

**Naval Historical Center
Oral Interview Summary Form**

Interviewers:

CAPT Michael McDaniel
CDR Richard Fahy

Interviewer's Organization:

Naval Historical Center
Naval Historical Center

Interviewee:

IS2 Jason Lhuillier

Current Address:

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Date of Interview:

December 13, 2001

Place of Interview:

Pentagon

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:

IS2 Lhuillier grew up in Kansas with his grandparents. He has a younger brother in the Air Force who lived with his father. His interests were biology, sports, and drama. He attended Kansas State for one year and did fairly well. Many of his family in previous generations had been in the military (Navy, Air Force, and Army). He joined the Navy after his freshman year in the Navy. Though his original interest was in special operations, he was pipelined into the Yeoman rating and based on his high graduation rate, he worked as a flag secretary for an Admiral in Washington, DC. Later, he worked on the Tomahawk Mission Planning Post Strike analysis. He traveled a great deal in that role. After that, he went to Seoul, S. Korea to work for the J-3 working primarily for the Army for two years (Jan 1999 – Jan 2001). After IS A school, he was detailed to ONI in April. Between April and September, he took 30 days of leave and attended several courses. They moved spaces during the later part of the summer, and he was the de facto LPO since the CPO and LPO had recently left. They were moved in for about 30 days prior to September 11th. Things were just settling down.

Topics Discussed:

The new space was a sensitive compartment information facility (SCIF) within the Navy Command Center. The SCIF door was pneumatically operated with key code locks. Down the passageway and immediately to the right was the graphics shop. The next right was the watch floor. Other locations mentioned were the conference floor, the briefer shop, the OIC office (CDR Shanower), and the AOIC office (LCDR Tolbert).

On September 11th, he was the functioning LPO and LCPO. Due to some scheduling conflicts, IS2 would agreed to take the Sun – Tues shifts for someone else. He took the 6 am to 6 pm shift.

Sunday was slow. It was the usually hectic Monday. The Deputy DNI (Ms Long) came down to the space for the first time and received the brief in the space. There were about 10 extra people in the VTC room that morning. The brief was about world intelligence events, current events and key events, threat issues, status of forces, and who's doing what/where. China and Russia, as usual, were covered, and Iraq is usually covered. The briefs are usually 8-10 slides with extra discussion and comments.

Their duties on watch are primarily the brief, intel highlights, and developing "read books." All the TV's are usually on CNN.

During the morning brief, the WTC was hit and they immediately interrupted the brief to make sure everyone was aware of that. IS2 and the Watch officer tried to get some more information. They contacted the liaison officer with the NMJIC (National Military Joint Intelligence Center) run by DIA. They have a person that sits down there at the Navy desk as a 24 hour liaison with CIA, DIA, and NSA. NMJIC is run by the J2 for the Joint Chiefs and is run like the CNOIP. Mr. Bill Dunne was the liaison officer at the time. In CNOIP, there are three different phone lines – the "bat" phone (warning phone), the grey phone (national secure telephone system line) and another secure phone. When the second plane hit, IS2 noticed the plane bank right before hitting the tower and that keyed him off that it was not an accident. At this stage, the VTC broke up and the DDNI and her people left (about 25 minutes before the attack on the Pentagon). The hot wash up started soon after that in CDR Shanower's office.

LT Humbert was on the "bat" phone rang when the grey phone rang. Bill Dunn informed them that there were indications that another plane had been hi-jacked and was enroute to Washington, DC. IS2 told the watch officer (LT Humbert), and then the people in the morning meeting. LCDR Tolbert remarked "it's a good thing our office is on the bottom deck." This took about 3-4 minutes. IS2 then sat down on a computer and tried to pull some more information. Very soon afterwards, there was this "kaboom" and this incredible force. There was a sucking sound. The first hit threw him to the floor. The lights went out and the ceiling completely collapsed. His initial reaction was that it was an airplane that had hit on top of the building. He swore several times. He saw the fire, in shock because of his eardrums, he saw fire but could hear very little. The fire started getting worse and the wall had come in. He couldn't get through the door. LT Humbert called out to him. He went to the other door in the direction of the conference room – it opened about a foot. He looked at what should have been the briefer's shop and where LCDR Tolbert's office was. All he saw was fire, and the ceiling was gone. Undescribable – like a house on fire. Since he thought that this was the only way out, he thought he was going to die. He was having trouble breathing, and was hoping he would pass out because he didn't want to be burned alive. His eyes were swollen shut. He could hear LT Humbert in the background.

The space was full of smoke and visibility was terrible ... except for the fire. He heard a voice that said "I see light." LCDR Capets, who had been in the space, had found the space where the hole had been blown out of the space. Though IS2 couldn't see anything, he went towards the voice. Smoke was pouring out of the hole as IS2 was rolling out. LT Humbert was behind him, and IS2 and LCDR Capets pulled her out.

IS2 immediately tried to go back in to get the people in the hot wash up, but the fire was too great and the debris was littered all over the space inside the Pentagon. He was mentally trying to remember who was in the space for accountability purposes. It was obvious that they could not re-enter through the hole. Eventually, the emergency door was pried open into the NCC.

There were still no firefighters around. He was really worried since it was such a new space that it was a maze in the office and no one else knew the area very well. He dictated to an Army O-3 alternate methods to enter the space and how to get to the various spaces. At this point, he still thought they could reenter the space and that there were people that were still alive. There were no fire extinguishers or fire axes. Eventually people turned up with CO2 fire extinguishers – there were 20-30 extinguishers that they went through quickly.

They heard people screaming from the second deck near the office right above theirs. It was 20-30 ft high. They couldn't break through the windows until they finally managed to pry open the frame of the window. Six or 7 people got under the window to soften the fall. One lady rushed her fall before they were ready to catch her and severely broke her femur. She soon went in to shock. People continued to jump, and things were falling out of the window. At this point, the jet fuel had lit off and you could hear the pressure inside the building and you could see all the windows bowing out from all the pressure. They continued to catch people.

There are lots of doctors and nurses around. They were afraid that the windows would explode. There was one person who came out of the emergency exit ... he was wearing khaki's and his clothing was completely burned off of him. The person was in shock. There were "tons" of people there who were ready to help ... almost too many. It was difficult to keep it organized. He never saw anyone else come back out through the emergency exit. This was about 25-30 minutes into the fire.

At this stage, everyone was told to clear away from the Pentagon. There was a secondary explosion, but it may just have been parts of the building falling. It was very upsetting. Reluctantly, they left the building perimeter, especially when there was rumor that there was another inbound plane. They sprinted out to North Parking. There was tons of traffic. There weren't that many firefighters around.

They provided some support for the morgue detail, then they were sent around to South Parking to provide support for the triage detail. No one came out. Eventually people started to drive up with tents, food, etc and they helped with this. He was exhausted, sunburned, and dehydrated.

He called his grandparents with a cell phone that he borrowed from an O-7 Chaplain at about 3 or 4 pm. He answered about 40 phone calls when he got home (his friends had picked him up). He was contacted several times by the FBI and CIS.

He went to work (in Suitland, MD) 2 days later. He was mad about the attack and wanted to get back to work even though he was told to take some time off. People were very helpful getting keys, ID cards, etc. It was helpful that he had his Pentagon badge still clipped to his clothes as he left the Pentagon. The support and interest from everyone was amazing.

IS2 was pretty sure that everyone in the hotwash up team died pretty early in the episode. In terms of finality and closure, once they found all the bodies that was helpful. The fact that the fire was still burning 3-4 days afterwards, that convinced him that no one could have survived. IS2 was contacted and interviewed by Dr. Golatz (Pentagon structural engineer), Chief Medical Officer, and fire marshals to put the pieces together. The interviews were held in the Pentagon. He was reminded of the fires by the smells that were all over. It's something he'll never forget.

A few weeks later (mid November), he went back to the damaged part of the Pentagon to get a better understanding of what happened and why. He went with Cole, Gully, and Polesek. He's glad that he did this.

Outside stimulus reminds him of the events – such as an air conditioner starting or the smell of fuel. He never had any real dreams or nightmares about this. He had a difficult time going to any of the funerals. He went to LCDR Tolbert's since he was the closest with him. It was very hard, especially when the coffin came with the flag over it. He was buried in Arlington cemetery. He wanted to go to all the funerals, but it was too hard. Mrs Tolbert wanted to know what LCDR Tolbert's last words were, so this kind of conversation is very hard. He still recalls how everyone was seated and their discussion minutes before they died.

An ONI specialist who is "kind of" like a SPRINT team member spoke to IS2, LT Humbert, and SN Polesek 7-8 days after the event. As a result, they didn't do a SPRINT team. It was helpful and good to talk to LT Humbert and Polesek together for the first time since the incident. It's hard to talk to people about it since they could never understand it unless they were there. IS2 has considered going back and talk to them again, but hasn't yet because he's able to work through it himself. Going to work and working hard has been very helpful. It helps that he feels he's involved with the war effort.

