

## Pentagon Attack

Interview with Ralph Newton  
November 19, 2001

Putney: This is an oral history interview with Ralph Newton, the deputy director for the Real Estate and Facilities Directorate, Washington Headquarters Services (WHS), Department of Defense. We are in the Pentagon, and it is November 19, 2001. [The interviewer is Diane T. Putney, OSD Historical Office.]

Mr. Newton, what are some of your key responsibilities as deputy director?

Newton: As deputy director for Real Estate and Facilities, I am responsible for serving in the absence of the director. The primary responsibilities of Real Estate and Facilities are to provide facilities and support services to the Office of the Secretary of Defense. We lease facilities for a broad range of DoD tenants throughout the national capital area. We manage and operate the Pentagon from a facilities perspective, as well as provide security through the Defense Protective Service at the Pentagon and in areas around the national capital region. That encapsulates the primary duties. We also have some information technology functions for WHS. Another key piece of what we do is provide graphic support to the Office of the Secretary of Defense. As deputy director, I serve as operating officer and direct a lot of operations through subordinate division heads.

Putney: Prior to September 11, had the directorate been thinking about threats against the Pentagon and buildings in the Washington area? What sort of things had been done over the few months or years prior to September 11 to protect against terrorism?

Newton: Over previous years we have prepared and published evacuation plans and emergency planning guides, etc. There had been some work done on continuance of operations plans throughout the department, also within WHS. Soon after I became deputy director in July of 2000, I began getting involved in the need for WHS to revitalize our efforts for emergency planning in Real Estate and Facilities and began to hold a series of meetings to review and restructure our emergency response plans. We had a meeting as late as August 2001. Some issues directly affected how we responded on September 11. We had a fire on August 3 here in the Building which pointed out additional issues, and subsequent to that fire, Mr. Haselbush, the director of Real Estate and Facilities, and I co-chaired a meeting to review the fire and the responses identifying and discussing specific problems with the response as well as actions that should be taken to correct the problems.

Putney: Was the threat envisioned as being an airplane? Or perhaps a car bomb? Was there any idea of a direct attack?

Newton: We never, to my knowledge, thought of an airplane specifically as a threat. We considered car bombs, additional types of weapons, chemicals and biological threats, and there had been a program begun through the Defense Protective Service (DPS) to respond to those kinds of threats. Some of the prior planning we had done related to where we could establish a command post presence in case of an event, and on September 11 Mr. Haselbush and I reported to that command post location and established a presence there to continue our role as the leadership of RE&F.

Putney: So you were here on September 11.

Newton: Yes, I was.

Putney: Could you describe what you were doing that morning and how you learned of the air crash?

Newton: I had a meeting in the adjacent conference room an hour or so before the crash. We had a contractor there, and we were talking about training on customer service. We heard about the initial plane crash into the first World Trade Center tower, and after that, the meeting broke off. I was back in my office when we heard about the second crash. The chief of DPS was keeping us informed of what was going on at that time. I had come back and sat down at my computer in my office when I felt the shudder of the Building and heard the crash. I looked up and saw a ball of flame over the top of the Building.

Putney: We are in room 4A111 and looking out Mr. Newton's window. We can see across the courtyard. Even now I can see the tarpaulin on the roof. We are almost straight across the courtyard from the impact site.

Newton: Just a little off to the left.

Putney: Did you know what had caused that explosion?

Newton: No, but it only took a few seconds to realize, because I knew of the second plane hitting the second World Trade Center tower, and intuitively I realized that we had been struck as well.

Putney: Was there an immediate evacuation?

Newton: Yes, very shortly after that. Of course, people who knew of the World Trade Center and who had heard and felt the crash here began to react very quickly. There were some alarms and voices over the PA system, we call it the "big voice," but there was so much noise in the corridors from people talking and moving that the message

was muddled. People were rapidly moving out of the Building. In general, the evacuation was orderly. Some people, either frightened or in a real hurry to get someplace, were running, but most people were moving toward the exits in an orderly way.

Putney: Where were you heading?

