personnel are trained to fight fires. Resources were wasted in the Pentagon with nothing to fight that fire. Needed hoses to put out the fire.
 10. More people should go through EMT training. There should be things like AEDs (automatic electronic defibrillators), basic first aid items available in the Pentagon. Anyone who is EMT trained can use an AED. The clinic at the Pentagon is not enough. There was no plan for which medical types showed up.
 11. There is a need for a better way to evacuate the building on very short notice. Muster lists. Where to assemble? We need OBAs in the Pentagon. Arlington County is opposed to them because they say it will cause people to stay in longer and they'll die from asphyxiation. He proposes the Navy insist on having them in their spaces.

Lessons Learned – YNSN Whitmarsh

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.

DM1 Gaston

24 Oct 01

Lessons Learned

Lessons learned – for years he could not sit comfortably with things in his pocket.

Lost all of his personal effects. To be alert. To cope without becoming dependent on different things. In stress management sessions at DeLorenzo at the Pentagon.

HMCS Tyrone Green:

Lessons learned:

- It is impossible to train people to handle mass casualties and this level of destruction. All you can do is to tell them what they will see, see if they think they can handle it and then keep your eye on them.

-All the services wanted to be involved at the Pentagon. Too many people wanted to be in charge and give orders. Sometimes groups need to step back. You need worker bees and not everyone can be in charge. It's just as important to be a support person.

CDR Denny Wetherald

31 Oct 01

Lessons Learned

1. Building construction solid. Windows in 4th corridor held; joiner bulkhead not hot at about two minutes into the attack. Between B and C ring, 4th corridor, ground zero. Second floor was a burning, sooty solid smoke. Smoke streaming out of window frames separated from bulkhead. Third floor same. Fourth floor seemed uninvolved. Small CO2 fire extinguishers. No response from emergency services at this point. Buried deeply in the building approaching it from inside. Tough place to get to quickly.

Recommendation: Station a fire truck inside the courtyard area of the Pentagon to ensure response time is minimal. Other interviews reiterated this theme, and one mentioned that a fire truck had difficulty getting to ground zero outside the site, much less getting to the inner courtyard.

2. Could not find fire extinguishers on the fourth deck. No fire hoses in the new wedge. If they had had water, could have gotten behind the door with water and saved some people. They were there in 30 seconds, but had no water or hoses. (Assumed he is talking of the N6 spaces). Emergency stairwells between wings. Organization owned a wing; where building made the turn was the end of one organization and the beginning of another. That is where the emergency stairwells were located. With new wedge, there was a door to get into the stairwell but it was only one way. Could not get back into the spaces. To right of stairwell people went to the stairwell but it was full of flames. The plane had taken out the bottom of the stairwell. People on the second and third deck got to that exit, it was involved, and had to go all the way through back out to the corridor. Two exits are all there is. No corridor running down the middle of the ring. On fourth deck could not get out of emergency exits. One man caught in stairwell with no way out; fire below; able to jimmy a door open due to damage to building.
3. Look at design of these buildings. What is trade off between safety and security? In emergency people need to be able to exit those stairwells. Surface warfare guys were the ones who survived. SWOs gravitated to ground zero. Office space with phones and computer were available on 17 October. In a conference room at the Annex.
4. No one planned to deal with this at the Pentagon. Deal with this all the time at sea. Loss of financial database was significant. Main servers were collocated with his office. Back up tapes off site not completely up to date. Now have a daily backup at the Navy Yard.
5. No time to take a break after this occurred. Working the next day. Deeply saddened by what he had been through. Forced to work even harder than they had been, with no data, in the aftermath of this tragedy. When he realized this he was able to take steps to break out of it. Too busy to take advantage of the SPRINT team. Issue of whether or not you are weak by seeking out the help of the SPRINT team. Can't make it an option. Trying to get back to clinic to get his lungs rechecked. Took three days to get the time to do that, and when he got back to office was asked where he had been. SPRINT guys came in a couple of weeks later. No time. Not his way to deal with it. Medical folks from Bethesda, Walter Reed and Fort Belvoir called to check on him. Had a trip planned to Europe on 4 October and they went.
6. He sees the rubble; body parts; brick burning; the fire reigniting. He places these images in a box and moves on. Numb by lack of concern by Navy Staff, by the way the OPNAV staff was treated in the wake of all of this. Their job was made more difficult by an order of magnitude; job still needs to be done. Navy staff's

