

Pages 1 through 5 redacted for the following reasons:

(b)(6), (b)(7)c



NATIONAL AIR TRAFFIC CONTROLLERS ASSOCIATION

20A Northwest Blvd., Suite 172 • Nashua, NH. 03063
Telephone 603-595-1978 • FAX 603-879-6826

To: Operations Manager, Boston ARTCC
From: (b)(6), (b)(7)c, Representative On Duty, NATCA Local ZBW
Date: September 15, 2001
Subject: Employee Interviews

At approximately 1500L I was advised by (b)(6), (b)(7)c that FAA needed to conduct interviews with employees concerning the events of 9/11/2001. Specifically, notice was given of intent to interview (b)(6), (b)(7)c and (b)(6), (b)(7)c

As the NATCA representative on duty and as the New England Region NATCA OWCP representative I strongly question this decision by the agency. I have consulted with (b)(6), (b)(7)c member of the (b)(6), (b)(7)c team, and (b)(6), (b)(7)c advises that being forced to recount the traumatic events of the date in question could have serious implications and consequences on the well-being of the aforementioned employees.

NATCA requests that further consideration be given to the decision to interview these employees. It seems apparent to NATCA that all of the information that could be gleaned from an interview with these (b)(6), (b)(7)c could just as easily be gleaned from the voice tapes and radar data that has already been secured from the affected sectors.

FAA is jeopardizing the return of (b)(6), (b)(7)c to (b)(6), (b)(7)c job as an air traffic controller if they pursue this course of action.

Received By:

(b)(6), (b)(7)c

Date:

9/15/01

TIGR CASE INPUT SHEET

Investigation Number: <div style="font-size: 1.2em; font-family: cursive;">042R0122001</div>		Opening Date:	Action Date:
Case Title: <div style="font-size: 1.2em; font-family: cursive;">FAA-NORAD Statements to 9/11 Commission</div>		Case Agent Name: <div style="background-color: black; color: white; padding: 2px;">(b)(6), (b)(7)c</div>	
DOT Element:	Priority:	Subject	
City/State:			
Judicial District:	AUSA/Atty Name:		Initial Consultation Date:
SUBJECT(S)/OTHER(S)			
1) Relationship: -	Last Name:	First Name:	MI:
2) Relationship: -	Last Name:	First Name:	MI:
3) Relationship: -	Last Name:	First Name:	MI:
4) Relationship: -	Last Name:	First Name:	MI:
5) Relationship: -	Institution:		
6) Relationship: -	Institution:		
Joint Agency Referrals:		Other Monetary Results:	
Agency:	Date Sent:	Date:	Amount:
ROI Date: <div style="font-size: 1.2em; font-family: cursive;">8/31/06</div>		Approved: <div style="background-color: black; color: white; padding: 2px;">(b)(6), (b)(7)c</div> <div style="font-size: 1.2em; font-family: cursive;">12/06</div>	
Close Investigation Date: <div style="font-size: 1.2em; font-family: cursive;">12/12/06</div>		<div style="font-size: 1.5em; font-weight: bold; text-align: center;">ENTERED</div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;"> <input type="checkbox"/> DEC 13 2006 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> </div> <div style="font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold; text-align: center; margin-top: 10px;">TIGR</div>	
Summary Predication Input: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No			

Case Status

Current Status

Change Status

Case No: 042R0122001

Start

Elapsed
Days

Description: Closed

12/12/2006

0

Status History

Description

Date

Open

08/24/2004

Open

08/24/2004

IV-STATUS

Return

Oracle Forms Runtime - [Case Summary]

File Edit Records Investigations Report Reference Menu Window Help

Investigation Summary User ID: I2HWLO Date: 03/16/2005

Case Details

Case No: 042R0122001 FY Old Status: Open

Title: FAA-NORAD Statements to 9-11 Commission

Add New Case Add Associated Case Search Brief Brief Edit

Lead Case Agent: (b)(6), (b)(7)c

Assigned Region: Region 2

Case Started: 08/24/2004 Sup. No.:

Shared: ☐ Congressional? ☐ Qui Tam: ☐

CC#: Civil Comp. No:

DOT Element: Federal Aviation Administration

Priority: Employee Integrity

Subject: Other

Jurisdiction / ROI

City & State: NEW YORK NY

Judicial District: Southern District of New York

Last Name First MI

AUSA:

Initial Consultation:

Type Date

Report of Investigation

Days / Costs

Staff Hours: 2,176

Case Elapsed Days: 204

Travel Cost: \$13,830.38

Base / Associated Cases

Case No	Title	Status
Base Case: > 042R0122001	FAA-NORAD Statements to 9-11 Commission	Open
Associated Cases: >		
>		
>		

IV MAIN Text Pages

Record 1/1 OSC DBG

Folder #2

042R0122001
(b)

(b)(6), (b)(7)c

From: (b)(6), (b)(7)c
Sent: Monday, November 14, 2005 11:00 AM
To: Beitel, Rick
Cc: Engler, Ronald; (b)(6), (b)(7)c
Subject: 9-11 Report



draft_final_report_27a.doc (12...

Rick,

Attached for your review is the FAA/NORAD Statements to the 9-11 Commission report.

(b)(5), (b)(6), (b)(7)c

Thanks

(b)(6), (b)(7)c

(b)(6), (b)(7)c

042R012200(b)

From: (b)(6), (b)(7)c
Sent: Monday, November 21, 2005 5:49 PM
To: Beitel, Rick
Subject: Fw: 9-11 Report

Rick,
I'm resending the report. If you have any questions please feel free to call me on my cell phone as I'm on leave this week. (b)(6), (b)(7)c

-----Original Message-----

From: (b)(6), (b)(7)c
To: Beitel, Rick
CC: Engler, Ronald; (b)(6), (b)(7)c
Sent: Mon Nov 14 11:00:10 2005
Subject: 9-11 Report

Rick,



draft_final_repor
t_27a.doc (12...

At ached for your review is the FAA/NORAD Statements to the 9-11 Commission report.

(b)(5), (b)(6), (b)(7)c

Thanks

(b)(6), (b)(7)c

(b)(6), (b)(7)c

From: (b)(6), (b)(7)c
Sent: Tuesday, April 26, 2005 9:37 AM
To: (b)(6), (b)(7)c
Subject: RE: (b)(6), (b)(7)c Interview



042R0122001_I

(b)(6), (b)(7)c_2005-C

(b)(6), (b)(7)c

Have you had a chance to review? If not please do so, sign and then return signed copy to me. Thanks (b)(6), (b)(7)c

-----Original Message-----

From: (b)(6), (b)(7)c
Sent: Wednesday, March 30, 2005 9:09 AM
To: (b)(6), (b)(7)c
Subject: (b)(6), (b)(7)c Interview

(b)(6), (b)(7)c

Will you please review, sign and send to me. If you have time today can you call me at my desk regarding your meeting with GAO? Thanks (b)(6), (b)(7)c

(b)(6), (b)(7)c

(b)(6), (b)(7)c

From: (b)(6), (b)(7)c
Sent: Monday, February 14, 2005 9:26 AM
To: Beitel, Rick
Cc: Lee, Charles H.; (b)(6), (b)(7)c
Subject: UPDATE: 9/11 FAA Statements Investigation

(b)(5), (b)(6), (b)(7)c

(b)(6), (b)(7)c

-----Original Message-----

From: (b)(6), (b)(7)c
Sent: Monday, February 14, 2005 6:43 AM
To: (b)(6), (b)(7)c
Cc: (b)(6), (b)(7)c
Subject: Outline

(b)(6), (b)(7)c

As discussed, attached please find a copy of our results in brief and a draft report outline. The outline has not been approved by my HQ yet so it is subject to change. (b)(6), (b)(7)c



DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

Investigation Quarterly Synopsis

Case No: 042R0122001

Report Date: 12/12/2006

Title: FAA- NORAD Statements to 9-11 Commission

Summary of Predication

Case opened at the direction of DAIGI, DOT-OIG based on a referral a July 24, 2004 from the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States (the Commission). During the Commission's investigation they discovered evidence that public statements made by North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD) and Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) officials at a the Commission hearing on May 23, 2003, and elsewhere, regarding the actions of NORAD and FAA officials in responding to the 9-11 attacks were not accurate. The Commission did not investigate whether these statements were knowingly false. The Commission specifically noted four statements made by retired (b)(6), (b)(7)c testimony on the 23rd of May as being inaccurate.

- 1) The FAA notified the military at 9:16 a.m. that United Flight 93 (UN93) was hijacked.
- 2) The FAA notified the military of the hijacking of American Flight 77 (AA77) at 9:24 a.m.
- 3) When the Langley fighters were scrambled, their objective was to respond to the reports at 9:16 that UN93 was hijacked and at 9:24 a.m. that AA77 was hijacked.
- 4) [Military] Officials were tracking UN93 and intended to intercept the aircraft if it approached Washington, D.C.

The Commission believes that NORAD and FAA made significant efforts to get accurate information as to what had transpired, within days of September 11th. The Commission further believes that once accurate reconstruction information was developed by NORAD and FAA they both had the burden of correcting the public record and insuring that information, including testimony provided to the Commission in May 2003, was accurate.

Investigation will be conducted in cooperation with Department of Defense, OIG. DOT-OIG's portion of the investigation will seek to determine whether FAA officials knowingly made false or inaccurate statements at a Commission hearing on May 23, 2003 and/or elsewhere regarding the action of FAA officials in responding to the September 11th attacks.

Updates

(b)(5), (b)(6), (b)(7)c, (b)(7)e

Page 15 redacted for the following reason:

(b)(5), (b)(6), (b)(7)c, (b)(7)e



DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

Investigation Quarterly Synopsis

Case No: 042R0122001

Report Date: 12/12/2006

Title: FAA- NORAD Statements to 9- 11 Commission

(b)(5), (b)(7)e

Final report is pending.

10/01/2006 On August 31, 2006, the final report was issued documenting the results of our review from a referral made by the 9/11 Commission staff regarding certain inaccurate statements made by FAA officials regarding their notifications to DOD during the September 11 hijackings. Our investigation included examining whether FAA officials knowingly made any false statements. The report contained the review results, which indicated that, we did not find evidence to conclude that FAA officials knowingly made false statements, purposely omitted accurate information from any statement, or intentionally failed to correct an inaccurate statement after becoming aware of it. However, the review did discover that three FAA executives did not act to correct an erroneous FAA response to a Commission Question for the Record (QFR) after learning it was inaccurate. The report contained recommendations to the FAA Administrator that FAA correct its QFR response and consider appropriate administrative action for two current executives. The other recommendations to the Administrator include enhancing FAA's capability to respond to and report on hijacked or suspicious



DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

Investigation Quarterly Synopsis

Case No: 042R0122001

Report Date: 12/12/2006

Title: FAA- NORAD Statements to 9- 11 Commission

aircraft.

On September 12, 2006, DOD/OIG separately issued its public redacted version of its classified report on its review findings.

Investigation is to be closed.

FINAL UPDATE.



DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

Investigation Quarterly Synopsis

Case No: 042R0122001

Report Date: 04/26/2005

Title: FAA-NORAD Statements to 9-11 Commission

Summary of Predication

Case opened at the direction of DAIGI, DOT-OIG based on a referral from the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States (the Commission). During the Commission's investigation they discovered evidence that public statements made by North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD) and Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) officials at a the Commission hearing on May 23, 2003, and elsewhere, regarding the actions of NORAD and FAA officials in responding to the 9-11 attacks were not accurate. The Commission did not investigate whether these statements were knowingly false. The Commission specifically noted four statements made by retired (b)(6), (b)(7)c testimony on the 23rd of May as being inaccurate.

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- 4) [Military] Officials were tracking UN93 and intended to intercept the aircraft if it approached Washington, D.C.

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Investigation will be conducted in cooperation with Department of Defense, OIG. DOT-OIG's portion of the investigation will seek to determine whether FAA officials knowingly made false or inaccurate statements at a Commission hearing on May 23, 2003 and/or elsewhere regarding the action of FAA officials in responding to the September 11th attacks.

Updates

(b)(5), (b)(6), (b)(7)c, (b)(7)e

Page 19 redacted for the following reason:

(b)(5), (b)(6), (b)(7)c, (b)(7)e



U.S. Department of
Transportation

Office of the Secretary
of Transportation

Office of Inspector General

Memorandum

Subject: INFORMATION: Meeting DOT Chief of Staff

Date: Mar. 30, 2005

From:

(b)(6), (b)(7)c

JRI-2

Reply to

Attn of:

JRI-2

(b)(6), (b)(7)c

To: File 042R0122001

On March 22, 2005, Special Agent (b)(6), (b)(7)c and I met with DOT (b)(6), (b)(7)c

(b)(6), (b)(7)c

(b)(6), (b)(7)c

(b)(6), (b)(7)c

The purpose of the meeting was to obtain information from (b)(6), (b)(7)c concerning the proposed DOT Emergency Response Organization (ERO) with the stated intent of incorporating the information into the OIG's response to a referral from the 9-11 Commission concerning allegedly inaccurate public statements made by DOD and FAA officials regarding the actions of DOD and FAA in responding to the 9-11 attacks.

(b)(6), (b)(7)c expressed essentially three concerns in discussing the Department's ongoing work on the ERO in connection with the 9/11 Commission's referral:

(b)(5), (b)(6), (b)(7)c

- # -

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION-OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL
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(Public availability to be determined under 5 U.S.C. 552)

September 2, 2006

Report Urges F.A.A. to Act Regarding False 9/11 Testimony

 By **PHILIP SHENON**

WASHINGTON, Sept. 1 — The Transportation Department's inspector general urged the Federal Aviation Administration on Friday to consider disciplinary action against two executives who failed to correct false information provided to the independent commission that investigated the Sept. 11 terror attacks.

The acting inspector general, Todd J. Zinser, whose office acts as the department's internal watchdog, found in a new report that the F.A.A. executives, as well as a third official who is now retired, learned after the fact that false information was given to the commission in May 2003 about the F.A.A.'s contacts with the Air Force on the morning of Sept. 11.

The false information suggested that the aviation agency had established contact with its Air Force liaison immediately after the first of the four hijacked planes struck the World Trade Center at 8:46 a.m.

In fact, the commission's investigators found, the Air Force's liaison did not join a conference call with the F.A.A. until after the third plane crashed, at 9:37 a.m. The 51-minute gap is significant because it helps undermine an initial claim by the North American Aerospace Defense Command, which is responsible for domestic air defense, that it scrambled quickly on Sept. 11 and had a chance to shoot down the last of the hijacked planes still in the air, United Airlines Flight 93.

The inspector general's report, prepared in response to complaints from the independent Sept. 11 commission, found that the three F.A.A. executives failed to act on an "obligation" to correct the false information provided to the commission, which found widespread confusion within the aviation agency and the military on the morning of the attacks.

The F.A.A., part of the Transportation Department, declined to identify the three executives, whose names and titles were not revealed in the inspector general's report. Nor did the agency say whether it would consider disciplinary action.

The inspector general's office found that while false information was given to the Sept. 11 commission, there was no evidence that F.A.A. executives had done it knowingly or had intentionally withheld accurate information about the agency's actions on the morning of the attacks.

That finding was welcomed by the F.A.A., which said in a statement that the "inspector general's investigation has clarified the record and found no evidence that F.A.A. officials knowingly made false statements." The Pentagon's inspector general issued a similar finding last month about military officers who provided inaccurate testimony to the commission, saying their inaccurate statements could be attributed largely to poor record-keeping.

Richard Ben Veniste, a commission member, said in an interview on Friday that he was troubled that it had

taken the inspector general two years to complete his investigation — “more time than it took the 9/11 commission to complete all of its work” — and that he released the report “on the Friday afternoon before the Labor Day weekend.”

Mr. Ben Veniste said he was convinced that the failure of the aviation agency and the North American Aerospace Defense Command to provide early, accurate information about their performance had “contributed to a growing industry of conspiratorialists who question the fundamental facts relating to 9/11.”

Mr. Zinser, the acting inspector general, said in an interview that the investigation had taken so long because of “the very complicated issues” his office reviewed.

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The Star-Ledger

Same old story for 9/11 book: Long on politics, short on truth

Thursday, August 31, 2006

This is not a good time for the relatives of 9/11 victims -- their private hurt made part of a nonstop public theater of grief.

And this special anniversary -- because it's divisible by five? -- wasn't made any easier for some by all the new books that will be published just in time, including the one by Tom Kean and Lee Hamilton.

"I guess it's a sort of catharsis for them," says Mindy Kleinberg of East Brunswick, whose husband Alan died that day. "A justification for what the commission didn't do. If the commission had done its job, this book wouldn't have been necessary."

The commission -- the 9/11 Commission, headed by Kean, a former New Jersey governor counted among the most reasonable of Republicans; and Hamilton, a longtime Democratic congressman from Indiana who spent enough time hobnobbing with generals and diplomats so that he truly understands how the system works.

They issued a report that blamed no one, and everyone. Found the worst failure a "failure of imagination."

And promised, when it was released in 2004, that nothing had been withheld.

Except that now we read the book and, well, there are problems, including the one with the Federal Aviation Administration and NORAD, our air defense. Seems as if some folks in high positions, some with stars on their shoulders, lied -- oh, scratch that, didn't tell the truth -- under oath about why a country with what we all thought was the greatest military in the world couldn't catch up with four hijacked airplanes.

The commission's staff, Kean and Hamilton admit now, believed that what our generals were saying "bordered on willful concealment."

Well, not to worry, the issue of whether some of the nation's highest military officers lied under oath has been referred to the defense department's inspector general, and there it shall lie buried.

The point, of course, is that all this was suspected years ago when the FAA and the U.S. Air Force couldn't get their stories straight and blamed failures on radar pointed at Russia instead of internally.

"We knew someone was lying," says Lorie Van Auken, also of East Brunswick, who provided the best light moment of the hearings when she stood in a doorway at a hearing room and told each of the generals coming in to testify: "You're fired."

In effect, the military took the fall for the FAA. The uniforms fell on their ceremonial swords for the political hacks. The FAA lost the planes that became guided missiles and didn't alert the Air Force until it was too late to do anything.

Why was truth covered up? Kean and Hamilton don't answer. But the evidence is strong that the story was cooked up at a higher level to make political appointees -- all of whom should have been fired, if not tried for negligence -- look better.

But no one ever got fired for what happened on 9/11.

"Their legacy was supposed to be the definitive report of what happened," says Van Auken, who lost her husband Kenneth. "Now even they are admitting they didn't give us the definitive story. No facts, no accountability."

Kleinberg and Van Auken are among the "Jersey Girls," the widows from this state and New York who lobbied for the creation of the commission, supported it when it needed funding and more time, but then became disillusioned when the commission opted for good feelings among its members rather than a good investigation.

"We knew, once we got a commission of politicians, that it wouldn't really search for the truth," says Kleinberg.

Not the real truth. But the possible truth. The political truth.

Best exemplified, perhaps, by its handling of the alleged telephone conversations between President George Bush and Vice President Richard Cheney. There is no evidence one such call, from Bush, ever occurred, but it's important to the administration's version of the story that it did.

Well, did it or didn't it? As the book explains, the commission reports that the administration says it did but there is no evidence it did. Other examples: Was Condoleezza Rice or Richard Clarke telling the truth? The CIA or the FBI -- particularly about the open presence of some hijackers here in the United States?

Here's what Kean and Hamilton say: "Our task was to provide those facts for the reader, not to make that judgment for them." And, "Once again, the reader is capable of making a judgment about who he or she feels performed well, and who could have done better."

What? A commission of 10 political heavy hitters, a staff of scores, \$12 million spent --and we have a panel that runs from conclusions, but leaves it all to us to figure it all out. Wait a minute, I'll go call my staff -- you go get yours.

"That's why the commission shouldn't have had politicians on it," says Kleinberg. "Experts, yes, academics. But not politicians."

But, hey, what's the point of complaining? The commission's gone. Royalties are what's important now.

Bob Braun's columns appear Monday and Thursday. He may be reached at rbraun@starledger.com or (973) 392 4281.

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LJWORLD.COM

LAWRENCE JOURNAL-WORLD

U.S. fortress not so solid

By Garrison Keillor

Tuesday, September 12, 2006

Growing up in the '50s, we imagined our country defended by guided missiles poised in bunkers, jet fighters on the tarmac and pilots in the ready room prepared to scramble, a colonel with a black briefcase sitting in the hall outside the president's bedroom, but 9/11 gave us a clearer picture. We have a vast array of hardware, a multitude of colonels, a lot of bureaucratic confusion, and a nation vulnerable to attack.