Newton: Initially, I followed the crowd down to the corridor one stairwell and down to the second floor. I initially was going to the Building Operations Center to see what was going on. I was told in the corridor that a plane had crashed. There was a lot of confusion, and the evacuation out of corridor two was stacked up. They had either stopped people from exiting or the amount of people was great, and people were just backed up in the corridor. At that point I assessed that I should go to our alternate command post site at 400 Army Navy Drive, and I left the Building via the Metro entrance, because corridor two was backed up. Outside the Building I connected with Mr. Haselbush and Kent Womack, the director of the Leased Facilities Division of RE&F. Together we walked over to 400 Army-Navy Drive.

Putney: Do you have a radio that you normally carry or a cell phone?

Newton: I have a cell phone, and that was one significant frustration that day, to be unable to make contact with anyone. At the time the cell phone was virtually worthless. Later in the day we were able to get word out. When we reached Army-Navy Drive we used regular desk phones and established some contact and some presence.

Putney: So there was already an office over there?

Newton: That's the front office of our Leased Facilities Division that manages leased space in the national capital area. So there is office space there, but it's not specifically

configured for a command center. There is a bank of desks, a conference room, telephones and computers, and we were able to set up there and start to piece together a response and keep communication lines up.

Putney: Who then did you start communicating with? Are calls coming in or are you making calls?

Newton: The first thing we did was to try to establish contact with our division heads-- Mr. Cooke, director of WHS; DPS communications, to let them know where we were. Those were the first groups we contacted. Subsequent to that we dealt with other groups, such as the Army, Navy, and Air Force administrative assistants' offices, the Pentagon Renovation Office, as well as GSA and some other organizations.

Putney: Were you able to get the sense that most of your staff was out safely or was it a matter of not knowing the status of your people?

Newton: We knew that our immediate office was outside, but RE&F has about 1,000 employees, and we did not initially know if there were any casualties. One purpose for establishing a presence over there was to identify some place for division heads to call into and report in their muster. We did not get the final muster until about 9:30 that night. I received that call when finally the last division head was able to confirm all his people were safe. At that point it was almost 12 hours after the attack.

Putney: You have 1,000 people all over the Building; it's remarkable that you were able to get that by the end of the day.

Newton: I would have liked it a lot sooner, but in hindsight maybe that was not too bad. We have since then reviewed evacuation procedures with all the division heads in our

organization and a process for making muster reports more clearly understood. It should have happened a lot sooner.

Putney: I guess with so many employees all over the Building, I am impressed that everyone got out all right. Had you heard of another plane on the way?

Newton: We did when we were walking over to 400 Army-Navy Drive. I don't know who supposedly made the statement about another plane, but once we got over there a second alert went out, and we were told to evacuate that building. That was also for the supposed second plane.

Putney: Could you describe what you did for the next several hours, how you functioned over there, what kinds of decisions you made, and how you tried to anticipate what the next problem would be?

Newton: A lot of the initial activities we were engaged in concerned the situation in the Building—the extent of the damage, how much was on fire, could we figure out what the possible Building population was in that particular area and to what organizations they belonged. This was complicated by the fact that the area where the plane struck was in the area that was part of the newly renovated space and not fully occupied, and the adjacent space, from where we were moving people into the new space. It took a while to figure out exactly where the different organizational elements were so that they could be tabulated. Most of that work was done by the Pentagon Renovation Office, because they had the best information about which groups they had moved into the new space and which ones were still residing in the old space. So we worked on trying to find out what the Building population was and get a picture of what the potential casualties were.

We were trying to coordinate response and establish lines of communication for all the people we would have to deal with up and down the chain, as well as to support agencies that would be helping. We tried to arrange for materials and equipment to be delivered to support the response to the attack. We worked with PenRen to arrange lighting to the site so they would have lighting after hours. PenRen did most of that effort. We coordinated with our customer base to keep them engaged and knowledgeable about developments. We immediately started working on how we would arrange additional office space for people displaced by this event. We checked up on our building systems. We run a network for WHS functions, and we wanted to establish that it was still functioning, that the telephone system was still operational. Our graphics organization immediately went to work to support the Office of the Secretary of Defense and Public Affairs to provide them with any necessary graphics to get briefings to the press and that sort of thing.

Putney: That very afternoon?

Newton: Yes. In the late afternoon, early evening, we were engaged in discussions with the Washington Metropolitan Transit Authority to discuss the status of Metro. The trains were no longer stopping at the Pentagon, but passing on through. We arranged to redirect the bus service and started working on plans for the next business day. Mr. Cooke passed on to us the wish of the Secretary of Defense to have the Building operational the next day.