This event has cemented in IS2 his future career aspirations. He wants to keep involved with intelligence and especially terrorism to continue to try and help these things to happen, whether in the military, government, or civilian field. The dynamics and role of intelligence in the future both in terrorism and in general is open. He's extremely interested in it. He's considered OCS or DIA.

One of the hardest things from the intelligence side has been the focus and mission. Also, since the entire leadership was wiped out during the events, there have been new people and they have already moved three times and they eventually will move again. With each move, they've had the same problems ... they don't go away. It feels like he's banging his head against the wall with systems connectivity, etc. The OP tempo has been high and a good learning experience but very, very frustrating. New personnel, new briefers, new ways of doing things. But there has been a great bunch of people who want to do the job to . Things are getting back on track, slowly but surely.

Abstracted by:
CDR Rich Fahy
18 December 2001

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CAPT Michael McDaniel
CAPT (s) Carol O'Hagan

Interviewer's Organization:

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Interviewee:

IS2 Jason Lhuillier

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Subject Terms/Key Words: CNO IP; Navy Command Center Survivor; Award; Pentagon; Terrorist Attack; 11 September 2001; Evacuation; Navy Command Center

Transcript of Interview:

Interviewee Information:

IS2 Lhuillier grew up in Kansas with his grandparents. He has a younger brother in the Air Force who lived with his father. His interests were football, basketball, biology (created a biology club in high school which was tremendously active), Spanish and drama. He was a lifeguard every summer. He attended Kansas State for one year and did fairly well, but was deterred by the huge, impersonal classes and could not narrow in on a focus of study. Many of his family in previous generations had been in the military, a grandfather in the Navy, his father was in Vietnam in the Army, his uncle was in the Air Force). While on vacation as a child at a San Diego beach, he was inspired by watching a Navy SEAL training on the beach. He joined the Navy after his freshman year in college. Though his original interest was in special operations, he was pipelined into the Yeoman rating. He went to boot camp in Great Lakes in mid-winter and froze to death. He went to "A" school in Meridian, Mississippi, and based on his high graduation rank (second in his class), he worked as a flag yeoman for an Admiral in Washington, DC. Later, he worked on the Tomahawk Mission Planning Post Strike analysis. He traveled a great deal in that role. That spurred his interest in the INTEL community. He went to support strikes in Bosnia, went to England, Spain and Italy, got to go aboard a submarine and a few ships—good exposure and what got him interested in INTEL. After that, he went to Seoul, S. Korea to work for the J-3 working primarily for the Army for two years (Jan 1999 – Jan 2001). He was the only Navy person in his chain of command. He got to do a lot of things as a soldier that a sailor doesn't get to do, such as field ops, general field exercises, marksmanship, common combat tasks, fire drills, learning to set up perimeters, digging foxholes,

shooting M16 machine guns. He worked as security manager working personnel and information security, in charge of 800+ individuals comprised of Korean, U.S. Army and Navy personnel—an interesting cross-cultural experience. He got to go into the DMZ and North Korea. After IS “A” school, he was detailed to ONI in April. It was a great school. Between April and September, he took 30 days of leave and attended several courses: an INTEL analyst course out of DIA, and some submarine courses. He made some great contacts with Army, Air Force, CIA, NSA—a lot of good networking. Also got exposed to the joint military intelligence college where you can finish a degree in strategic intelligence, which sparked his interest. He worked on the watch for three months and saw a need for better continuity during the three day on, three day off shifts. He wanted a watch supervisor to help with continuity and daily ops who would be a Mon-Fri person who would seal the information gap between watch standers. This worked well. They moved spaces during the latter part of the summer, and he was the de facto LPO since the CPO and LPO had recently left. Keeping continuity of operations while moving was difficult. They were moved in for about 30 days prior to September 11th. Things were just settling down.

Topics Discussed:

TAPE ONE—Side One (First question begins at 23:20 on digital count)

Q. Describe the space for us—for the tape purposes, just take us through it.

A. The new space was a SCIF, Sensitive Compartment Information Center, located within the Navy Command Center. So basically you had to walk all the way through the Navy Command Center to get to our SCIF door, which is a big pneumatically, operated vault door with key-code locks. Once you enter in there, there’s a main P-way, which had some closets, some generators and stuff in it. Immediately to your right when you walk in the door about five feet is the graphics shop where all of the ISs that work on producing our briefs and all of our production. We’ve got basically a full-on production facility: multi-media, printers, photo-quality color copiers, printers, and that was our graphics workshop. Approximately about six to eight people had work stations in there and would work in there off and on—mostly our ISs that worked as draftsmen or graphics guys. Then if you kept going instead of making that right, the next right was the watch floor for us which also opened up—the watch floor was set up where there was a watch desk for the Petty Officer of the Watch and the Watch Officer, and then it was also the

VTC area conference room which was in front. In our space we had about six or seven different work stations—differing systems that backed up against the wall of the graphics center: printers, copiers, all of our phones and switch networks. Then, on the other side of the desk where we could visually see was the conference room which was a full-on multi-media video teleconferencing conference room, just real, real, slick stuff—podium with touch code stuff where you could operate all the screens and cameras and everything, because we would do a morning video-teleconference with headquarters out at ONI in our morning meetings. That was a large conference table. Immediately to the left of the conference room was the media control center where our contractor would control the whole video teleconferencing—the meshing of our soft copy brief with the teleconference. It was basically a whole audio-visual studio and control room. Actually, if you are walking into the IP that was at the very end of the P-way, so there was graphics, then the watch floor, then the conference room, then there was an opening, a door where the VTC operator was. Immediately left at the end of that T-junction was the briefer shop and the (head shedder) the OIC and the AOIC's office. The briefers have several different stations and senior analysts also as well where they would build the brief all night long—do their research and do their rehearsing and so on and so forth. Directly off to the right from the briefer's office was the officer in charge's office, CDR SHANOWER'S office, and then directly to the left was the AOIC, CDR TOLBERT'S office. Not a real big space, but very, very nice, in the newly renovated wedge, so it was real slick, real high speed, low drag, nice furniture, new walls—it's like you're afraid to hang up a picture—new carpet, all new desks. It was a real nice set-up, functional too. We had a lot more space than we had up here and the ability to monitor who comes in and out via video camera, being able to monitor the briefs and so on and so forth, and things that allowed us to do our job a lot better. It's a real nice space.

Q. Take us through the day of 11 September. Just walk us through your whole day, maybe night before, whatever.

A. I was still functioning in the capacity as LPO and LCPO, but due to some scheduling conflict; one of my petty officers wasn't able to work, so I would fill in shifts for the watch as well to try and free up things, so I had told him—I basically took the shift that Sunday, and that Monday and that Tuesday, the watch shift—the day watch—we go on a 12-hour cycle, 6:00 am-6:00 pm, 6:00 pm-6:00 am, so I was there Sunday. It was a slow day. I came in that Monday morning and I had a new petty officer, IS2 GULLY. I was going to train him that morning on the watch. That was his first day aboard as a watch stander under instruction. I came in—pretty normal day. We spin up around 0330, 0400. We have a morning routine and we do our briefs, which is one piece of our pie and then we also do read books for all the INTEL entities that belong to different OPNAV codes—SECNAV, OPNAV, (CNO, VCNO), the OPS guys, N3 and N5, so we build—one part of our shop builds the brief that is presented all over the place and to everyone every morning, and the other side of us builds the CNO's morning INTEL highlights, which is a product, and we also build all these books with products from across the INTEL community. So, we start doing that really early in the morning to be able to deliver these books. So everything was going normal. There was nothing, nothing really at all—typical Monday morning. Monday mornings are always horrible because you've already had that Friday night, all day Saturday, all day Sunday and whatever's happened in the world in that amount of time—again, three days is a whole lot—it's a whole lot of time, a whole lot of things, so Monday mornings are always hectic. So, we were going about 100 miles a minute from the second you get there, trying to do the under instruction thing and trying to train someone while you're also trying to get the job

accomplished. We basically had gotten everything accomplished—I don't know what time it was—we usually started the VTC—we'd gotten all our books walked to everywhere, we had to walk them, everyone had their products. It just happened to be that the DNI and the DDNI were supposed to come down for the morning brief in our space. Something happened and the DNI got held up over at the Capitol or over at the Senate building or something. He had a meeting that morning, so he wasn't able to come, so MS. LONG, who was the Deputy Director, came down with her staff. This is at approximately 8:00 o'clock, I think, when they start the morning video teleconference and the brief; basically our head shed here presenting the brief via teleconference to ONI headquarters, because we kind of have two chains of command, to keep everyone meshed. So, MS. LONG was there---

