

**Naval Historical Center
Oral Interview Summary Form**

Interviewers:

Capt Michael McDaniel
CDR Carol O'Hagan

Interviewer's Organization:

Naval Historical Center
Naval Historical Center

Interviewee:

LT (jg) Harold Jackson

Current Address:

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████████████████████

Date of Interview:

3 Apr 02

Place of Interview:

Washington Navy Yard

Number of Cassettes:

One

Security Classification:

Unclassified

Name of Project: Pentagon Terrorist Attack Incident

Subject Terms/Key Words: Pentagon; Terrorist Attack; 11 September 2001; evacuation; NAVTELCOM

Abstract of Interview:

Interviewee Information:

LT (jg) Jackson was born in July 1975 in ██████████, Michigan. His father worked for Chrysler. His father had been in the Army and served in Germany where he met LT(jg) Jackson's mother. In 1971 his parents settled in ██████████, MI. He attended Catholic school in the Detroit area. He joined the Navy after high school enrolling in the BOOST program. He attended boot camp in San Diego, CA in June 1993. He then attended BOOST, also in San Diego. After graduating from BOOST in 1994 he attended Norfolk State University and the Hampton Roads ROTC unit. He majored in Psychology, graduated and was commissioned. He attended Surface Warfare Officer School in Newport, RI. From there he was stationed on the *USS McInerney* (FFG 8) in Mayport, FL. He was initially the Damage Control Assistant. During this tour he did a UNITAS deployment. In December 2000 he got orders to OPNAV TCC at the Pentagon. He became the Division Officer for the Maintenance Equipment Division. In August they had just moved from 4C663 to 1D467.

Topics Discussed:

On 11 Sep he decided to go PT at the Navy Yard to get ready for the upcoming PRT. Since his command is headquartered at the Navy Yard he often went there to work out. He left the Navy Yard about 0850. He was listening to the radio about the World Trade Center. As he drove into the Pentagon South Parking lot he decided to get gas and heard about the second plane hitting the World Trade Center. After getting gas he decided to stop by the ATM machine in the gas station. He then went back to South Parking and parked. Walking toward the Pentagon he ran

into IT1 McCrae, a coworker. They walked into the Pentagon and they were getting on the escalator to go to the First Floor in the A ring between corridors 3 and 4. They heard a loud boom, saw people running and debris. He thought it had been a bomb. They were by an exit to the courtyard so they went out to the courtyard. People were coming out of the building and they migrated toward the middle of the courtyard. He looked up and saw black smoke and debris falling down. He saw an injured man who was bleeding.

They tried to go out to North Parking but the Pentagon police kept redirecting them. When they got to North Parking they tried to find their people. Since they had just moved it made no sense to look for the people in their old evacuation spot, so he assumed they had gone to South Parking. He called the command at the Navy Yard and told the Commanding Officer what was going on. They then decided to walk toward South Parking to try to find some of their people. It was blocked off so they couldn't get there. People were being backed away from the building so they ended up by Fort Meyer. They called the Commanding Officer and reported that they still had not found anyone and she informed them that they had 7 personnel missing. She told them to go home and report to the Navy Yard at 0730 the next day.

They took the Metro home since their cars were in South Parking and they couldn't get to them.

They ended up losing 7 people: A civilian who was a retired Chief, Mr. Roger Woods; YN3 Melissa Barnes; IT2 Kevin Yokum; IT2 Kris Bishundat; ET3 Daniel Caballero; ET3 Chris Burford; and ET2 Brian Moss.

LT (jg) Jackson went to the Pentagon to view the site 2-3 weeks after 11 Sep. He thought he might be able to recover some material. When he got there he saw that to the left of where his desk should have been was the hole. It looked like the people died from the explosion.

There were four people who worked out of the space who weren't there; Petty Officer Hardiman was taking a smoke break; LT (jg) Jackson; LCDR Davis (their OIC) and ET1 Coulson (he was doing a PT test).

At first it seemed like a dream that it happened. After about 2 weeks LT (jg) Jackson found he had to sleep with the lights on. He spoke to a chaplain about this.

He's thankful he went to the ATM machine. That \$30 saved his life. He told his dad to play combinations of 3 and 0 in the lottery the next day.

That night on the news he saw exactly where the plane had hit. He went on the Internet and saw the graphics of the building and realized the plane had hit where his office was.