The Federal Aviation Administration has now acknowledged that the third of the four planes seized by the 19 men with box cutters had already hit the Pentagon before the FAA finally called there to say there was a problem. The FAA lied to the 9/11 Commission about this, then took two years to ascertain the facts — a 51-minute gap in defense — and released the finding on the Friday before Labor Day, an excellent burial site for bad news.

So America is not the secure fortress we grew up imagining. Perhaps it never was. What protects us is what has protected us for 230 years, our magnificent isolation. After the disasters of the 20th century, Europe put nationalism aside and adopted civilization, but we have oceans on either side, so if the president turns out to be a fool with a small rigid agenda and little knowledge of the world, we expect to survive it somehow. Life goes on.

It's hard for Americans to visualize the collapse of our country. It's as unthinkable as one's own demise. Europeans are different; they've seen disaster, even the British. They know it was a near thing back in 1940. My old Danish mother-in-law remembered the occupation clearly 40 years later and was teary-eyed when she talked about it. Francis Scott Key certainly could envision the demise of the United States in 1814 when he watched the bombardment of Fort McHenry. Lincoln was haunted by the thought. We are not, apparently, though five years ago we saw a shadow.

You might think from the latest broadsides that the republic is teetering, that it's Munich again, the Nazis are on the loose, and the Current Occupant is Winston Churchill, and that to question him is treachery. The fury of the right wing is quite remarkable — to maintain a sense of persecution after years of being in power is like Donald Trump feeling overlooked — but life goes on.

We really are one people at heart. We all believe that when thousands of people are trapped in the Superdome without food or water, it is the duty of government, the federal government if necessary, to come to their rescue and to restore them to the civil mean and not abandon them to fate. Right there is the basis of liberalism. Conservatives tried to introduce a new idea — it's your fault if you get caught in a storm — and this idea was rejected by nine out of ten people once they saw the pictures. The issue is whether we care about people who don't get on television.

Last week I sat and listened to a roomful of parents talk about their battles with public schools on behalf of their children who suffer from dyslexia, apraxia, ADD or some other disability — sagas of ferocious parental love versus stonewall bureaucracy in the quest for basic needful things — and how some of them had uprooted their families and moved to Minnesota so their children could attend better schools.

You couldn't tell if those parents were Republicans or Democrats. They simply were prepared to move mountains so their kids could have a chance. So are we all.

And that's the mission of politics: to give our kids as good a chance as we had. They say that liberals have run out of new ideas — it's like saying that Christians have run out of new ideas. Maybe the old doctrine of grace is good enough.

I don't get much hope from Democrats these days, a timid and skittish bunch, slow to learn, unable to sing the hymns and express the steady optimism that is at the heart of the heart of the country. I get no hope at all from Republicans, whose policies seem predicated on the Second Coming occurring in the very near future. If Jesus does not descend through the clouds to take them directly to paradise, and do it now, they are going to have to answer to the rest of us.

washingtonpost.com

Agency wants FAA execs disciplined over 9/11: NYT

Reuters

Saturday, September 2, 2006; 1:45 AM

NEW YORK (Reuters) - The U.S. Transportation Department's inspector general has urged the FAA to consider disciplining two executives who failed to correct false information provided to the commission that investigated the September 11 attacks, the New York Times reported on Saturday.

Citing the report by the acting inspector general, Todd Zinser, whose office acts as the department's internal watchdog, the Times said the Federal Aviation Administration executives, as well as a third, now-retired official, learned after the fact that false information was given to the commission in May 2003 about the FAA's contacts with the Air Force on the morning of the attacks.

That information suggested that the FAA had made contact with its Air Force liaison immediately after the first of the four hijacked planes struck the World Trade Center in New York, the Times said.

But the commission's investigators found that the liaison did not join a conference call with the FAA until after the third plane crashed nearly an hour later.

The time gap is considered significant because it helps undermine an initial claim by the North American Aerospace Defense Command, which is responsible for domestic air defense, that it moved quickly and had a chance to shoot down the last of the hijacked planes still in the air, United Airlines Flight 93, the Times said.

Now the inspector general's report, compiled to address complaints from the independent September 11 commission, has found that the three FAA executives failed to act on an "obligation" to correct the false information given to the commission.

The FAA declined to identify the executives and their names and titles were not disclosed in the inspector general's report, the Times said. The agency also did not say whether it was considering disciplinary action. There was no evidence that the executives provided false information knowingly, the inspector general's office found.

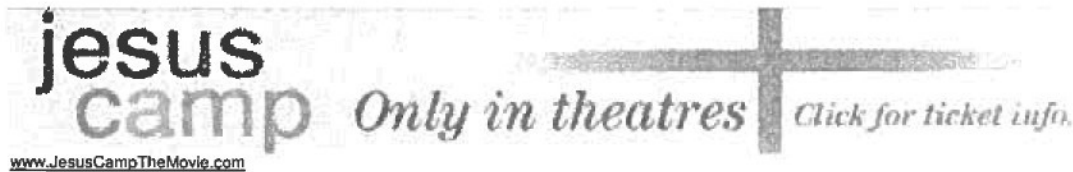
The FAA said the "inspector general's investigation has clarified the record and found no evidence that FAA officials knowingly made false statements," the Times said.

The Pentagon's inspector general said in a similar finding last month concerning military officers who provided inaccurate testimony to the commission that their inaccuracies could be mainly attributed to poor record-keeping.

Advertisement



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NewsTrack - Top News

FAA 9/11 inaccuracies found unintentional

WASHINGTON, Sept. 2 (UPI) -- A U.S. government report says two officials should face administrative action for failing to correct inaccurate statements made to the Sept. 11 commission.

However, the report, by acting inspector general of the Transportation Department Todd Zinser, said it did not appear that the Federal Aviation Administration officials had intentionally misled the commission when they made the statements, The Washington Post reported Saturday.

The report referred to statements made by NORAD and Federal Aviation Administration officials for two years after the attacks that claimed aviation officials had reacted quickly to the Sept. 11, 2001, plane hijackings and had made preparations to shoot down United Airlines Flight 93 if it posed a threat to Washington.

However, the commission's investigation found the military never targeted any of the hijacked planes and spent considerable time attempting to locate American Airlines Flight 11 after it crashed into the World Trade Center.

Zinser said in the report two unidentified FAA officials acted improperly when they failed to notify the commission that the information they provided was incorrect. He recommended unspecified administrative action be taken against them.

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Sept. 1, 2006, 4:55PM

Report: No knowingly false info by FAA

By **LESLIE MILLER** Associated Press Writer

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WASHINGTON — There is no evidence Federal Aviation Administration officials intentionally misled the Sept. 11 commission when they gave false accounts about how quickly they responded to the terror attacks, the agency's watchdog said.

Members of the panel had asked the Transportation Department inspector general to look into inaccurate statements made by FAA officials.

"We did not find evidence to conclude that FAA officials knowingly made false statements," said the report, signed by Acting Inspector General Todd Zinser.

The FAA said in a statement that it had provided more than 6,000 documents and materials to the commission.

"The investigation also recognized the significant steps taken by the FAA since 9/11 to improve its capability to notify federal agencies and to respond to such incidents," the statement said.

The Sept. 11 commission's chairmen, Thomas Kean and Lee Hamilton, said in their recently published book that the commission found it mind-boggling that authorities claimed that their air defenses had reacted quickly.

In the book, "Without Precedent," Kean and Hamilton said the panel was so frustrated with repeated misstatements by the Pentagon and FAA about their response to the 2001 terror attacks that it considered an investigation into possible deception.

In the end, they settled on referring the matter to the inspectors general of the Transportation Department and the Pentagon.

At issue was when the FAA notified the Defense Department of the suspected hijacking of American Airlines Flight 77, which left from Washington's Dulles airport and crashed into the Pentagon.

The FAA had claimed _ on both its public Web site and in response to the commission _ that it told the Pentagon at 9:24 a.m. that it suspected Flight 77 was hijacked.

"In fact, no such notification was made," the inspector general report said. It said the mistake was due to an FAA's executive's inattention to detail when preparing a summary of events shortly after the attacks.

The FAA had also claimed that an Air Force liaison joined its teleconference and established contact with the

North American Aerospace Command immediately after American Airlines Flight 11 crashed into the twin towers at 8:46 a.m.

"In fact, the liaison did not join the phone-bridge until after the third hijacked aircraft (American Flight 77) struck the Pentagon at 9:37 a.m.," the report said.

The report did not say what caused that error. It did say that FAA executives learned of the mistake but didn't take steps to correct it because they thought someone else was doing it.

None of the executives were named, and one retired.

The inspector general recommended that appropriate administrative action be considered against the two executives who didn't correct the record.

Earlier this month, the Pentagon's watchdog agency said there is no evidence defense officials intentionally misled the Sept. 11 commission when they gave mistaken accounts about the Defense Department's response to the terrorist attacks.

Poor investigating and record keeping contributed to the inaccuracies, according to a summary from the inspector general's office of the Pentagon.

A Pentagon spokesman said the question of whether military commanders intentionally were misleading will be addressed in the full report.

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FAA Testimony to 911 Commission Under Fire

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Executives Failed to Correct Errors

An investigation conducted by the Transportation Department's acting Inspector General (IG) found that three FAA executives (one now retired) knew after the fact that testimony presented to the 9/11 Commission in 2003 was, in fact, false, but they made no effort to correct it.



Acting on complaints from the independent 9/11 Commission, acting IG Todd Zinser conducted a two-year investigation, publishing his findings in a report released Friday, 1 Sep 2006. As reported by the New York Times, Zinser noted -- in direct contradiction to 9/11 commission testimony given -- the FAA and the USAF were not in immediate communication after the first of two aircraft struck the World Trade Center. In fact, they weren't in contact for over 50 minutes.

The FAA testimony in question, given before the 9/11 commission in 2003, claimed the FAA had immediately contacted the USAF. In fact, NORAD even went so far as to claim they were in a position to shoot down Flight 93, which crashed in rural PA after passengers took steps to wrest control of the aircraft from the terrorist hijackers.

While the report urges disciplinary action for the two executives still actively serving, no evidence was found to prove any of the executives acted to knowingly mislead the 9/11 Commission. This mirrors a report made last month by the USAF IG claiming similar errors in testimony provided by military officers could be attributed to poor record-keeping.



The FAA has declined to identify the three executives or what, if any, disciplinary action is to be taken.

Commission members expressed concern the investigation had taken so long. Richard Ben Veniste, a commission member, said the IG's investigation had taken "more time than it took the 9/11 commission to complete all of its work." He also questioned the decision to release the report on the Friday before Labor Day.

The 9/11 Commission was highly critical of the government's immediate response to the hijackings finding "widespread confusion" within the FAA and the military.

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news**

Report: No Knowingly False Info by FAA

Friday September 1, 2006 11:01 PM

By LESLIE MILLER

Associated Press Writer

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In the end, they settled on referring the matter to the inspectors general of the Transportation Department and

Mexican
Lawmakers Block
Fox's Speech
2:01 am

the Pentagon.

At issue was when the FAA notified the Defense Department of the suspected hijacking of American Airlines Flight 77, which left from Washington's Dulles airport and crashed into the Pentagon.

Appeals Court
Frees Jailed
Videographer
2:01 am

The FAA had claimed - on both its public Web site and in response to the commission - that it told the Pentagon at 9:24 a.m. that it suspected Flight 77 was hijacked.

Pa. City Delays
Immigrant
Crackdown Law
2:01 am

"In fact, no such notification was made," the inspector general report said. It said the mistake was due to an FAA's executive's inattention to detail when preparing a summary of events shortly after the attacks.

Muslim Group:
Bush Distorts
'Islamic'
1:46 am

The FAA had also claimed that an Air Force liaison joined its teleconference and established contact with the North American Aerospace Command immediately after American Airlines Flight 11 crashed into the twin towers at 8:46 a.m.

Mexican
Lawmakers Take
Stage at Congress
1:46 am

"In fact, the liaison did not join the phone-bridge until after the third hijacked aircraft (American Flight 77) struck the Pentagon at 9:37 a.m.," the report said.

U.S. Missile Hits
Target in Test
1:46 am

The report did not say what caused that error. It did say that FAA executives learned of the mistake but didn't take steps to correct it because they thought someone else was doing it.

Pope's Brother
Doesn't Offer
Advice
1:31 am

None of the executives were named, and one retired.

FBI Probes Office of
Sen. Stevens' Son
1:31 am

The inspector general recommended that appropriate administrative action be considered against the two executives who didn't correct the record.

Hurricane Lashes
Mexico Tourist Spot
1:31 am

Earlier this month, the Pentagon's watchdog agency said there is no evidence defense officials intentionally misled the Sept. 11 commission when they gave mistaken accounts about the Defense Department's response to the terrorist attacks.

Upgraded Tram
Reopens in New
York City
1:31 am

Poor investigating and record keeping contributed to the inaccuracies, according to a summary from the inspector general's office of the Pentagon.

From the Associated
Press

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Federal Aviation Administration: <http://www.faa.gov>



washingtonpost.com

Report: No Knowingly False Info by FAA

By LESLIE MILLER
The Associated Press
Friday, September 1, 2006; 5:55 PM

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IN BRIEF / WASHINGTON, D.C.

FAA Didn't Mislead 9/11 Panel, Report Finds

From Times Wire Reports

September 2, 2006

There is no evidence Federal Aviation Administration officials intentionally misled the Sept. 11 commission when they gave false accounts about how quickly they responded to the terror attacks, according to a new report.

The findings by the Department of Transportation's acting inspector general, Todd J. Zinser, address a lingering question about the response on Sept. 11 by military and civilian aviation officials, who initially portrayed the reaction as swift and efficient. It was later shown to be neither.

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No Intent to Mislead Panel Found In Aviation Officials' 9/11 Errors

By Dan Eggen
Washington Post Staff Writer
Saturday, September 2, 2006; A04

Investigators found no evidence that aviation officials intentionally misled the Sept. 11 commission when they made inaccurate statements about their response to the 2001 terrorist attacks but recommended that two officials face "appropriate administrative action" for failing to correct the record, according to a report released yesterday.

The findings by the Transportation Department's acting inspector general, Todd J. Zinser, address a lingering question about the response on Sept. 11 by military and civilian aviation officials, who initially portrayed the reaction as swift and efficient. It was later shown to be neither.

The conclusions echo the findings of a separate inquiry at the Defense Department, which found no evidence that authorities at the North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD) intended to mislead the Sept. 11 panel.

For more than two years after the attacks, officials at NORAD and the Federal Aviation Administration suggested in public statements and testimony that air defenses and aviation officials had reacted quickly to the hijackings and were prepared to shoot down United Airlines Flight 93 if it threatened Washington. That aircraft crashed in Pennsylvania after passengers attempted to retake control from the hijackers.

In fact, the Sept. 11 commission found, audiotapes and other evidence showed clearly that the military never had any of the hijacked airliners in its sights and chased a phantom aircraft -- American Airlines Flight 11 -- long after it had crashed into the World Trade Center.

The FAA had said on its Web site and in statements to the commission that it informed the Pentagon at 9:24 a.m. that American Airlines Flight 77 had been hijacked. The commission found that the FAA never notified defense officials of the hijackings but did label the plane missing after it had crashed into the Pentagon.

The FAA also omitted from official timelines the fact that it notified NORAD about the hijacking of Flight 93 at 10:07 a.m., after the airliner had crashed in Pennsylvania. It gave an earlier than actual time for the moment when an Air Force official joined an FAA "phone-bridge" focused on the hijackings.

Zinser's report blames the erroneous statements on a series of innocent mistakes, including an erroneous entry in an early FAA timeline and an assumption by some officials that others would correct the record once the errors became clear.

"We did not find evidence to conclude that FAA officials knowingly made false statements," the report said.

At the same time, it said, two unidentified FAA officials should have notified the commission when it became clear that the information was wrong. The report recommended that the FAA consider unspecified administrative action against them.

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Although the inaccurate statements have been publicly known for several years, it has only become clear more recently how much the issue had strained relations between the Sept. 11 panel and the FAA and NORAD. They were the only two agencies to receive subpoenas from the commission.

Some commission members and staffers were so angered by the inaccuracies that they advocated referring the matter to the Justice Department for criminal investigation. The panel settled on a compromise, referring the complaints to the two inspectors general.

In their new book, "Without Precedent," the commission's chairman and vice chairman, Thomas H. Kean (R) and Lee H. Hamilton (D), said the panel was "exceedingly frustrated" by the FAA and NORAD.

"Fog of war could explain why some people were confused on the day of 9/11, but it could not explain why all the after-action reports, accident investigation, and public testimony by FAA and NORAD officials advanced an account of 9/11 that was untrue," they wrote.

The FAA said in a statement that Zinser's report "clarified the record and found no evidence that FAA officials knowingly made false statements or intentionally failed to correct any inaccurate statements while providing more than 6,000 documents and materials to the commission." The FAA also has "made major improvements to its communications capabilities" since the Sept. 11 attacks, the statement said.

Staff writer Del Quentin Wilber contributed to this report.

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9/11 Panel Suspected Deception by Pentagon

Allegations Brought to Inspectors General

By Dan Eggen
Washington Post Staff Writer
Wednesday, August 2, 2006; A03

Some staff members and commissioners of the Sept. 11 panel concluded that the Pentagon's initial story of how it reacted to the 2001 terrorist attacks may have been part of a deliberate effort to mislead the commission and the public rather than a reflection of the fog of events on that day, according to sources involved in the debate.

Suspicion of wrongdoing ran so deep that the 10-member commission, in a secret meeting at the end of its tenure in summer 2004, debated referring the matter to the Justice Department for criminal investigation, according to several commission sources. Staff members and some commissioners thought that e-mails and other evidence provided enough probable cause to believe that military and aviation officials violated the law by making false statements to Congress and to the commission, hoping to hide the bungled response to the hijackings, these sources said.

In the end, the panel agreed to a compromise, turning over the allegations to the inspectors general for the Defense and Transportation departments, who can make criminal referrals if they believe they are warranted, officials said.

"We to this day don't know why NORAD [the North American Aerospace Command] told us what they told us," said Thomas H. Kean, the former New Jersey Republican governor who led the commission. "It was just so far from the truth. . . . It's one of those loose ends that never got tied."

Although the commission's landmark report made it clear that the Defense Department's early versions of events on the day of the attacks were inaccurate, the revelation that it considered criminal referrals reveals how skeptically those reports were viewed by the panel and provides a glimpse of the tension between it and the Bush administration.

A Pentagon spokesman said yesterday that the inspector general's office will soon release a report addressing whether testimony delivered to the commission was "knowingly false." A separate report, delivered secretly to Congress in May 2005, blamed inaccuracies in part on problems with the way the Defense Department kept its records, according to a summary released yesterday.

A spokesman for the Transportation Department's inspector general's office said its investigation is complete and that a final report is being drafted. Laura Brown, a spokeswoman for the Federal Aviation Administration, said she could not comment on the inspector general's inquiry.

In an article scheduled to be on newsstands today, Vanity Fair magazine reports aspects of the commission debate -- though it does not mention the possible criminal referrals -- and publishes lengthy excerpts from military audiotapes recorded on Sept. 11. ABC News aired excerpts last night.

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For more than two years after the attacks, officials with NORAD and the FAA provided inaccurate information about the response to the hijackings in testimony and media appearances. Authorities suggested that U.S. air defenses had reacted quickly, that jets had been scrambled in response to the last two hijackings and that fighters were prepared to shoot down United Airlines Flight 93 if it threatened Washington.

In fact, the commission reported a year later, audiotapes from NORAD's Northeast headquarters and other evidence showed clearly that the military never had any of the hijacked airliners in its sights and at one point chased a phantom aircraft -- American Airlines Flight 11 -- long after it had crashed into the World Trade Center.

Maj. Gen. Larry Arnold and Col. Alan Scott told the commission that NORAD had begun tracking United 93 at 9:16 a.m., but the commission determined that the airliner was not hijacked until 12 minutes later. The military was not aware of the flight until after it had crashed in Pennsylvania.

These and other discrepancies did not become clear until the commission, forced to use subpoenas, obtained audiotapes from the FAA and NORAD, officials said. The agencies' reluctance to release the tapes -- along with e-mails, erroneous public statements and other evidence -- led some of the panel's staff members and commissioners to believe that authorities sought to mislead the commission and the public about what happened on Sept. 11.

"I was shocked at how different the truth was from the way it was described," John Farmer, a former New Jersey attorney general who led the staff inquiry into events on Sept. 11, said in a recent interview. "The tapes told a radically different story from what had been told to us and the public for two years. . . . This is not spin. This is not true."

