

**Naval Historical Center  
Oral Interview Summary Form**

**Interviewers:**

CAPT Gary Hall  
CAPT (s) Mike McDaniel  
CDR Karen Loftus

**Interviewer's Organization:**

Navy Combat Documentation Det 206  
Navy Combat Documentation Det 206  
Navy Combat Documentation Det 206

**Interviewee:**

DM1 Paul Gaston, USNR

**Current Address:**

Imagery Analyst, Dept of Army  
Washington Navy Yard

**Date of Interview:**

24 Oct 01

**Place of Interview:**

Navy Annex

**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:**

1. Born in Mississippi. Very small town. Grew up in Chicago, IL. Four siblings. Joined Navy after high school. First assignment was on the USS Blue Ridge in March, 1979. Wanted to get experience; had a love for ships. Joined the reserves after almost eight years of active service. Assigned since 1986 to the Navy Command Center. Stands watch as a Draftsman; works in the graphics section; prepares monthly brief for the reserve unit.
2. On Active Duty for Training (ADT) orders and on watch on date of the attack. ITC(S) Brown was out of the office that day; DM2 Noethe was there that morning. LI1 not there that day. She was to come in late that day since I was standing watch.
3. His office space was in the Navy Command Center. The graphic area is to the right of the watch section spaces. To the left of the counter drug spaces. Watching the news from New York unfold in the Command Center spaces. Petty Office Noethe called his

grandmother in New York to reassure her. Pulled CNN up on the large conference screen. Then he called his sister.

4. DM1 Gaston heard large sweeping sound from behind him and to the left. Thrown up against the wall. Heard people screaming throughout the Command Center. Battle lanterns and sprinklers did not come on. Could feel the heat and smoke. Heard Noethe crying out for help. Some were crying out in pain; others asking if there was a way out. Coughing. Thought a bomb had gone off in the Pentagon. Started to run out of air. Made his peace with God. Got out of building; stumbled toward water he heard. Water main had broken coming down from the ceiling. Saw an opening in the wall into an alleyway. CAPT Masso (NCC 106 Commanding Officer) was out there in civilian clothes. He asked me if I was okay. Asked if there was anyone else inside. He said yes. Put DM1 on a Pentagon cart and took him to the triage area in North Parking. Grouped people and gave them medical attention. Saw an Air Force plane fly over the Pentagon.
5. Some injured went into ambulances. He was taken to Arlington Hospital. Had a few scrapes and scratches – required four stitches to left leg and eight-ten to right leg. Chest burning, coughing. Found out later it was a plane that hit the Pentagon.
6. Thinking about where his shipmates were. Was sent home; stayed there a couple of days. One day at a time. Called stress management after 4-5 weeks. Has trouble sleeping at times. That Friday the list came out of the missing. He had to know how Noethe was doing. Read his name in paper; lost it. Received calls from people in unit. DMC Derr called; friends for years. Learned that ITC Brown's son was one of the children in the special program on the plane that was to go to California. His son was killed in the plane that hit the Pentagon. Helped a CACO and talked to one of the families to help bring closure to that family. Felt survivor's guilt. Working on those feelings now. Returned

to work – probably too early. Had to take time off later to get rest. Taking one day at a time. Gains strength from his wife and daughter.

7. Reserve unit asking for volunteers for recall. Not likely but they will be standing more watches. Looking for volunteers to rebuild the Command Center; will be rebuilt in the same area. Told he was going to get a Purple Heart. Had always been very proud of his penmanship; found this ironic. Unit is helping families of shipmates who died. NCC 106 is a family. Red Cross called him to see if he needed anything. They do reach out and touch people.
8. In times of crisis, in times like this, we are all Americans; all want to fulfill our responsibility as Americans. Differences aside. Earlier this year he debated retiring but decided to stay in the Navy in August. Now there is no way he will get out- he may be needed. He hopes to make Chief. He will continue to reach out. He is different, appreciates every minute. Wants to see how his daughter turns out – what type of person she becomes.
9. Leadership. Wonderful examples. Incredible amounts of courage. People putting themselves in harms way to help others. CAPT Masso was there in civilian clothes – as DM1 Gaston was going out, his skipper and others were going in. Injured were helping others; people were consoling those who were taking it hard. A volunteer from Arlington Hospital that day took him home.
10. Lessons learned – for years he could not sit comfortably with things in his pocket. Lost all of his personal effects. To be alert. To cope without becoming dependent on different things. In stress management sessions at DeLorenzo at the Pentagon.