- attitude was that they were strong and to keep going. Many people were deeply affected by it. Would have helped if people had recognized the conditions they were working under, both physical and emotional.
7. Seventeen years of emergency training onboard ship paid off. If this happens onboard a ship he is confident they would be able to do whatever is necessary. Important to break the Washington paradigm of 15-hour days with no benefits. Make people want to come back here since it is necessary to do 2-3 tours here before you understand all of the players.
 8. No matter what the environment, SPRINT team is necessary and should be required. OPNAV gave us the option but did not make it mandatory. The psychological impact was ignored due to the immediacy of the budget requirements. No one from Navy Staff interested in the story.

Lessons Learned: [REDACTED]

The atmosphere of practicing emergency drills in a serious atmosphere, as is done on ships, should be practiced in the Pentagon.

There need to be back-up ways to get water to different areas of the Pentagon, as well as better ways to exhaust the spaces.

Lighting in the Pentagon was very poor in the new construction areas.

The glass prevented the explosion from getting in, but also prevented the smoke from getting out.

More firebreaks needed. The roof burned because of all the wiring and insulation. Cabling is all run through the attics, these cables created fire food.

NMCI did a good job getting the offices up and running with computers they were getting ready to give to other offices that were upgrading.

Know where to muster, have a muster plan.

Lessons Learned: - [REDACTED]

There was no plan for evacuating the building and mustering in a specific location. Have an evacuation plan.

Know who is in charge during a catastrophe. Plan who will fill what roles. Not just specific agencies, but individuals within the separate services.

Many organizations did not recognize or allow for the time necessary to readjust after the attack. Their organizations required them to be back to work as normal in the next few days, even if their offices were displaced.

[REDACTED]
31 Oct 01

Lessons Learned

1. He ended up in the alleyway between C and B ring. Big piece of wall blown out. Windows black from smoke and flames. Several bulging from flames. Said 25 people in there. Fire extinguishers used; not successful. Fire reignited immediately. Collected fire extinguishers from other corridors. Saw emergency equipment closets in several areas that could not be opened. Last time the walls were painted the doors were sealed shut by the paint. Kicking them; some unable to open. No continuous water supply available within the building.
2. Back in alleyway; report of another plane inbound. Pentagon maintenance worker told them which of the alleyways were reinforced to take shelter if necessary.
3. One entrance to their spaces, except for the emergency exit. Did not know where that door went. Later discovered there was no handle from that stairwell to get back in. It was a one-way stairwell. Never occurred to him to go that way.
4. Amazed at how quickly they were up and running at the Annex. No internet connectivity. Their server was located in the corridor that was lost. Went into the space in the Pentagon on the 21st; able to retrieve some backup files from that area.
5. Keep an eye on the family; be sensitive to people's familial needs.

Lessons Learned: [REDACTED]

We should question if we really need all the paper copies of the classified material.

Some spaces with classified material had open storage instead of the classified material being contained in one place such as a safe.

Have backups of paperwork on CD ROMS, etc, but keep it in a separate area.

Train people on how the fire doors work. There were people who were leaning up against fire doors trying to escape when the fire doors began to shut on them.

Practice evacuations.

LCDR Charles Capets – Lessons Learned

14. Lessons learned:

- Only one entrance into and out of the SCIF (Sensitive Compartmentive Information Facility). Egress out of any SCIF should be looked at. Have primary and secondary evacuation routes.

- Basic rescue equipment such as battle lanterns and axes should be in the workspaces, not just the out in the hallway. They needed the equipment inside the spaces due to the total destruction in the NCC spaces.

- They lost a significant amount of data on the computers. Server and data storage needs to be reviewed.

Lessons Learned: - LT Sell

Make sure there is an evacuation plan that everyone knows and drills.

Send people from a command to an EMT course, make it a high priority.

Make people aware of dangers and how to be able to help out individually.

Put emergency radios next to fire extinguishers to improve communications. The various rescuers had no communication with each other.