Putney: Do you remember when that order came down from Mr. Cooke?

Newton: It probably was mid-afternoon. We had been in contact with Mr. Cooke a lot earlier than that, and it became clear that the Secretary wanted us to be able to get

people back to work the next day. By mid-afternoon we started making a lot of calls to try and sort out what we would do to get the people to work. For people who drove, where we would park them. We encouraged as many as possible to take public transportation, and we needed to get them from that transportation onto the site and into the Building.

Putney: Did you have the smoke problem under control at that point?

Newton: No, I didn't know that we had everything under control at that point. The fire was still raging; there a tremendous amount of smoke in the Building. We had isolated it to some degree. The Building Operations Center was able to change air pressures in different air conditioning zones to contain the smoke to a great degree. But we were not convinced that the Building would truly be occupiable the next day, because we didn't know the extent of the damage or how long it would take to contain the fire. By later that night, 8:00 or 9:00, we had a feel that things were at least contained within the zone and that we would be able to purge the Building of the heavy smoke. The smoky smell was still there, and there was a hazy yellowish air throughout this side of the Building, which is opposite to the crash site. We saw that we could bring people back in, and start working to reestablish the presence of the department and the Building.

Putney: Were you getting word that essential functions of the Building, like the National Military Command Center and different service command centers, although the Navy's was destroyed, could be up and running?

Newton: They never stopped running, to my knowledge, and we knew that they were still operating through the day. For instance, Mr. Cooke never left the Building. There was still some core of the leadership, and the operational elements of the command



centers were still functioning, and we knew that through the day. Our concern was bringing the typical office worker back. That's what makes up so much of this work force.

Putney: You were confident that you could keep the Secretary in his office and keep the National Military Command Center functioning? Your people were able to get the water valves and contain the smoke, and these essential offices would remain operational?

Newton: Confident? We never knew. It was a reasonable risk that we felt we would be able to utilize the building systems to control the hazard so that, yes, those operations could continue. In a situation like that, it's difficult to guess beforehand the responses necessary. Tremendous credit needs to go to so many of the blue collar trades people, police officers, and building engineers who manipulated the systems to make sure we could control the fire and keep the air conditioning and electrical systems up and running so that those other critical areas could continue. That was less in the hands of leadership of RE&F to make those things happen and more in the hands of the operational people down in the utility trenches, the mechanical rooms, and other places.

Putney: As it got to late afternoon, were you aware of the fire department being the on site command, in both the inner courtyard and outside?

Newton: That's a prearranged status. We understand that and concur wholeheartedly with that structure. In an emergency which takes a response from Arlington County, it is necessary for them to control the site of the emergency so they can direct their forces to respond to it. We were aware of that within a short period of time. For the first hour

or two, time was in some strange warp. Sometimes it seemed to be moving faster, sometimes slower. But within an hour or two afterwards, we knew that there was an on scene commander, and that command position actually moved a couple of times. At one point they were under the interstate, under the I-395 overpass at Fern Street, then moved to the site, and ultimately there was an on-scene commander, and a Joint Operations Center, which was established at Fort Myer. We were aware that it was established, and that's the expected thing.

Putney: How did you communicate with the on-scene commander while you are at Army-Navy Drive?

Newton: Through the Defense Protective Services Command Center, essentially. We don't, as the Real Estate and Facilities Directorate, have in the current structure, a direct operational role in emergency response, the physical response to the scene. We have elements of our organization that do respond. RE&F and Federal Facilities, the Building Management function, both do, but in an emergency we provide the resources to the on-scene commander, which was the Arlington Fire Department in this case, and they use them to direct their response. DPS provides security of the site and the law enforcement control, and then the Building Management function provides support control, building systems, etc. We do have a direct role in managing the communication up the chain to our leadership, making sure that our customers are kept informed, and making sure that all the other RE&F services to the Building--everything from telephones and supplies to lease arrangements--are provided and customers are accommodated. Parking management is another piece of it. All those things outside of the immediate physical response, we have to manage, sort through, and figure out

ways in the emergency to keep the pieces going so that the Pentagon can continue to operate.