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**Name of Project:** Pentagon Terrorist Attack Incident

**Subject Terms/Key Words:** Navy Command Center Survivor, Pentagon Rescue, Medical Evacuation, SPRINT, Pentagon; Terrorist Attack; 11 September 2001; Triage; Carnage; Navy Command Center

**Transcript of Interview:**

**Interviewee Information:** Born in Mississippi. Very small town. Grew up in Chicago, IL. He has four siblings. Joined Navy after high school. First assignment was on the *USS Blue Ridge* in March 1979. He wanted to get experience and had a love for ships, which is why he wanted to join the Navy. Joined the reserves after almost eight years of active service. Assigned since 1986 to the Navy Command Center. Stands watch as a Draftsman; works in the graphics section; prepares monthly brief for the reserve unit.

**Topics Discussed:**

Transcription begins 05:02

DM1 Gaston: Was Trainer, training my Reserve and sometimes active duty counterparts on graphics shop equipment and operating procedures and that kind of thing. I served as LPO

(Leading Petty Officer), work counselor, Training Petty Officer, chief cook and bottle washer,

make great coffee for mid-watch. I've had the opportunity to do a lot of things, both in Reserves and on active duty.

But the reason, the real reason why I stayed in NCC 106 actually are two. One is people like yourselves who've already been stationed there, and the other is it's close to home. That's one of the reasons I got out of the service. I wanted to be close to my family.

Q. (05:53) Where's your family?

A. Well, my immediate family my wife and daughter, we live in Woodridge now.

Q. How old's your daughter?

A. She just turned eleven.

Q. Wow

A. On the 11<sup>th</sup> of August, and yesterday I took her to get braces and so we had a long day yesterday. But the poor kid looks like me so I have to make sure she has all the advantages coming to her.

(all laugh)

Q. What do you do in civilian world?

A. Right now I'm an energy analyst and I work for the Department of the Army, I guess and that's the equivalent of the Navy IS. I read out imagery on a daily basis, do case studies of third world countries, different threats against our national freedom and that kind of thing.

Q. How long you been doing that?

A. I've been doing that for about seven years. I first came into the government as a visual information specialist, which would be the equivalent of a Navy DM, and so downsizing had myself and a couple of co-workers to change job skills, and I was looking for something that I could use the knowledge that I had already gained and help me transition to a new career. So being an art person or graphics person I was able to take concepts, because sometimes you look at military equipment from overhead imagery and we don't always get the clear picture. It might be a shadow, or it might be partially behind a building, and so being a graphics person I can take the information I see and then add the rest of the information. What I think is there to identify a piece of equipment or a ship or things like that. So it was a smooth transition in that sense.

Q. (07:51) Are there any certain areas of the world you deal with mostly, or is it kind of wherever?

A. Well, of late it's been Afghanistan and Pakistan. But usually it hasn't been any particular area. The way they work it is kind of a round robin. At my civilian employer, we have three or four different teams and we work on different areas of the world for three months at a time and then we rotate that assignment to another team so that we all get the experience of knowing what's out there in different locations.

Q. (08:24) Take us through the events leading up to 11 September. What were you doing there? What was your—were you on active duty?

A. Yes Sir, I was. In fact, that was my ADT (Active Duty for Training). I already did my annual training for the year, and this would have been the month of June and July they mentioned that

they had additional funds for ADT. So I thought well I'll go back to the Pentagon. Get some more training, and then carry on smartly. So I was there doing my seventeen day ADT.

Q. ADT.

A. This was the second week of that ADT. So that particular morning I came in—first I should say there's three active duty counterparts. There was IT Select Brown (Chief Select), who was not in the office that morning, because, of course he was an IT Select and so they were out doing their chief initiation and things like that. There's a Petty Officer Noeth, DM2 Noeth, God rest his sole. He was there that morning, and Petty Officer Francis. I think she's an LI1. She wasn't there that morning because usually when the reservists come in they kind of augment to their active duty counterparts. So we would rotate. One day I would come in early and then one of the other guys would come in late and so on and so forth. That particular morning, September 11<sup>th</sup> it was her turn to come in late, because I was there early.

So that morning I was cutting mats for the Nights on Horseback, and you all have seen those. So I was doing those and I'd been working on that the previous week as well.