Q. What kind of things were briefed? Unclassified—you know, what you can tell us?

A. World INTEL developments, current events, key events, threat issues, status of forces, who's doing what, where, what's going on here. You know, we're always interested—China's always a big one, Russia's always a big one, so all those types of things. There's always an Iraq issue, so just keeping up in a very, very broad sense, what's happened over the weekend and overnight with each one of these things and is there anything new that's popped up on the screen. It's a pretty standard thing. It's probably a good eight to ten slides of information along with commentary and questions and it is a give and take kind of thing. We've got our standard pitch that we brief, but then there's always feedback or questions. Everyone wants to know additional information or clarification. So it's basically just to keep the higher-ups—this is what's going on, because we are the eyes and ears for the CNO, the VCNO, for all the entities out there on the Navy side as far as INTEL goes. So, we had just—and it was the first time that MS. LONG, the

Deputy Director had been down in the new space, so she came down. We had to—this is how things were happening—everyone didn't have their key codes to get into the building, so we actually had to go and walk the senior civilian Naval intelligence person and actually let her in the door and walk her through the space to get her in the door. That's how things were still trying to get put together, so it was kind of—we had done a little field day trying to get things straightened up because we thought the DNI was coming down as well. Things, like I said, are hectic in the morning so there's stuff everywhere. She came down, we escorted her in and they've got their entourage of aides and so on and so forth, so I think we had about 10-15 people in the VTC room that morning, extra. So there were chairs and everything like that. The VTC brief started pretty normal. While the VTC is going on, we on the watch floor have to make sure all the phones are shut off and everything, not to interrupt anybody and still maintain what's going on. So we've got all the TVs tuned to CNN, and we're trying to make sure people aren't ringing the doorbell to get in or whatever. Midway through the VTC—I don't even know what time it was, it had to have been around 8:40, I guess—I just happened to look up—well, actually no, I had left right as the VTC started because I wanted to go and get some breakfast. I went and got a smoothie at the Smoothie King, and I had lost a bet to CDR TOLBERT that morning, so my penance was to get him a smoothie because he'd never had one, so I went and got him a smoothie and got me one.

Q. What was the bet?

A. I don't know what it was; I wish I could remember, too. It was something about whether something would go off without a hitch. I think it was whether or not the DNI would show up or something—it was something to that effect, and we'd gotten into a big debate in the morning

about it—whether or not the codes would work, I think. I'd lost. So I was going to get him a smoothie, he'd never had one and all of the guys are kind of smoothie addicts, so we went and got a smoothie and was sitting down. In the middle of the VTC, drinking the smoothie, Petty Officer GULLY who was under instruction with me at the time, because we have to have someone there at all times—when I went, he stayed, and so when I came back he went. In the middle of the VTC watching CNN, you know, just kind of saw, “Boom” the plane hit the first Trade Center and the report came up. And of course, we funneled it in to the teleconference, so they interrupted the VTC and the DNI. My first impression upon seeing it was just, “Man, what an air traffic control mistake—I mean, I can't—someone—that is just absolutely horrible.” Honestly, my first thought was not that it was a terrorist attack, it was an accident. I mean you just don't fly a jumbo jet into a skyscraper, not over New York. So we kind of started scrambling trying to do some research, what significant dates—it was September 11th, well, are there any organizations that have any anniversaries of significant events on this date, and who might—the DDNI—we watched it unfold and stuff, saying like, “Well, we need to carry on with the VTC and try to get this over with.” Did that. They continued on with that as myself and the watch officer continued to try and just pull as much information as we could with our liaison at the NMJIC, which is the National Military Joint Intel Center—run by DIA. We basically have a person that sits down there at the Navy desk as our 24-hour liaison with the CIA, DIA, NSA, so we're on the phone with them. We're on the computers trying to pull up whatever we can, trying to find anything that might make sense of this if it would happen to be a terrorist attack.

Q. The NMJIC, is that a similar CNO/IP plot type environment or is it—

A. Well, it's similar, but it's on a much larger scale. DIA owns it, but it's run by the J2 for the Joint Chiefs.

Q. So there are actually people assigned to that?

A. Yes, sir. We've got one person that's assigned to there all the time.

Q. From IP?

A. Yes, from our organization, from IP. That morning happened to be MR. BILL DUNN, civilian, but we've got also Naval officers that work down there as well.

Q. They just rotate through?

A. Yes sir, they do the same kind of rotation.

Q. But they are attached to the CNO IP?

A. Yes sir. They are ONI personnel attached to CNO IP that work at the NMJIC at our Navy desk. So, I just remember—we've got three different phone lines, we've got a certain phone that we call a bat phone that is the one you don't want to hear. That's on, and that's one of those ones where we have to take dictation of everything that's said. It's a warning phone. So that's on and we've got our secure phones that are direct connections, so it's like a juggling thing where you're trying to watch what's going on, you're trying to pull up stuff and you're still trying to do, you know—and then the second plane hit.

Q. Did you see that happen?

A. Yes, and the first thing I saw was as it hit, it kind of banked right before hitting, and immediately it was like, “That wasn’t an accident.” I mean, it just hit me like that. “That wasn’t an accident.” I ran into the briefer’s shop and CDR TOLBERT and LT PONTELL and LT PANIK were all kind of watching too. And about that same time, the VTC kind of broke up. It was like, “We need to get back up to the office.” So all the DDI and her staff and everybody kind of filed out, which in hindsight was just a really good thing, you know they would have been there. They probably missed it by about 20 minutes, 30 minutes, something like that. So, again the phones are now—everything is going crazy—I even remember making a comment to CDR TOLBERT, as we were sitting there, “That wasn’t an accident. There’s just no way that could happen.” This close—I mean, you could see it intentionally bank to head for the second building. You know, it doesn’t really hit you at the time, so we run back onto the watch floor—myself and the watch officer are scrambling trying to find—now we know it’s something. So, we’re pulling what strings we can. The assistant officer in charge, the briefers, senior naval analyst ANGIE HOUTZ, and some other personnel decided to have their hot wash—it’s like, okay, this is what happened last night; this is the strategic plan for the day. These are some of the issues we need to work for the next brief, and so on and so forth. They all went into CDR SHANOWER’S office, kind of spread out around his desk, to all kind of have a hash-out session. While this is going on, of course, the watch is doing what we need to do and we’re monitoring it. There’s really not much they can do right now. And at the same time, the graphics folks are all kind of sitting back in their shop watching it too. The bat phone rings again, the gray phone—this and that—it’s not really kind of setting in as to what really we should be doing. We’re trying to pull information, but were there any warnings? That’s another thing, we were trying to patch reports for the past two weeks—was there any indication that this would have happened—

who might have—anything—anybody just joking around, because we have to look at all that. Right about that time, the watch officer, LT HUMBERT—I believe she was on the bat phone—she was taking down notes, and our gray phone which is the national secure telephone system line rang. I picked it up and it was BILL DUNN, and he said, “Hey guys, just want to give you a heads up. We’ve got indications—reports that there’s another plane that has been hijacked, possibly in route to D.C. Don’t get spun up about it. The terrorism guys down here at the CIA and CTC guys are working it. We don’t have anything definitive—just wanted to give you a heads up.” And I said, “Thanks Bill—appreciate it.” Click. The first thing I did was I told the watch officer—of course she’s got one phone in one ear, one phone in the other—so I then walked in—interrupted their morning meeting and told everyone—basically repeated exactly what he’d said, and it was kind of one of those, “Yeah, right,” kind of thing, and I remember it specifically, CDR TOLBERT looked at me and he goes, “Good thing we’re on the bottom floor—good thing we’re on the first deck.” And you know, I was thinking the same, like, “Yeah, right,” because my whole understanding of the Pentagon being—I’ve always heard that the Kiol scout (phonetic) (Editors note: the hot dog stand in the center courtyard) in the courtyard at ground zero’s got a big bull’s-eye put on top of it. And my thought was that if something was going to hit the building, it would come like that. I’m thinking SRBM—you know, ballistic missile—not thinking an aircraft. I mean, I kind of laughed and was like, “Right,” but I said, “I’ll keep you updated. Bill said not to get too spun up about it,” so they said, “Okay, thanks, we’ll finish this up real quick.” I walked back in to the watch floor and that whole cycle took about three, four minutes and LT HUMBERT had hung up the phone, and I think she had sat down. I had sat down and grabbed the computer and just started trying to pull some more information when there was this incredible force, just, “Kaboom,” and there was like the initial,

“Kaboom.” and there was just this sucking sound, like a vacuum like a (mouth noise recreation of sound), type thing. The first hit threw me to the floor. I was sitting at my desk but back away from it a little bit, and the desk had a kind of t-intersection in between myself and the watch officer. So she was sitting here and I was sitting here and when it hit—