Putney: At about 8:00 p.m. on September 11 there was a meeting in the Building--did you attend that?

Newton: Yes.

Putney: Who was in charge and can you describe the meeting?

Newton: Doc Cooke called me and asked me to come over to attend the meeting. I came over from 400 Army-Navy Drive. The Army general, a one- or two-star, who was the commanding officer of the Military District of Washington (MDW), was there, and sort of co-chaired the meeting with Doc Cooke, although the meeting was turned over to the Arlington County battalion chief who was on site. It might have been the deputy chief of the Arlington County fire department. They described some of the problems. There were a lot of different command centers, and they were trying to consolidate all those functions into a single response capability. It was true. The Pentagon Renovation had their own command operation set up out of their offices in North parking, we had our operation at 400 Army-Navy Drive, there was the on-scene commander function that was established by Arlington County. There may have been others, but those are the ones I am aware of. Someone from the FBI talked about their role. FEMA was there. Search and rescue teams from Fairfax County were there. Representatives from at least the Air Force, Army, and perhaps Navy were there. The meeting was initially called at the request of Arlington County. The commanding officer of MDW sort of chaired it, but Doc Cooke was also there lending the power of his position to get us organized and be a more cohesive a unit in not having these isolated

functions. They were all trying to do good things, but they were not orchestrating through a single organizational structure.

Putney: Did this meeting lead to the establishment of the Joint Operations Center (JOC) at Fort Myer?

Newton: Yes. In hindsight, it probably should have been changed, but RE&F provided a facilities or building management presence there, and a security DPS presence there. Because of the breadth of the rest of our responsibilities there should have been someone representing the rest of the RE&F functions, because we then continued to do all of those things outside of this structure. It probably would have been beneficial to have an additional person there to coordinate all these other issues up there at the JOC.

Putney: Who represented RE&F and, therefore, represented WHS in the JOC?

Newton: It was really the FFD and DPS. There was no specific Washington Headquarters Service, from a pure leadership/management role, in the JOC. There were only the functional elements. In hindsight, there should have been an additional body up there. In fact, we are continuing our planning and organizing for emergency response, and that is one of the considerations. In fact I have some documents here that I've been working on, where a crisis action team would include someone from the director of WHS. If not Doc Cooke, then someone he might delegate to play that role in the emergency process. That's something that, in hindsight, we needed. Not that we were ineffective, but we were less efficient than we might have been. Things that we needed to get done did get done, but possibly not in as efficient a manner, and we tended to spend more time agitating over them rather than actually doing them.

Putney: Can you give an example of a task that needed to be done, but it wasn't done through the JOC--something your folks knew needed to be done, and so you just did it?

Newton: Coordination with Metro is probably a prime example. Arrangement of off-site parking for employees is another. South Parking was initially taken up the first few days, and we lost about half of that after that. How did we recover the lost parking? Another is the communication chain to customers and employees. We set up on the, an incident response information page with OSDPA on the RE&F Web site. Someone that went into the Defense Link could hit on a button and get straight to our Web site and get information about parking, working systems, DoD and commuter buses, all the information they needed to know to get back to work and what to expect when they got there. They needed certain pieces of identification, visitors would be dealt with in such and such a fashion, all bags would be checked, all the information in terms of security. Those types of things were executed through RE&F, not through the JOC. The JOC was predominantly responding to the crash site. I am sure it overlapped, there is not a clear line of differentiation, because we were constantly in touch with people at the JOC to gain information about what the current state of the response was, what the security requirements were, where the boundaries of the crash site would be established. There was a tremendous dialogue. I probably called the JOC 20 times a day in the first weeks or so, maybe more than that. If anything, that is why it would have been helpful to have a RE&F or WHS person there, outside the purely facilities and security piece, because of the need for such a large amount of communication.

Putney: Were you involved with anything the FBI might have needed? The FBI attends the 8:00 meeting, at which a representative stands and explains what the FBI was doing. How did they affect your directorate?

Newton: Of course, DPS, which is one of our divisions, worked with the FBI. I can't think of anything directly supporting them, outside of DPS support. We arranged for vehicles through GSA, vans, that we provided to the FBI to allow them to move people around the Building and the site area. They were setting up an evidence field in North Parking where they collected stuff. We arranged for a number of vans to be available to them so that they could move people around. There may have been other things, but I can't think of any.