Q. (10:08) Could you just take us through where you were located in the new Command Center?

A. Yes ma'am. When you walk through the front door, you have a passageway, off to the right is the geedunk (Editors Note: a coffee/eating area) where there's a refrigerator and coffee mess. Then as you go up another probably ten yards, the first place you come to on your right is the Duty Captain Watch section and that's where the duty captain is, obviously and his watch staff. And so, it's a fairly long area, about the same width, but maybe ten or fifteen feet longer than

this room here, and of course, it's a large area and it's all partitioned so you can stand up and look over the partitions.

The graphic area, like I said, you come up and when you get to the—the watch team is off to your right and make a turn there and then there's a space where you can actually walk in there. When you make that right and you walk down the passageway another fifteen or twenty feet is the graphic shop, again, just partitioned. It's a small shop. A couple of computers in it, and camera equipment, mat board, mat cutter and then the next space over I think was Counter Drug and that's where Mr. Sandelli, Commander Moore and YN1 Jackson and a couple of civilian guys that I did—had known. They were in that next space there and then just beyond that was a hard wall and there was one of the senior civilians. I can't remember his name, older gentleman who's been in the Command Center –

Q. (11:53) Paul Brady?

A. Yes Ma'am.

Q. OK, yes. Yes. OK.

A. That's exactly who it was and that was his office there. And so that morning as I said, I was doing the mats, and I can't remember the Petty Officer's name. He's on the Watch Team for the Duty Captain, who said, "Oh my God!" Then he said, "Hey, come over here and look at this." Of course, they have all the monitors there so they can monitor CNN and other different things. And when I walked over, just on the other side of the wall, of the partition there, I said, "What's going on?" So they explain it to me. A plane just ran into one of the towers of the World Trade

Center. And he said, “Well,” you know, everyone started asking questions. Was it a commercial plane? Is it a Cessna? What is it?

He said, “Well, I don’t know. I just happened to look up and see it.”

So we were watching it there in disbelief like everybody else was watching it and I just kind of stood there for a while, and you know, they were talking about different things and I thought, “Oh my goodness!” So I went back around to my area, because for that particular morning the most important thing to me was making sure I got those mats cut. So I went back to cut the mats and by the time I got back over there, Petty Officer Jackson had turned on the television, because we had one down between the partitions so both Counter Drug and Draftsman could see it. She had turned the volume up so I was standing there, right about here and the TV was to my right maybe eighteen feet. And so we saw the other plane, the second plane run into the second tower. So Petty Office Noeth ran over. He said, “I’m going to call my grandmother.” So he picked the phone up and called his grandmother in New York. So he called her up and he said to her, he says, “Hey Grandma, I just wanted to give a call and make sure you’re OK. We’re watching the TV and we see that some planes just ran into the World’s Trade Center.” He says, “Don’t worry about us, me, we’re fine and we’re going to find out what’s going on and so you may not hear from me for a while.”

So he hung the phone up. Then he ran back out, and of course the new theater, it’s great. Seats about thirty people, large conference room, he said, “I’m going to pull the screen up in there” — because it’s a large screen— “I’m going to pull CNN up in there and why don’t you come back here and watch it with us?”

Apparently a few more people had gone back there as well. So I said, “I’ll be back there in a few minutes.”

Then he said, “Well, I need to call my sister.” So he picked up the phone and called his sister and he told his sister that he had just talked to his grandma and she’s OK. He said that “I’ll give you guys a call when we find out,” you know, “what’s going on.”

It seemed (speaker becomes emotional) as soon as he hung up the phone, it seemed—heard this loud crash from kind of behind me and to the left and this loud sweeping sound and then I was thrown, I believe, up against the wall where the TV was, and then when I went down on my face, I covered my head, laying on the floor, and I could hear people screaming. (speaker becomes tearful).

I’m sorry.

Q. (15:28) That’s OK.

A. I could hear people screaming throughout the Command Center. People were hurt. The lights were off. The battle lanterns didn’t come on. The sprinklers didn’t come on. I could feel the heat, and the place filled up with smoke, but I never saw any fire, but I guess I would have had to uncover my head to do that. And I could hear Petty Officer Noeth who was crying out for help, and then different people throughout the Command Center were, were crying things, you know, from being in pain, to, and there’s a few people in the other areas of the Command Center were asking if, you know, there was a way out. Things were still raining down from the overhead. People were talking and so I remembered thinking to myself that, you know, someone had set a bomb off in the Pentagon, and as things were falling I was trying to get as low as I possibly could, because I kept thinking, I didn’t obviously know what was going to happen, or what else was going to fall, and I started running out of air. I started running out of air. As I said, the place filled up with smoke. As I laid there, I made my peace with God.