On 12 Sep he went to work at the Navy Yard. They began to assume the missing were dead. They initiated the inventory of goods for the missing people who were single. The CACO's went out to the families and made preliminary visits. The Commanding Officer and LCDR Davis went to visit the families with the CACO's as well. LT (jg) Jackson went with the CACO to visit Mr. Woods's family.

LT (jg) Jackson was designated to inventory IT2 Yokum's belongings. He collected his gear and sent it to his family. He did this with IT1 McCrae. He also shipped ET3 Burford's car back to North Carolina.

They had a Command Memorial at the Women's Memorial in Arlington.

YN3 Barnes was their administrative person who handled all admin issues and handled the Plan of the Week. IT2 Yokum was the Training Petty Officer for OPNAV TCC. Mr. Woods was the Assistant Officer in Charge, the assistant to LCDR Davis. IT2 Bishundat worked the phone switch for people who needed to connect via DSN. ET3 Caballero and Burford and ET2 Moss worked the maintenance of the equipment for the CNO. ET3 Caballero also coordinated the VTC's. ET3 Burford was the Supply and Division Training Petty Officer. ET2 Moss had newly arrived and was being trained to take over as Supply Petty Officer as well as the Work Center Supervisor for the ET's.

The function of their command is message traffic for 700 commands in the area.

Abstracted by:
CDR Carol O'Hagan
15 Apr 02

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Interviewee Information:

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Topics Discussed:

Q. (13:09) You were right next to the Command Center?

A. We were in the Command Center.

Q. (13:12) In the Command Center itself. There was a little section where you were?

A. Yeah, yes, sir. So we were in the Command Center and that day, September 11th, my girlfriend had mentioned to me that I should go to PT to start getting back into shape because we had a PRT coming up. So that morning I was like OK, I'll go to PT and usually we PT over at Fort Myer, but that day, well actually we PT'd over at Fort Meyer before and then when we got our new OIC everything switched to where we PT'd in the Pentagon at the POAC. For Officers, we would have to pay and me being a cheapskate didn't want to pay so I decided to PT over at the Navy Yard, which is where part of our command is. Well actually that's the head of our command.

Q. (14:04) Over there before September.

A. Over there.

Q. (14:10) They were there already.

A. What's that?

Q. (14:11) The rest of your command was over at the Annex?

A. Well,

Q. (14:15) Oh, Navy Yard. Oh I'm sorry, I was –

A. See our command is like, we have most of our command over at the Navy Yard, and then we have like I won't say a subordinate command, but it's not even a detachment. It's like part of our command works at the Pentagon for OPNAV TCC. So I was over there and you know I was just telling you about I would PT or whatever. And that morning I decided to PT over at the Navy Yard, because I didn't want to pay to PT. So I was over there PTing and no one really showed up for PT that morning so it was me and another guy. We just worked out on our own and I left the Navy Yard after my shower at about, had to be about 8:50, close to nine o'clock on September 11th.

As I was driving over, I was listening to the radio and they were mentioning how a plane had crashed into one of the World Trade Centers. I was like, "How can a plane just crash into a World Trade Center?" I mean, the pilot must have been drunk or something and he didn't know what he was doing. So I didn't really pay it no mind, and as I was driving to the Pentagon parking lot, South Parking lot, I decided that instead of parking I was going to go get gas for my truck.

I went to the gas station and that's when I heard that another plane had hit the Trade Center, and I was thinking, "OK, that's not an accident. Something's happening. Something really bad's going on."

So as I was getting my gas, I was listening to the radio and as I was leaving the gas station. Something told me to go get money out of the ATM machine, because there's one right by the gas station. So I was like, OK, I went to the ATM. Got in my truck and went and was going to park in the same spot that I was going to initially park in and as I was walking toward the Pentagon I ran into another one of my co-workers, IT1 MC CREA, and she was, we started discussing you know the events in New York.

I was like, “Man, that’s a shame,” and then I began to talk about you know, “What if they hit the Pentagon. There’s nothing we can do.” you know. Then we walked in; went through the security check; walked down one hall, or passageway and then walked down another passageway to where the new area where they had just renovated. There was an escalator that led down to the first floor. I was on the second floor in the A ring between corridors 3 and 4 and just as we were about to go down the escalator, we heard a loud boom, and we saw people running and we saw debris.

My first reaction was that it was a bomb. I didn’t think an airplane hit the Pentagon.