Arnold, who could not be reached for comment yesterday, told the commission in 2004 that he did not have all the information unearthed by the panel when he testified earlier. Other military officials also denied any intent to mislead the panel.

John F. Lehman, a Republican commission member and former Navy secretary, said in a recent interview that he believed the panel may have been lied to but that he did not believe the evidence was sufficient to support a criminal referral.

"My view of that was that whether it was willful or just the fog of stupid bureaucracy, I don't know," Lehman said. "But in the order of magnitude of things, going after bureaucrats because they misled the commission didn't seem to make sense to me."

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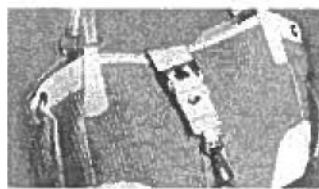
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Aug 3, 2:01 PM EDT

Investigators looking into FAA, Pentagon reporting on Sept. 11

WASHINGTON (AP) -- Five years after the Sept. 11 attacks, investigators are still looking into the government's response to the hijackings, specifically to determine why aviation and military officials inaccurately reported their performance on that day.

The Defense Department inspector general will soon release a report into whether the military's testimony to the Sept. 11 commission was "knowingly false," Pentagon spokesman Lt. Col. Brian Maka said Thursday.

The counterpart office at the Transportation Department has completed and is writing a report on whether Federal Aviation Administration officials misspoke in their testimony, said David Barnes, the inspector general's spokesman.

Sept. 11 panel members have said that timelines on the tapes did not match accounts given in testimony by government officials and have asked for the two investigations.

The FAA and defense officials have corrected some information originally given to the panel, such as the exact times the FAA notified the military of the

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hijackings and the military's assertion that it was tracking one of the planes and intended to intercept it when, in fact, the plane had already crashed.

Meanwhile, newly disclosed tapes made by the military that day confirm again that there was widespread confusion on the morning of the attacks as military fighter jets were scrambled and aviation and defense officials tried to identify the hijacked planes and figure out how to counter them.

The tapes recorded at the North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD) were the basis for an article in the new edition of Vanity Fair magazine by Michael Bronner, an associate producer on the movie "United 93."

The Pentagon gave Bronner 30 hours of tapes. They had previously been given to the Sept. 11 panel, though only parts of them were revealed publicly.

On the Net: <http://www.vanityfair.com>

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**Book: Sept. 11 panel considered Pentagon probe**

Authors, panel's chairmen, offer behind-the-scenes look at terror response
The Associated Press

Updated: 7:21 p.m. ET Aug 5, 2006

WASHINGTON - The Sept. 11 commission was so frustrated with repeated misstatements by the Pentagon and FAA about their response to the 2001 terror attacks that it considered an investigation into possible deception, the panel's chairmen say in a new book.

Republican Thomas Kean and Democrat Lee Hamilton also say in "Without Precedent" that their panel was too soft in questioning former New York Mayor Rudy Giuliani — and that the 20-month investigation may have suffered for it.

The book, a behind-the-scenes look at the investigation, recounts obstacles the authors say were thrown up by the Bush administration, internal disputes over President Bush's use of the attacks as a reason for invading Iraq, and the way the final report avoided questioning whether U.S. policy in the Middle East may have contributed to the attacks.

Kean and Hamilton said the commission found it mind-boggling that authorities had asserted during hearings that their air defenses had reacted quickly and were prepared to shoot down United Airlines Flight 93, which appeared headed toward Washington.

In fact, the commission determined — after it subpoenaed audiotapes and e-mails of the sequence of events — that the shutdown order did not reach North American Aerospace Command pilots until after all of the hijacked planes had crashed.

The book states that commission staff, "exceedingly frustrated" by what they thought could be deception, proposed a full review into why the FAA and the Pentagon's NORAD had presented inaccurate information. That ultimately could have led to sanctions.

Due to a lack of time, the panel ultimately referred the matter to the inspectors general at the Pentagon and Transportation Department. Both are preparing reports, spokesmen said this week.

No explanation for post-9/11 actions

"Fog of war could explain why some people were confused on the day of 9/11, but it could not explain why all of the after-action reports, accident investigations and public testimony by FAA and NORAD officials advanced an account of 9/11 that was untrue," the book states.

The questioning of Giuliani was considered by Kean and Hamilton "a low point" in the commission's examination of witnesses during public hearings. "We did not ask tough questions, nor did we get all of the information we needed to put on the public record," they wrote.

Commission members backed off, Kean and Hamilton said, after drawing criticism in newspaper editorials for sharp questioning of New York fire and police officials at earlier hearings. The editorials said the commission was insensitive to the officials' bravery on the day of the attacks.

"It proved difficult, if not impossible, to raise hard questions about 9/11 in New York without it being perceived as criticism of the individual police and firefighters or of Mayor Giuliani," Kean and Hamilton said.

042R0122w1(e)

Congress established the commission in 2002 to investigate government missteps leading to the Sept. 11 attacks. Its 567-page unanimous report, which was released in July 2004 and became a national best seller, does not blame Bush or former President Clinton but does say they failed to make anti-terrorism a high priority before the attacks.

The panel of five Republicans and five Democrats also concluded that the Sept. 11 attacks would not be the nation's last, noting that al-Qaida had tried for at least 10 years to acquire weapons of mass destruction.

Book addresses global issues

In their book, which goes on sale Aug. 15, Kean and Hamilton recap obstacles they say the panel faced in putting out a credible report in a presidential election year, including fights for access to government documents and an effort to reach unanimity.

Among the issues:

- **Iraq.** The commission threatened to splinter over the question of investigating the administration's use of 9/11 as a reason for going to war. The strongest proponent was original member Max Cleland, a Democratic former senator who later stepped down for separate reasons.

If Cleland had not resigned, the commission probably would not have reached unanimity, according to the book. Ultimately, commissioners decided to touch briefly on the Iraq war by concluding there was no "collaborative relationship" between Saddam Hussein and al-Qaida; the administration had asserted there were substantial contacts between the two.

- **Israel.** The commission disagreed as to how to characterize al-Qaida's motives for attacking the U.S., with Hamilton arguing that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the presence of U.S. forces in the Middle East were major contributors.

Unidentified members believed that "listing U.S. support for Israel as a root cause of al-Qaida's opposition to the United States indicated that the United States should reassess that policy," which those commission members did not want.

Ultimately, the panel made a brief statement noting that U.S. policy regarding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and Iraq are "dominant staples of popular commentary across the Arab and Muslim world."

- **Access to detainees.** The panel pushed for direct access to detainees, at one point proposing to be at least physically present or to listen by telephone during interrogations so they could gauge credibility and get unvarnished accounts.

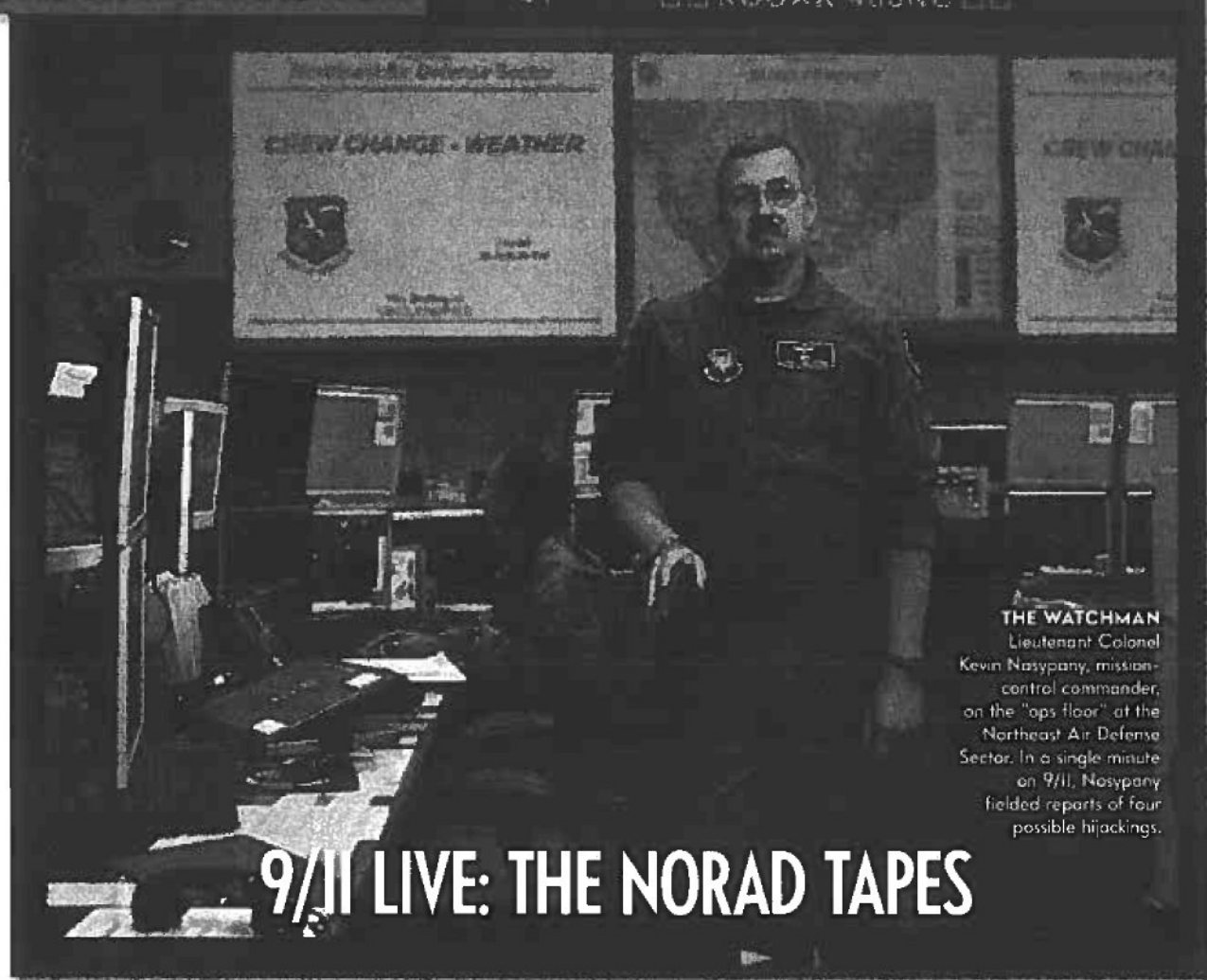
The administration resisted, citing concerns about national security. Officials also said they feared setting a precedent of access by a nongovernment entity that could undermine the administration's position that the Geneva Conventions did not apply to detainees classified as "enemy combatants."

The commission agreed to submit questions and receive written responses. Later, allegations emerged of prisoner abuse at Abu Ghraib and Guantanamo Bay that probably played a factor in the government's resistance, the book states.

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**THE WATCHMAN**

Lieutenant Colonel Kevin Nasypyany, mission-control commander, on the "ops floor" of the Northeast Air Defense Sector. In a single minute on 9/11, Nasypyany fielded reports of four possible hijackings.

9/11 LIVE: THE NORAD TAPES

How did the Air Force respond on 9/11? Could it have shot down United 93, as conspiracy theorists claim? Obtaining 30 hours of never-before-released tapes from the control room of NORAD's Northeast headquarters, the author reconstructs the chaotic military history of that day—and the Pentagon's apparent attempt to cover it up

BY MICHAEL BRONNER

Tucked in a piney notch in the gentle folds of the Adirondacks' southern skirts—just up from a derelict Mohawk, Adirondack & Northern rail spur—is a 22-year-old aluminum bunker tricked out with antennae tilted skyward. It could pass for the Jetsons' garage or, in the estimation of one of the higher-ranking U.S. Air Force officers stationed there, a big, sideways, half-buried beer keg.

As Major Kevin Nasypyany, the facility's mission-control commander, drove up the hill to work on the morning of 9/11, he was dressed in his flight suit and prepared for battle. Not a real one. The Northeast Air Defense Sector (NEADS), where Nasypyany had been stationed since 1994, is

the regional headquarters for the North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD), the Cold War-era military organization charged with protecting North American airspace. As he poured his first coffee on that sunny September morning, the odds that he would have to defend against Russian "Bear Bombers," one of NORAD's traditional simulated missions, were slim. Rather, Nasypyany (pronounced Nah-sip-a-nee), an amiable commander with a thick mini-mustache and a hockey player's build, was headed in early to get ready for the NORAD-wide training exercise he'd helped design. The battle commander, Colonel Bob Marr, had promised to bring in fritters.

NEADS is a desolate place, the sole or-

phan left behind after the dismantling of what was once one of the country's busiest bomber bases—Griffiss Air Force Base, in Rome, New York, which was otherwise mothballed in the mid-90s. NEADS's mission remained in place and continues today: its officers, air-traffic controllers, and air-surveillance and communications technicians—mostly American, with a handful of Canadian troops—are responsible for protecting a half-million-square-mile chunk of American airspace stretching from the East Coast to Tennessee, up through the Dakotas to the Canadian border, including Boston, New York, Washington, D.C., and Chicago.

It was into this airspace that violence descended on 9/11, and from the NEADS operations floor that what turned out to

be the sum total of America's military response during those critical 100-some minutes of the attack—scrambling four armed fighter jets and one unarmed training plane—emanated.

The story of what happened in that room, and when, has never been fully told, but is arguably more important in terms of understanding America's military capabilities that day than anything happening simultaneously on Air Force One or in the Pentagon, the White House, or NORAD's impregnable headquarters, deep within Cheyenne Mountain, in Colorado. It's a story that was intentionally obscured, some members of the 9/11 commission believe, by military higher-ups and members of the Bush administration who spoke to the press, and later the commission itself, in order to downplay the extent of the confusion and miscommunication flying through the ranks of the government.

The truth, however, is all on tape.

Through the heat of the attack the wheels of what were, perhaps, some of the more

"The real story is actually better than the one we told," a NORAD general admitted to 9/11-commission staffers when confronted with evidence from the tapes that contradicted his original testimony. And so it seems.

Subpoenaed by the commission during its investigation, the recordings have never been played publicly beyond a handful of sound bites presented during the commission's hearings. Last September, as part of my research for the film *United 93*, on which I was an associate producer, I requested copies from the Pentagon. I was played snippets, but told my chances of hearing the full recordings were nonexistent. So it was a surprise, to say the least, when a military public-affairs officer e-mailed me, a full seven months later, saying she'd been cleared, finally, to provide them.

"The signing of the Declaration of Independence took less coordination," she wrote.

I would ultimately get three CDs with huge digital "wav file" recordings of the

that morning are those of the "ID techs"—Senior Airman Stacia Rountree, 23 at the time, Tech Sergeant Shelley Watson, 40, and their boss, Master Sergeant Maureen "Mo" Dooley, 40. They are stationed in the back right corner of the ops floor at a console with several phones and a radar-scope. Their job in a crisis is to facilitate communications between NEADS, the civilian F.A.A., and other military commands, gathering whatever information they can and sending it up the chain. Dooley—her personality at once motherly and aggressive—generally stands behind the other two, who are seated.

The tapes catch them discussing strategy of an entirely domestic order:

08:37:08

O.K., a couch, an ottoman, a love seat, and what else...? Was it on sale...? Holy smokes! What color is it?

In the background, however, you can make out the sound of Jeremy Powell, then 31, a burly, amiable technical sergeant, fielding

"WE HAVE A PROBLEM HERE. WE HAVE A HIJACKED AIRCRAFT HEADED TOWARDS NEW YORK, AND WE NEED SOMEONE TO SCRAMBLE SOME F-16S ... HELP US OUT."

modern pieces of equipment in the room—four Dictaphone multi-channel reel-to-reel tape recorders mounted on a rack in a corner of the operations floor—spun impassively, recording every radio channel, with time stamps.

The recordings are fascinating and chilling. A mix of staccato bursts of military code; urgent, overlapping voices; the tense crackle of radio traffic from fighter pilots in the air; commanders' orders piercing through a mounting din; and candid moments of emotion as the breadth of the attacks becomes clearer.

For the NEADS crew, 9/11 was not a story of four hijacked airplanes, but one of a heated chase after more than a dozen potential hijackings—some real, some phantom—that emerged from the turbulence of misinformation that spiked in the first 100 minutes of the attack and continued well into the afternoon and evening. At one point, in the span of a single mad minute, one hears Nasypany struggling to parse reports of four separate hijackings at once. What emerges from the barrage of what Nasypany dubs "bad poop" flying at his troops from all directions is a picture of remarkable composure. Snap decisions more often than not turn out to be the right ones as commanders kick-start the dormant military machine. It is the fog and friction of war live—the authentic military history of 9/11.

various channels in each section of the operations floor, 30-some hours of material in full, covering six and a half hours of real time. The first disc, which arrived by mail, was decorated with blue sky and fluffy white clouds and was labeled, in the playful Apple Chancery font, "Northeast Air Defense Sector—DAT Audio Files—11 Sep 2001."

"This is not an exercise"

At 8:14 A.M., as an Egyptian and four Saudis commandeered the cockpit on American 11, the plane that would hit the north tower of the World Trade Center, only a handful of troops were on the NEADS "ops" floor. That's the facility's war room: a dimly lit den arrayed with long rows of radarscopes and communications equipment facing a series of 15-foot screens lining the front wall. The rest of the crew, about 30 Americans and five or six Canadians, were checking e-mails or milling around the hall. A briefing on the morning's training exercise was wrapping up in the Battle Cab, the glassed-in command area overlooking the ops floor.

On the Dictaphone decks, an automated voice on each channel ticked off, in Greenwich Mean Time, the last few moments of life in pre-9/11 America: "12 hours, 26 minutes, 20 seconds"—just before 8:30 A.M. eastern daylight time.

The first human voices captured on tape

the phone call that will be the military's first notification that something is wrong. On the line is Boston Center, the civilian air-traffic-control facility that handles that region's high-flying airliners.

08:37:52

BOSTON CENTER: Hi, Boston Center T.M.U. [Traffic Management Unit], we have a problem here. We have a hijacked aircraft headed towards New York, and we need you guys to, we need someone to scramble some F-16s or something up there, help us out.

POWELL: Is this real-world or exercise?

BOSTON CENTER: No, this is not an exercise, not a test.

Powell's question—"Is this real-world or exercise?"—is heard nearly verbatim over and over on the tapes as troops funnel onto the ops floor and are briefed about the hijacking. Powell, like almost everyone in the room, first assumes the phone call is from the simulations team on hand to send "inputs"—simulated scenarios—into play for the day's training exercise.

Boston's request for fighter jets is not as prescient as it might seem. Standard hijack protocol calls for fighters to be launched—"scrambled"—merely to establish a presence in the air. The pilots are trained to trail the hijacked plane at a distance of about five miles, out of sight, following it until, presumably, it lands. If necessary, they can show themselves, flying up close to establish visual contact,

and, if the situation demands, maneuver to force the plane to land.

At this point, certainly, the notion of actually firing anything at a passenger jet hasn't crossed anyone's mind.

In the ID section, the women overhear the word "hijack" and react, innocently enough, as anyone might with news of something exciting going on at work:

8:37:56

WATSON: What?

DOOLEY: Whoa!

WATSON: What was that?

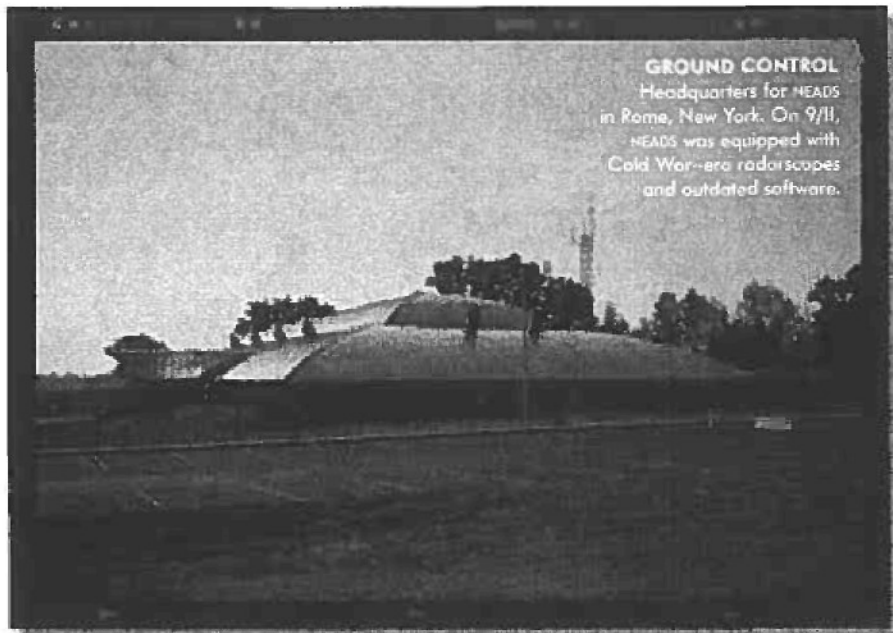
ROUNTREE: Is that real-world?