Q. So were you facing towards—

A. I was facing the conference room, so facing forward, basically facing the conference room so when it hit like that—

Q. Coming from your left?

A. Yes, sir. When it hit, the initial force threw me to the ground, basically I’m sitting in my chair and it just kind of, “Boom,” and I just happened to fall just slightly under this desk that was on my right. I think that probably saved me. All the lights went out and the ceiling completely collapsed on top of us. My initial reaction was—I knew just like that (finger snap)—and I don’t know if it was because of seeing what had happened on the TV or getting the phone call from Bill, from NMJIC—I knew exactly. But I still was under the impression, this pre-conceived notion of it hitting on top of the building. I don’t know why. First off, I cussed several times. You know, I’m sitting there curled up in a ball, now seeing fire and smelling the burning, smelling plastic and kind of still in shock because my eardrums—you really couldn’t hear very well. Except for the fire, I couldn’t see anything. All the lights went out. Everything went out. There was no sprinklers—nothing—it was just like, it was that catastrophic. I mean, it was just “Kaboosh.” I remember being on the ground and trying to get out from under the desk and smelling the smoke and feeling it in my lungs and it was like, “I can’t breathe very well,”

and trying to remember you're taught to stay low; stay low so you can breathe. But you had to get up—I had stuff on top of me. So I was pushing debris off of me. At that time the fire started getting worse over in the conference room and I was able to kind of see from the fire that the wall had come in like that—I couldn't see over it or anything, but the door that was directly to my left was closed. But there was debris all over it. So I immediately went to the door; started pulling debris off and the door was jammed shut. About that time I heard LT HUMBERT saying, "Open the door, open the door! Can you get out? Open the door!" I told her, "It's jammed; it's jammed!" So I jumped over the desk into the conference room because it has another door there too, as well. I pushed some debris out of the way and was able to get that door open about a foot.

TAPE ONE—Side Two

So basically, what I could see was what should have been the briefer's shop and where the commander's office—CDR TOLBERT'S office was, and trying to look back to see if—the only exit that I knew of to get out, and all I saw was fire everywhere, and the ceiling was gone. I mean you can't even describe it. I mean it looked like you would imagine a house on fire and just everything had collapsed. So right then and there it just hit me, I was like, "We're going to die. I mean that's our exit. That's the only way out." I did not know of any other emergency exit.

Q. What's going through your mind?

A. I was starting to get to the point where I was having trouble breathing. I know, as much fire as I saw, the first thinking was along the line of, "I hope I pass out and suffocate because I don't

want to burn to death. I don't want to burn alive. I don't want to be on fire and feeling that.”

Then I turned, because I couldn't see—by that time my eyes were basically swollen shut and snot's pouring out. I couldn't see but I could hear or feel, I guess, LT HUMBERT and I was like, “We can't get out. The door's jammed—the door's jammed!” I can't remember what she was saying, if anything, probably cursing. But I couldn't—I was trying to go through my mind, what can we do, is there some way—by that time the space was so full of smoke that you couldn't see anything, literally, except for the fire. I had turned towards her, so the fire was back over my right shoulder. The plastic ceiling tiles were starting to melt. Everything was coming down. You could feel it hitting you and stuff. I don't know if it's insulation or what. And right about that time—I don't know how much time went by—I just heard a voice. I don't know—out of nowhere. I see light. And I'd completely forgotten that LCDR CAPETS—CHUCK CAPETS, was in our space with us at the time. He had just happened to come down to come in and check his SCI e-mail and was sitting at one of the desks, and I had completely forgot, because he's not normally there. He'd been sitting off to the side and I was just, like, “Why am I hearing a guy's voice?” That didn't really go through my head at the time—I thought it was just me and LT HUMBERT. He was saying, “I see light! I see light!” Apparently, where the wall had blown out, the pressure—and nowhere for the pressure to go—had blown a hole in the soft wall about 10 feet wide. I saw it afterwards. So, I just basically headed directly for his voice, climbing over rubble and stuff with LT HUMBERT behind me and said, “Come on, come on!” I still couldn't see anything, but I could still hear him—he was hollering, “Come on, come on this way!” Because literally the wall had caved in—the wall right between the graphics shop and the watch floor was here—the building was here. I guess the hole blew out here where the graphics guys—where they all got blown through that hole or whatever, and our wall here had folded in

on us like this—along with this wall here. So, I didn't know where I was going, I just knew I was heading in the direction of his voice—had no idea there was a hole—couldn't see anything. Got about halfway over the rubble and stuff and I started to kind of black out a little bit, the smoke was just a horrible thing to taste and feel and started feeling that, you know, spots kind of in the back of your vision. And just happened to climb over and I see some daylight and smoke just pouring out, and so—I don't know how I got out—I don't know how I ended up rolling out or if CDR CAPETS was standing there and helped pull us out. I think he ended up helping us down. I remember when I got down out there, out of the building right there on A and E drive, I still couldn't see really—snot's just pouring out and stuff, and POLASEK was standing in front of me and he was like, "You okay? You okay?" I probably looked pretty bad because I had black stuff and snot pouring out and I remember saying, "Yah, I'm fine," and then remembering LT HUMBERT—she was behind me, but she hadn't come out that I knew of. I didn't feel her behind me anymore. So, I turned around and we were able to pull back some debris and all I remember is her saying, "I can't make it. I can't make it. I can't breathe." I was able to grab her hand, like, "Give me your hand! Give me your hand!" She was able to grab my hand and we were able to pull her up and through and out of the space—CDR CAPETS and I, I think. I think he was with me. So, it's like, we got out and it was—I don't know how long that took. I don't know how long I stood there, too, for a couple of minutes trying—you know, the eyes flushing themselves out and snot and smoke and stuff. We immediately were just like, "Where's everyone at? Where's GULLY? Where's COLE?" POLASEK told me, "They're all here—they are right there." Then I remember when I had looked back through that door—I looked at LT HUMBERT, and I said, "They are still in there," and I was trying—I had just been in there and saw them, you know, so I knew exactly where they were sitting and everything. So,

immediately, we tried to start to go back in where we had climbed out, pulling debris and stuff. But, I don't know, I think LT HUMBERT was trying to make sure we had the other guys as well. CDR CAPETS and I were, I think, trying to pull the stuff away from where we had climbed out, but I don't think we were able to get much out of the way. I think everything that we had moved to be able to get out was the only stuff that was going to move. I remember looking back through the hole in the wall and just seeing all the fire and the ceiling coming down some more and the fire getting worse and worse on the space. I think at that point in time, it was like, you know I told whoever was standing around, it was just like, "We've got people in there. We've still got six people in there." Well, at the time, I didn't know Jerry was still in there, and I said, "We've got six people in there. Get some firefighting gear or something," because even though I've not been on ship, we're all trained at damage control and stuff and the only thing I could think of was that, if we'd only had OBAs or something, or an ax or something we might be able to get back in there. I kept telling everybody that I saw—I mean, there were OPNAV security folks down there, sailors, trying to do a little bit of crowd control. There were DPS guys—just everybody and anybody that had kind of tried to exit the building, I guess, into that area. I mean, I just kept telling people over and over again, "We've got people in there—we've got people in there," and I'm mentally clicking off the names, trying to get it embedded in my head for accountability purposes and it was frustrating because it was obvious we could not go back into that hole, and the only other way back in the space that we knew of was either around to the front door or through this emergency hatch that was sitting there that I didn't even know was there in the beginning, into the Navy Command Center, which was locked. We couldn't get it open. There was no way to go back through the hole that we had come out of. It was just—the fire was that bad, the smoke, the debris and rubble, and I don't remember the time span or anything, but

eventually somebody was able to pry open that emergency door to the NCC. And then at the same time, people were running trying to get fire extinguishers and we kept screaming at everyone with radios, “Get firefighters down here,” again, still not knowing where it hit or how, thinking that we can get back in there, or come around the other side, or something—some way to get back in there. The only thing that kept sticking in my mind was that I was really worried because we had just moved down there. It was a brand new space, and the only thing I could think of was, “No one’s going to know how to get back there.” I mean, it’s literally, you know kind of a maze back into that office, and because of what we do and the facility that it’s at, not a lot of people are allowed back in there, so the only thing I could think of was that we’ve got to make sure that they know how to get back there, or where they’re at exactly. I bumped into an Army Captain who was wearing a hardhat—I don’t even know what he was doing, he had a first aid kit—and I told him, I said, “Sir, I’ve got people back there. The space is new—I don’t think anybody knows how to get back there,” and so he started writing down—I tried to dictate to him, you know, “you go in this area, make a right, go down about 20 feet”, trying to just visually remember how to get back there, because again, as far as I knew there was no other back exit or anything so I knew they were still in there. They had to still be in there. And at that time it hadn’t sunk in—I thought some of them might still be alive, maybe just injured or trapped. It was just basically back and forth with everybody that came by and were trying to get people out, it was, you know, “We need firefighters; we need firefighting gear, we need axes, we need fire extinguishers—something.” I know people were running off in different sections of the building trying to get this and that. I think GULLY ran off and POLASEK ran off trying to get fire extinguishers. CDR CAPETS and I and some of the other people around ended up trying—we actually went back into that exit—the ceiling had fallen down and there was standing water,

about a good six inches deep, electrical wires everywhere—we got about halfway into the space and the smoke was so bad and everything was so hot. We got about six, seven feet into the space and I hear someone yell, “There’s live wires,” and we’re standing in six inches of water, and I was like, “Oh my God, look, I survive this and then just get zapped.” There was about eight of us trying to make our way back into this space and the smoke was just so bad that it was just maybe six feet or so until you just basically had to turn around and all we had was our shirts. So, we took them off, put them in the water and was trying to breathe. Eventually people started bringing fire extinguishers, the little hand-held ones—