Q (17:08) Hum.

A. Then I remembered thinking, that I had to do something, and right about that time someone from Counter Terrorism, I guess that's where it was. He had, they were up in, kind of stumbling through the area and they stepped on, I believe, a partition or something that was on me, and I said, "Who is that?"

He said. —I can't remember his names for the life of me.

Q. Sandelli?

A. No ma'am it wasn't Mr. Sandelli. I didn't see Mr. Sandelli until a few moments later when I actually got to North Parking and I saw Mr. Sandelli and I thought, "What," — he said he was fine, and at that time I was on one of those little Pentagon taxis we call them. They had myself, an Army Major, a civilian and a couple of other people that were injured. A few people were—I think the major said that he cut his leg, or ankle was broken. When I came out of the building, actually, I remember making my way, stumbling my way toward some water I heard, and when I got through a hole in the wall, it was light on the other side and there was a water main that was broken coming down from the ceiling, and I just had a sigh of relief, because it was a lot cooler and the air was breathable. I kind of, in shock, stood there for a while and then I, I made it over the rumble that was in the passageway there, and just kind of looked around and I saw there was another opening in the wall, another twenty feet from me. So I went through there, and it was the, you know how the Pentagon has the rings and then you have the alleyways, we call them. It was actually an entrance to the alleyway and once I got through there, there was Captain Masso, my skipper. He was there and I thought to myself, "What is he doing here today?" He was in

civilian clothes. He asked me if I was OK, and there was a couple of other people that were out in that area that were rushing to where the problem was, and they asked me if there was anyone else inside. I just kind of nodded my head and pointed inside, and so at that point, I believe it was one of the DPS (Defense Protective Service) officers grabbed me and helped me over to where they had put those other people in the cart I mentioned, and set us down there. Then they asked if we could walk and so they told the ones that could walk to follow, you know, that gentleman, another gentleman who was telling us how to get out of the command, or the Pentagon.

Then they sent the cart for the Major who couldn't walk, and then when the cart came back through they had room on it. They had myself and the female civilian to get on the cart and that's when they took us to the triage area out in North Parking.

From there, it was kind of chaos for a while and they were trying to get a handle on people who had severe injuries, people who had serious and that kind of thing. So they started grouping people and giving them medical attention.

Then I remember seeing an Air Force plane fly over the Pentagon. I thought that's wonderful. I felt secure when I saw the plane.

So shortly after that, they're grabbing different people, of course, with the severity of the injuries, putting some in ambulances. There was a couple of squad cars drove up. So they put myself, another Army officer, two Army officers, the gentleman who had the broken leg and another Major who had some first degree flash burns on his arm and his face and they took us to Arlington Hospital.

Then when we got to Arlington, they checked everybody out. I had a few scrapes and scratches, but I didn't really notice them. So they pulled my pants leg up. I had, my right leg I had a deep wound. They gave me about four stitches in that, and then my left leg, I had a long scar and I

took eight to ten stitches in that. And I had bumps and bruises and a few additional lumps in my head I didn't have when I started that morning.

I'd sucked down a lot of smoke, so my chest was burning and I was coughing and that kind of thing. So I didn't find out 'til later what had happened, I then found out that it was a plane that ran into the Pentagon as well.

So then, I started thinking about where my different shipmates in the building were. So that day, after they gave me medical attention, they sent me home. I stayed there for a couple of days, and, you know, it's just been one day at a time. I've been fine (he's still choked up as he speaks).

Some days are better than others.

Last week, I recently decided to call stress management, and so I'm seeing them. I sleep fairly well, some days. My wife mentions that sometimes I talk in my sleep, and she says regretfully, it's not pillow talk. Sometimes I wake up in the middle of the night, but as Captain Hall said earlier, we're all different, so we deal with things differently. (very choked up). I thought, well, in the scheme of things, I have no complaints. I'm here today. Got a chance to see my family, everyday after that.

Trying to get a new appreciation for different things. Before I went back to work, I think that Friday, same week, I don't remember the date, I was at home. Kind of just milling around, and the list came out—Thank you, Ma'am. (someone apparently handed him some tissues)— of the people who were still missing.