DOOLEY: Real-world hijack.

WATSON: Cool!

For the first time in their careers, they'll get to put their training to full use.

Almost simultaneously, a P.A. announcement goes out for Major Nasypany, who's taking his morning constitutional.



GROUND CONTROL
Headquarters for NEADS in Rome, New York. On 9/11, NEADS was equipped with Cold War-era radarscopes and outdated software.

"YOU WOULD SEE THOUSANDS OF GREEN BLIPS ON YOUR SCOPE," NASYPANY SAID LATER. "YOU HAVE TO PICK AND CHOOSE. WHICH IS THE BAD GUY OUT THERE?"

08:37:58

P.A.: Major Nasypany, you're needed in ops pronto.

"When they told me there was a hijack, my first reaction was 'Somebody started the exercise early,'" Nasypany later told me. The day's exercise was designed to run a range of scenarios, including a "traditional" simulated hijack in which politically motivated perpetrators commandeered an aircraft, land on a Cuba-like island, and seek asylum. "I actually said out loud, 'The hijack's not supposed to be for another hour,'" Nasypany recalled. (The fact that there was an exercise planned for the same day as the attack factors into several conspiracy theories, though the 9/11 commission dismisses this as coincidence. After plodding through dozens of hours of recordings, so do I.)

On tape, one hears as Nasypany, following standard hijack protocol, prepares to launch two fighters from Otis Air National Guard Base, on Cape Cod, to look for American 11, which is now off course and headed south. He orders his Weapons Team—the group on the ops floor that controls the fighters—to put the Otis planes on "battle stations." This means that at the air base the designated "alert" pilots—two in this case—are jolted into action by a piercing "battle horn." They run to their jets, climb up, strap in, and do everything they need to do to get ready to fly short of starting the engines.

Meanwhile, the communications team at NEADS—the ID techs Dooley, Rountree,

and Watson—are trying to find out, as fast as possible, everything they can about the hijacked plane: the airline, the flight number, the tail number (to help fighter pilots identify it in the air), its flight plan, the number of passengers ("souls on board" in military parlance), and, most important, where it is, so Nasypany can launch the fighters. All the ID section knows is that the plane is American Airlines, Flight No. 11, Boston to Los Angeles, currently somewhere north of John F. Kennedy International Airport—the point of reference used by civilian controllers.

ID tech Watson places a call to the management desk at Boston Center, which first alerted NEADS to the hijack, and gets distressing news.

08:39:58

WATSON: It's the inbound to J.F.K.?

BOSTON CENTER: We—we don't know.

WATSON: You don't know where he is at all?

BOSTON CENTER: He's being hijacked. The pilot's having a hard time talking to the—I mean, we don't know. We don't know where he's going. . . . I guess there's been some threats in the cockpit. The pilot—

WATSON: There's been what? I'm sorry.

UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: Threat to the . . . ?

BOSTON CENTER: We'll call you right back as soon as we know more info.

Dooley is standing over Watson, shouting whatever pertinent information she hears to Nasypany, who's now in position in the center of the floor.

08:40:36

DOOLEY: Okay, he said threat to the cockpit!

This last bit ratchets the tension in the room up considerably.

At Otis Air National Guard Base, the pilots are in their jets, straining at the reins. ("When the horn goes off, it definitely gets your heart," F-15 pilot Major Dan Nash later told me, thumping his chest with his hand.) But at NEADS, Nasypany's "tracker techs" in the Surveillance section still can't find American 11 on their scopes. As it turns out, this is just as the hijackers intended.

Radar is the NEADS controllers' most vital piece of equipment, but by 9/11 the scopes were so old, among other factors, that controllers were ultimately unable to find any of the hijacked planes in enough time to react. Known collectively as the Green Eye for the glow the radar rings give off, the scopes looked like something out of *Dr. Strangelove* and were strikingly anachronistic compared with the equipment at civilian air-traffic sites. (After 9/11, NEADS was equipped with state-of-the-art equipment.)

In order to find a hijacked airliner—or any airplane—military controllers need either the plane's beacon code (broadcast from an electronic transponder on board) or the plane's exact coordinates. When the hijackers on American 11 turned the beacon off, intentionally losing themselves in the dense sea of airplanes already flying over the U.S. that morning (a tactic that would be repeated, with some variations, on all the hijacked flights), the NEADS controllers were at a loss.

"You would see thousands of green blips on your scope," Nasypany told me, "and

now you have to pick and choose. Which is the bad guy out there? Which is the hijacked aircraft? And without that information from F.A.A., it's a needle in a haystack."

At this point in the morning, more than 3,000 jetliners are already in the air over the continental United States, and the Boston controller's direction—"35 miles north of Kennedy"—doesn't help the NEADS controllers at all.

On tape, amid the confusion, one hears Major James Fox, then 32, the leader of the Weapons Team, whose composure will stand out throughout the attack, make an observation that, so far, ranks as the understatement of the morning.

08:43:06

FOX: I've never seen so much real-world stuff happen during an exercise.

Less than two minutes later, frustrated that the controllers still can't pinpoint American 11 on radar, Nasypany orders Fox to launch the Otis fighters anyway. Having them up, Nasypany figures, is better than having them on the ground, assuming NEADS will ultimately pin down American 11's position. His job is to be proactive—to try to gain leverage over the situation as fast as possible. His backstop is Colonel Marr, the battle commander and Nasypany's superior up in the Battle Cab, whose role is more strategic, calculating the implications of each move several hours down the line.

Marr, 48 at the time (and since retired), is a well-liked leader. Most of his conversations on 9/11 are unrecorded: he speaks over a secure phone with his superior, Major General Larry Arnold, stationed at NORAD's command center at Tyndall Air Force Base, in Florida, or over an intercom with Nasypany. In the latter case, only Nasypany's side of the conversations is recorded.

In the last lines of his first briefing to Marr, Nasypany unwittingly trumps Fox in the realm of understatement.

08:46:36

NASYPANY: Hi, sir. O.K., what—what we're doing, we're tryin' to locate this guy.... And probably right now with what's going on in the cockpit it's probably really crazy. So, it probably needs to—that will simmer down and we'll probably get some better information.

American 11 slammed into the north tower of the World Trade Center four seconds into this transmission.

More than 150 miles from Manhattan, within the same minute as American 11 hits the tower, the stoplight in the Alert Barn at Otis Air National Guard Base on Cape Cod turns from red to green. Colonel Marr and General Arnold having

approved Nasypany's order to scramble the fighters. The pilots taxi out and fire the afterburners as the planes swing onto the runway. NEADS has no indication yet that American 11 has crashed.

Five minutes later, Rountree, at the 1D station, gets the first report of the crash from Boston Center (as her colleagues Watson and Dooley overhear).

08:51:11

ROUNTREE: A plane just hit the World Trade Center?

WATSON: What?

ROUNTREE: Was it a 737?

UNIDENTIFIED MALE (background): Hit what?

WATSON: The World Trade Center—

DOOLEY: Who are you talking to? [Gasps.]

WATSON: Oh!

DOOLEY: Get—pass—pass it to them—

WATSON: Oh my God.

ROUNTREE: Saw it on the news. It's—a plane just crashed into the World Trade Center.

In light of this news, someone asks Nasypany what to do with the fighters—the two F-15s from Otis Air National Guard Base—which have now just blasted off for New York at full afterburner to find American 11. (The flying time at full speed from Cape Cod to New York is about 10 minutes.) Pumped with adrenaline, Nasypany doesn't miss a beat.

08:52:40

NASYPANY: Send 'em to New York City still. Continue! Go!

"I'm not gonna stop what I initially started with scrambling Otis—getting Otis over New York City," Nasypany recalled when I played him this section of his tape. "If this is a false report, I still have my fighters where I want them to be."

Meanwhile, confusion is building on the ops floor over whether the plane that hit the tower really was American 11. Rumors that it was a small Cessna have started to circulate through the civilian air-traffic system. 1D tech Rountree is on the phone with Boston Center's military liaison, Colin Scoggins, a civilian manager, who at first seems to confirm that it was American 11 that went into the tower. But an unidentified male trooper at NEADS overhears the exchange and raises a red flag.

08:56:31

MALE NEADS TECH: I never heard them say American Airlines Flight 11 hit the World Trade Center. I heard it was a civilian aircraft.

Dooley, the 1D desk's master sergeant, takes the phone from Rountree to confirm for herself, and the story veers off course...

DOOLEY (to Boston): Master Sergeant Dooley here. We need to have—are you giving confirmation that American 11 was the one—
BOSTON CENTER (Scoggins): No, we're not

gonna confirm that at this time. We just know an aircraft crashed in and... The last [radar sighting] we have was about 15 miles east of J.F.K., or eight miles east of J.F.K. was our last primary hit. He did slow down...

DOOLEY: And then you lost 'em?
BOSTON CENTER (Scoggins): Yeah, and then we lost 'em.

The problem, Scoggins told me later, was that American Airlines refused to confirm for several hours that its plane had hit the tower. This lack of confirmation caused uncertainty that would be compounded in a very big way as the attack continued. (Though airlines have their own means of monitoring

the commanding officer. (Dooley told me she remembers looking up toward the Battle Cab and, for a long moment, seeing Marr's jaw drop and everyone around him frozen.)

On the ops floor, there is considerable confusion as to whether the second hijacking New York Center just called in is the same plane that hit the second tower, or whether there are now three missing planes.

09:03:52

NASYPANY (to Marr): Sir, we got—we've got unconfirmed second hit from another aircraft.... Fighters are south of—just south of Long Island, sir. Right now. Fighters are south of Long Island.

Center.'... My first thought was 'What happened to American 11?'

With both towers now in flames, Nasypany wants the fighters over Manhattan immediately, but the weapons techs get "pushback" from civilian F.A.A. controllers, who have final authority over the fighters as long as they are in civilian airspace. The F.A.A. controllers are afraid of fast-moving fighters colliding with a passenger plane, of which there are hundreds in the area, still flying normal routes—the morning's unprecedented order to ground all civilian aircraft has not yet been given. To Nasypany, the fact that so many planes

"WE'RE TRYIN' TO LOCATE THIS GUY.... AND PROBABLY RIGHT NOW WITH WHAT'S GOING ON IN THE COCKPIT IT'S PROBABLY REALLY CRAZY."

the location of their planes and communicating with their pilots, they routinely go into information lockdown in a crisis.)

Amid the chaos, Nasypany notices that some of his people are beginning to panic, so he makes a joke to relieve the tension.

08:57:11

NASYPANY: Think we put the exercise on the hold. What do you think? [Laughs.]

Just at that moment, in one of the dark, U-shaped air-traffic-control areas at New York Center, on Long Island, a half-dozen civilian controllers are watching a second plane that's turned off course: United 175, also scheduled from Boston to Los Angeles. As the controllers try to hail the pilots, a manager comes running in and confirms that the plane that hit the first tower was, indeed, a commercial airliner, rather than a small Cessna. It's just at that moment that United 175, 38 minutes into its flight and now near Allentown, Pennsylvania, moving southwest farther and farther off course, makes a sudden swing northeast toward Manhattan. Suddenly—instinctively—the civilian controllers know: it's another hijacking, and it's not going to land.

The controllers start speculating what the hijacker is aiming at—one guesses the Statue of Liberty—and the room erupts in profanity and horror. One controller is looking at his scope, calling out the rate of descent every 12 seconds as he watches the radar refresh. It is not until the last second, literally, that anyone from New York Center thinks to update NEADS. ID tech Rountree fields the call.

09:03:17

ROUNTREE: They have a second possible hijack!

Almost simultaneously, United 175 slams into the south tower of the World Trade Center, something several NEADS personnel witness live on CNN, including Colonel Marr,

There's seemingly enough commotion in the Battle Cab that Nasypany needs to clarify: "Our fighters..." The two F-15s, scrambled from Otis, are now approaching the city.

In the background, several troops can be heard trying to make sense of what's happening.

09:04:50

—Is this explosion part of that that we're lookin' at now on TV?

—Yes.

—Jesus...

—And there's a possible second hijack also—a United Airlines...

—Two planes?...

—Get the fuck out...

—I think this is a damn input, to be honest.

The last line—"I think this is a damn input"—is a reference to the exercise, meaning a simulations input. It's either gallows humor or wishful thinking. From the tape, it's hard to tell.

"We've already had two. Why not more?"

Meanwhile, flying southwest over the ocean, the two fighters from Otis Air National Guard Base are streaking toward Manhattan. The pilots are startled, to say the least, when they see billowing smoke appear on the horizon; no one's briefed them about what's going on. They were scrambled simply to intercept and escort American 11—a possible hijacking—and that is all they know.

"From 100 miles away at least, we could see the fire and the smoke blowing," Major Dan Nash, one of the F-15 pilots, told me. "Obviously, anybody watching CNN had a better idea of what was going on. We were not told anything. It was to the point where we were flying supersonic towards New York and the controller came on and said, 'A second airplane has hit the World Trade

are still in the sky is all the more reason to get the fighters close. ("We've already had two," he told me, referring to the hijackings. "Why not more?")

The fighters are initially directed to a holding area just off the coast, near Long Island.

Nasypany isn't happy. He tells the Battle Cab he wants Fox to launch two more fighters from Langley Air Force Base, in Virginia, to establish a greater presence over New York, but the request is refused. The order from the Battle Cab is to put the Langley jets on battle stations only—to be ready, but not to launch.

"The problem there would have been I'd have all my fighters in the air at the same time, which means they'd all run out of gas at the same time," Marr later explained.

Incredibly, Marr has only four armed fighters at his disposal to defend about a quarter of the continental United States. Massive cutbacks at the close of the Cold War reduced NORAD's arsenal of fighters from some 60 battle-ready jets to just 14 across the entire country. (Under different commands, the military generally maintains several hundred unarmed fighter jets for training in the continental U.S.) Only four of NORAD's planes belong to NEADS and are thus anywhere close to Manhattan—the two from Otis, now circling above the ocean off Long Island, and the two in Virginia at Langley.

Nasypany starts walking up and down the floor, asking all his section heads and weapons techs if they are prepared to shoot down a civilian airliner if need be, but he's jumping the gun: he doesn't have the authority to order a shootdown, nor does Marr or Arnold, or Vice President Cheney, for that matter. The order will need to come from President Bush, who has only just learned of the attack at a photo op in Florida.

But the prospect soon becomes real. Mo

Dooley's voice erupts from the 1D station on the operations floor.

9:21:37

DOOLEY: Another hijack! It's headed towards Washington!

This report, received from Colin Scoggins at Boston Center, will set off a major escalation in the military response to the attack, resulting in the launch of additional armed fighter jets. But 20 months later, when the military presents to the 9/11 commission what is supposed to be a full accounting of the day, omitted from the official time line is any mention of this reported hijacking and the fevered chase it engenders.

ly gotten to any of the hijacked planes? And did they shoot down the final flight, United 93, which ended up in a Pennsylvania field?

On hand, dressed in business suits (with the exception of Major General Craig McKinley, whose two stars twinkled on either epaulet), were Major General Larry Arnold (retired), who had been on the other end of the secure line with NEADS's Colonel Marr throughout the attack, and Colonel Alan Scott (retired), who had been with Arnold at NORAD's continental command in Florida on 9/11 and who worked closely with Marr in preparing the military's time line. None of the military men were placed under oath.



THE INTERCEPTOR
Senior Airman Stacio Rountree, who relayed hijack reports to the rest of NEADS. Fellow "1D techs" called her "the bearer of death and destruction."

THE CONTROLLERS START SPECULATING ABOUT WHAT THE HIJACKER IS AIMING AT—ONE GUESSES THE STATUE OF LIBERTY—AND THE ROOM ERUPTS IN HORROR.

I was the Friday before Memorial Day weekend, 2003, and the hearing room in the Hart Senate Office Building, in Washington, was half empty as the group of mostly retired military brass arranged themselves at the witness table before the 9/11 commission. The story the NORAD officers had come to tell before the commission was a relatively humbling one, a point underscored by the questions commission chairman Thomas Kean introduced during his opening remarks: How did the hijackers defeat the system, and why couldn't we stop them? These were important questions. Nearly two years after the attack, the Internet was rife with questions and conspiracy theories about 9/11—in particular, where were the fighters? Could they have physical-

Their story, in a nutshell, was one of being caught off guard initially, then very quickly ramping up to battle status—in position, and in possession of enough situational awareness to defend the country, and the capital in particular, before United 93, the fourth hijacked plane, would have reached Washington.

Major General Arnold explained to the commission that the military had been tracking United 93 and the fighters were in position if United 93 had threatened Washington. "It was our intent to intercept United Flight 93," Arnold testified. "I was personally anxious to see what 93 was going to do, and our intent was to intercept it."

Colonel Marr, the commanding officer at NEADS on 9/11, had made similar comments

to ABC News for its one-year-anniversary special on the attacks, saying that the pilots had been warned they might have to intercept United 93, and stop it if necessary: "And we of course passed that on to the pilots: United Airlines Flight 93 will not be allowed to reach Washington, D.C."

When I interviewed him recently, Marr recalled a conversation he had had with Arnold in the heat of the attack. "I remember the words out of General Arnold's mouth, or at least as I remember them, were 'We will take lives in the air to save lives on the ground.'" In actuality, they'd never get that chance.

In the chronology presented to the 9/11 commission, Colonel Scott put the time NORAD was first notified about United 93 at 9:16 A.M., from which time, he said, commanders tracked the flight closely. (It crashed at 10:03 A.M.) If it had indeed been necessary to "take lives in the air" with United 93, or any incoming flight to Washington, the two armed fighters from Langley Air Force Base in Virginia would have been the ones called upon to carry out the shootdown. In Colonel Scott's account, those jets were given the order to launch at 9:24, within seconds of NEADS's receiving the F.A.A.'s report of the possible hijacking of American 77, the plane that would ultimately hit the Pentagon. This time line suggests the system was starting to work: the F.A.A. reports a hijacking, and the military reacts instantaneously. Launching after the report of American 77 would, in theory, have put the fighters in the air and in position over Washington in plenty of time to react to United 93.

In testimony a few minutes later, how-

ever, General Arnold added an unexpected twist: "We launched the aircraft out of Langley to put them over top of Washington, D.C., not in response to American Airlines 77, but really to put them in position in case United 93 were to head that way."

How strange, John Azzarello, a former prosecutor and one of the commission's staff members, thought. "I remember being at the hearing in '03 and wondering why they didn't seem to have their stories straight. That struck me as odd."

The ears of another staff member, Miles Kara, perked up as well. "I said to myself, That's not right," the retired colonel, a former army intelligence officer, told me. Kara had seen the radar re-creations of the fighters' routes. "We CONTINUED ON PAGE 275

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 27 • knew something was odd, but we didn't have enough specificity to know how odd."

As the tapes reveal in stark detail, parts of Scott's and Arnold's testimony were misleading, and others simply false. At 9:16 A.M., when Arnold and Marr had supposedly begun their tracking of United 93, the plane had not yet been hijacked. In fact, NEADS wouldn't get word about United 93 for another 51 minutes. And while NORAD commanders did, indeed, order the Langley fighters to scramble at 9:24, as Scott and Arnold testified, it was not in response to the hijacking of American 77 or United 93. Rather, they were chasing a ghost. NEADS was entering the most chaotic period of the morning.

"Chase this guy down"

At 9:21 A.M., just before Dooley's alert about a third hijacked plane headed for Washington, NEADS is in the eye of the storm—a period of relative calm in which, for the moment, there are no reports of additional hijackings.

The call that sets off the latest alarm ("Another hijack! It's headed towards Washington!") comes from Boston and is wholly confounding: according to Scoggins, the Boston manager, American 11, the plane they believed was the first one to hit the World Trade Center, is actually still flying—still hijacked—and now heading straight for D.C. Whatever hit the first tower, it wasn't American 11.

The chase is on for what will turn out to be a phantom plane.

American Airlines, we could never confirm if it was down or not, so that left doubt in our minds."