One thing I haven't mentioned at all is that the FEMA presence was strong. FEMA was at that meeting as well. I think that the FBI basically said it was a crime zone, and they were going to control it very strictly. Our access to areas that they considered part of the crime scene would be very limited and only through them. They established site control, for a number of reasons. They didn't want people to contaminate the scene, to get the best shot at gathering evidence. Lord knows, the devastation of the site must have made it a tremendous challenge to them. They basically just established what we all realized it to be--a crime scene. FEMA, at that point, was really in charge, but the FBI was controlling the site.

Putney: You have FEMA in charge, not the Arlington County Fire Department?

Newton: At that point, FEMA was really in charge of the site, the crash scene, and the fire-rescue-recovery effort was coordinated by FEMA.

Putney: At the 8:00 meeting was the search and rescue effort still underway?

Newton: Yes.

Putney: How long did it go on?

Newton: I don't know, exactly, but they were here for days. Maybe some elements as long as a week or longer, because once it is no longer a rescue effort it is a recovery effort, and they had assets that were still valuable to that aspect of it.

Putney: So the 8:00 meeting was about firefighting, search and rescue effort, and also about a crime scene. There were different functional people there for different purposes, and it was all going on simultaneously?

Newton: Right. It was an interesting meeting, because it was not entirely structured as I would have expected, it was fairly loose. People who had something to say were given an opportunity to have the floor and say their piece. The Arlington County deputy fire chief made statements about what they were doing, what they needed, and what kind of cooperation they needed to fight the fire. The FBI made its pitch about the crime scene. The search and rescue people talked about the activities that they would be engaged in and what we could expect for the next few days. They talked about establishing the Joint Ops Center up at Fort Myer, and each organization had the opportunity to ask who really needed to be there, so as not to overburden the operation with extra people not necessary for a streamlined function. That's where I talked to Doc Cooke and asked him if we needed other than DPS and building managers, but should we have another one. We kind of agreed "no," but in hindsight I certainly would have recommended differently. We had a loose and open meeting, and rather than concluding the meeting, they asked people who wanted to talk about various subjects to gather in groups. It just broke down that way, and we got names and numbers of

people who would be coming to the JOC. There was a lot going on, and it was still smoky. When I got home I smelled like smoke. I never felt, at that point, to be in danger, certainly not that the fire was at any moment going to come licking around the corner. I noticed for some days after that, a raspy cough, which I attributed to having inhaled smoke. But that has gone away. After the meeting I went to the Building Manager's Office, where a lot of people had been working through the day, and I had seen some of them right after the event. I had talked to them in the corridor downstairs before I left the Building. They were still there, looking very tired, haggard, and dirty. They had been very close to the crash scene. I thanked them for their efforts and told them their hard work was appreciated. After that, I wasn't sure if I could get my car out of South Parking, but I did, and went home. I got home about 10:00 p.m. and proceeded to get phone calls through my home number. Bill Davidson, the administrative assistant of the Air Force, called several times through the night and early morning hours. I was asked by Doc Cooke to make sure that he knew what the status of Metro would be the next day, and I called him about 5:00 a.m. the next morning after having spoken with the director of security at Metro. Their plans were to not to stop at the Pentagon that day.

Putney: That's Metro's call, not to stop at a station?

Newton: Yes. It's their system, not ours, if they feel it is not safe or secure for their trains or buses to run a particular route. They could shut down the line from either side, but they chose not to, and continued the connection through the Pentagon to Rosslyn and down through Crystal City. They just didn't stop at the Pentagon station. It is their system to run, and they have the responsibility for the security of their passengers, so it



is their call. I don't remember exactly when I reported into the office the next day, probably close to my normal arrival time. I got here about 8:00, but the line to get into the Building was so long and slow that I walked over to 400 Army-Navy Drive and got on a computer there and called over here to our administrator who was already in and told them where I was. I worked there for a while and got a phone call saying the line had disappeared, so I came over. I was able to park in South Parking.

Putney: Have you yet seen the exterior of the Building at the impact site?

Newton: Yes, I have.

Putney: When did you go over and see it?