Q. The CO2?

A. Yes, sir. They probably went through a good 20 or 30 of them, I don’t know. I mean, we just kept handing them back you know, kind of cycling people in trying to make our way back into the area. But again, the IP personnel were the only people that knew the layout of our area. None of the people in the Navy Command Center had been back in our space—none of the people that were there, and it was getting really frustrating because no firefighters are showing up. Nobody was showing up and I guess I was under the impression that the Pentagon, being the size building it was and it’s DOD and everything, that there was a fire in it—it had its own police force, why don’t they have their own firefighting force now, or emergency services of some kind, I’m still not understanding the scope of what had happened on the other side. So it was really, really frustrating. I don’t know how long that went on, and then eventually we heard people screaming from second deck and we looked up and the windows—people were trying to get out of the windows—the office right above ours, about a good 15-20 feet up, I think, I don’t know. But they couldn’t—it was the new wedge and all the windows were those blast-proof

windows, so they were taking chairs and computer monitors, trying to break the windows and they wouldn't break. They just wouldn't. Finally, some guy—he's an Army guy—was able to get the window frame wedged out enough where he could stand in the frame and hold the frame open of the window where people could get out. And we looked for ladders—we found a little bitty ladder and some guy's like, "Put it on my shoulders, put it on my shoulders," and we tried that. It didn't work, and finally we're just like, you know, "Drop down as far as you can and jump." So, a good six, seven of us just stood under them and caught people as much as possible. One lady, I remember vividly—just the visual of it—I mean we had just caught somebody and were trying to move them out of the way and an older lady was scared and panicked and she didn't wait for us to get back under her and she fell the full way and busted her leg really, really bad—a good compound fracture right on the femur. I basically remember thinking, "She's got a bad leg," so we try to pick her up and put her on a piece of wall or board or whatever to try and get her out, and I think she started going into shock. I didn't know what leg—I mean, you saw it but with everything going on I couldn't remember what leg it was and we're trying to pick her up and trying not to hurt her and trying to get her out of the way because there's still more people jumping, there was stuff falling. You know, the jet fuel had lit off and you could hear it just kind of "Whoof, whoof." The pressure inside the building of the fire and the fuel, and you could see all the windows were bowing out from the pressure—from the smoke pressure and stuff like that. And so then we caught some people and me and another guy grabbed a piece of board and took the lady that fell and broke her leg out to the courtyard because we were told there was a triage area out there. Got her out there and there's just people everywhere—injured people, and this and that—I mean as far as you could see people: doctors, nurses, injured—

“Well, she’s not life threatened, take her there,” so I remember setting her down and then going back in and someone kept saying, “Watch it, the windows are going to explode,” because you could literally see the windows, and it was strange seeing glass bow like that, like a balloon. You could see it flex and you could hear it. I remember just looking at it going, “It doesn’t look like it’s going to shatter, it would have shattered already,” so we pulled back away for a couple of seconds, minutes, and then we saw some more people in a different area of windows trying to get out. They were able to get the frame undone enough, and we were able to get under them and catch some more people as they were falling down, jumping out. Then, I don’t remember if the sequence is right or not, but I remember standing back and we were going to try and go back into the emergency exit now—try and go back in there—and I remember seeing a Navy guy, he was wearing khakis, I think, come stumbling out burnt head to toe, his uniform burnt off of him pretty much, his top. He was really wet I guess because the sprinklers had ended up going off in that part of wherever he was at. I think he came out of the Command Center but I think he was in shock. I mean his eyes were as big as quarters, just huge and he was just burnt. I remember seeing him step out and I was like, “Oh my God, he walked out of there!” So then I thought, again, “Maybe they’re okay—maybe there are some people—maybe we’re okay.” So we tried to go back in again. I say we, I mean, there were just people from all over that ended up congregating and trying to help. It was amazing—almost too much. It was hard to organize and hard to get a grasp of what was going on because everyone’s trying to help. Everyone’s trying to do something and everyone’s panicking, too, because you can’t do anything but just—and so people would try to go in, Army guys and civilians. I mean, just seeing everyone trying to go back into the space and come back out. I never saw anybody else come back out. I never saw them get anybody else out through that door out of the Command Center. This went on for

probably about 30 minutes, I don't know, time is kind of strange. But then they started saying again, "The windows are going to explode," and finally the OPNAV security police said, "You have to get back away." I kept bumping into this Army Captain with the hardhat on and kept telling him, "No one's come out," and he kept telling me, "I've got it." He kept asking me my name. So we backed up away from that side of the wall where the hole was in the door up under one of the walkways, because there were some pillars that they thought might provide some blast protection if the windows blew, because I think they were still thinking that the windows were going to blow. So we stood back there for a couple of minutes, I guess, and finally there was what sounded like secondary explosions, but I can't think of anything it would have been. I think it may have been structural things falling inside the building, thumps and stuff like that. There's a lot of radio traffic I could hear from the guys that had radios, and still no firefighters, no firefighting gear, nothing, which I just felt like I was pounding my head against the wall, because you know people are in there. You know if there was something you had that you could breathe, you might be able to get in there, and still knowing that no one knew—if we left the scene, if we left that area, no one else knew where they were, knew who was back there. It was just really, really making me upset. And LT HUMBERT was like, "We've done everything we can." The Army Captain came up again and was like, "I've got the names. I've got how many people and where they were at. I told you when I first talked to you and we were first down there and we were going back into the building, I told you that there would be a time where we've got to go. It's now. We've got to go. We've got to get out of the building." So, reluctantly—we had sent COLE on out, basically, I think—I know she wanted to help, but I felt bad, I didn't want her getting hurt. I was like, "Can you go out, stand in the courtyard and keep a count of who, if anybody comes back out through that area—if it's any of our people so we can

try and keep a count.” So she, I guess, had already been evacuated out of the courtyard. But what struck me was that when we actually went to leave and we walked out of the courtyard, where I had just been (it felt like five minutes ago), dropping that injured lady off, there was nobody around. The whole triage area had disappeared and it just shocked me. I was like, “There were people everywhere here.” I didn’t know at the time that there was a warning over the radio that there was another inbound aircraft possible. Right about that time I remember some security officer or somebody saying, “There’s another plane coming. Get out of the building. Head out this corridor.” So it was me, LT HUMBERT and GULLY just basically started sprinting through the building. I remember as we were going out of the building out corridor 8, there was a bunch of smoke rolling down one of the P-ways and like GULLY’s like, “I’m going to go close a fire door,” and there was like half a door and finally John was like, “Forget about it—let’s go!” It was so funny because they are fire doors but when he closed them and stuff they were there and there was this big gap, you know. It’s like, “well, that’ll do a lot of good,” smoke pouring out of them. So then we ran out into North Parking and ran into COLE and POLASEK, so I knew we had everyone that we had, that I knew for sure. I don’t know who we bumped into first, if it was CDR RIELAGE or LT WYPYSKI, but one of the two, I gave them the list of everyone that I knew were still in there when I left. He took down all the names and LT WYPYSKI did the same whenever I ran into him. I think, eventually we ran into CAPT MOORE, who at the time was the DNI’s executive aide and I passed down that information to her as well. So we started trying to call people. We were standing out there and trying to form who we needed to inform. We were kind of at a loss for what to do. So, we just kind of stood there for a while after we had informed everyone as far as we knew, that we could. It was really hard to get out on cell phone, because there was just so much traffic and just everyone, of course,

was on their phones. Several different warnings of, “Get farther back from the building; there’s another aircraft,” and by that time you’re just, “What now,” type deal. Eventually, I don’t know how long it took, we—GULLY—were trying to decide, “Well, what do we do now—try and get home?” All of our keys and stuff like that were in the office—to our vehicles—wallets, a lot of us had wallets, our IDs, just everything. Whatever you had on you was all you had. I think GULLY was initially like, “Well, can we try and go home or try and get a hold of apartment keys and car keys,” and trying whatever. Then we were all going to call each other tonight to see what had happened and see if we could figure out what was going on. So perhaps STROBOLI [Phonetic] started walking home and LT WYPYSKI, COLE, POLASEK, LT HUMBERT and myself all kind of were like, well we’re going to try and walk to somebody’s apartment to try and get a ride. So we started walking along the backside of the Pentagon and we ran into an Air Force Colonel—she wore a State Department badge, I don’t know. She said, ‘What are you guys doing?’”