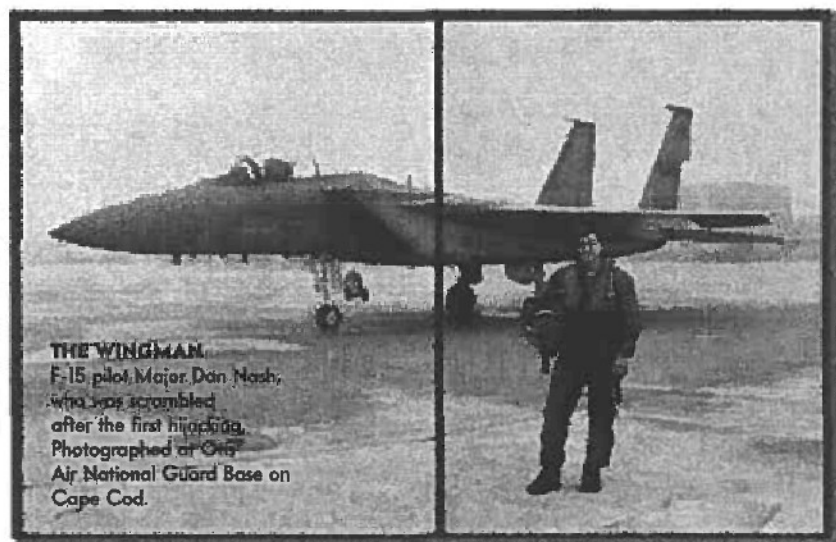
An unwieldy conference call between F.A.A. centers had been established, and Scoggins was monitoring it when the word came across—from whom or where isn't clear—that American 11 was thought to be headed for Washington. Scoggins told me he thinks that the problem started with someone overheard trying to confirm from American whether American 11 was down—that somewhere in the flurry of information zipping back and forth during the conference call this transmogrified into the idea that a different plane had hit the tower, and that American 11 was still hijacked

could Colonel Scott and General Arnold have missed it in preparing for their 9/11-commission testimony? It's a question Arnold would have to answer later, under oath.

In the middle of the attack, however, the hijackers' sabotaging of the planes' beacons has thrown such a wrench into efforts to track them that it all seems plausible. Another officer asks Nasypany the obvious question.

9:32:20

MAJOR JAMES ANDERSON: Have you asked—have you asked the question what you're gonna do if we actually find this guy? Are we gonna shoot him down if they got passengers on board? Have they talked about that?



THE WINGMAN
F-15 pilot Major Dan Nash, who was scrambled after the first hijacking. Photographed at Otis Air National Guard Base on Cape Cod.

"HAVE YOU ASKED THE QUESTION WHAT YOU'RE GONNA DO IF WE ACTUALLY FIND THIS GUY? ARE WE GONNA SHOOT HIM DOWN IF THEY GOT PASSENGERS ON BOARD?"

9:21:50

NASYPANY: O.K. American Airlines is still airborne—11, the first guy. He's heading towards Washington. O.K., I think we need to scramble Langley right now. And I'm—I'm gonna take the fighters from Otis and try to chase this guy down if I can find him.

Arnold and Marr approve scrambling the two planes at Langley, along with a third unarmed trainer, and Nasypany sets the launch in motion.

It's a mistake, of course. American 11 was, indeed, the plane that hit the first tower. The confusion will persist for hours, however. In Boston, it is Colin Scoggins who has made the mistaken call.

"When we phoned United [after the second tower was hit], they confirmed that United 175 was down, and I think they confirmed that within two or three minutes," Scoggins, the go-to guy at Boston Center for all things military, later told me. "With

and still in the air. The plane's course, had it continued south past New York in the direction it was flying before it dipped below radar coverage, would have had it headed on a straight course toward D.C. This was all controllers were going on; they were never tracking an actual plane on the radar after losing American 11 near Manhattan, but if it had been flying low enough, the plane could have gone undetected. "After talking to a supervisor, I made the call and said [American 11] is still in the air, and it's probably somewhere over New Jersey or Delaware heading for Washington, D.C.," Scoggins told me.

Over the next quarter-hour, the fact that the fighters have been launched in response to the phantom American 11—rather than American 77 or United 93—is referred to six more times on Nasypany's channel alone. How

Approval for any such order would have to come from the commander in chief. Just after 9:30, however, the president was in his motorcade preparing to leave the Emma Booker Elementary School, in Sarasota, for the airport and the safety of Air Force One. The 9/11 commission determined that the president had not been aware of any further possible hijackings and was not yet in touch with the Pentagon.

But a clear shootdown order wouldn't have made a difference. The Langley fighters were headed the wrong way—due east, straight out to sea into a military-training airspace called Whiskey 386, rather than toward Washington, which NEADS believed was under attack. According to the 9/11 commission, the Langley pilots were never briefed by anyone at their base about why they were being scrambled, so, despite having been given the order from NEADS to fly to Washington, the pilots ended up follow-

ing their normal training flight plan out to sea—a flight plan dating from the Cold War. As one pilot later told the commission, “I reverted to the Russian threat—I’m thinking cruise-missile threat from the sea.”

At NEADS, a 28-year-old staff sergeant named William Huckabone, staring at his Green Eye, is the first to notice that the Langley jets are off course. His voice is a mix of stress and dread as he and the controller next to him, Master Sergeant Steve Citino, order a navy air-traffic controller who’s handling the fighters to get them turned around toward Baltimore to try to cut off the phantom Amer-

9:34:01

WASHINGTON CENTER: Now, let me tell you this. I—I’ll—we’ve been looking. We’re—also lost American 77.... They lost contact with him. They lost everything. And they don’t have any idea where he is or what happened.

This is a full 10 minutes later than the time Major General Arnold and Colonel Scott would give in their testimony; reality was a lot messier. Forty minutes prior, at 8:54 A.M., controllers at Indianapolis Center had lost radar contact with American 77, flying from Washington Dulles to LAX, and assumed the plane had crashed because they

Center’s report that American 77 is lost.

Of these four vague and ultimately overlapping reports, the latest—word of a plane six miles from the White House—is the most urgent. The news sets off a frenzy.

9:36:23

NASYPANY: O.K., Foxy [Major Fox, the Weapons Team head]. I got a aircraft six miles east of the White House! Get your fighters there as soon as possible....

HUCKABONE: We’re gonna turn and burn it—crank it up—

MALE TECH: Six miles!

“Six miles south, or west, or east of the White House is—it’s seconds [away].” Nasypany told me later. “Airliners traveling at 400-plus knots, it’s nothing. It’s seconds away from that location.”

The White House, then, is in immediate danger. Radar analysis in the following weeks will show that the plane abruptly veers away and turns toward the Pentagon, though the controllers at NEADS have no way of knowing this in the moment. Looking in the general capital area, one of the tracker techs thinks he spots the plane on radar.

9:37:56

MALE TECH: Right here, right here, right here. I got him. I got him.

NASYPANY: O.K., we got guys lookin’ at ‘em. Hold on.... Where’s Langley at? Where are the fighters?

The fighters have no chance. They’re about 150 miles away, according to radar analysis done later. Even at top speed—and even if



THE BRASS

Colonel Robert Morr, former commanding officer at NEADS, had only four armed fighters at his disposal on 9/11.

THE FIGHTERS HAVE NO CHANCE. EVEN AT TOP SPEED IT WILL TAKE THEM ROUGHLY 10 MINUTES TO GET TO THE PENTAGON... AND THE PENTAGON IS ALREADY IN FLAMES.

ican 11. The navy air-traffic controller seems not to understand the urgency of the situation.

9:34:12

NAVY A.T.C.: You’ve got [the fighters] moving east in airspace. Now you want ‘em to go to Baltimore? ... All right, man. Stand by. We’ll get back to you.

CITINO: What do you mean, “We’ll get back to you”? Just do it!

HUCKABONE: I’m gonna choke that guy!

CITINO: Be very professional, Huck.

HUCKABONE: O.K.

CITINO: All right, Huck. Let’s get our act together here.

All hell is breaking loose around them. Boston Center has called in with another suspected hijacking—the controllers there don’t know the call sign yet—and 1D tech Watson is speed-dialing everyone she can to find a position on the resurrected American 11. In the course of a call to Washington Center, the operations manager there has sprung new information about yet another lost airplane: American 77.

weren’t aware of the attack in New York. Though they soon realized this was another hijacking and sent warnings up the F.A.A. chain, no one called the military; it was only by chance that NEADS’s Watson got the information in her call to Washington Center.

As Watson takes in the information from Washington Center, Rountree’s phone is ringing again. By this point, the other 1D techs have taken to calling Rountree “the bearer of death and destruction” because it seems every time she picks up the phone there’s another hijacking. And so it is again. At Boston Center, Colin Scoggins has spotted a low-flying airliner six miles southeast of the White House. This will turn out to be American 77, but since the hijackers turned the beacon off on this plane as well, no one will realize that until later. Depending on how you count, NEADS now has three reported possible hijackings from Boston (the phantom American 11 and two unidentified planes) as well as Washington

they know the problem is suicide hijackings of commercial airliners rather than Russian missiles—it will take them roughly 10 minutes to get to the Pentagon.

9:38:50

NASYPANY: We need to get those back up there—I don’t care how many windows you break! ... Goddammit! O.K. Push ‘em back!

But the Pentagon is already in flames, American 77 having plowed through the E-ring of the west side of the building seconds before, at 9:37:46. The Langley fighters will not be established over Washington for another 20 minutes.

“You were just so mad”

On the ops floor, everyone is staring at CNN on the overhead screen. Seeing the first pictures of the Pentagon in flames is gut-wrenching. Nasypany’s voice can be heard cursing in frustration: “God-dammit! I can’t

JOHN CIUFFARO

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 176 even protect my N.C.A. [National Capital Area]." You hear troops prod one another to stay focused.

CITINO: O.K.—let's watch our guys. Huck. Not the TV.

"The more it went on, the more unbelievable it got, and then the one that did the Pentagon," Dooley told me. "we just couldn't believe it. You were just so mad that you couldn't stop these guys and so you're looking for the next one. Where are they going next?"

It looks like Washington again. Three minutes after the Pentagon is hit, Scog-

controller in Cleveland in contact with the pilot has determined that the flight is fine—that Delta 1989 isn't a hijacking after all.

Meanwhile, however, NEADS has gotten a call from a NORAD unit in Canada with yet another suspected hijacking headed south across the border toward Washington. In the barrage of information and misinformation, it becomes increasingly difficult for the controllers to keep count of how many suspected hijackings are pending. So far, it is known that three have hit buildings, but given the uncertainty about the fates of American 11 and

have the authority to shoot? The request skips up the chain to Arnold.

"I was in Vietnam," Arnold later told me. "When people are shooting at you, you don't know when it's going to stop. And that same thought went through my mind [on 9/11]. You begin to wonder, How can I get control of this situation? When can we as a military get control of this situation?"

Arnold, in turn, passes the request for rules of engagement farther up the chain.

It is in the middle of this, simultaneously, that the first call comes in about United 93. ID tech Watson fields it.

LOST IN SPACE

Radar images from 9/11 showing planes over the eastern U.S. By 2:30, only military craft are airborne.

8:30 A.M.

10:30 A.M.

2:30 P.M.

gins, at Boston Center, is back on the phone. The Boston controllers are now tracking Delta 1989—Boston to Las Vegas—which fits the same profile as the other hijackings: cross-country, out of Boston, lots of fuel, and possibly off course. But this one's different from the others in one key respect: the plane's beacon code is still working. In this chase, NEADS will have a chance, as the excitement in Doolley's last line reflects:

9:40:57

ROUNTREE: Delta 89, that's the hijack. They think it's possible hijack.

DOOLEY: Fuck!

ROUNTREE: South of Cleveland. We have a code on him now.

DOOLEY: Good. Pick it up! Find it!

They quickly find the plane on radar—it's just south of Toledo—and begin alerting other F.A.A. centers. They're not sure where the plane is headed. If it's Chicago, they're in big trouble, because they don't have any planes close enough to cut it off. Marr and Nasypany order troops to call Air National Guard bases in that area to see if anyone can launch fighters. A base in Selfridge, Michigan, offers up two unarmed fighters that are already flying, on their way back from a training mission.

But NEADS is victim again to an increasingly long information lag. Even before Rountree gets the urgent call that Delta 1989 is hijacked, a civilian air-traffic

American 77—no one knows yet that this is the plane that hit the Pentagon—the sense at NEADS is that there are possibly three hijacked jets still out there, and who knows how many more yet to be reported. At this point, no one on the military side is aware that United 93 has been hijacked.

Then, over a crackly radio, one of the Langley fighter pilots, now in a combat air patrol over Washington, is calling in urgently.

10:07:08

PILOT: Baltimore is saying something about an aircraft over the White House. Any words?

A fourth hijacking? Nasypany, who's running full throttle, replies instinctively.

NASYPANY: Intercept!

FOX: Intercept!

NASYPANY: Intercept and divert that aircraft away from there.

On one channel, you hear a weapons tech very dramatically hailing the fighters and ordering the intercept, while Nasypany calls the Battle Cab. With a plane headed straight for the White House, Nasypany needs an update on his rules of engagement—fast.

10:07:39

NASYPANY: Do you hear that? That aircraft over the White House. What's the word? ... Intercept and what else? ... Aircraft over the White House.

The "what else?" is the big question: do they

10:07:16

CLEVELAND CENTER: We got a United 93 out here. Are you aware of that?

WATSON: United 93?

CLEVELAND CENTER: That has a bomb on board.

WATSON: A bomb on board?! And this is confirmed? You have a [beacon code], sir?

CLEVELAND CENTER: No, we lost his transponder. ... All I know is it's a United 93. He's got a confirmed bomb on board ...

The information is shouted out to Nasypany.

NASYPANY: Gimme the call sign. Gimme the whole nine yards. ... Let's get some info, real quick. They got a bomb?

But by the time NEADS gets the report of a bomb on United 93, everyone on board is already dead. Following the passengers' counterattack, the plane crashed in a field in Pennsylvania at 10:03 A.M., 4 minutes before Cleveland Center notified NEADS, and a full 35 minutes after a Cleveland Center controller, a veteran named John Werth, first suspected something was wrong with the flight. At 9:28, Werth actually heard the guttural sounds of the cockpit struggle over the radio as the hijackers attacked the pilots.

Werth's suspicions about United 93 were passed quickly up the F.A.A.'s chain of command, so how is it that no one from the agency alerted NEADS for more than half an hour?

A former senior executive at the F.A.A., speaking to me on the condition that I not

identify him by name, tried to explain. "Our whole procedures prior to 9/11 were that you turned everything [regarding a hijacking] over to the F.B.I.," he said, reiterating that hijackers had never actually flown airplanes; it was expected that they'd land and make demands. "There were absolutely no shootdown protocols at all. The F.A.A. had nothing to do with whether they were going to shoot anybody down. We had no protocols or rules of engagement."

In his bunker under the White House, Vice President Cheney was not notified about United 93 until 10:02—only one minute before the airliner impacted the ground. Yet it was with dark bravado that the vice president and others in the Bush administration would later recount sober deliberations about the prospect of shooting down United 93. "Very, very tough decision, and the president understood the magnitude of that decision," Bush's then chief of staff, Andrew Card, told ABC News.

Cheney echoed, "The significance of saying to a pilot that you are authorized to shoot down a plane full of Americans is, a, you know, it's an order that had never been given before." And it wasn't on 9/11, either.

President Bush would finally grant commanders the *authority* to give that order

ment comes back in no uncertain terms, as you hear him relay to the ops floor.

10:10:31

NASYPANY (to floor): Negative. Negative clearance to shoot.... Goddammit!... Negative clearance to fire. ID. Type. Tail.

The orders from higher headquarters are to identify by aircraft type and tail number, and nothing more. As it turns out, this is just as well. Delta 1989 and the Canadian scare turn out to be false alarms. American 11 and United 93 are already down. And the fast-moving target near the White House that the armed fighters are racing to intercept turns out to be a friendly—a mistake by a civilian controller who was unaware of the military's scrambles, as weapons techs Huckabone and Citino, and their senior director, Fox, suddenly realize.

HUCKABONE: It was our guys [the fighters from Langley].

CITINO: Yup. It was our guys they saw. It was our guys they saw—Center saw.

FOX: New York did the same thing....

CITINO: O.K., Huck. That was cool. We intercepted our own guys.

At that point in the morning, Marr later told me, preventing an accidental shoot-down was a paramount concern. "What you don't want happening is a pilot having

"I know what spin is"

On June 17, 2004, a year after the 9/11 commission's initial public hearing, Major General Arnold and a more robust contingent of NORAD and Pentagon brass arrived to testify before the commission at its 12th and final public meeting. This time, they would testify under oath.

The hearing began with an elaborate multimedia presentation in which John Farmer Jr., the commission's senior counsel, John Azzaello, and another staff attorney, Dana Hyde, took turns illustrating, in withering detail, the lag time between when the F.A.A. found out about each of the hijacked aircraft and the time anyone from the agency notified the military. Excerpts from the NEADS tapes and parallel recordings from the F.A.A., which show the civilian side in equal turmoil, were played in public for the first time. (Both sets of recordings were provided to the commission only after being subpoenaed.)

The focus of the pointed questioning that followed wasn't on why the military didn't do better, but rather on why the story Major General Arnold and Colonel Scott had told at the first hearing was so wrong, in particular with respect to the phantom American 11, which the officers had never mentioned, and United 93, which they claimed to have been tracking. Commissioner Richard Ben-Veniste, who cut his teeth 30 years earlier working

"OUR PROCEDURES WERE THAT YOU TURNED EVERYTHING OVER TO THE F.B.I.," SAID A FORMER F.A.A. EXECUTIVE. "THERE WERE ABSOLUTELY NO SHOOTDOWN PROTOCOLS."

at 10:18, which—though no one knew it at the time—was 15 minutes after the attack was over.

But comments such as those above were repeated by other administration and military figures in the weeks and months following 9/11, forging the notion that only the passengers' counterattack against their hijackers prevented an inevitable shootdown of United 93 (and convincing conspiracy theorists that the government did, indeed, secretly shoot it down). The recordings tell a different story, and not only because United 93 had crashed before anyone in the military chain of command even knew it had been hijacked.

At what feels on the tapes like the moment of truth, what comes back down the chain of command, instead of clearance to fire, is a resounding sense of caution. Despite the fact that NEADS believes there may be as many as five suspected hijacked aircraft still in the air at this point—one from Canada, the new one bearing down fast on Washington, the phantom American 11, Delta 1989, and United 93—the answer to Nasypany's question about rules of engage-

ment comes back in the heat of the moment where he is bearing all that burden as to whether I should shoot something down or not," Marr said.

It is 12 minutes after United 93 actually crashed when NEADS's Watson first hears the word. Her voice is initially full of hope as she mistakenly believes she is being told that United 93 has landed safely.

10:15:00

WATSON: United nine three, have you got information on that yet?

WASHINGTON CENTER: Yeah, he's down.

WATSON: What—he's down?

WASHINGTON CENTER: Yes.

WATSON: When did he land? Because we have confirmation—

WASHINGTON CENTER: He did—he did—he did not land.

Here, on the tape, you hear the air rush out of Watson's voice.

WATSON: Oh, he's down down?

MALE VOICE: Yes. Yeah, somewhere up northeast of Camp David.

WATSON: Northeast of Camp David.

WASHINGTON CENTER: That's the—that's the last report. They don't know exactly where.

for the Watergate special prosecutor, led off the questioning and came out swinging.

"General, is it not a fact that the failure to call our attention to the miscommunication and the notion of a phantom Flight 11 continuing from New York City south in fact skewed the whole reporting of 9/11?" he asked Arnold, who replied that he had not been aware of those facts when he testified the year before.

"I've been in government and I know what spin is," Farmer, the senior counsel, told me. The military's story was "a whole different order of magnitude than spin. It simply wasn't true." Farmer says he doesn't understand why the military felt the need to spin at all. "The information they got [from the F.A.A.] was bad information, but they reacted in a way that you would have wanted them to. The calls Marr and Nasypany made were the right ones."

Both Marr and Arnold bristled when I asked about the commission's suspicion that there had been an effort to spin the story. "I can't think of any incentive why we'd want to spin that," Marr said, his eyes tensing for the first time in what had been friendly

interviews. "I'll be the first to admit that immediately after—in fact, for a long time after—we were very confused with who was what and where, what reports were coming in. I think with having 29 different reports of hijackings nationwide, for us it was next to impossible to try and get back there and figure out the fidelity [about the morning's chronology] that the 9/11 commission ended up being able to show."