Newton: That night before I went home, but I did not get over there on the ground, I saw it from the highway. Through this whole process I had mixed emotions over my role. Should I try to take more of an operational role at the site or is it my responsibility to support the continuity of the organization. I had to be somewhere in between the operational element and Doc Cooke and the chain of the departmental leadership. I had a lot of conflict with myself about where I should be. In previous positions I would have been more in the operational phase. Figuring that I am not a firefighter, police officer, or turn wrenches on water systems and that sort of thing, I did not go over to the crash site that day, figuring I would be in the way more than a benefit. I felt I had more of a coordination role than an elemental operational role. I saw the crash site on the way home that night. By that time they had lights on it. It was shocking, not something you would expect to see. The fires were still burning in many areas, although a lot of it was smoke and smoldering. The fire inside the Building was still burning at that point, and the fire on the roof continued for a week or more.

Putney: The Arlington Fire Department decided it would not work during the night because of safety concerns? When did you learn about that, at the meeting?

Newton: I don't know if that was at the 8:00 meeting or not. Certainly I knew that night that the battalion chief had pulled his people. It's not that he decided not to fight the fire, that is unfair to them. They decided to pull their people out of the Building and fight it from the outside. They did continue to put water on the fire from the outside through the night. I don't know if I knew it at the 8:00 meeting or if I found out about it later, but my recollection is that I got a phone call at home.

As I recall, the battalion chief's statement was that without adequate lighting inside the Building and not having a good understanding of the state of the structure, it would put the firemen substantially at more risk. In hindsight, I would say, whenever they fight a fire, day or night, they never have a good feel for the stability of the structure, so I didn't fully understand it, but it was his call. He has to use his judgment, and I am sure he used his best judgment based on what he knew at the time. They did have a flare-up later that night, but he probably did not understand the scope of the roof fire at that point. I'm only second guessing.

Putney: Do you remember him saying that he was going to pull the firefighters out?

Newton: I think I heard him say it, but I don't remember where. I can almost visualize the person saying it.

Putney: What about September 12, when you finally came back to this office after starting over at Army-Navy Drive? What kinds of things did you do that day?

Newton: A lot of what we did that day was focussed on what we would do with displaced people. Although we started on the 11th, a lot of the efforts were focussed

toward what office arrangements we could make elsewhere, through other DoD organizations or through leased facilities. GSA was a tremendous asset and support organization in this event. They cut through the red tape and got down to providing service. It turns out we had access to a large amount of available office space, and it was a matter of deciding what would be best suited for our needs and what we could turn around in a quick amount of time, with furniture, telephones, computers, all the necessary things. We focused in on predominantly two buildings, the Polk and Taylor buildings, and Crystal Gateway 4, where we had a relatively small space, 30,000 square feet. We wanted to make those available to the organizations that were displaced by the event. Surprisingly, it was not just the crash site but a fairly broad area on either side of the immediate crash site that was affected, either by the fire, smoke, or water damage. About 4,000 people was the initial number, maybe a bit more than that. We worked on that, and defining the boundaries and beginning to maintain a firmer security on that was the big DPS effort that day. On the 12th or a day later we were able very quickly to get MPs inside the Building as well as on the exterior to establish security. Other activities were relocating people not only outside, but inside the Pentagon, finding every nook and cranny of space that could be used. We spent a lot of time working with our customers finding out what their needs were. We were working on how to recover as much space as possible and get the Building cleaned. We also started very rapidly staffing up our ability to test for hazards. We started sampling for asbestos, lead, and different chemicals and gasses, things that potentially could be in the air and be hazardous to people. We worked closely with the Army and their medical organization, especially with groups that have an industrial hygiene focus,

which involves occupational safety issues having to do with workplace hazards, etc. They were very helpful, along with the safety organization in RE&F and contract support to test for hazards. We continued that for at least another week and a half or two weeks to get a good map of where we had hazards. Surprisingly, there were few locations where we had any positive hazards. Those we were able to clean up relatively easily. A big problem was the development of mold, after the fire was out and the air-conditioning systems were turned off in those areas. It was damp and humid, a good place for mold to grow. This was right after the fire was extinguished. We were thinking of moving the boundaries in and occupying the space, but as the mold growth came on strong, especially in the new Wedge 1 renovated areas, we moved the boundaries back out because we felt it was hazardous. The medical community supported that decision. It was not until we had better control over the mold growth and were sure that it stopped at a certain point. We sampled to make sure we didn't have substantial growth, then we were able to narrow the boundaries and provide occupiable space as soon as we got furniture and telephone service and such reestablished.