Q. (17:25) Describe the boom.

A. It was loud. The building shook and it was kind of scary, but I kind of remained calm. I didn’t know what I was supposed to do initially, but in the A ring, it’s right near the courtyard and so we were right by an exit where we could go out into the courtyard. But my first initial reaction was to keep going forward, but then we pulled back when we saw the debris and the people running from where we were trying to head to. So we ran down the stairs, outside into the courtyard and stayed like under, not really under the building, but they had like an overhang. So we were standing there and people were coming out of the building on the first floor, so we all started to migrate toward the middle of the courtyard and at that time I had looked up and I saw black smoke and a lot of debris, like falling down.

I didn’t realize where the plane had hit until later that evening and I remember people running scared. They didn’t, no one knew what was going on. They had, it was like chaos, and I remember seeing a guy who was, I guess he had got cut or something because he was bleeding from his head and it was kind of bad. Me and IT1 MC CREA basically asked this guy if he was

OK, if he needed help, and he needed to cover up his wound. That's when the rush had come out, and so we more or less lost him. We don't know where he went.

So everyone ended up trying to go out to North Parking lot but we kept getting re-directed by I guess the police, the Pentagon police, so there was really no, no one knew where they were supposed to go. They knew they needed to get to North Parking, but I had never evacuated that building before so I was really following everybody else.

When we finally got to North Parking which is by the I guess, the Child Development Center, they had I guess a duty vehicle out there that was basically playing the radio and having the interviews of, you know, I guess like SAM DONALDSON or somebody, talk show hosts. They were discussing it and we were trying to find out where our people were, because when we had moved down to the new area, it made no sense to evacuate to where we were supposed to go before. So I assume that everybody went to South Parking lot. I was trying to call my command over at the Navy Yard and let them know what happened and it was kind of hard to get through because the cell phones were I guess were, the lines, satellites were plowed or whatever.

When I finally got through I let my command officer know that, I told her it was a bomb. I didn't know it was an airplane. She was like, "Yeah, we heard. We heard. Who's all with you?" She wanted basically a muster report.

I was like, "Well, right now it's just me and IT1 MC CREA."

She was like, "OK, OK, well try to find everybody else and give me a call back."

Right after she hung up I called my mother and basically was trying to get in touch with her to let her know I was OK, because I'm assuming they had saw what happened on TV. When I finally got in touch with her, it was like maybe 10:15 when I called her, and when she heard my voice

she began to cry and basically was just happy that I was alive. But she didn't know where I had worked at, so if she had really known I think she would have been more hysterical than she was. After I called her, I tried to call Command back and let them know that we didn't have anymore people, that we didn't, there was no one else with us, as far as muster report.

I stayed where I was because IT1 MC CREA knew where we were supposed to muster at before and we, she came back and let me know there was, she couldn't find anybody else. Then we started to try to walk toward South Parking lot because that's where I thought you know most of our people would go because it was closer than going all the way through the other side of the building. But we couldn't get over there because they had it blocked off, whatever.

So we came back and then they, there was a lot of people telling us there's another inbound plane and to get as far away from the Pentagon as possible. So everybody started walking away from the building and we ended up, I believe it was near Fort Myer where they had us, and basically we ended up in Roslyn and that's when we called our commanding officer again and let her know that we still didn't find anybody.

She had let us know that they still only had, there was seven people missing. So it was like, OK –

Q. (22:53) How many total people did you have in the Pentagon at any given time?

A. In the Pentagon? I'd say about sixty, but they were in a different section of the Pentagon. See, the part that we had just down to there was probably like eleven people usually in the space that we had.

Q. (23:20) Inside the Command Center?

A. Right, from our command. So when she had told us that they had, they were still missing seven people, I didn't think they were dead. After she told us that basically we could go home and just come to the Navy Yard tomorrow because they weren't letting anybody on or off base at the Navy Yard. So we was like, "OK, well she basically told us to go home," and to call if we know of anything, or heard of anything. They'll let us now, basically come in to work tomorrow at 7:30.

So after she told us that I ended up calling my girlfriend. Basically she did the same thing my mother did. She was just happy to hear, and from what she told me she was at the bookstore, at her college working when the planes hit the Trade Center. When they told her, she was in the back room and they told her that the Pentagon was hit and she basically ran out of the room and ran out of the building and ran to her dorm room to try to call me, but she couldn't get through because the cell phones -

When I finally called her she was basically happy and crying at the same time. So I let her know I was OK, and that I'll be heading home. But at the time, they wouldn't let us into South Parking, which is where we parked so we had to take the Metro to our houses. I gave Petty Office MC CREA some money because she had all her wallet and stuff in her car. Her plan was not to stay there the whole day at work. So I had loaned her some money and she basically thanked me for you know, I guess being calm and you know keeping her calm because -

After we said our good-byes, I ended up going home and watching the news the first ten days.