“We’re not doing anything, ma’m, what do you need?” “Well, we need help over here.” What they were doing was setting up a temporary morgue staging area outside the building right there by North Parking by the Child Development Center. She said, “Well, I need you guys to stand a perimeter and try and keep people away from the morgue because they’re going to start bringing bodies out.” And right there I was like, “Ah, that’s not—that’s not what—we’ve got people in there. What if someone’s standing there and they bring out CDR SHANOWER,” you know what I mean? So then I got kind of where I told LT WYPYSKI, “COLE doesn’t need to be standing here. She doesn’t need to see if that happens.” So we tried to work through that. I think the VCNO LT—I can’t remember his last name—the VCNO’s flag secretary--ENNIS was with us, too. Finally, we stood around there for a while and they never brought anybody out.

Still—we still have absolutely no idea what’s happened on the other side of the building. I mean, we’re seeing smoke and stuff but not really understanding the full gravity of what has happened. It was amazing because we are just kind of standing there seeing smoke and stuff and I’m curious, “What’s going on? Why aren’t we seeing any more fire people?” We stood around there for probably 15 or 20 minutes maybe, I don’t know. Finally LT WYPYSKI and LT ENNIS went and asked one of the police officers, “Hey, we’re standing here. Nothing’s happening here. Can we help somewhere else? Is there something else we can do?” So he got on his radio and called over to the crash site and it was like, “Yeah, send them over,” so we walked all the way around the long end of the Pentagon and when we walked around and looked it was just like, “Oh my God.” It had taken us that long for us to get out and get around. It had already collapsed. It just looked like—after hearing that it had come in like that, I envisioned the tail of a big airplane sticking out of the building. I don’t know why, it was just what I expected, and I walk around and there’s nothing. There’s just a big debris and fire and it was, like, “Where’s the plane?” That’s the first thing that I said, “Where’s the plane?” So we started talking to people and met up with some people who described how the plane came in. Then I started seeing a little bit of debris. I saw a little silver piece of the aircraft skin laying next to the heliport that obviously was an American Airlines—

Q. You saw the lettering on it?

A. Yeah, I saw some letters and it’s like, “Yeah, that’s what an American Airlines plane looks like.” I don’t know why that just popped into my head. So then they were trying to get triage units staged up. I just remember hundreds of people, and, “Okay, if you’re medically trained, stand in this group, and if you’re not medically trained stand in this group,” trying to do that

whole deal. So we went and stood for a while because we were going to be stretcher-bearers, I guess. And that was another thing, I was like, “I don’t want COLE--” I don’t know why I kept thinking, I just didn’t want her to have to see something like that. So we stood around there for awhile and they didn’t start bringing anybody out. It felt strange, too, because every once in awhile people would get spun up and like, “Okay, they’re getting ready to start bringing—”, and I guess what was happening, in hindsight I found out later, was that the fires kept flaring up and the firefighters were having a lot of problems getting the fires out or getting it under control to even be able to try and bring people out. So we stood around there for a while. Eventually, all kinds of people just started driving up and delivering supplies: tents, triage units, so we spent the rest of the afternoon unloading tents and water and food and medical supplies and helping the firefighters with food and stuff like that. Periodically, every 20 or 30 minutes people would get spun back up again, “Oh, they’re getting ready to bring some people out; they’re going to try and bring some,” so you’d kind of get all worked up and be like, “Okay, let’s go. Let’s try and do what we can do,” and eventually we set up a whole bunch of triage tents and medical tents and they got people divided off and stretcher-bearers and stuff. I don’t know what time it was but eventually someone came over a loudspeaker, megaphone and said, “If you have medical training, please stay and get with one of the groups, if not please just go on and go home,” which was kind of really, really deflating. I mean, you know, “I know first aid,” I don’t even know what time it was—sunburned and dehydrated and just everything, and finally, I think LT HUMBERT and LT WYPYSKI had walked up to the Navy Annex because the DNI and the DDNI had established base up there. They had walked up there at some point in time—I just told them I was going to stay down here and try to keep an eye on what was going on. POLASEK ended up going home at some point in time in the afternoon. COLE went up to the

Annex as well. LT HUMBERT and LT WYPYSKI came back down at 5:00 or 6:00 or something like that. I just told them basically they said if you don't have any medical training just go ahead and go on. So it's like, "Let's go back up to the Annex and see if we can get everybody home." So LT HUMBERT and I walked up to the annex and the DNI and the DDNI were up there and tried to call a friend of mine to come and pick me up. I didn't have any keys—couldn't get in my truck, couldn't get in my apartment—so that was it. My friend came and picked me up. SEAMAN COLE was still up in the office trying to get hold of somebody I think. LT HUMBERT had gotten a van to come out from ONI to try and take us home and I was like, "Hey, I've got a friend that's going to come and pick me up." He came to pick me up and we went home—well, I didn't go home, I went to my friend's house and sat, and they were kind of like asking all about it and everything. I was just exhausted. Not that I didn't want to talk about it, but it wasn't really settled in, everything that was happening, and of course they are civilians and they don't know and they're seeing the stuff on TV and hearing the stuff at the Pentagon and everything, so I just kind of hung out with my friends for awhile until I could get a ride to my apartment complex and try and get some keys to get in my house.

Q. When and how did you get a hold of your family?

A. At some point in time during the day, LT HUMBERT said, "That's the chaplain of the Marine Corps." It was a General, I don't know if he was two-star or three-star—I don't know what he was. He was an Admiral—I'm not sure because the chaplains wear Marine uniforms, I guess, so he came down and she knew his EA I think as a Colonel or Lieutenant Colonel or somebody. She started talking to him and the Admiral/General, or whatever came over and was like, "Have you guys called your family?" Like, "No, we haven't been able to," and he's like,

“Here, use my phone,” so he handed us about six cell phones I think, and handed us all cell phones and basically I called—the only people I could think of who could get a hold of everybody else—I called my grandparents and said, “I’m okay. I can’t talk right now. I will get a hold of you later on this evening or whenever I can get somewhere where I can call you and talk to you. I’m okay. Call everyone else and let them know that I’m okay.” This was probably 3:00 or 4:00 o’clock in the afternoon, I guess, I don’t know. So I can only imagine—I got the phone calls and messages when I got home, but my cell phone was in my truck, so I’m sure they were calling my cell phone, sure they were calling home. So that ended up how we all got a hold of our families. The chaplain let us use his phones which was really neat. Then my grandparents called the rest of my family to let them know. My friends who I ended up calling to come pick me up were like, “Oh my God, we didn’t know if we were going to hear from you,” and all freaking out and stuff. They were really helpful with helping me get home and getting my key and stuff like that. I went home and answered about 40 phone calls. It was pretty crazy.

Q. What about your brother? When did you talk with him? Have you been able to talk with him about the whole experience?

A. Yes. I don’t know what time I got a hold of him. I got a hold of his wife. He had actually left for Saudi that Saturday prior. So I was able to get a hold of his wife and tell her and she was able to relay it to him. Once he got to Saudi and I could get e-mail contact it was like a day or two later, I guess, I was able to write him and explain some things. I haven’t seen him since he’s been back, so I haven’t physically sat down and talked to him about it now that I think about it. So I e-mailed him. I was worried in a way, because knowing how--Kobar Towers and knowing how things go and dealing with the terrorism thing—my only thought was that this is the start of

something big. There's a lot more things that are going to happen, and Saudi Arabia and our forces in the Middle East have always been major targets. Knowing that, I was really worried for a couple days about him being over there, but once I got in e-mail contact, it was like, "They've got us locked down. We're at (Prince [Phonetic] Air Base), no one's getting in; no one's getting out. We can't leave the base. There's nothing going on. We're good over here, don't worry about it." So that was a relief, just knowing how the Kobar Towers was and how stuff happens over there. So that was a big relief. I called my best buddy back home who's a police officer and he wanted to know about everything. He was all—the whole police officer thing—it was kind of funny, but he was like, "Glad to know you're okay and we'll let everyone know over here." Then I got several phone calls from the FBI and the NCIS. I had initially talked to the FBI and they are more concerned with, "Did you see anything beforehand?" and I tried to explain. Before I realized why he was asking, because you're not really thinking, I told him all this. I told him everything and he was like, "Oh my God," and I'm like, "Yeah." So really it didn't click, why he was wanting to call me and interview me or anything, and he was like, "What you are saying is you didn't see anything—or any window you didn't see anything. You didn't see the plane come in or anything," and I said, "No, we were in a closed off room," and he said, "Jesus Christ," and the guy is my age and he was just kind of like, "Oh my God," so it's pretty funny because they are concerned with the investigation. "Did you see anything? Did you videotape anything? Did you see anything suspicious? Did you hear phone?" and I'm like, "None of that stuff." It was kind of funny actually. But there were a lot of phone calls like that—NCIS. "I already talked to the FBI," and they're like, "Okay, we'll get it from the FBI, bye." But it was pretty funny—kind of something to kind of laugh at I guess.