Azzarello, Farmer, and several other commission members I spoke to dismissed this fog-of-war excuse and pointed out that not only had the military already reviewed the tapes but that the false story it told at the first hearing had a clear purpose. "How good would it have looked for the government in general if we still couldn't have stopped the fourth plane an hour and 35 minutes [into the attack]?" Azzarello asked. "How good would it have looked if there was a total breakdown in communication and nothing worked right?"

If nothing else, it might have given the



"THE FALSE TESTIMONY SERVED A PURPOSE ... TO OVERSTATE THE READINESS OF THE MILITARY TO INTERCEPT AND, IF NECESSARY, SHOOT DOWN [UNITED] 93."

public a more realistic sense of the limitations, particularly in the face of suicide terrorism, of what is, without doubt, the most powerful military in the world.

As one of its last acts before disbanding, in July 2004, the 9/11 commission made referrals to the inspector general's offices of both the Department of Transportation (which includes the F.A.A.) and the Defense Department to further investigate whether witnesses had lied. "Commission staff believes that there is significant evidence that the false statements made to the commission were deliberately false," Farmer wrote to me in an e-mail summarizing the commission's referral. "The false testimony served a purpose: to obscure mistakes on the part of the F.A.A. and the military, and to overstate the readiness of the military to intercept and, if necessary, shoot down UAL 93." A spokesman for the Transportation Department's inspector general's office told me that the investigation had been completed, but he wasn't at liberty to share the findings, because the report had not been finalized. A spokesman at the Pentagon's inspector general's office said its investigation had also been completed, but the results are classified.

Pouring over time-stamped transcripts that undercut the Pentagon's official story, one is tempted to get caught up in a game of "gotcha." For those on the operations floor in the thick of it that day,

however, the cold revelations of hindsight are a bitter pill to swallow.

Listening to the tapes, you hear that inside NEADS there was no sense that the attack was over with the crash of United 93; instead, the alarms go on and on. False reports of hijackings, and real responses, continue well into the afternoon, though civilian air-traffic controllers had managed to clear the skies of all commercial and private aircraft by just after 12 P.M. The fighter pilots over New York and D.C. (and later Boston and Chicago) would spend hours darting around their respective skylines intercepting hundreds of aircraft they deemed suspicious. Meanwhile, Arnold, Marr, and Nasypany were launching as many additional fighters as they could, placing some 300 armed jets in protective orbits over every major American city by the following morning. No one at NEADS would go home until late on the night of the 11th, and then only for a few hours of sleep.

Five years after the attack, the controversy around United 93 clearly eats at Arnold, Marr, Nasypany, and several other military people I spoke with, who resent both conspiracy theories that accuse them of shooting the flight down and the 9/11 commission's conclusion that they were chasing ghosts and never stood a chance of intercepting any of the real hijackings. "I don't know about time lines and stuff like that," Nasypany, who is now a lieutenant colonel, said in one of our last con-

versations. "I knew where 93 was. I don't care what [the commission says]. I mean, I care, but—I made that assessment to put my fighters over Washington. Ninety-three was on its way in. I knew there was another one out there. I knew there was somebody else coming in—whatever you want to call it. And I knew what I was going to have to end up doing." When you listen to the tapes, it couldn't feel more horrendously true.

When I asked Nasypany about the conspiracy theories—the people who believe that he, or someone like him, secretly ordered the shootdown of United 93 and covered it up—the corners of his mouth began to quiver. Then, I think to the surprise of both of us, he suddenly put his head in his hands and cried. "Flight 93 was not shot down," he said when he finally looked up. "The individuals on that aircraft, the passengers, they actually took the aircraft down. Because of what those people did, I didn't have to do anything."

On the day, however, there was no time for sentiment. Within 30 seconds of the report that United 93 has crashed, killing everyone on board, once again, the phone is ringing.

10:15:30
 ROWELL: Southeast just called. There's another possible hijack in our area....
 NASYPANY: All right. Fuck....

TO LISTEN TO
 AIR-FORCE
 AUDIOTAPES
 FROM 9/11,
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washingtonpost.com

'United 93': The Real Picture

By John Farmer
Sunday, April 30, 2006; B02

How accurate is "United 93," Universal Pictures' new movie depicting the drama and heroism aboard the fourth plane hijacked on Sept. 11, 2001? The answer tells us a lot about Hollywood and government in the age of terrorism: The film is closer to the truth than every account the government put out before the 9/11 commission's investigation. Its release marks our passage through the post-9/11 looking glass, with our wildest fairy tales now spun not in Hollywood, but in Washington.

The facts of 9/11 are as simple as they are grim. The military officers in charge of the air defense mission did not receive notice of any of the four hijackings in time to respond before the planes crashed. The passengers and crew aboard United Airlines Flight 93 really were alone. They were all that stood between the hijackers and the Capitol (or possibly the White House). That is the core reality of that morning, and "United 93" gets it right.

The movie does make some concessions to drama. As one of the commission staffers whom the filmmakers consulted (on an unpaid basis) about what happened on 9/11, I believe, for instance, that the movie's climax shows the passengers penetrating farther into the cockpit than the evidence supports.

But compare the harsh truth that the movie accurately portrays with this account from a documentary special that aired on ABC on Sept. 11, 2002:

Army Brig. Gen. W. Montague Winfield: "The decision was made to try to go intercept Flight 93."

Vice President Cheney: "The significance of saying to a pilot that you are authorized to shoot down that plane full of Americans, is, a, you know, it's an order that had never been given before."

... Montague: "The vice president briefed into the conference that the president had given us permission to shoot down innocent civilian aircraft that threatened Washington, D.C. Again, in the National Military Command Center, everything stopped for a short second as the impact of those words [sank] in."

... Charles Gibson, ABC News: "Colonel Bob Marr is in command at the Northeast Air Defense Sector base in Rome, New York."

Marr: "I got the call and I, the words that I remember as clear as day [were], 'We will take lives in the air to preserve lives on the ground.'"

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Gibson: "Marr orders his controllers, 'Tell the pilots to intercept Flight 93.' "

... Marr: "And we of course passed that on to the pilots. United Airlines Flight 93 will not be allowed to reach Washington, D.C."

Like the other government versions of 9/11, this account has all the pulse-pounding suspense of a classic movie thriller. It is also, as we discovered at the commission and as "United 93" makes clear, almost completely untrue.

The Northeast Air Defense Sector (NEADS) was not following United 93 on radar; it wasn't even informed that the plane had been hijacked until four minutes after the crash. The authorization to shoot down commercial aircraft was not received until about 30 minutes after the plane went down, and 15 minutes after the military air defenders learned of the crash. The authorization was not passed on to the pilots. Once again, the film depicts the controlling reality more accurately: People were making judgments based on faulty information amid complete chaos.

The question we at the commission asked repeatedly was how the official accounts could have been so wrong. The answer came back: It was the fog of war. The day was too confusing, and government officials hadn't had time to reconstruct events.

But the fog wasn't that thick. The critical times and notifications were recorded in contemporaneous logs virtually all along the chain of command. In testimony before Congress and the commission, officials attributed the pivotal event of the morning -- the scramble of fighters from Langley Air Force Base -- to reports that American Airlines Flight 77, which hit the Pentagon, and United 93 had been hijacked. But the government's own records revealed that the Langley fighters were scrambled in response to a mistaken report, received at 9:21 a.m., that American Flight 11 -- the first plane hijacked -- was still airborne and heading toward Washington.

That truth, the final commission report notes, emerges "not just from taped conversations at NEADS but also from taped conversations at FAA centers; contemporaneous logs compiled at NEADS, Continental Region headquarters, and NORAD; and other records." In short, anyone who looked would have seen right through the fog.

And it's clear that officials were looking. There was a White House briefing on the facts of 9/11 within a week of the attacks. There were countless interviews, television specials and even an official Air Force history of the day, "Air War Over America."

But the story that officials told made the government's response appear quicker and more coordinated than it really was. By telling the public that the Langley fighters were scrambled in response to reports that American 77 and United 93 had been hijacked, officials were able to avoid admitting that they had scrambled fighters in the wrong direction -- heading east, not west toward Pennsylvania -- against a plane that didn't exist. They were also able to say that they had been following United 93 for about 47 minutes before it crashed and were thus well positioned to shoot down the plane if the passengers and crew hadn't acted.

That, of course, was impossible. At the time when North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD) officials told the commission they began tracking United 93 -- 9:16 a.m. -- the plane hadn't been hijacked yet. That didn't occur until 9:28.

Finally, many of the Federal Aviation Administration and Defense Department records that establish

the truth of that day were withheld from the commission until they were subpoenaed. In one of its final acts, the commission asked the inspectors general of the Transportation and Defense departments to investigate who was responsible for the mistaken accounts of the morning's events.

That was more than 18 months ago. The inspectors general have now had longer than the life of the 9/11 commission itself to investigate. While we await their results, we can watch the movie and wonder at a government so lost in spin that it took Hollywood to set the record straight.

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John Farmer, a former attorney general of New Jersey, was a senior counsel to the 9/11 commission.

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(b)(6), (b)(7)c

From: (b)(6), (b)(7)c
Sent: Thursday, September 08, 2005 7:52 AM
To: (b)(6), (b)(7)c
Subject: Sept 1, 2005, (b)(6), (b)(7)c

Good Morning. There was a problem with side B of the tape. The sound quality deteriorated to ultra slow and became completely undecipherable. I found the address to send the invoice but should I send the transcript to you in New York?

Thanks (b)(6), (b)(7)c

Enclosed is side 2 of the 9/11 (b)(6), (b)(7)c interview, which starts on page 41 of the transcript. If you forward the tape to count 88 that is where the tape appears to have become undecipherable.

(b)(6), (b)(7)c

9/22/2005

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(b)(5), (b)(6), (b)(7)c

AGENT'S NOTES

CASE # 042R0122001

AGENT (b)(6), (b)(7)c

(b)(6), (b)(7)c

5/13/05

5/24/05

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(b)(5), (b)(6), (b)(7)c



U.S. Department of Transportation
Office of Inspector General

EVIDENCE CUSTODY DOCUMENT

CASE TITLE FAA- NORAD statements to 9-11 Comm	PROJECT NUMBER 042R0122001	DATE AND TIME OF SEIZURE 10/1/04	LOG NO. 136
NAME OF PERSON FROM WHOM PROPERTY SEIZED (b)(6), (b)(7)c	LOCATION WHERE PROPERTY SEIZED FAA, Bldg 10A 6th Flr, Washington DC		
TO BE RETURNED <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	GRAND JURY MATERIAL - DISSEMINATE ONLY UNDER RULE 6(e), F.R.C.P. <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO		

(b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)c

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AGENT'S NOTES

CASE # 042R0122001

AGENT _____

(b)(6), (b)(7)c

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3/21/05

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(b)(5), (b)(6), (b)(7)c

AGENT'S NOTES

CASE # 042R0122001

AGENT

(b)(6), (b)(7)c

(b)(6), (b)(7)c

3/10/05

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(b)(5), (b)(6), (b)(7)c

042R012200

(b)(6), (b)(7)c

From: (b)(6), (b)(7)c
Sent: Tuesday, April 05, 2005 6:02 AM
To: (b)(6), (b)(7)c
Cc:
Subject: Re: NEADS Log

(b)(6), (b)(7)c

(b)(5)

(b)(6), (b)(7)c

Office: (b)(6), (b)(7)c **Facsimile:** (b)(6), (b)(7)c

(b)(6), (b)(7)c

03/30/2005 08:50
AM

(b)(6), (b)(7)c

To
cc
Subject

NEADS Log

(b)(6), (b)(7)c

I am writing to follow-up on our 2/22/05 discussion concerning the FAA's search for the

(b)(5)

Has the search been completed and what were the results.

Thanks

(b)(6)

DOT-OIG
Region 2

(b)(6), (b)(7)c

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Office of Inspector General

RESULTS OF INVESTIGATION OF 9/11 COMMISSION STAFF REFERRAL

Report Number: CC-2006-085

Date Issued: August 31, 2006



Commission hearings, written statements presented to the Commission, and memoranda and transcripts of numerous interviews conducted by the Commission. Additionally, we reviewed documents chronicling the events of September 11, as well as over 1,000 other documents, including air traffic control transcripts and FAA and DOD event logs, emails, faxes, memoranda, and correspondence. We also assigned an investigator to assist DOD/OIG in its review.

Results in Brief

1. We did not find evidence to conclude that FAA officials knowingly made false statements, purposely omitted accurate information from any statement, or intentionally failed to correct any inaccurate statement after becoming aware of it, regarding FAA notifications to DOD about the September 11 hijackings.
2. Our investigation disclosed that FAA inaccurately reported on its public website in 2002 that FAA notified DOD of the suspected hijacking of American Flight 77 at 9:24 a.m. on September 11. (In fact, no such notification was made.) FAA officials promptly corrected this error—which we attribute to FAA’s reliance on an erroneous timeline entry—after we brought it to their attention in Fall 2004.
3. We found that in its response to a May 22, 2003, Commission Question for the Record (QFR), FAA again inaccurately reported that it had notified DOD about American Flight 77. This, too, we attribute to FAA’s reliance on an erroneous timeline entry.
4. While investigating FAA’s QFR response, we found that it also inaccurately reported that the Air Force Liaison to FAA had joined an FAA headquarters phone-bridge and established contact with NORAD “immediately” following the crash of the first aircraft (American Flight 11) into the World Trade Center at 8:46 a.m. In fact, the Liaison did not join the phone-bridge until after the third hijacked aircraft (American Flight 77) struck the Pentagon at 9:37 a.m.

We further found that three FAA executives (two current and one now-retired) learned of this inaccuracy from the Liaison shortly following FAA’s submission of the QFR response. The two current FAA executives told us they thought the Liaison, when interviewed by Commission staff, would correct the inaccuracy. However, the Liaison told us that no one at FAA spoke to her about making a correction and she did not address this issue when interviewed by Commission staff. As a result, this inaccuracy was not corrected with the Commission.

5. During our investigation, we also reviewed FAA's post-September 11 capability to notify federal agencies about a hijacked or suspicious aircraft, as well as FAA's capability to investigate its handling of a hijacked or suspicious aircraft. We found that FAA acted to improve these capabilities, including:
- Establishing the Domestic Events Network (DEN), a nationwide, continuously open telephone line managed by FAA, designed to allow federal agencies with jurisdiction over the security of U.S. airspace to communicate information in real-time.
 - Instituting new procedures for air traffic controllers on communicating information about a hijacked or suspicious aircraft over the DEN.
 - Installing equipment to record most FAA Washington Operations Center Complex (WOCC) telephone lines. (Prior to September 11, FAA did not record any WOCC telephone lines.)

Based on our findings detailed below, we are making recommendations to the FAA Administrator for enhancing FAA's capability to respond to and report on hijacked or suspicious aircraft. We are also recommending that FAA correct its response to the Commission's QFR and consider appropriate administrative action for the two current executives who did not act to correct the record with the Commission. As a mitigating factor, and to provide some context, we note that at the time, the FAA, including these executives, produced over 6,000 documents and materials to the Commission.

Details

Background on Commission Staff Referral

As part of its statutory mandate to investigate the "facts and circumstances relating to the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001," the Commission examined the interaction between FAA and DOD. The Commission's findings included the specific hours and minutes when FAA notified DOD about the four hijacked aircraft. The summary chronology for each of the hijacked flights from the Commission's Final Report is attached as Appendix 1.¹

¹ The Commission's summary chronology did not list a notification time for United Flight 175; however, included in the body of the Commission's Final Report is the statement that at 9:03 a.m., at approximately the same time United Flight 175 struck the World Trade Center, FAA advised DOD that the aircraft might have been hijacked.



Memorandum

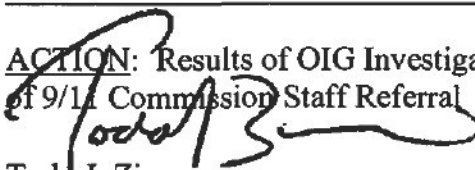
U.S. Department of
Transportation

Office of the Secretary
of Transportation

Office of Inspector General

Subject: **ACTION:** Results of OIG Investigation
of 9/11 Commission Staff Referral

Date: August 31, 2006

From: 
Todd J. Zinser
Acting Inspector General

Reply to
Attn of:

To: The Acting Secretary
Federal Aviation Administrator

Introduction

By letter dated July 29, 2004, the General Counsel for the *National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States*, on behalf of the Commission staff, referred to the Department of Defense (DOD) and Department of Transportation (DOT) Inspectors General information concerning several inaccurate statements made by DOD and Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) officials regarding FAA notifications to DOD about the airplane hijackings on September 11, 2001. The letter noted that the Commission, which would "sunset" on August 26, 2004, did not investigate whether the inaccurate statements were knowingly false; thus, the Commission staff's referral noted that this information was being provided to the Inspectors General for appropriate action.

Based on the Commission staff's referral, our office investigated whether FAA officials knowingly made any false statements. We also investigated whether FAA officials intentionally omitted accurate information from any statement or failed to correct an inaccurate statement after becoming aware of it. Separately, but in coordination with our office, the DOD Office of Inspector General (OIG) undertook a similar review with regard to the actions of DOD officials, namely North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD) officials.

In addition to conferring with Commission staff, our investigation included interviews of 34 current and former FAA and other DOT officials, government contractors, and other private citizens, and we examined voluminous records. Specifically, we reviewed the Commission's Final Report, Commission Staff Statements, transcripts of

The Commission staff's July 29, 2004, correspondence identified the following inaccurate statements made by FAA and NORAD officials regarding the times at which FAA notified NORAD that United Flight 93 and American Flight 77 had been hijacked:

1. During the Commission's May 23, 2003, hearing, a retired NORAD Colonel inaccurately testified that FAA notified DOD at 9:24 a.m. that American Flight 77 had been hijacked. The Commission found that FAA never notified DOD that American Flight 77 had been hijacked. Instead, it found that, at 9:34 a.m., three minutes before American Flight 77 crashed into the Pentagon, FAA advised NEADS that American 77 was "missing."²
2. FAA officials, despite having documents containing an accurate time within their possession, omitted from FAA's September 17, 2001, "Summary of Air Traffic Hijack Events," the time at which FAA notified the NORAD's Northeast Air Defense Sector (NEADS) that United Flight 93 had been hijacked. The Commission found that FAA notified NEADS at 10:07 a.m. that United Flight 93 had been hijacked.
3. NORAD's September 18, 2001, press release inaccurately stated that the time of FAA's notification to DOD that United Flight 93 had been hijacked was "N/A," i.e., "not applicable." The Commission found the accurate time was 10:07 a.m. (NORAD's press release, captioned "NORAD's Response Times" is attached as Appendix 2.)
4. During the Commission's May 23, 2003, hearing, the same retired NORAD Colonel inaccurately testified that FAA notified DOD at 9:16 a.m. that United Flight 93 had been hijacked. The Commission found the accurate time was 10:07 a.m.

The Commission staff concluded that FAA officials had accurate information concerning the above four statements. Thus, the Commission staff referred to us the questions of whether FAA officials knew the above four statements were inaccurate and, if so, why they failed to correct them. We investigated these questions and also whether FAA officials intentionally omitted accurate information from any statement or failed to correct an inaccurate statement after becoming aware of it.

² The Commission staff also identified two other inaccurate statements made by the NORAD Colonel at the May 23, 2003, hearing. Because those statements involved actions by DOD officials, not FAA officials, they were investigated by DOD/OIG.

Investigative Findings

- 1. We did not find evidence to conclude that FAA officials knowingly made false statements, purposely omitted accurate information from any statement, or intentionally failed to correct any inaccurate statement after becoming aware of it, regarding FAA notifications to DOD about the September 11 hijackings.**

- a. FAA's September 17 and 18 documents chronicling the events of September 11**

We found that shortly following September 11, 2001, an FAA executive (now retired), his subordinate manager (now an executive), and their staff created two documents chronicling the events of September 11. The first document, dated September 17, 2001, was entitled "Summary of Air Traffic Hijack Events." FAA officials told us this document was prepared for, and circulated to, FAA, DOT, and other government agencies. The second document, untitled and dated September 18, 2001, was prepared for FAA internal use. These two documents (attached at Appendices 3 and 4) served as the principal sources for other FAA documents chronicling the events of September 11.

In preparing the September 17 and 18 documents, the FAA executive cited the Air Force's NEADS log and also had available a transcript from FAA's Cleveland Air Route Traffic Control Center. Both of these documents correctly recorded FAA's notification to DOD about the hijacking of United Flight 93 as having occurred at 10:07 a.m. Despite the availability of this accurate information, FAA's September 17 "Summary of Air Traffic Hijack Events" is silent as to the time of FAA's notification to DOD for United Flight 93.