The people that we had lost, there was seven people. We had a civilian who was a retired Chief.

We had -

Q. (25:53) Can you name them for us?

A. There was, forgot his last name.

Q. (25:59) Was it MR. WOODS?

A. Yeah, ROGER WOODS was his name. He was our civilian. Then we had, we had a YN MELISSA BARNES. We had KEVIN YOKUM. I think I'd better write these down so I can remember them all. We had MELISSA BARNES, KEVIN YOKUM.

Q. (26:38) MR. WOODS.

A. ROGER WOODS. We had CHRIS BISHUNDAT. He was one of the, one of our new guys. I think he was there about two months, and he was supposed to turn I believe 24 the next day, or something like that. We also have DANIEL CABALLERO. He was one of the guys that actually worked for me at the time. He was a real good guy. We had CHRIS BURFORD, who also worked for me, and we had –

Q. (27:23) Was ET2 MOSS one of them?

A. Yeah, I forgot his first name.

Q. (27:24) BRIAN

A. Yeah, BRIAN, BRIAN MOSS. He was one of, he was actually one of my newest guys. He was basically there not even three weeks. He had just transferred from the Ceremonial Guard. PETTY OFFICER BARNES, she was a very nice young lady. She basically helped me out. We would have discussion more or less, I won't say about her private life, but about her I guess

situation with her boyfriend, because they were going to get married, and we'd just sit and chat about it, or whatever.

But PETTY OFFICER YOKUM, he was the guy that I actually had to go to his house and basically account for all his items, which was kind of hard for me because him, CABALLERO and BURFORD like maybe a month prior, we had all went to Chillies for happy hour and just hung out and talked and you know so I told them I'd go hang out with them at least once, and you know I thought I'd do it then.

They basically told their sea stories. I was I guess an observer and listened to their stories and thought some of them were unbelievable, and stuff like that.

With Mr. Woods, he was a very smart man. He knew his stuff. He was, he was from Michigan, too, so we had somewhat of a connection and he was a pretty good guy. He wouldn't let stuff slide, but he was firm and I actually liked him. He was pretty cool to me.

PETTY OFFICER BISHUNDAT, I didn't really interact with him. I knew of him, but I didn't really, he was one of the guys that worked from upstairs and then he worked the phone switch. So he was more like one of the guys I saw around, but I didn't really have a conversation with him or anything. So I don't really know of him and the last three guys were actually in my, under my, I guess command, CABALLERO, BURFURD, and MOSS.

CABALLERO, he was a good guy. He always wanted to do what was right and he was good with his maintenance. He did have a slight problem with his VTC information book, which was kind of sloppy and me and ET1 COULSON, we always got on him about that, you know. Make sure it looks right so in case anybody, any of us need to go in their book and you know, get some information and look at it, and so he was from Texas and he was nice.

With PETTY OFFICER BURFORD, he was a good guy too. He was funny. He would always talk about, his stories, about you know, how you want to talk to this girl, or how you want to talk to that girl. He was a funny character.

PETTY OFFICER MOSS he was a good guy, too. He, I remember one time I had received a phone call on my cell phone and he told me that I was a player. I thought he was funny. I didn't really know him that well. I know he had two kids and a wife and he had some type of medical condition which led him to our command because he wanted to stay in the area, because Bethesda's nearby.

So I talked to him on occasions and he was our, he was going to be taking over for PETTY OFFICER BURFORD as far as supply, our SUPPLY PO. We were getting him into the training, before September 11th. To this day when I think of these people, my thoughts go to you know, what were they thinking. Exactly what happened when the plane struck.

Because I actually went to the site where the plane had hit, maybe like two to three weeks after September 11th. I didn't know how severe it was so I thought I could you know, recover some of my materials you know. I lost a Palm Pilot and some clothes and some legal officer files and of that stuff and I thought I could reclaim it, because I didn't think it was that bad. But when I got there, all I saw was where my desk should have been, because they basically cleaned the whole area out, I saw where my desk should have been. If I was sitting at my desk and I was to turned to my left, there was the hole right there.