Putney: As you're getting all these issues addressed and getting your answers and thinking things through were you briefing this up through the chain? How was the leadership being informed?

Newton: We routinely are briefing Mr. Cooke and the administrative assistants to the services and the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Putney: Do you all come to one meeting place at a certain set time for briefings?

Newton: Initially there were briefings every morning for a period of time. We had some briefings with the ESC leadership group. Sometimes Mr. Cooke asked us to provide

him with information to take to those briefings, and sometimes he asked if Mr. Haselbush or I would go with him. Many times John Jester, as chief of DPS, was present at those briefings. A couple of things I did here with Mr. Haselbush's concurrence was to establish routine situation reports that we used to keep Mr. Cooke informed as we established morning meetings here with RE&F. Every day we would meet as a group, go over the activities of the previous day, what was expected of the current day's activity, what the different statuses were of specific things. PenRen had a situation meeting at 8:00 a.m., and we had representatives there that came back to our meeting here. Out of that, salient issues were briefed up to Mr. Cooke. Routinely, RE&F has a presence in the Building Manager's Office and a security presence in the Building. After this event, I recommended to Mr. Haselbush, and he agreed, that we establish a duty watch for the director's office here, so that this office would be represented 24 hours a day. That was an at-home watch after normal business hours, and during the course of the day, the person would probably be the duty watch officer and carry a watch manual which always had information about who to contact. It had logs and records that were made through the course of events. By the time we established it, the process was behind us, and we were in the recovery mode. That person had a specific cell phone and pager that was passed off to the next person over and over. For a period of time that duty watch officer rotation would report on-site on the weekends during daylight hours, sort of a normal business day. It has since been discontinued, but we have maintained the structure so that should we have additional events, we can re-institute that presence. It is for a customer base and for DPS, and the Building Management Office, providing a single point of contact for issues that are

outside what might be construed as "normal" emergency response issues. If it's a fire, they should call DPS here in the Building. If it's a building emergency such as a burst chilled water line, they would still call DPS, and they would coordinate with the Building Manager's Office. But if it is an issue of coordination or providing service or IT networks or has to do with coordinating occupancy or moving back into a space that's being recovered, that person becomes the focal point and is available 24 hours a day to make sure things get done. The reason I did that was because after nine days into the event, I had been playing that role pretty much, and it got to the point where I was exhausted, and we realized we had to pass the baton and get fresh minds to deal with the problems and not someone who has been working too many hours. I think it worked well. The senior division heads, people who understand the organization well, understand the operations and know who to contact, although the manual we put together has all the contact information.

Putney: People were eventually allowed to go back to their offices to collect personal items, did you have anything to do with that?

Newton: We didn't have anything directly to do with that. It was coordinated pretty much through the JOC. There, the people who played a role were not only DPS in coordinating security issues, but also PenRen, because from a facilities recovery perspective, at that point, they had control of Wedge 1. It had not been turned back over to RE&F for normal building operations. PenRen had begun taking control of Wedge 2, because we were right at the point of vacating Wedge 2 in preparation for it to be renovated. So within the boundary zone PenRen still had oversight and management of that space. They played a key role in helping to coordinate who was in

that space, and really it was coordinated through the JOC and not RE&F. Spaces outside of the boundaries and normal operating space we did and still continue to provide management.

Putney: Wedge 1 wasn't yet turned over to RE&F. What would have happened when it was turned over? What does RE&F do when it's turned over to RE&F?

Newton: Normal building operations and management issues involve us. Those are issues that customers have about their space, whether it is air conditioners not working, lights out, a feeling that indoor air quality is bad, something is broken or is not operating right, as well as cleaning and janitorial services. In Wedge 1, since it had not been turned over to us for normal operation, PenRen was doing all those things through their contractors, except for some of the building janitorial services that we were doing. Anything that might be broken or not working right, they were doing those types of things. A transfer of that responsibility is what would have happened.

Putney: Regarding the "big voice" PA system, are there now efforts to have a building-wide system? What was the system prior to September 11?