Similarly, FAA's September 17 "Summary" is silent as to FAA's notification to DOD about American Flight 77. The Commission found that FAA never notified DOD that American Flight 77 had been hijacked. Instead, the Commission found that at 9:34 a.m., three minutes before American Flight 77 crashed into the Pentagon, FAA advised NEADS that American Flight 77 was "missing."

FAA's September 18 chronology document erroneously listed FAA's notification time to DOD about American Flight 77 as 9:24 a.m. The FAA executive, who was responsible for preparing the document, told us that he cited the NEADS log as the source for the 9:24 a.m. entry. We found, however, that he failed to cross-check the tail number listed for the American Airlines aircraft in the 9:24 a.m. entry. Had he done so, he would have discovered that the aircraft identified was American Flight 11,

not Flight 77.³ Therefore, we concluded that, because of the executive's lack of attention to the details in the NEADS log, he mistakenly believed that FAA had notified DOD of the hijacking of American Flight 77 at 9:24 a.m.

Further, the September 18 document inaccurately reported that the notification time for United Flight 93 was "N/A," i.e., "not applicable," when, in fact, the NEADS log and the Cleveland Center transcript both accurately show that FAA notified DOD of the hijacking of United Flight 93 at 10:07 a.m., four minutes after the aircraft crashed in Pennsylvania.⁴

We interviewed the FAA executive and manager separately and each told us that at the time they prepared the September 17 and 18 chronology documents, they did not believe they had an accurate notification time for United Flight 93, and for that reason they listed "N/A," meaning "not applicable." (We note that they took no further action to establish an accurate notification time.) We also interviewed other members of their staff, who did not contradict the rationale of the executive and manager for the lack of a notification time. We do not find this explanation to be reasonable because the NEADS log—which the executive and manager cited was the source of the notification times for the three other hijacked aircraft—and the transcript from FAA's Cleveland Center (which was also available to them) show the correct notification time for United Flight 93. However, while we could not determine whether these officials omitted the correct notification time for United Flight 93 for any reason other than what they told us, we considered two alternative possibilities:

First, we considered whether the FAA executive and manager may have adopted the "N/A" entry from NORAD's September 18, 2001, press release, a September 17 draft of which FAA's Office of Public Affairs had obtained. It is possible, for example, that the "N/A" entry in NORAD's press release created uncertainty on the part of the FAA executive and manager about the United Flight 93 notification time as they were preparing FAA's September 18 chronology document. Thus, they may have deferred to the NORAD release. However, despite the coincidence of the "N/A" entry in both NORAD's press release and FAA's September 18 document, when we addressed this possibility during our interviews, the FAA executive did not recall, and the manager denied, having seen any draft of NORAD's press release. We investigated the extent to which FAA and DOD collaborated on their chronologies of events of September 11. However, neither DOD/OIG's investigation nor our investigation

³ This entry in the NEADS log was based on an erroneous report that American Flight 11 was headed toward Washington, DC.

⁴ These two documents, along with multiple other drafts and versions of FAA's September 11 chronology, were obtained by the Commission pursuant to its mandate. Nonetheless, the Commission was able to produce an accurate chronology that is the definitive record of the events of September 11.

established any direct coordination between DOD and FAA officials regarding the chronologies.

Second, we considered whether the FAA executive and manager may have purposely omitted the notification time to avoid disclosing that FAA did not notify DOD until approximately four minutes after United Flight 93 had crashed. We asked them about this and they denied it. Further, we discounted this possibility because both the September 17 and 18 documents they produced reported that FAA had not notified DOD of the hijacking of United Flight 175 until approximately two minutes after it crashed into the World Trade Center. We found no evidence to explain why the executive and manager would have purposely omitted one after-the-fact notification and not the other.

Based on our investigation and factoring in the potential for human error under the circumstances that existed during the week following September 11, and the limitations of their recollections, we did not find evidence to conclude that the FAA executive and manager omitted the correct notification times for American Flight 77 and United Flight 93 for any reason other than what they told us.

b. NORAD press release dated September 18, 2001

The Commission staff questioned why FAA officials did not correct NORAD's September 18, 2001, press release, which inaccurately stated that the time NORAD was notified by FAA that United Flight 93 had been hijacked was "N/A," i.e., "not applicable." As addressed above, the FAA executive and manager maintained that they did not believe they had an accurate notification time for United Flight 93.

c. Retired NORAD Colonel's testimony of May 23, 2003

The Commission staff also questioned why FAA officials did not correct the retired NORAD Colonel's May 23, 2003, testimony in which he stated, erroneously, that FAA notified DOD at 9:16 a.m. on September 11 that United Flight 93 had been hijacked. During our interviews, only an FAA executive who attended the hearing acknowledged being aware of the Colonel's testimony. This FAA executive initially recalled having been "upset" about the timeline in the Colonel's testimony, and, immediately following the hearing, unsuccessfully attempted to speak with a NORAD official about inaccurate notification times in that timeline. However, following our interview and after reviewing the Colonel's testimony at our request, the FAA executive advised us that her recollection was it was not the timeline about which she attempted to talk to the NORAD official. Rather, she advised, she tried to tell the NORAD official that the Colonel did not include in his testimony information about

the phone-bridge that was established between FAA headquarters and DOD on September 11.

Finally, the Commission staff questioned why FAA officials did not correct the NORAD Colonel's May 23, 2003, testimony, in which he inaccurately stated that FAA notified DOD at 9:24 a.m. that American Flight 77 had been hijacked. As addressed above, we found that because of the executive's lack of attention to the details on the NEADS log, he mistakenly believed that FAA had notified DOD of the hijacking of American Flight 77 at 9:24 a.m. Thus, we concluded that it would have been reasonable for any FAA official aware of the Colonel's testimony about FAA's notification time for American Flight 77 to have believed it was accurate because his testimony was consistent with FAA's erroneous chronology.

- 2. Our investigation disclosed that FAA inaccurately reported on its public website that FAA notified DOD of the suspected hijacking of American Flight 77 at 9:24 a.m. (In fact, no such notification was made.) FAA officials promptly corrected this error, which we attribute to an erroneous timeline entry, after we brought it to their attention in Fall 2004.**

We found that FAA posted its September 11 chronology in two documents on its public website. The first document, undated, was entitled *FAA Responds*.⁵ The second document, dated August 12, 2002, was an FAA "fact-sheet" entitled *Chronology of Events on September 11, 2001*.⁶ Both erroneously stated:

0924. The FAA notifies NORAD's Northeast Air Defense Sector about the suspected hijacking of American Flight 77.

In fact, as previously addressed in this report, FAA never made such a notification. After we brought this inaccuracy to FAA's attention (in September 2004 on the first document and October 2004 on the second), the agency deleted it from each document. We found no evidence to indicate that anyone at FAA posted these documents knowing they were inaccurate. Instead, we found that FAA's Office of Public Affairs, which was responsible for preparing the documents posted on the website, relied upon inaccurate documents chronicling the events of September 11.

⁵ See www.faa.gov/Sept11/portraits/chronology.cfm

⁶ See www.faa.gov/newsroom/factsheets/2002/factsheets_020812.htm

3. **We found that in its response to a May 22, 2003, Commission Question for the Record (QFR), FAA again inaccurately reported that it had notified DOD about American Flight 77. This, too, we attribute to FAA's reliance on an erroneous timeline entry.**

On May 22, 2003, former FAA Administrator Jane Garvey testified before the Commission. During the hearing, she was asked the time at which FAA notified DOD about American Flight 77. Because Administrator Garvey did not have this information at hand, she told the Commission she would provide a response for the record that evening. FAA's response to the Commission's QFR, captioned "FAA Communications with NORAD on September 11, 2001," which was submitted on the night of May 22, 2003, and read into the Commission hearing record on May 23, 2003, inaccurately reported that FAA notified DOD about American Flight 77 at 9:24 a.m. (FAA's response to the Commission's QFR is attached as Appendix 5.)

We determined that FAA's QFR response was prepared by a now-retired FAA executive and two current executives. We found that because these three executives had relied upon inaccurate FAA documents chronicling the events of September 11, they believed FAA notified DOD of the hijacking of American Flight 77 at 9:24 a.m. We did not find evidence that these three executives knew that FAA never notified DOD that American Flight 77 had been hijacked.

4. **We also found the QFR response to be inaccurate regarding the time at which the Air Force Liaison to the FAA joined an FAA headquarters phone-bridge about the hijackings. We determined that three FAA executives learned of this inaccuracy shortly following FAA's submission of the QFR response, but did not act to correct the record with the Commission; consequently, it was never corrected.**

We found that the QFR response incorrectly related that the Air Force Liaison to FAA joined the FAA phone-bridge on the hijackings and established contact with NORAD "immediately" following the crash of the first aircraft (American Flight 11) into the World Trade Center at 8:46 a.m. In fact, the Liaison did not join the phone-bridge until after the third hijacked aircraft (American Flight 77) struck the Pentagon at 9:37 a.m. The Air Force Liaison told us:

I was enroute to the [FAA headquarters] building when the first plane hit the World Trade Center. ... [S]o probably five, ten minutes after that, I got to the building. ... I went to my office. Everybody was there around the TV. We watched the events unfold. At first, we were kind of hanging back and saying, you know, there's something awful going on with the air traffic system[.] ... But at a certain point, not too long after that, it became

obvious that, you know, something really strange is going on and so ... I relocated. I went upstairs to the 10th floor. ... It was right after the airplane hit the Pentagon.

The now-retired FAA executive told us she learned during a conversation with the Air Force Liaison, which she told us may have occurred on the same day that FAA's QFR response was read into the record, that the response was inaccurate regarding when the Liaison joined the phone-bridge. The other two FAA executives also told us that they learned from speaking with the Liaison that the QFR response was inaccurate. One executive told us that she spoke with the Liaison within a few weeks of the submission of the QFR response, the other executive told us she spoke to the Liaison by the end of the summer. None of these executives, however, informed the Commission of the inaccuracy.

The now-retired executive told us she knew the other two executives were aware of the inaccuracy and assumed they would correct it. The two current executives told us they thought that the Air Force Liaison, when interviewed by Commission staff, would tell the staff that she did not immediately join the phone-bridge on September 11. The Air Force Liaison told us that no one at the FAA spoke to her about correcting FAA's QFR response during her Commission staff interview and she did not address the response when interviewed. Therefore, no one corrected this inaccuracy.

In our view, these FAA executives had an affirmative obligation to correct FAA's May 2003 response to the Commission's QFR directly with the Commission, as opposed to relying on the Air Force Liaison to do so. Part of the Commission's mandate was to examine, and accurately report on, the interaction between FAA and DOD on September 11. The time at which the Air Force Liaison joined the FAA headquarters phone-bridge and established contact with NORAD was relevant to the Commission's mandate.

5. After September 11, FAA improved its capability to notify federal agencies about, and investigate its handling of, hijacked or suspicious aircraft.

While investigating statements about FAA's notifications to DOD about the hijackings on September 11, we also reviewed FAA's post-September 11 capability to notify federal agencies about a hijacked or suspicious aircraft, as well as FAA's capability to investigate its handling of a hijacked or suspicious aircraft. We found that FAA acted to improve these capabilities.

a. FAA established the Domestic Events Network (DEN).

The DEN is a nationwide, open telephone line that allows federal agencies with jurisdiction over the security of U.S. airspace to share, in real-time, information about a hijacked or suspicious aircraft. It is managed by FAA in its Washington Operations Center Complex (WOCC). Some of the agencies and organizations that continuously monitor the DEN include: DOD (NORAD and NEADS), FAA air traffic field facilities, and the Department of Homeland Security.

b. FAA now records Washington Operations Center Complex telephone lines.

Prior to September 11, FAA did not have the capability to record telephone lines in the WOCC. FAA now records most WOCC telephone lines, including the DEN. Though there is no FAA policy on retention of the recordings from those lines, they are kept for six months as a matter of practice. Priority telephone lines used by the Secretary, the Administrator, and Deputy Administrator, and the lines used for classified voice and video communications, remain unrecorded.

c. FAA instituted new procedures for air traffic controllers on communicating information about a hijacked or suspicious aircraft over the DEN.

On September 11, three FAA divisions—Air Traffic, Civil Aviation Security, and the Office of the Deputy Administrator—were responsible for FAA's response to a hijacked or suspicious aircraft. We discovered five procedures or protocols, three for Air Traffic and two for the Deputy Administrator and Civil Aviation Security staffs, regarding how information was to be provided to DOD about a hijacked or suspicious aircraft. We found that these pre-September 11 procedures provided indirect lines of communication from air traffic controller to DOD about a hijacked or suspicious aircraft. As the Commission concluded in its final report, in this regard, FAA's "existing protocol was unsuited in every respect."

Following September 11, FAA issued a new policy, "Aircraft Hijack and Suspicious Inflight Activities—Response and Notification Procedures," that requires air traffic control facilities to directly report a hijacked or suspicious aircraft to the DEN.⁷ However, four of the five pre-September 11 procedures also remain in effect. In order to avoid confusion about which FAA procedures govern FAA's response to a hijacked or suspicious aircraft, we are recommending that FAA review its procedures and eliminate those that are inconsistent or duplicative.

⁷ FAA Notice 7110.422, dated 11/14/05, is the most recent version of these procedures. It is considered "Sensitive Security Information" and its release is governed by 49 CFR § 1520.

To evaluate the effectiveness of FAA's post-September 11 communication procedures, we reviewed reports by FAA and the House Subcommittee on Aviation regarding the June 9, 2004, flight carrying the Governor of Kentucky to Washington Ronald Reagan National Airport to attend President Reagan's funeral—an incident that resulted in the evacuation of the Capitol.

The Subcommittee's July 2004 report concluded that a number of "key" errors contributed to the decision to evacuate the Capitol. First, FAA allowed the aircraft (bearing tail number N24SP) to enter the Washington, DC Area Defense Identification Zone (ADIZ) with an inoperative transponder.⁸ Second, FAA incorrectly broadcast over the DEN that N24SP had a transponder signal, but that its altitude read-out was not functioning. And, third, FAA failed to identify an aircraft radar return, which did not contain transponder data, as N24SP.

In response to these errors, we found FAA made several changes, including requiring every aircraft entering the Washington ADIZ to have an operative transponder with an automatic altitude readout. FAA also mandated refresher training for all air traffic controllers on, among other things, communicating over the DEN. FAA informed us that there have been no such similar incidents attributable to errors on the part of FAA.

Recommendations

1. FAA should correct its response to the Commission's May 22, 2003, Question for the Record.
2. FAA should consider appropriate administrative action for the two current executives who did not act to correct the record with the Commission. In our view, they had an affirmative obligation to do so in light of the Commission's mandate that included examining, and accurately reporting on, the interaction between FAA and DOD on September 11. The time at which the Air Force Liaison joined the FAA headquarters phone-bridge and established contact with NORAD was relevant to the Commission's mandate.

As a mitigating factor, and to provide some context, we note that at the time, the FAA, including these executives, produced over 6,000 documents and materials to the Commission.

⁸ The ADIZ is defined as the airspace less than 18,000 feet in an approximate 30-mile radius around Washington, DC.

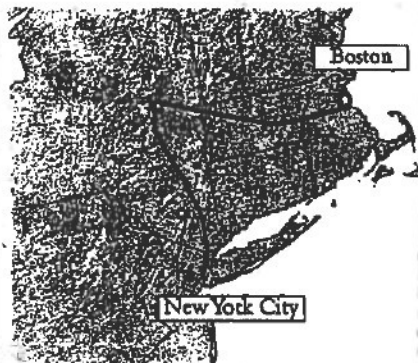
3. FAA should institute a formal policy for the preservation of telephone recordings following notification of hijacked or suspicious aircraft.
4. In order to avoid confusion about which FAA procedures govern FAA's response to hijacked or suspicious aircraft, we are recommending that FAA review its procedures and eliminate those that are inconsistent or duplicative.

#

Appendices

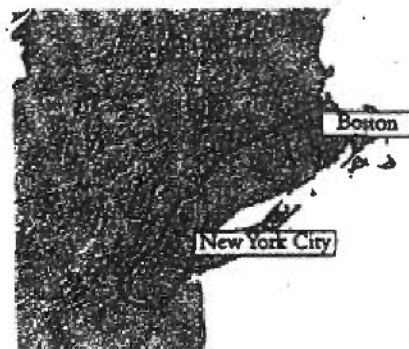
1. Chronology for each of the hijacked flights from the Commission's Final Report. [1 page]
2. NORAD's September 18, 2001, press release, captioned "NORAD's Response Times." [1 page]
3. FAA's September 17, 2001, "Summary of Air Traffic Hijack Events." [13 pages]
4. FAA's September 18, 2001, untitled chronology. [1 page]
5. FAA's response to the Commission's May 22, 2003, Question for the Record. [1 page]

**American Airlines Flight 11
(AA 11)**
Boston to Los Angeles



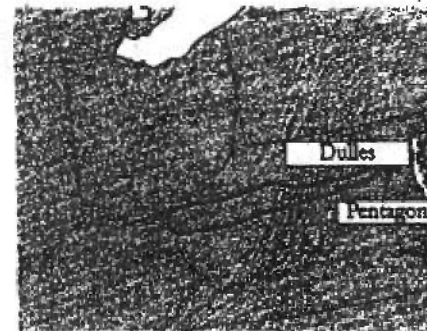
7:59 Takeoff
8:14 Last routine radio communication; likely takeover
8:19 Flight attendant notifies AA of hijacking
8:21 Transponder is turned off
8:23 AA attempts to contact the cockpit
8:25 Boston Center aware of hijacking
8:38 Boston Center notifies NEADS of hijacking
8:46 NEADS scrambles Otis fighter jets in search of AA 11
8:46:40 AA 11 crashes into 1 WTC (North Tower)
8:53 Otis fighter jets airborne
9:16 AA headquarters aware that Flight 11 has crashed into WTC
9:21 Boston Center advises NEADS that AA 11 is airborne heading for Washington
9:24 NEADS scrambles Langley fighter jets in search of AA 11

**United Airlines Flight 175
(UA 175)**
Boston to Los Angeles



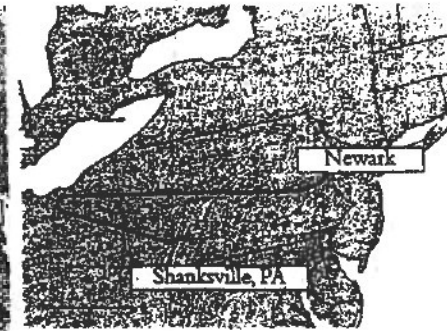
8:14 Takeoff
8:42 Last radio communication
8:42-8:46 Likely takeover
8:47 Transponder code changes
8:52 Flight attendant notifies UA of hijacking
8:54 UA attempts to contact the cockpit
8:55 New York Center suspects hijacking
9:03:11 Flight 175 crashes into 2 WTC (South Tower)
9:15 New York Center advises NEADS that UA 175 was the second aircraft crashed into WTC
9:20 UA headquarters aware that Flight 175 had crashed into WTC

**American Airlines Flight 77
(AA 77)**
Washington, D.C., to Los Angeles



8:20 Takeoff
8:51 Last routine radio communication
8:51-8:54 Likely takeover
8:54 Flight 77 makes unauthorized turn to south
8:56 Transponder is turned off
9:05 AA headquarters aware that Flight 77 is hijacked
9:25 Herndon Command Center orders nationwide ground stop
9:32 Dulles tower observes radar of fast-moving aircraft (later identified as AA 77)
9:34 FAA advises NEADS that AA 77 is missing
9:37:46 AA 77 crashes into the Pentagon
10:30 AA headquarters confirms Flight 77 crash into Pentagon

**United Airlines Flight 93
(UA 93)**
Newark to San Francisco



8:42 Takeoff
9:24 Flight 93 receives warning from UA about possible cockpit intrusion
9:27 Last routine radio communication
9:28 Likely takeover
9:34 Herndon Command Center advises FAA headquarters that UA 93 is hijacked
9:36 Flight attendant notifies UA of hijacking; UA attempts to contact the cockpit
9:41 Transponder is turned off
9:57 Passenger revolt begins
10:03:11 Flight 93 crashes in field in Shanksville, PA
10:07 Cleveland Center advises NEADS of UA 93 hijacking
10:15 UA headquarters aware that Flight 93 has crashed in PA; Washington Center advises NEADS that Flight 93 has crashed in PA

(b)(6), (b)(7)c

From: (b)(6), (b)(7)c
Sent: Wednesday, July 19, 2006 2:29 PM
To:
Cc: (b)(6), (b)(7)c
Subject: 9/11 Report

I just talked to Rick Beitel at the DOT IG. They are getting ready to circulate a discussion draft of their report.