Q. (32:21) Right there?

A. Uh huh, and it looked like they didn't die from the initial crash, but from the explosion from all the gas and the fumes, so I don't really know how bad it was for them. I sometimes think you

know, what were they thinking, because it was like four of us that weren't there. One of them had just went out to take a smoke break, like maybe –

Q, (32:50) Who was that?

A. That was PETTY OFFICER HARDIMAN. She just transferred from here last month, or this month. Yeah, it had to be last month.

She just had left out like two minutes before the plane struck to take a smoke break. Our LIEUTENANT COMMANDER DAVIS, he was in a morning meeting over at the Navy Yard so he wasn't there. PETTY OFFICER COULSON, I think he was doing a PT test that morning, so he wasn't there. I was going to PT. Now I realize that's where everybody was at, doing the PT test while I was doing PT. So I wasn't there.

I'm wondering were they thinking, "Well, where's all our people," you know before you know, when it happened. I wonder if, how they tried to escape you know. Because I'm trying to figure out you know, where were their bodies at. We're they still at the desk when it happened, or were they trying to escape, or – I know they said that some of the bodies were unidentifiable. You know they had to use dental records, and basically you know any type of you know marks they might have had, tattoos or anything like that.

To me it's still a shock that it happened, and I still can't believe that it happened. At first it seemed like a dream you know. And then after about two weeks I found myself not being able to be in my own apartment without the lights being on all the time, especially at night. I would try, I would go to sleep with the lights on and when I talked to a Chaplain about it, he basically said those were my, just my way of handling the situation.

I was scared, and I didn't realize it until I had told him about it, that I was trying to maintain some type of security by having the lights on. I still think back and I'm thankful that I wasn't there at the time, but I was supposed to be there. My girlfriend basically convinced me to go to PT. Normally I wouldn't have gone to PT on a Tuesday, because I usually do it Monday, Wednesday and Friday and I was there on a Tuesday doing PT. Because I would have been right in the office at my computer. I also think about you know what if I hadn't of gone to get gas? I still would have been there, because after PT, it was like nine o'clock and I think the plane hit about 9:45 or something like that. So I would have been in my office. Thankfully I went to the ATM machine. That thirty dollars really saved my life.

Q. (35:59) Did you keep that thirty dollars?

A. No, I ended up spending it, but I did tell my dad to play some lottery numbers for the, the gas amount was like 31 something. I told him to play that four-digit number, because he's really into playing the lottery. I told him to play three hundred, three thousand, thirty, 0-3-0 stuff like that, because that was the thirty dollars that I took out.

Q. (36:29) At what point did you find out where the plane had hit?

A. That evening when I was at my house and they were showing I guess a graphic of where the plane hit. I didn't realize that that's where our office had moved to, because the way they showed the graphic, I knew where we entered at. We entered at, we entered at in the second corridor. I'm looking at the picture and I'm think, "OK, is that where my office is?" So I still didn't know that those seven people had died until later, and when I pictured it, I thought, "Man, that's where our office is. That's where we had just moved to." If we had been in our old office, if they had

delayed our move in, they probably wouldn't have had the situation that we had as far as our command. But that's when I realized where the plane hit and I went on line and got a blow-up picture of where the plane hit and I have that on my refrigerator to this day.

I was obviously, I guess I won't say how lucky I am, but you know.

Q. (37:41) Aside from the Chaplain was there any other counseling available to people?

A. That was it, just the Chaplain. I think they had two different Chaplains come in. That was in. Basically talked to everybody that (_____ Inaudible 38:08).

Q. (38:14) Tell us about the immediate days after.

A. Immediately after that I went into work the next day and basically it was still confusion and since I didn't really have a desk over there, I didn't know what I was supposed to do. They basically began to more or less consider those people dead, our seven. They basically began to I guess, initiate the, I forgot what it's called but the people that were to go and inventory everyone's goods.

Q. (38:52) CACOs? Not CACOs, somebody else.

A. Well we had to interact with the CACOs in order to do that, but there were some people we didn't have to do because of the, they were married and their spouses basically had all their materials. But before, actually before that we had the CACO go out to each family and basically let them know that you know their family member has been basically deceased.