At first I thought, "Well, do I want to do this?" And I had to know how Petty Officer Noeth was doing. When I read his name in the paper (in tears again) I just lost it. Then I just went to bed. I called my mother and went to bed.

When I started getting calls from different people in the unit wanting to find out how I was doing and that kind of thing. Then my Chief called, Chief Derr.

Q. (25:54) You know Chief Derr?

A. Yes, Ma'am. We've been friends for years. He called to see how I was doing. Then, you know, he asked different questions. Mostly was I all right? Then I asked him about ITC Select Brown. I asked him how he was doing, and he said that he was doing fine. He told me at that moment, he says, "Well, I don't know how you're going to feel about this, but I wanted to tell you that Petty Officer Brown's son was one of the children who was in the special program on the plane that was supposed to go to California." And so, his son, along with the other people were killed in that particular plane that hit the Pentagon.

And I thought, "Unbelievable!" As I talked to different people they shared with me, you know, their feelings on different matters and the more I talked to them, the stranger it all became, because there were people that I, that I knew and had known for years who were fine, but the way it touched them with losing even former co-workers or neighbors or what have you, it was just so bizarre.

I got a call a couple of days after that, and I kind of lose all track of time, because - but I got a call from one of the CACOs. Actually it was, I can't remember his name, but one of the Commanders in our unit and she knew I was there that day, and she had called. She had been working with this particular CACO, and so she called, and asked if I could talk to one of the families, because, I can't remember one of the Commanders in our unit.

Q: (28:45) Commander Lankingwall (phonetic)

A. No, Ma'am, it was a gentleman. He was on watch that morning. He was part of the –

Q. Vauk

A. No, sir.

Q. Lieutenant Vauk. Lieutenant Commander Vauk.

A. Vauk, no ma'am there was another. There was another. There was Commander Vauk was on watch.

Q. (28:56) There was another one on watch with you?

A. Yes, I can't remember his name for the life of me, but his family wanted to talk to me, and she said that I didn't have to do it, but it would help, she thought, to bring closure to that family. So I told her that I would do that, but I needed some time to get together. So I met her and we went to the Hilton Hotel in Springfield, and the Hilton had given the CACO a room where they could conduct their interviews. So I talked to the Commander's father who was a Sergeant Major in the Army, retired. His brother who was a Major in the Marine Corps Reserves and they asked me different questions and things like that.

The father, all of them were so appreciative that I had done that, and they understood, kind of gave me a sense that, OK, I helped, and that kind of helped me to deal with some things, because at that time I was feeling very sorry for myself. Dealing with this incredible sense of guilt (tearful again) that I'd made. Happy that I did but at the cost of my shipmates and friends that hadn't. So that's one of the things I deal with on a regular basis it seems.

I'm doing fine. I've been back to reserve duty. I've been back to work now for a while, and I rushed back to work thinking that the more I, the faster I get my life back to the way it was, the better I'll be.

So the first couple weeks I over did it. Didn't eat properly. Worked long hours. Slept little and I ended up having to take some more time off, because I needed the rest. So I guess I'm learning that I just have to take one day at a time. One day at a time.

What's wonderful, best therapy I've had in my life, after any difficult day has been to go home and to see my wife and daughter and those little hugs mean so much. The day I came home from the hospital, September 11<sup>th</sup>, I was wearing whites. I can laugh about it now. Wearing whites and I was looking pretty tattered. As I said, I had cuts on my legs and arms, so they'd given me stitches. But for some reason they cut my pants from stem to stern, on both sides. They were looking like some type of fashion statement (interviewers laugh). Of course, the uniform was dirty and still had smoke and stuff on it and there was stains from blood and other things. I had this cut on my, on the palm of my hand that they didn't put stitches in, but they put some type of tape. They didn't want to put the stitches in the palm of my hand. But they wrapped my hand from the tip of my fingers, almost up to my elbow. Excuse me, and so it looked like it was, it looked a lot worse than it was, and I looked a lot worse than I was physically. So when my daughter saw that, she just broke into tears and I told her that I was fine. Just looked bad, and she gave me a hug, and it made all the difference in the world.

And as I said before, the poor kid looks like me so I have to do all I can to make sure that she has every advantage in life that she's owed.

