



UNITED STATES ARMY
CENTER OF MILITARY HISTORY

INTERVIEW OF


Fort Myer Fire Department

NEIT 209

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AT

The Pentagon

October 30, 2001

TAPE TRANSCRIPTION

1 PROCEEDINGS

2 [REDACTED] Today's date is October 30, 2001. This is an oral
3 history interview. I am [REDACTED], 46th Military History
4 Detachment. If you would for the text, please state your name and who
5 you are.

6 [REDACTED] I am [REDACTED] and I work at Fort Myer Fire
7 Department.

8 [REDACTED] This interview is unclassified.

9 Do you understand that this interview is being given voluntarily?

10 [REDACTED] Yes.

11 [REDACTED] Until such time as the transcription is made, and you
12 have reviewed it, do you give permission for it to be used by the U.S.
13 Army Center of Military History for use in official publications,
14 provided you were quoted accurately?

15 [REDACTED] Yes.

16 [REDACTED] How long have you been a fireman?

17 [REDACTED] About seven years.

18 [REDACTED] Always here at Fort Myer?

19 [REDACTED] No. I was in the Marine Corps, and then, also, at
20 MCS (inaudible). I came here in August of this year.

21 [REDACTED] August. Is this home, this area, Washington, D.C.,
22 area?

1 [REDACTED] It is for my wife, yeah. (Inaudible.)

2 [REDACTED] Transplant home to you. Okay. What, what was going
3 on with you on September 11th before the World Trade Center bomb? What
4 were you doing when you heard about that?

5 [REDACTED] I was part of the crew down there at the Pentagon
6 Fire Station. We had just watch the two twin towers get hit, and we were
7 outside talking about the incident, and that's when we saw the plane, and
8 (incident) hit then started to run away from the building -- and got off
9 the -- and started a couple vehicles (inaudible).

10 [REDACTED] When you saw the plane - I mean. do you see planes
11 regularly in that area from the airport?

12 [REDACTED] Yes.

13 [REDACTED] So did you know fairly soon that that plane wasn't
14 where it was supposed to be?

15 [REDACTED] Yes, because it was only 300 yards away when we saw
16 it.

17 [REDACTED] And how long -- had it departed -- I mean had it been
18 going in one direction, and you all saw it turn, or did you just --

19 [REDACTED] I just saw it about 300 yards away.

20 [REDACTED] 300 yards away, and coming right for the building?

21 [REDACTED] Correct.

22 [REDACTED] What went through your head, or did anything?

1 [REDACTED] Nothing. Just to get out of there.

2 [REDACTED] Wow! I know this is probably hard to describe --
3 someone who hasn't got any sleep, or -- what did it feel like, and what
4 did it sound like?

5 [REDACTED]: Didn't sound like anything until you actually hear
6 it. (Inaudible.)

7 I just remember starting to run. Heard the horrible crash behind
8 me. Saw the next big orange glow (inaudible) on the ground. Getting
9 myself up from the blast, and got our gear on, and started to go to work.

10 [REDACTED] Did you get burned?

11 [REDACTED] Yeah, I got some minor burns to my arms and my back,
12 and some lacerations (inaudible).

13 [REDACTED] Do you remember what was the first thing you said?

14 [REDACTED] I don't remember. If I did, I probably couldn't say
15 it here - shouldn't be saying all that.

16 [REDACTED]. It shouldn't be said on tape. So your gear was right
17 there. I mean it didn't take you all hardly any time to probably get it
18 on.

19 [REDACTED] RIGHT..

20 [REDACTED] The truck -- if your truck already gone you . Do you
21 all get to your truck right away, or was it already toast.

22 [REDACTED] Got in -- got in, and started it. Started it up.

1 (Inaudible.)

2 [REDACTED] Oh my goodness!

3 [REDACTED] So salvaged what gear we could off the truck. Some
4 medical supplies, extinguishers to put out small fires around it,
5 emergency tanks (inaudible).

6 [REDACTED] It's not funny at all, but isn't there irony when a
7 fire truck burns up at fire station.

8 [REDACTED] Exactly

9 [REDACTED] Did you think that?

10 [REDACTED] No, No, it didn't cross my mind.

11 [REDACTED] A fire truck is on fire. So you
12 go -- are there -- just try, if you could, describe it for me.

13 People are pouring out of the building. What does it look like to
14 you as you go toward the building?

15 [REDACTED] (Inaudible) lots of the airplane burning, some high
16 trees, and glass flying (inaudible), and people are pouring from the
17 exits, from the doors, from the windows. For the most part the people
18 that we saw were (inaudible).

19 [REDACTED] Do you have any (inaudible) in effect? Any kind of
20 alarms or warning or sirens or anything that you would add today, or did
21 you hear Arlington?

22 [REDACTED] AH. As you... Ah

1 Did you all call Arlington, or -

2 [REDACTED] Did you call Arlington? Or...

3 [REDACTED] ... (Inaudible) in the truck, started the truck, gave
4 the first dispatch out to our people. Told them that (inaudible).

5 [REDACTED] How long before you think before Arlington
6 (inaudible)?

7 [REDACTED] It was a real quick response from (inaudible).