Q. (39:27) Was anybody in the command a part of that, working with the CACOs or were they-?

A. Yes, mostly our senior officers. We had our CO, our LIEUTENANT COMMANDER DAVIS, and there was an occasion where I had to go as I guess it was a follow-up to MR. WOODS house with his family and basically with the CACO and just let them know, actually it was a CACO and a command member that went to each person's house to let them know, because I guess it was because they didn't want the CACO you know not to actually know the person that went. If you understand what I mean by that. They wanted someone from the command there also, as you know, "OK, he knew my," I guess wife or husband, or you know brother or sister, you know. So it was like Ok I had to do that only one time and that was for MR. WOODS, which it was – I wasn't scared. I didn't know how they would react because I never did anything like this before. I never had to, "Ok you're family member's not living anymore." You know, that was kind of hard for me, but.

Q. (40:44) At what point did you do that? Why was that?

A. It had to be, I think it had to be like the next week, the week after, because they, we didn't hear anything that they were alive so it was basically known that they were deceased. And I don't think they found any survivors, except for the people that escaped, but after they put the fires out I don't think there were any survivors after that.

Then after that, that's when I found out that I would be you know doing inventory of this guys belongings, PETTY OFFICER YOKUM's. I really didn't want to do that, because I felt odd being in a dead person's house, you know. Basically collecting their gear and basically sending it to their family. I didn't like that at all. I got volunteered for that so I know if I'd had the choice, I wouldn't have done it.

You find out a lot about a person in their belongings, you know. A lot of stuff, he had a lot of clothes. Had to basically clean up after the person. You know, that morning they didn't know they were going to die. So you know, they had all their, they still had dishes in the sink, and food in the refrigerator and all that stuff.

Q. (42:10) And you were the first one to go back in there?

A. In was me and PETTY OFFICER MC CREA who ended up doing it, and then we had the movers come in and it was kind of hard.

Q. So not everybody had that. Sometimes the families would do that?

A. What the inventory?

Q. Right.

A. Well they didn't really have to do an inventory, because it was their belongings.

Q. (42:44) Right, so these were only –

Q. The single people?

Q. Single people that didn't have family in the immediate area?

A. Right.

Q. (42:52) And where would that have been sent? Where were the things sent?

A. Well, PETTY OFFICER YOKUM's stuff was sent to his parent's house in Louisiana.

Basically it went to, we had one, her, that was PETTY OFFICER BARNES, her parents were

separated, or divorced or something like that and they basically were I guess, trying to figure out who gets what. So I didn't have to deal with that, luckily. There were also cases where they hadn't received their stuff, received the deceased materials after a long time, so you know, we had to work with that. People trying to get their, I guess their SGLI allowance money, and it was kind of hectic trying to deal with it, but then it settled down a lot since then, not as stressful.

Q. (43:49) Where did MR. WOOD's stuff go?

A. Well, he lived in down in Patuxent River (MD), so the only thing that we had to get from his was I guess his wife came up to get his car that was still in the parking lot. That was the only thing.

I also worked with shipping PETTY OFFICER BURFORD's car back to North Carolina, where he's from. So we had to clean out his car and basically inventory that too. Take away the parking passes. Turn them back into the proper authorities.

Q. (44:31) How long was it before all that was finished up?

A. As far as sending it? I would say by October. It was all finished by October.

Q. (44:58) And then did the funerals and the memorials start?

A. Yeah, we had one basic Command memorial at the Women's Memorial in Arlington, and that was, it was very heartwarming. We had our YN that was over at the Navy Yard was on the phone with PETTY OFFICER BARNES when the plane hit.

Q. (45:22) When it hit?

A. She's just, she transferred in December to Jacksonville, but she said she was on the phone with her when the plane hit. That was like (big breathe) hummm. I'm sure she didn't know what happened. It's kind of sad. These people had no idea what happened. I'm sure they did, I think. Some of them from what I hear was watching the television in the Command Center that was talking about the Trade Center, and I still wonder what they were doing when it actually hit.

Q. (46:18) For the items that you lost, were you reimbursed for those?

A. Yes I was.

Q. How did that work?

A. Well, what you had to do basically if you lost anything you would have to basically identify it and basically submit I guess a price, what it's worth. And submit it to the claims office and I had to really, I took a long time to do that because I wanted to make sure I could remember everything that I had lost. Because I had forgotten that I had lost this jacket, so I had to put that down. I was trying to remember a lot of stuff. I know I lost, I got reimbursed like \$450 worth of items. I had a Palm Pilot and some civilian clothes. There was some things I couldn't possibly get back, like all my legal officer files and my, we had lost a camera, a Command camera, and film, and so. I did get reimbursed for my items. Actually I got it back in, I filed it in January so I got it back in February.