Q. Have you been back home, to Kansas?

A. No. I went to work the next day—well no, I went to work the day after that. The next day I had to go and try and get a new ID card and keys and stuff like that. Basically the office said, take some days off—go ahead. I think I was more mad than anything. I felt like I wanted to do something. I felt like, I don't know, I didn't want to sit at home. I didn't want to sit and watch on TV channel after channel showing pictures of the trade center and everything like that, because I'd only seen stuff prior to it, I hadn't seen a lot of other stuff afterwards. Didn't see anything about the Pentagon of course, because I hadn't seen a TV. So I just didn't want to sit at home and see that over and over again. I just felt like—after not being able to go back in there and after not being able to have equipment or not being able to have some way to help more than what we did—I felt like I didn't want to feel anymore useless. I didn't want to feel anymore—it's like, I've got to be doing something. You need to do something about this. So I went to work the day after that and it was more talk about it kind of thing which is kind of overwhelming because you tell the same story over and over again and it's just—people are trying to be nice and polite and, “tell me about it again”, and of course, the command knows, the casualty teams and everyone for the debriefings. It was a little bit overwhelming. It was one of those things where I just came in because I wanted to know, “What are we doing? What are we doing about this? Do we have any idea who did this,” because of course, they stood up shortly thereafter it hit and notice got out and everything they stood up our watch, out at ONI, our headquarters. So, it was like, what's going on? Tell me what's going on? Why, who, what, when, where? What are we doing?

Q. So you actually went back to work at the Suitland?

A. Yes. To do that I had to get a new ID. That was the whole reason why I didn't go in that next day is 'cause I didn't have an ID card. So I couldn't get on base. You can't get on out at Suitland without a blue badge, but I couldn't get a blue badge without my ID. I was just worthless. I couldn't do anything. So I—

Q. You didn't have a driver's license to show who you were?

A. I didn't have any ID on me—well actually I did. The only thing I had was my Pentagon badge, the only badge that I didn't have clipped to my uniform top at the time. I don't know why. I had it separate. That's the only thing I had and people were like, "What's that?" and it was, "Listen, I work at the Pentagon, this is my Pentagon badge," and they're like, "Oh, okay, okay, here." It's like trying to get ID and I appreciate the help, I just want an ID, I just want something, you know.

Q. Were people pretty helpful once they found out why you—

A. Very, very helpful. I mean as far as car keys, apartment keys, the guys at PSD in Anacostia getting my ID—yeah, they were very helpful. Which I felt kind of bad, like I was using it as an excuse, and I was like, "I appreciate it, I really do," but I felt guilty for like saying, "I need to get a new set of keys made. I was in the Pentagon and all my keys--" and peoples jaws drop and after the first time of that, I didn't want to say that anymore, but it was basically the only way to get the stuff that you had to have. But they were very helpful across the board. It's amazing the people just wanting to help, wanted to do everything they could—to help in any way, like all kinds of weird stuff—food, "Do you have food at your house?" I'm like, "Well, my house didn't blow up, you know, I've got food," little things like that that you just never—it was kind of

interesting. The outpouring of people that were concerned and wanted to help and everything was just pretty amazing. And I guess until you are involved in something like that, maybe you don't see it all that much—maybe you don't notice it, I don't know—take things for granted, probably. It's pretty amazing.

Q. How long was it until you heard about those that were in CDR SHANOWER'S office—how they had been killed? How did that—

A. Well, after the day progressed, and as LT HUMBERT and I were walking back up to the Annex, I remember looking at her and saying to her that after reflection, looking, and seeing what I saw, that I was pretty sure that they were dead. And I told her, "I hate to say that. I hate to even—but I, there was nothing left." And I told her, I said, "I think they probably—it was probably pretty instantaneous I think." There was just such utter devastation and destruction that I saw where they were, and I guess it's positive thinking in a way, you know, I hope they went quick. I hope they didn't suffer. I knew then, though. I honestly knew in my heart, unfortunately. I told her that. I really do think that. I saw where they were sitting and then I saw five minutes afterwards what was there and what happened. I just don't think that anybody—but then, unfortunately, periodically over the next couple of days, different people's spouses and stuff were saying well, you know I got a phone call from the cell phone—this and that, which was really bad. And you don't want to hurt somebody by squashing what little hope they have, or destroying what little hope, because you know you hold onto anything you can at that point. It was really hard, because I knew. In my heart and in my head I knew. It was logic. It was like, well, I saw and I'm sorry. That's what I saw. But I think, finality-wise, it wasn't until they found all the bodies, and it was over the course of a week or two, I think or a couple

weeks I think. They did end up finding all the bodies. So, that was, I don't know if you'd call it closure for me, but there was no questioning—there's not even that one percentile—that one millionth of a chance now. And the fact that the fire was still burning three or four days afterwards, you know—I saw how bad it was as we were literally evacuating, looking back into the space, seeing how bad it had gotten from when I was standing in there, it was a hundred-fold worse, so it was just kind of—finality.

TAPE TWO—Side One

Q. When were you able to go back in and view the space again?

A. Oh, I'm not sure. At some point in time we got a phone call—I think it was when we were still out at Suitland—that the structural engineers and the fire marshals and everyone wanted to sit down and interview all of us. Doctor GOLATZ [Phonetic], one of the Pentagon architectural engineers and a bunch of people—the chief medical officer, so they could try to put the pieces together, what went right, what went wrong, what could have been done, what in structural engineering—accesses, you know, stuff like that. So we all basically came back over here and that was the first time that I had been back in the building, I think when I came back in for that interview, and the smell—the smell got to me. I could still smell it everywhere. The burnt smell—the residual burnt smell is like something you never forget. But during the interview and everything and getting all the information, it was myself, LT HUMBERT and Petty Officer GULLY all did the interview together, that one. Doctor GOLATZ [Phonetic] said, “If you want to go back in and walk through the space and see where you were at, all the debris is gone—if you want to do that or need to do that,” I think LT HUMBERT was the first one to be able to do

it and walk through, and then a couple of days later that next week, myself, POLASEK, COLE and GULLY all walked through.

Q. Together? Was that a hard decision to go back in?

A. No. Not at all. I didn't even think about it twice. I wanted to see—I don't know why. I think maybe that would get some closure of some kind or whatever—I don't know. I just want to get a better understanding as to what happened, why it was so bad. Because at the time you're still thinking that it couldn't have been any worse when it could have been a lot worse, especially after talking to the structural engineers, and kind of learning some of the stuff—some of the behind the scenes things that happened with the building and everything, and I just wanted to see—while we were in the interview they showed us a diagram of the support pillars and which ones were sheered off, literally like twigs; which ones were bent, which ones held, the path of the plane, and seeing it on paper wasn't good enough. I mean I'm not an engineer. I'm not an architect. Yeah, it kind of makes a little bit of sense, but I wanted to see it and get an idea to where I was at. So, I didn't even think twice about it and I don't think anybody else did either, honestly. When we were offered, it was just, "Yeah, I want to go. I want to go back and look." And that was probably quite awhile afterwards—it wasn't very long ago I don't think—maybe a month ago, I don't know, something like that.

Q. So it had been awhile since the incident?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Do you relive the experience? Dream about it?