8 [REDACTED] You, you probably have heard people -- the emergency
9 crew from around here thought you were sneaking inside the Pentagon. I
10 guess they had some kind of security (inaudible) as well.

11 [REDACTED] (Inaudible.)

12 [REDACTED] Did you know -- what to do? --

13 [REDACTED] No. (Inaudible.)

14 [REDACTED] Were you familiar enough with the building layout and
15 everything (inaudible) to know where you need to go, and how you need to
16 direct people?

17 [REDACTED] Yes. (Inaudible) and that's all I (inaudible) severe
18 (inaudible) triage stations.

19 [REDACTED] After it happened you're trying to be (inaudible) you
20 already have an assessment of what you were dealing with in there. I
21 mean you're dealing -- I immediately think of, My God, this is -- look
22 at all this jet fuel around us.

1 What was the thought? How did you know what you were going in for?

2 Did you know what was --

3 ██████████: I've been on plenty of airplane crashes before, in
4 the Marine Corps. . (inaudible).

5 ██████████: Oh, okay.

6 ██████████: I was (inaudible) part of my career.

7 ██████████: Does it get any easier?

8 ██████████: Ah, yeah, actually that was probably the worst one
9 I've ever been on, because (inaudible).

10 ██████████: Anybody (inaudible)?

11 ██████████: Oh, no, not really. (inaudible.)

12 ██████████: Was it -- what was it like? Lots of smoke, lots of
13 really, really hot (inaudible)?

14 ██████████: (Inaudible), lots of black smoke.

15 ██████████: And were -- was it easy -- I don't want to say easy,
16 but was the escape route fairly marked where people could get out, or
17 were people along the way trying to help them through the right
18 corridors? (Inaudible?)

19 ██████████: I never even made entry to the building until
20 (inaudible).

21 ██████████: Oh, okay, yeah. So it's awhile --

22 ██████████: So it's strictly... (Inaudible) windows, and

1 (inaudible).

2 [REDACTED] (Inaudible.) There was something -- at some point
3 people were talking about another plane, or other attacks on the
4 Washington, D.C., area.

5 Did you hear any of that while you were out there?

6 [REDACTED]: Yes. We pulled out of there several times.

7 (Inaudible.)

8 [REDACTED]. When the guys from Fort Myer Station got there were
9 they in the same area where you were?

10 [REDACTED] (Inaudible.)

11 [REDACTED] Was there a point after slow down, and I'm sure you
12 were there probably most of the day, where they checked on your burns,
13 and everything?

14 [REDACTED] Yes, You're over there (inaudible), and they've got
15 triage (inaudible).

16 [REDACTED] When, when you got away from the (inaudible) hospital
17 did all this kind of hit you again? What had happened? It all happened
18 at such a fast pace when you were there. Did the reality of it kind of
19 stay until later, or did -- is it all real to you?

20 [REDACTED] Pretty real, yeah.

21 [REDACTED] I just can't imagine. Were they working up plans to
22 (inaudible) the fire department right there at the Pentagon? Did you all

1 have some emergency plan that you practiced, or some scenarios that --

2 [REDACTED] No, no, none.

3 [REDACTED] None of that. Not for that. For like helicopter
4 crashes.

5 [REDACTED] Right, right.

6 [REDACTED] Is there -- what if you're out of the situation that
7 you (inaudible) maybe you've learned as a person here at the fire
8 department. Is there any way to be prepared for that? Is there anything
9 else that, that you could do to be more prepared for that kind of
10 disaster? Do you need to be more prepared for that kind of disaster?

11 [REDACTED] I don't know. (Inaudible) for the Marine Corps Air
12 Station (inaudible). It's just (inaudible) working with so (inaudible).

13 [REDACTED] Tell (inaudible) major airports (inaudible). Do they
14 not do that here in Washington?

15 [REDACTED] I have no idea.

16 [REDACTED] They need to probably.

17 [REDACTED] Probably.

18 [REDACTED] Well I guess with your work for the Marine Corps you
19 probably have had opportunities to -- had to be, I'll say brave. I mean
20 that's what it is to me, bravery, to risk your life to go help other
21 people. Was this the bravest you ever had to be?

22 [REDACTED] Yeah, I think so. (Inaudible.)

1 [REDACTED] (Inaudible?)

2 [REDACTED] (Inaudible.)

3 [REDACTED] Your family out there -- your wife's heard about all
4 this. She about absolutely had gone crazy, but when were you able to
5 talk to her, and tell her you were okay.

6 [REDACTED] About four o'clock in the afternoon.

7 [REDACTED] So had she already gone crazy twice waiting for the
8 hearsay?

9 [REDACTED] Oh, no. We never could work (inaudible) home
10 numbers, so I didn't get hold of her, and, no, she knows what this is
11 about when I told her (inaudible).

12 [REDACTED] Yeah. Well I have all my regular questions. Is there
13 anything that you want to add to the tape as far as (inaudible).
14 Something that maybe stands out in your mind as significant, or a picture
15 that you're keeping with you that, you know, you want to add to the
16 history, or anything you need to add?

17 [REDACTED] No.

18 [REDACTED] I sure appreciate your time.

19 (The interview was concluded.)

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