Q. (47:28) Pretty quick turnaround.

A. Yeah. pretty much, because they, basically they go over and make sure that you're supposed to have that item at work or whatever your trying to make a _____ with.

Q. (47:44) Who was that filed with? Who paid that? Do you remember?

A. No, I do not remember. I can –

Q. (47:53) It's a government entity. I saw the reimbursement form. Any other vignettes or stories about others that were involved that you can relate to us, that you've heard?

A. Well there was another ET that was, that my ETs knew of. He didn't work for our command, but he worked for another Command and from what I heard, when the plane hit he was on the toilet and got knocked off the toilet and was sent like maybe ten, fifteen feet from where he was when the tragedy happened.

We had a guy, MR. WATKINS over at the, well he's at the Pentagon. MR. WOODS had called him to come down to talk to him and I guess, luckily for him he stopped to use the head before he came down and I don't know exactly where he was, but he I guess he had just missed it. He's still alive I know. Those are the only ones that I could think of.

Like I said PETTY OFFICER HARDIMAN went to take a smoke break just minutes before it happened.

Q. (49:17) Is she the person who was trying to quit smoking?

A. I'm not sure. I'm sure she, I know they have you know, they try to get everybody to stop smoking. So I know they have the cessation classes or whatever. I'm sure she, I don't know if she'll stop now.

Q. (49:35) We heard about somebody who was trying to quit smoking and was taking a smoke break and now they say they'll never quit.

Q. (49:43) Tell us about the individuals you listed, tell us just briefly what each one did.

A. PETTY OFFICER BARNES, she was basically our Yeoman. She was our administrative, I guess, won't say leader, but she basically handled all our admin problems, situations, whatever. She went and got us our badges, our parking passes and she basically ran with our plan of the week. She'd run that.

PETTY OFFICER YOKUM, he was our Training Officer, or our Training PO for OPNAV TCC. He basically was, you know the one responsible for making sure everybody got their training done and that they submitted their reports.

MR. WOODS, he was basically the AOIC at the time. He was the assistant to LIEUTENANT COMMADNER DAVIS. He basically, he was the one that, I won't say called the shots, but he knew what was going on and what should happen, as far as, because he was the main one that helped us with our move down to our new space, and getting all of our equipment set up so that we could have connections.

PETTY OFFICER BISHUNDAT, he was the one that was working the phone switch, you know. People that wanted to connect via VSN or whatever from like overseas.

PETTY OFFICER CABALLERO, PETTY OFFICER BURFORD and PETTY OFFICER MOSS were our ETs. They basically worked the maintenance of the equipment for the CNO. So they worked for me, so that's what they did.

PETTY OFFICER CABALLERO also worked with the VTCs. He was the coordinator. He's the one set it up and made sure everything was working when the VTCs were to happen, and PETTY OFFICER BURFORD he was our Supply Petty Officer and also, I guess our Division Training

Petty Officer. So he worked basically to get us our supplies and basically he helped develop our training plan so that you know when the test came up, everybody was prepared to take their test. PETTY OFFICER MOSS, he had just got there so we were basically in the process of training him to take over the Supply Petty Officer. He was going to be, I guess the LPO. No, he was going to be the Work Center Supervisor for the ETs over at the Pentagon, because we also have ETs over at the Navy Yard. At that time they were all together, but they since split because there was a lot of confusion with those. Me being their Division Officer I would have to work with both sets, and me being stationed over at the Pentagon was kind of you know, I would have to go over to the Navy Yard and then come back to the Pentagon and go back to the Navy Yard, just, and I didn't see it working, you know. There was no way that I could possibly you know evaluate someone that I don't see on a daily basis. They basically wanted me to go over there at least once a week to you know, solve any problems or just be their division officer. So now they've switched them to be under what we call N3, which is our communications people, because they basically work on an any type of maintenance or you know computer situations over at the Navy Yard, while our ETs work on situations basically dealing with the CNO and their equipment.

Q. (53:23) CNO and equipment, not just the Command Center.

A. Right, because the Command Center had their own ETs. Our ETs work basically for, see that's the problem I couldn't understand is, that they had ETs working for the Command Center, ETs working, well I'm now TCC, but they more or less collaborated together, so it was kind of difficult for me to understand why is there even an OPNAV TCC then if they basically deal with more or less the same things. I don't know.