A. Some. The first couple of days afterward a lot. I mean, it wasn't like dreams when I was sleeping, it's just something triggers—some kind of external stimulus of some kind—the smell, or something and you know you vividly see it and feel it and everything and just remember how—what, the third day I was back at ONI and was standing on the watch floor and the air conditioner compressor kicked on right behind me and it shook—you know, it's for a huge watch floor and it was like, “Vroom,” just like that, and I literally had a panic attack—not an uncontrollable one, but hair stood up on the back of my neck, I started sweating, I was just like—you know you just get that feeling, and that was the first time that had happened, and it just really for some reason, whatever it was, my body or whatever, it just reminded me of that initial force. But I never really had real dreams or nightmares, but definitely little things that would trigger it—you know, you'd think about it; think about it all the time, at least every day. I had a hard time going to any of the funerals. I chose to go to CDR TOLBERT'S because I was the closest with him and it was very, very hard—it was just, you get close to somebody and when they wheel in the coffin with the flag over it, it was really hard. They buried him in Arlington Cemetery and it's overlooking the blast site—actually you can see it from his grave. It was also the first time I saw CDR CAPETS since the incident as well, so that helped some. It was very hard, though. I wanted to try and go to all the funerals, but I just—it was just hard enough as it was. What do you tell someone's family? You were the last—you know, there were a couple of instances where like, Ms. TOLBERT wants to know what CDR TOLBERT'S last words were and you know, and I can understand maybe wanting that closure, but—I mean, I just—how do you tell somebody that? How do you say—you know, it was just really hard. Being basically the last person to see them alive; to talk to them, and I could still see where everyone's sitting and the looks on their faces and their comments—you know it was just—I didn't think I could do

that. I don't know why, it was just really hard. But it helped, CDR TOLBERT'S funeral helped a lot, but it's still, it's like, there are times when—because I've got some friends from other commands that knew him at prior commands and came up for the funeral and at nights you're sitting there talking about it and it hits you. You know, you miss them. You miss your friends, not only co-worker and shipmates, but you miss them. It's hard then. You work through it and try and move forward. They were doing the job they chose to do, and no excuses for anything.

Q. After the 11th when did the SPRINT team visit you all and give you a chance to—

A. I'm not sure, ma'am, probably three or four days. They were out there at ONI . I think POLASEK and LT HUMBERT and myself all sat down with this—well she actually wasn't with the SPRINT team but she was the civilian equivalent of it that ONI has internally. And then, about midway through our meeting and interview thing, a SPRINT officer showed up and he was basically like, "Well I don't want to interfere or make things—rehash through stuff, or whatever," so he basically just said you know, let her go on and conduct it for us—for LT HUMBERT and POLASEK and of course it was made available at any point in time and still is. We're still—have the option at any time to see them. But I think it was a good, probably that next week—midway that next week, I think. Maybe the end of the week—maybe that Thursday or Friday, I'm not sure.

Q. Was that helpful, what did you think about that experience?

A. It was helpful. I think it was more helpful because that was the first time that LT HUMBERT and I and POLA—like we were together in a room and talking about it. Having somebody that was there with you and maybe saw something that you didn't see or felt something you didn't

feel, and their perspective—that was more helpful to me than anything. It was good to have a disinterested third party, if you want to say that, but that was the most helpful for me to have them in there together, who went through it with you and were able to share, because it's hard to talk to people about it because there is no way that there's anyway to describe it to where you ever understand it unless you were there, and they were there. And having that kind of co-understanding and feeling helped the most, I think. I think it helped in that respect most of all, but just being able to talk about it again kind of open, and not having people necessarily ask, because she was really good about, “What do you want to talk about? How did you feel?” Not, recite everything that happened that you remember or go through the whole ordeal. So it was very helpful in that respect. And I don't know for sure, but I think that a couple of the folks maybe went back again or talked to the actual SPRINT team maybe, the SPRINT officer again. I'm not sure though. I did not. I thought about it occasionally, just a sounding board kind of thing, but just haven't done it. I think I'm able to work through it myself when I think about it. Being busy at work helps—I kind of completely immerse myself in work and you feel like you're doing something about it because of our job and it gives you some form of satisfaction to at least know that you're trying to do something to keep this from happening again. And not a revenge kind of thing, but at least maybe somehow, in some remote way, help those responsible do something about it.

Q. Well obviously, you have a very promising career ahead of you. You're a sharp young man and you're obviously going places. How has this—this is kind of a reflective question—but how has this experience, and your reflection of this experience changed you and your outlook about where you go from here, particularly in a leadership role?

A. I'm not sure. I'd always been interested in terrorism. I'd been studying it on my own for probably a good two years prior to even getting into the INTEL field. I've always been interested in it and the groups and why they do the things they do and stuff, and it's kind of ironic to be an actual victim of it, you know, so it was kind of strange. I think it's cemented in me what I'd like to do with my life professionally—continue in the job, in this job, in this field in any way shape or form to be able to try and continue to help keep things from this like happening. Whether that be in the military or the civilian field or government or whatever, you know there are so many things—you hear so much stuff on the news about intelligence gaps and this and that and you know, and who knew about it, then why didn't someone do something about it, and people—you're everyday Joe Smuckatelly just doesn't understand the complexities and the things that are out there, and the things that people will do. Like, I still have friends that are talking about suicide bombers, like, "Why would somebody do it?" It's a different mindset, and that interests me—the dynamics and the (interests me even more now) the role that I think intelligence and what is going to play in this in the future, and not just in the war on terrorism per se, but just in general, the security and safety of everyone. I mean, it wasn't just military people, it wasn't just combatancy—3,000+ people in the World Trade Center. But that's opened, kind of pushed me more in that direction, even more than before, especially extreme interest, and that's why I would like to stay in the military as long as I can facilitate doing that, and when that ends or if I've had enough of the military, then probably get a government job doing the same thing. It's what interests me.

Q. Have you thought about OCS?

A. Yes, sir. I'm looking at some different programs—still have my eye on the DIA program to finish up my degree and then either looking at a possible—some way to get a commission, one of the programs. I'm trying to get all the information together. I'd like to be able to do that if I'm allowed. The only problem with some of the commission programs is you can't chose what specialty or field you go into, and no offense to boat drivers, but that's not what I want to do with my career. If that's what I—get a commission, I got to go drive a boat—that's not really what I really want to do. That's not for me.

Q. Could you become an INTEL officer or—

A. Yes, sir. If I can get a situation where I can get a commission where I can get a guarantee of some kind to channel into that field, into that community, then that's what I'm planning on doing. That's why I've been looking at like, the warrant officer program or the LDO program.

Q. Do you have some good people to go to? Do you have some good people within the ONI—

A. Yes, sir. Excellent people. A lot of the watch officers that I work with on a daily basis are all prior enlisted that have gotten their commissions in some way, shape or form. There are a lot of good people to talk to about it and are willing to do a lot for the help.

Q. Great. Well, you obviously have a lot to offer. Anything else you want to add for the historical record?

A. Can't think of anything.

Q. Let me ask you—obviously you've lost your leadership of the ONI plot, CNO plot—unique

challenges, unique perspectives from being a senior enlisted with bringing in new leadership?

A. Very much so. That's probably been one of the hardest things. Not necessarily having a different boss, because you adapt and overcome, but the mission, the focus has changed so much, which is not necessarily a bad thing, but it's a transition. It's something that everyone in the military is having to deal with, but on the INTEL side, it's a big, big transition. But also, with the leadership, different leadership styles, different management styles, personnel—along with the physicalities of moving, you know, this is the third time that my people, the guys that were here at the time—this is the third time we've moved to a new space, and we'll move again. And with each move comes the same problems. You try and negate some of those by lessons learned, but—

Q. They don't go away.

A. No, they don't. And so you go through the same—sometimes it just feels like you're banging your head against a wall—it's like oh, how many times do I have to go through this, how many times do I have to deal with these system's con activity. How many times? But it's challenging, especially with things the way things are now, the op tempo and the status we're in and everything, the dynamics being flexible and stuff. It's been a learning experience in a good way. It's been frustrating as can be—extremely frustrating. Especially when the admiral—you know, you can only gripe so high—and when the admiral changes things day-to-day it gets to be a little frustrating. And then having all the new personnel come in—the new briefers and the new watch officers, and you do things differently and people come in with all their experiences from the past and you know you tend to do things like that, so it's been a kind of a learning experience. But you get a great group of people really, that want to do the job, that feel the same way. They

are like, you know, “Let’s do something about this. What part can we play to help.” There were several individuals that had transferred out of the IP back to command headquarters at ONI that stepped up and filled in positions at the IP during everything and it was just amazing. People that I know didn’t want to come back to the IP, you know, and had been here for awhile and were ready to go do something else, that at the drop of a hat had no qualms or second thoughts about saying, “If you all need help, we’re here to help. Here I am. Knock on the door. Tell me what you want done.” Which is an amazing thing. And even our leadership, CDR NICHOLSON, and that group of people that we had—I know he didn’t want the job. I know for a fact that (it was) the farthest thing from his mind—but to step up and take something like that and to run with it—it’s been pretty amazing, a challenge every day. Like I said, things are coming together now, so slowly but surely we get back on track.

Q. Thanks so much for taking the time with us.

A. Sir, thank you, I appreciate it.

Q. Incredible story, and a great interview.

A. I appreciate it, sir.

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