(everyone laughs)

This weekend, just came off my reserve weekend and they were talking about recall and that kind of thing. We're asking, had asked for volunteers and they said at this time it didn't look like there would be anyone from the unit recalled. But they were devising a plan where we could, like we have done, stand watch and things like that, but it would be stepped up, and asked us to hold up on our two weeks or whatever time we wanted to drill until they came out with the need of the active duty counterparts. Maybe around the holidays, or for things like that, but then they said that they wanted volunteers also to help rebuild our command center to make it bigger and better than it was before. Then they also said that it was going to be in the same, I understood them to say that it was going to be in the same area.

I thought, OK, well I've been here since 1984. I have a couple of years to make sure I'm not in the NCC 106 (Editors note: NCC 106 is his reserve unit) when they move back to that particular command center. I don't want to go back there. I've been back to the Pentagon a couple of times. I'm very shy of loud noises now, and different things. Day by day. Day by day.

One thing was they told me, the Chief called me and told me, said, "Hey look, looks like you're going to get a Purple Heart." I thought that's so unfair. And I said to him, "Well, I've always been very proud of my penmanship. I never got an award for that." Ironic, I guess.

I didn't get a chance to make it to Petty Officer Noeth's funeral. They had it in New York. I sent my condolences. We're devising plans in our unit to help the families of our reserve shipmates who died. Things of helping, giving the family support, raking leaves, whatever they need. Not just now when it's needed, but after when all the calls have stopped and things like that to let them know, as you all know. NCC 106 is a family, and you leave, but you never leave.

It's like "Hotel California," you check out, but you don't leave, and so that's what were doing in our unit to help out and make things better.

I got a call from Red Cross a couple of weeks ago. I've always donated blood to Red Cross. I heard different things about the Red Cross, some good, some bad, but they called me to see if I needed anything, and that helped me to feel that over the years when I'd donated in the services and my blood, I had to at least feel better because they do reach out and touch people. So it's a shame I had to learn it this way, but I'm learning different things and that helps me to feel good. I'm looking for anything I can to help me with that. I'll be OK. It's just time, I know that.

Q. (38:14) Don't you feel a lot of love for you around you? Don't you feel that people really love you and too?

A. Yes ma'am, I do. It's amazing that in times of crisis regardless of where you stand on different issues whatever they are, in times like this it doesn't matter. We're all Americans and all want to do our duty to fill our responsibility as Americans to put all that aside and get in where we fit in, whatever it is, and that's encouraging. Very encouraging.

Early this year, in February, I'll have twenty-two years in the service, and so earlier this year, my wife and I debated if I were going to stay in or get out. So we'd reached that conclusion that I was going to stay in in August.

So, after it was all over my wife said, "Well,"—this was just last week—"are you still going to stay in?"

I told her that before there was a possibility that I might not stay in, but now there's no way I'm going to get out. I can't. I may be needed. So I'll be in as long as they'll have me and who knows in the process I might even pick up Chief. (chuckle) So there we are.

Unless you have questions, Sir, I don't have anything else.

Q. (40:01) Where do you go from here?

A. I don't know. It's one day at a time. Continue to reach out. Try to understand that I'm not who I was, and to appreciate every minute, whether I'm sitting in traffic and trying to get in here this morning without a decal on my car. (all chuckle).

Q. You need that, huh?

A. Or whatever it is just understand that everyday that I have after the 11<sup>th</sup> is a bonus, and what I do with that bonus is entirely up to me, but how do I deal with it? I don't know I guess I just do, or just make an attempt, whether or not I'm successful, but that's OK. I'm dealing with that. I'm dealing with getting older. My legs still get stiff when I sit for a long time, and it pops when I walked. Yaah, oh well. My PT score may not be as high as it was, but I'll still complete it, and just take more naptime.

Tell you what would be nice, would be sometime from now, because I'm not ready and I don't know if I will be ready to give my daughter away, but I'd like to see that. I'd like to see what type of person she becomes and to know that whatever person she comes—becomes, or how she turns out I had something to do with it. That's it.

Q. (42:23) More than if she just looks like you, right?

A. More than if she just looks like me, yes Sir, but hopefully that'll change.

Q. (42:28) I have one of them, too. (all chuckle) Some of this may be sprinkled through what you said, but were there any things that stand out in your mind as far as lessons that you've

learned through this, either through the evacuation or in the aftermath that you could share with us?