Q. (53:51) The overall commands title is -?

A. Naval Computer and Telecommunications Station, Washington DC.

Q. (54:00) And the subset in the Pentagon is -?

A. Basically it's Chief of Naval Operations Telecommunications Center.

Q. (54:11) And kind of in a couple of sentences or a paragraph, give us a description of the overall command.

A. Well, our function is basically message traffic for like seven hundred commands in the area. We basically, right now we're doing I guess, the DMS switchover from the Legacy applications. We are like a customer service as far as messages. Actually both sides are.

Q. (55:51) How has the involvement of email shifted your all's responsibility and - ?

A. I think it's improved because it seems to be simpler using email than using regular message traffic. Because all you have to do is send an email. You know message traffic you have to draft it up and make sure it's in the proper format before you send it out.

Q. (55:13) Have there been discussions on how you all are going to play into that as far as your role?

A. I haven't heard anything about it. Right now I'm working in the Admin Department so I'm just a paper pusher more or less. I don't really read into the things I see.

Q. (55:34) Shift real quick for a minute. What about from your place of observation, how is leadership dealing with a loss like this, and to continue in their role and their function? What are some of the unique challenges? What are some of the lessons learned there from a young JO's perspective?

A. Well, our leadership more or less had to deal with the fact that since we don't have anymore people we had to get more people in, and that we were always trying to get more people in, because basically we're somewhat understaff. So it was like dealing with the same situation that we were dealing with before, but since this emergency came up, to me it seemed like we got more people in quicker than we would have if the situation didn't happen. Some of the things we learned from that as far as our people was that there was no way to get in contact with family members, like our parents or whatever, because on the page 2 there's no line item for a phone number. They've got the address, but what's an address without a phone number? You can't call nobody. What's you going to do, send them a letter? SO our CO basically made everyone update their page twos by including a phone number, which I think is a very good thing.

Another thing that we learned was that I guess the CDO at the time went home, and left basically the CO and XO and our OIC there with out no one to task. So that was a big thing. That comes up at every CDO board, don't leave to go home during an emergency unless the CO or XO tell you to.

Those were the two major things that I saw. We also got I guess, an influx of reservists that came in just to assist us in the meantime until we got our new people more or less.

Q. (57:46) Anything else you want to add for the historical record? Before we ask you that, where do you go from here? What's next for –

A. For me next, I'm waiting on the O3 results to see whether or not I made Lieutenant. Since I got passed over previously, there's a chance that if I don't make it this time, then I would have to get out of the Navy. So, I'm hoping that the O3 results are positive for me, because I'm you know I like serving my country. I like being in the Navy. I like telling people I'm in the Navy and then get that surprised look. "Oh, really? How do you like it?"

I tell them what my experience has been. If not, if I don't make it, I'm in limbo. I don't know, I'm looking into, like we were talking on our way over here, I'm thinking about going into counseling or you know being a teacher's aide or something like that I've looked into the Troops, the Teacher's program and I like what they do. They help you become a teacher by basically paying for your, getting your classe so you can become certified. I'm also looking into government jobs. I wouldn't mind working for the government. They've treated me well so far. That's my outlook right now.

Q. (59:11) What's the biggest way this experinece has changed you?

A. I don't take life for granted. I'm thankful for every day that I have. I'm thankful that I have people that care for me enough to be concerned and call me and ask if I'm OK. I also have, I received a lot of phone calls from my friends to see if I was OK and stuff so it was like, "Yeah, I'm doing fine. I'm a little shook, but I'm doing OK."

Apparently I'm here for a reason so trying to make the best of it.

Q. (59:46) Do you have a hard time going back in the building?

A. No, I was acutally over there last week to get a new badge.

Q. (59:52) No problem after all this time?

A. No problem. I thought I would have a problem like the two weeks after, when I went over there. I was kind of nervous. I was kind of scared, and I've noticed everytime I hear a plane I have to look up and look at it. You know, thinking is that one going to be the next one you know.

Q. (01:00:15) Anything else you want to add for the historical record?

A. I'm glad that I had the opportunity to share my story.

Q. So are we.

Q. Yeah, we're privileged to hear it. Thank you very much on behalf of the Naval Historical Center and ourselves.

A. No problem, glad to do it.

Transcribed by:
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January 1, 2003