Newton: The Pentagon is a pretty old Building, and over the course of its occupancy systems were put in. I don't know the history of why it was done that way, but they were done piece-meal, and older systems were patched together with some newer systems, and so there is a hodge-podge of capability, none of which covers singly the entire Pentagon. One of the goals of the renovation is to put in a state of the art fire alarm notification system, etc. What is called the "big voice" is an emergency notification system that was installed in the Pentagon some time ago, before I came to work here in July of 2000, so I don't know exactly how far back it goes. It reaches

much of the Pentagon, but not all of it. There are some dead zones that don't have the "big voice." The idea is that it provides the capability, like a PA system, to announce an emergency and give directions to people to evacuate or not to evacuate or go to another area of the Building. There are some problems with that system which are a combination of things—the effectiveness of the speakers and the amplification of the system. Also the wall, ceiling, and floors in our corridors are all hard surfaces, and the sound reverberates, and that, plus the noise of people trying to evacuate, sounds like gobbledy-goop. The system we will put in will hopefully have better audio quality. There will be better distribution of speakers so that the more localized speakers covering the entire facility should improve greatly the ability to communicate a message.

Putney: Are you doing after action reports with a view towards lessons learned?

Newton: We have done a number of things there. We worked in conjunction with the PenRen and the Army Corps of Engineers, who are involved in this, to look at a lot of issues related to the evacuation of the Building that day. The issues include survivability of people in an immediate fire, explosion or emergency zone; what systems are in place, how they functioned and what they did well or not well. Issues include different firefighting and life safety capabilities of the Building—should we have things they used to call "civil defense lockers," with flashlights, hard hats, masks, etc., scattered around the Building so people could go get gear to help respond to an event, whether a major medical event, or fire, or whatever. We learned a lot by interviewing people who were actually in the zone and people throughout the Building, especially those in the crash zone, about the problems they had. None of what came about, none



of the lessons learned could point to someone not doing their job or a failure, but if we had things in place we could have responded better. For instance, people who came out of the crash area into A&E drive said they were looking for things that would help them fight the fire or try to rescue people injured still inside. But there was no capability. For whatever reason, the fire department had not responded inside at that point. They felt that they could have saved more lives if they had had that capability. We assembled all that information, and there is a report being prepared that will not only help us better define what the requirements should be for the renovated Pentagon, but will be a set of actions, changes, and processes and will be things that we can retrofit onto the existing Pentagon to improve survivability. As I mentioned earlier, in RE&F I was working on emergency response planning and things like that even before the event, and that effort is continuing. We are incorporating additional lessons learned from the attack on the 11th and how things worked in our own planning to try to improve upon our ability to respond in the future.

Putney: Do you see anything good coming out of this tragedy?

Newton: "Good" is a hard word to use. People are going to be aware that bad stuff can and does happen. People can lose their lives, and if you pay closer attention to the planning and procedures put in place to respond and get people out of buildings . . . . I can't tell you how many times we have fire drills, and people won't leave their desks to practice to save lives because their work is more important. We have made sure that every single office in our organization that we can control has evacuation routes posted, and that people understand what they are supposed to do. Those kinds of things are improvements that we can make in the collective building psyche that we have to be

prepared for and think about. Here on the top of my desk I have a couple of flashlights and a hard hat. That is directly related to the fact that I have responsibilities and need to be able to be prepared, but hopefully people will think more about what they will do to look after their office mates and make sure everyone gets out.

From a broader organizational level, I think there is a renewed emphasis on a more specific response planning. What tools we need--certainly better communication tools. We need better organizational structure. We need to practice our response to improve our efficiency. We need to make sure that the work force is educated. We need to continue dialogue in coordination with local authorities. We need to understand as many of the potential threats and different responses to those threats as we can and practice those. We need dialogue with other organizations that have experienced major events like this so we can learn from their experiences. There are lots of things that you can call "good" that will come from this and better our response the next time around.

Putney: Is there anything else you would like to add to this session?

Newton: This is just personal, but I am really proud of the people I work with and the sacrifices that many of them made that day and afterwards--people that are not paid to be emergency response people, but that acted in a way that saved lives and property and protected national assets. I hope that in some way we will properly recognize them and that the citizens of our nation know that there are a lot of federal servants in uniform and civilian clothes that they should be proud of for the way they acted that day.