(let me turn the tape over before we go on)

Let me ask you that, lessons learned and also I want to ask you about if there were any great examples of leadership you saw through that?

A. Yes sir, leadership? I've seen wonderful examples of leadership from everyone. I've seen, witnessed incredible amounts of courage written about, exemplified by a lot of different people. I've seen people in harms way, put themselves in harms way to help other people across the board. As I say when I came out of the Command Center the skipper was there. He was there in civilian clothes, and as I was coming out, he was going in. He was going in with some other people who were there. People who were hurt and injured were helping other people to get out who were worse off than they were.

People who weren't hurt at all were consoling people who were. Maybe not hurt, but emotionally scarred. The people at the hospital were wonderful. They took us in wave after wave. They had people set up to direct, you know, depending upon what the severity of your injuries were, they were directing people here and there. They were giving them ample attention and then move you to another place where they could treat your emotional needs. They had people in place at Arlington hospital who volunteered, and so that's how I got home that day. A volunteer actually took me home.

People who I hadn't seen or talked to in years, calling me up to find out how I was doing, flowers, cards, letters. What my reserve unit is doing for the people in our, who had fallen in our reserve unit. Wonderful, wonderful examples of leadership, and kindness. So yes I have, absolutely.

Lessons learned? It's all still cloudy for me now. One of the main lessons I've learned. For years, I've never been able to sit comfortably with things in my pocket, keys. I don't carry a wallet. Take my keys out and put them on my, when I get to work, which is a bad habit I found out. Take my keys out of my pocket and put them on my cover, so when I leave I'll pick the cover up and get the keys. First, I have to get new keys now and that kind of thing. To be alert. Just a lot of different things. To cope, mostly I guess. That's what I battle daily, to cope, without becoming dependent on different things.

Q. (46:26) You're finding the right source of helps?

A. Yes, sir, now, and that's another thing people have reached out. I've gotten a call from all over the hospital several times. Gotten a call from Dewitt, or whatever the medical center is-

Q. (46:45) Dewitt in the Pentagon.

A. Oh, the -

Q. Delorenzo?

A. Delorenzo, yes, that's who I have the stress management sessions with. Different people have reached out to see that I was OK, and then offer their services and not push the services. The psychiatrist from the Pentagon, she told me that she wanted me to take her number and to call her when I felt like talking. And she said, if you don't feel like talking that's fine. I'll call you in a couple of weeks, or I'll talk to your wife and see how you're doing. And so that's been wonderful.

I guess because people understand better than I do that it takes time. I'm learning to -

Q. (47:33) But you're being a good student of yourself?

A. I'm trying the best I can, Sir. Some days better than others.

Q. Sounds like it.

A. My employer's been very nice, the appointments I have. Of course I try and arrange things like this morning. I'm working twelve-hour shifts. Twelve in the afternoon to twelve at night, and so, of course, the medical attention I receive I have no way to do that. Whenever I can get it and without taking leave and that kind of thing. So they've been very, very cooperative and very kind. They've also been very cooperative and kind not to ask questions, and so I appreciate that. That's one of the things that I really kind of regretted about going to work was facing everyone, and the questions, and not being able to answer some. And then not being able to talk about it without getting emotional, but they haven't done that so that's good.

Q. (48:37) Is there anything we haven't asked you that you'd like to say?

A. No ma'am, I think I've talked enough.

Q. Anybody else you can think of we should talk with?

A. Perhaps Mr. Sandelli, Mr. Moore, Commander Moore who also works with Mr. Sandelli. Mr. Moore wasn't there. He was TDY, but of course, he had co-workers and stuff who were there. Mr. Sandelli did one of those co-workers.

If you haven't talked to Captain Masso yet, you might.

Q. (49:22) Yes, I was thinking about that.

(Another Interviewer) Had not yet, but we planned to.

Q. Did he ever answer you? What was he doing there?

A. No ma'am, he didn't. (laugh)

Q. (49:31) I think he works in Crystal City, so maybe he just was able –

A. Aw, making sense. He was there, but then he split.

Q. That was within a minute though, so he had to have been in the Pentagon.

A. He was there in a heartbeat.

Q. (49:49) CO's are like that. (laughter) Well that you so much for you time.

A. You're welcome, Sir. Congratulations, by the way.

Q. Thank you, I think.

(Another interviewer) Thank you.

A. It was good seeing you all today.

Q. (50:04) Really, very good.

Transcribed by:  
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