(b)(5)

(b)(6), (b)(7)c

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7/20/2006



NORTH AMERICAN AEROSPACE DEFENSE COMMAND

Directorate of Public Affairs, Headquarters, North American Aerospace Defense Command & US Space Command
250 S. Peterson Blvd. Suite 115, Peterson AFB, Colorado Springs, Colo. 80914-3193 Phone (719) 554-6889 DSN 692-6889
NORAD and US Space Command website address: <http://www.peterson.af.mil/norad> or <http://www.spacecom.af.mil/usspace>

18 September, 2001

Contact: (719) 554-6889

NORAD'S Response Times

PETERSON AFB, Colo. --The following timelines show NORAD's response to the airliner hijackings on September 11, 2001.

- * All times are Eastern Daylight Time; NEADS = North East Air Defense Sector, NORAD
- ** Scramble = Order to get an aircraft airborne as soon as possible
- *** Estimated = loss of radar contact
- **** Flight times are calculated at 9 miles per minute or .9 Mach
- ***** The FAA and NEADS established a line of open communication discussing AA Flt 77 and UA Flt 93

American Airlines Flight 11 -- Boston enroute to Los Angeles

FAA Notification to NEADS	0840*
Fighter Scramble Order (Otis Air National Guard Base, Falmouth, Mass. Two F-15s)	0846**
Fighters Airborne	0852
Airline Impact Time (World Trade Center 1)	0846 (estimated)***
Fighter Time/Distance from Airline Impact Location	Aircraft not airborne/153 miles

United Airlines Flight 175 -- Boston enroute to Los Angeles

FAA Notification to NEADS	0845
Fighter Scramble Order (Otis ANGB, Falmouth, Mass. Same 2 F-15s as Flight 11)	0846
Fighters Airborne	0852
Airline Impact Time (World Trade Center 2)	0902 (estimated)
Fighter Time/Distance from Airline Impact Location	approx 8 min**** 71 miles

American Flight 77 -- Dulles enroute to Los Angeles

FAA Notification to NEADS	0924
Fighter Scramble Order (Langley AFB, Hampton, Va. 2 F-16s)	0924
Fighters Airborne	0930
Airline Impact Time (Pentagon)	0937 (estimated)
Fighter Time/Distance from Airline Impact Location	approx 12 min/105 miles

United Flight 93 -- Newark to San Francisco

FAA Notification to NEADS	N/A *****
Fighter Scramble Order (Langley F-16s already airborne for AA Flt 77)	
Fighters Airborne (Langley F-16 CAP remains in place to protect DC)	
Airline Impact Time (Pennsylvania)	1003 (estimated)
Fighter Time/Distance from Airline Impact Location	approx 11 min/100 miles (from DC F-16 CAP)

NOTE: This appendix is an excerpt of the complete document (dated September 17, 2001) and contains only the chronologies for each of the four hijacked aircraft.



Summary of Air Traffic Hijack Events

September 11, 2001

American Airlines Flight 11 (AAL11)

Boston – Los Angeles

All times indicated are Eastern Daylight Savings Time

0756:27 Boston Airport Traffic Control Tower (BOS) issued taxi instructions to AAL11.

0800:00 AAL11 began takeoff roll, runway 4 Right, Boston Logan International Airport. All communications with BOS and with Boston Departure Control were routine and normal.

0809:17 AAL11 established radio contact with Boston Air Route Traffic Control Center (ZBW). "Boston Center, good morning, American Eleven with you passing through one-nine-zero (nineteen thousand feet) for two-three-zero (twenty-three thousand feet)."

0809:22 ZBW acknowledged AAL11. From this time until 0813:31 all communications appear routine and normal. The sector was responsible for six aircraft including AAL11. The flight was instructed to climb to twenty-eight thousand feet, subsequently to twenty-nine thousand feet, and issued a twenty degree turn for traffic.

0813:47 ZBW instructed AAL11 "American Eleven, now, climb and maintain flight level three-five-zero (thirty-five thousand feet)." There was no acknowledgement to this transmission. ZBW made two subsequent transmissions to AAL11, neither of which were acknowledged. Between 0813:47 and 0824:53, ZBW made several radio transmissions attempting to contact AAL11. None of the attempts were acknowledged.

0814:45 ZBW during intra-facility coordination recognized that AAL11 appeared to be turning right but had not acknowledged the climb clearance to thirty-five thousand feet and did not acknowledge any further radio transmissions.

0817:59 A brief unknown sound (possibly a scream) from an unknown origin was heard over the ZBW radio.

0820:48 Secondary radar return (transponder) indicating aircraft speed, altitude, and flight information was lost on ZBW radar displays. The aircraft was then observed as a primary radar target only.

0824:38 A radio transmission partially unintelligible stated, "we have some planes just stay quiet and you'll be ok we are returning to the airport" from an unknown origin was heard over the ZBW radio.

Appendix 3 to DOT/OIG Report on Investigation of 9/11 Commission Staff Referral

0824:57 A second radio transmission partially unintelligible stated "nobody move everything will be ok if you try to make any moves you'll endanger yourself and the airplane just stay quiet" – from an unknown origin was heard over the ZBW radio.

0825:00 ZBW began notification based on radio transmissions that a suspected hijack was in progress. The New England Regional Operations Center (ROC), the Air Traffic Control System Command Center (ATCSCC), and the ZBW facility manager were notified. Additionally, controllers began inter-facility coordination with New York Air Route Traffic Control Center (ZNY) of the possible hijacking. Coordination describes the last known altitude as twenty-nine thousand feet.

0826:00 **AAL11 began southbound turn over Albany, New York. The last known altitude was twenty-nine thousand feet.**

0833:59 A third radio transmission partially unintelligible stated "nobody move please we are going back to the airport don't try to make any stupid moves" – from an unknown origin was heard over the ZBW radio. AAL11 primary radar track was still southbound, and the last known altitude was twenty-nine thousand feet.

0834:00 ZBW contacted Cape Terminal Radar Approach Control (located on OTIS Air Force Base) and requested they notify the Military of the events regarding AAL11.

0835:00 New England Regional Operations Center advised Washington Operations Center (WOC) of the suspected hijack of AAL11.

0836:00 WOC notified Civil Aviation Security Intelligence (ACI), and conferenced New England Regional Operations Center and the Air Traffic Control Systems Command Center (ATCSCC).

0838:00 ZBW notified New York Air Route Traffic Control Center (ZNY) of possible hijacking of AAL11.

0840:00 North East Air Defense Sector (NEADS) logs indicate they were notified by the Federal Aviation Administration of the events concerning AAL11.

0841:00 Military Command (VACAPES) issued scramble order on AAL11.

0844:00 ZNY facility manager notified New York Terminal Radar Approach Control (N90) of possible hijacking of AAL11. N90 began internal coordination of the aircraft's last known altitude (twenty-nine thousand feet) and southbound course.

0846:31 **Primary radar tracking of AAL11 was lost.**

0846:35 **Impact at World Trade Center.**

Appendix 3 to DOT/OIG Report on Investigation of 9/11 Commission Staff Referral

0850:00 Washington Operations Center activated a Tactical Net at the request of Civil Aviation Security Intelligence (ACI).

0850:00 Newark Airport Traffic Control Tower (EWR) advised N90 of possible aircraft crash into the World Trade Center.

AAT-20
September 17, 2001
6:30 AM

United Airlines Flight 175 (UAL175)

Boston – Los Angeles

All times indicated are Eastern Daylight Savings Time

0804:55 Boston Airport Traffic Control Tower (BOS) issued taxi instruction to UAL175.

0814:00 UAL175 began takeoff roll, runway 9, Boston Logan International Airport. All communications with BOS and with Boston Departure Control were routine and normal.

0823:01 UAL175 established radio contact with Boston Air Route Traffic Control Center (ZBW). "Boston, morning, United one-seven-five out of one-nine (nineteen thousand feet) for two-three-zero (twenty-three thousand feet)."

0823:06 ZBW acknowledged UAL175. At this point the controller was busy due to the events surrounding AAL11. The sector was responsible for six aircraft including UAL175. All communications between ZBW and UAL175 appear routine and normal. The flight was subsequently instructed to climb to flight level 310 (thirty-one thousand feet) and after radar handoff, was issued a frequency change to contact the New York Air Route Traffic Control Center (ZNY).

0840:32 UAL175 established radio contact with ZNY. "United one-seventy-five at flight level three-one-zero."

0840:37 ZNY acknowledged UAL 175. "United one-seventy-five, New York Center, roger."

0841:32 UAL175 transmitted to ZNY, "We figured we'd wait to go to your center, we heard a suspicious transmission on our departure out of Boston. Someone keyed the mike (initiated radio communications) and said everyone stay in your seats."

0841:51 ZNY replied, "okay, I'll pass that along." (The controller ensured UAL175's comments were forwarded to the Operations Manager.)

0844:05 US Air Flight 83 transmitted to ZNY "I just picked up an ELT (emergency locator transmitter) on 121.5 (emergency VHF frequency). It was brief, but it went off."

0844:09 ZNY acknowledged US Air Flight 83.

- 0846:48 UAL175's assigned transponder code of 1470 changed, first indicating 3020, then changing again to 3321. ZNY air traffic computers do not correlate either of these codes with UAL175. Consequently, the secondary radar return (transponder) indicating aircraft speed, altitude, and flight information began to coast and was no longer associated with the primary radar return. *Note: The controller communicating with UAL175 was also monitoring the flight track of AAL11. Based on coordination received from ZBW indicating a possible hijack, most of the controller's attention was focused on AAL11.*
- 0851:43 ZNY transmitted to UAL175, "UAL175, recycle transponder, squawk code one four seven zero." No response was received from UAL175. The controller made several attempts, repeatedly trying to contact UAL175 for the next four minutes. During this time, the aircraft was also observed making a left turn and descending.
- 0853:24 ZNY controller coordinated internally, asking other controllers if they saw UAL175, or if they knew who the unidentified radar target is on transponder code 3321. None of the other controllers replied in the affirmative. *Note: The unknown aircraft in this and all following times was later confirmed to be UAL175.*
- 0855:00 ZNY controller was busy trying to turn other aircraft away from the aircraft believed to be UAL175. The flight track of this aircraft had changed and was now headed southeast bound.
- 0855:00 *This time is approximate based on personnel statements from ZNY.* A controller-in-charge (CIC) advised the Operations Manager (OM) that she believed UAL175 was also hijacked. The OM advised the CIC that an aircraft had hit the World Trade Center. The CIC began coordinating with the controllers working position and one of the controllers stated that UAL175 appeared to heading "right towards the city." The CIC returned to the OM position and heard a request for military aircraft to scramble. UAL175 was observed in a rapid descent
- 0855:00 *This time is approximate based on personnel statements from ZNY.* A controller working a different position within ZNY reported that two aircraft, a Delta Airlines flight was given instructions to avoid an unknown aircraft. At about the same time a US Airways flight reported taking evasive action from an unknown aircraft. The controller reported that the unknown aircraft was now headed towards New York City. This controller, along with other controllers speculated that the unknown aircraft was an emergency and was heading for an airport to land.

- 0900:00 *This time is approximate based on personnel statements from New York Terminal Radar Approach Control (N90). N90 controller stated "at approximately 9:00, I observed an unknown aircraft south of the Newark, New Jersey Airport, northeast bound and descending out of twelve thousand nine hundred feet in a rapid rate of descent, the radar target terminated at the World Trade Center."*
- 0903:14 Second Impact at World Trade Center.
- 0905:00 North East Air Defense Sector (NEADS) logs indicate they were notified by the Federal Aviation Administration of the events concerning UAL175.
- 0905:00 N90 received notification from the Newark Airport Traffic Control Tower of a second aircraft striking the World Trade Center.

United Airlines Flight 93 (UAL93)

Newark – San Francisco

All times indicated are Eastern Daylight Savings Time

- 0809:18 Newark Airport Traffic Control Tower (EWR) issued taxi instructions to UAL93.
- 0842:00 **UAL93 began takeoff roll, runway 4 left, Newark New Jersey International Airport. All communications with EWR, with New York Departure Control, and with New York Air Route Traffic Control Center (ZNY) were routine and normal.**
- 0924:30 UAL93 established radio contact with Cleveland Air Route Traffic Control Center (ZOB), "Good morning Cleveland, United ninety-three, three-five-oh (thirty-five thousand feet), intermittent light chop." The controller was busy, the sector was responsible for sixteen aircraft. Of these, several aircraft were being issued new routes based on the events occurring on the east coast. The controller did not reply to this initial transmission.
- 0925:14 UAL93 again reported on ZOB frequency, "United ninety-three checking three-five-oh (thirty-five thousand feet)." The controller replied, "United ninety-three, Cleveland, roger." *Note: This was the third radar sector within ZOB to communicate with UAL93. The communications with the previous sectors were routine and normal.*
- 0928:19 A radio transmission of unintelligible sounds of possible screaming or a struggle from an unknown origin was heard over the ZOB radio.
- 0928:54 A second radio transmission, mostly unintelligible, again with sounds of possible screaming or a struggle and a statement, "get out of here, get out of here" from an unknown origin was heard over the ZOB radio. At about this same time, the ZOB controller observed that UAL93 had descended, altitude indicated thirty-four thousand, three hundred feet.
- 0929:29 ZOB controller asked UAL93, "United ninety-three, verify three-five-zero (thirty-five thousand feet)." There was no reply. The ZOB controller made several attempts to contact UAL93 without receiving any acknowledgement.
- 0929:50 ZOB controller began moving other aircraft away from UAL93 due to the lack of acknowledgement of any radio transmissions. Several other aircraft on the frequency confirmed unusual sounds of an unknown origin. The altitude of UAL93 again indicated thirty-five thousand feet.
- 0931:57 A third radio transmission, mostly unintelligible, may sound like an individual out of breath, more unintelligible words and what sounds like "bomb on board" from an unknown origin was heard over the ZOB radio.

Appendix 3 to DOT/OIG Report on Investigation of 9/11 Commission Staff Referral

0932:31 A fourth radio transmission stated "did you hear that transmission that reported a bomb on board?" from an unknown origin was heard over the ZOB radio.

0934:50 ZOB controller observed that UAL93 was climbing without an air traffic control authorization. The aircraft had started a turn to the southeast, also without air traffic control authorization.

0938:47 UAL93 altitude indicated forty-thousand seven hundred feet.

0939:12 A fifth radio transmission, mostly unintelligible, stated words that may sound like "captain, ...bomb on board, ...our demands, ...remain quiet"

0939:59 ZOB notified Great Lakes Regional Operations Center of the screams and statements from unknown origin, believed to be UAL93.

0941:00 Secondary radar return (transponder) indicating aircraft speed, altitude, and flight information becomes intermittent and eventually failed on ZOB radar displays.

0944:31 ZOB controller notified Pittsburgh Terminal Radar Approach Control (PIT) North Arrival controller of the unanticipated turn, the loss of secondary radar return and lack of radio communications with UAL93. The ZOB controller also stated that the projected flight path would result in UAL93 passing in close proximity if not directly overhead the Greater Pittsburgh International Airport.

0945:00 PIT controller notified the Operations Supervisor of the events surrounding UAL93. The PIT controller also manually initiated radar tracking of the primary radar target.

0951:00 After determination by the PIT facility manager to evacuate, the controllers have completed coordination with adjacent facilities and the PIT facility has been evacuated.

0956:56 A small contingency of controllers (volunteers) returned to the facility and coordination with adjacent facilities pertaining to return to operational status is completed. The track of UAL93 was no longer visible on the PIT radar displays.

1000:00 *This time is approximate and is based on personnel statements from ZOB. A ZOB controller's statement indicated that the pilot of a VFR aircraft reported sighting a United Airlines aircraft at approximately eight thousand feet in the vicinity of the Latrobe, Pennsylvania airport. The pilot also reported that the United Airlines aircraft's landing gear was down, the wings were rocking, and that the aircraft appeared to be in distress.*

Appendix 3 to DOT/OIG Report on Investigation of 9/11 Commission Staff Referral

- 1004:00 *This time is approximate and is based on personnel statements from ZOB. A ZOB controller statement indicated that UAL93's primary radar target terminated in the vicinity of Somerset, Pennsylvania.*
- 1007:00 **In response to a request from a ZOB controller, N20VF, a Falcon Jet reported observing puffs of smoke in the vicinity of UAL93's last known position.**
- 1041:00 After receiving a telephone call from the Somerset, Pennsylvania police department stating that several "911" telephone calls had been received reporting an aircraft accident, a ZOB operations manager made official notification to Great Lakes Regional Operations Center. *Note: Although this is the officially documented notification time, FAA officials were aware of the accident as these events were reported as they occurred on a critical event teleconference established at the Federal Aviation Administration headquarters building.*

AAT-20
September 17, 2001
6:30 AM

American Airlines Flight 77 (AAL77)

Washington Dulles - Los Angeles

All times indicated are Eastern Daylight Savings Time

0812:29 Dulles Airport Traffic Control Tower (IAD) issued taxi instructions to AAL77.

0820:00 AAL77 began takeoff roll, runway 30, Washington Dulles International Airport. All communications with IAD and with Dulles Departure Control were routine and normal.

0825:49 AAL77 established radio contact with Washington Air Route Traffic Control Center (ZDC), "Center, American seventy-seven with you passing one-three decimal zero (thirteen thousand feet) for one-seven-thousand (seventeen thousand feet)." All communications between ZDC and AAL77 appear routine and normal. AAL77 was subsequently handed off to the Indianapolis Air Route Traffic Control Center (ZID).

0840:14 AAL established radio contact with ZID. "Center, American seventy-seven with you, level three thirty (thirty-three thousand feet).

0840:16 ZID acknowledged, "American seventy-seven, Indy center, roger, squawk three-seven-four-three." (Squawk is a control instruction to change the transponder setting within the aircraft). AAL77 was subsequently instructed to climb to thirty-five thousand feet and later cleared to navigate direct to the Falmouth navigational aid. When ZID acknowledged AAL77, the sector was responsible for fourteen aircraft; additionally four aircraft were in handoff status to this sector.

0850:51 AAL77 acknowledged the clearance to Falmouth. This was the last radio communication with this flight.

0854:43 AAL77 began a left turn towards the south without air traffic authorization. The altitude indicated thirty-five thousand feet. Shortly after the turn, the aircraft was observed descending.

0856:19 Secondary radar return (transponder) indicating aircraft speed, altitude, and flight information is lost on ZID radar displays. There was no longer any radar return information (either primary or secondary) on AAL77 indicated at the ZID radar displays. *Note: The initial review of radar data, and controller personnel statements conducted by ZID did not indicate any primary or secondary radar returns were displayed.*

0856:32 ZID controller attempted to contact AAL77, "American seventy-seven, Indy." There was no acknowledgement. ZID also tried to communicate with AAL77 through American Airlines company radios.

Appendix 3 to DOT/OIG Report on Investigation of 9/11 Commission Staff Referral

- 0858:14 ZID also made several attempts to contact AAL77 through American Airlines company dispatch.
- 0859:00 ZID controllers began coordinating with other controllers to protect the airspace and altitude of AAL77's filed route of flight.
- 0909:00 ZID notified Great Lakes Regional Operations Center a possible aircraft accident of AAL77 due to the simultaneous loss of radio communications and radar identification.
- 0915:00 *This time is approximate based on personnel statements from ZID.* The ZID Operations Manager requested that the Traffic Management personnel notify Air Force Search and Rescue of the missing and possibly downed aircraft. The Operations Manager also contacted the West Virginia State Police advising them of a possible downed aircraft and asks if they have any reports of a downed aircraft.
- 0920:00 *This time is approximate based on personnel statements from ZID.* The ZID Operations Manager contacted the Chicago Air Route Traffic Control Center (ZAU) and advised the ZAU Operations Manager of his concern that AAL77 may have been hijacked and that he (ZAU Operations Manager) should be on the look out (based on events occurring in New York)..
- 0924:00 Great Lakes Regional Operations Notified Washington Operations Center of the simultaneous loss of radio communications and radar identification.
- 0925:00 ***Between 0925:00 and 0930:00, this time is approximate based on personnel statements from Dulles Terminal Radar Approach Control (IAD). Several IAD controllers working radar positions in the facility observed a primary radar target tracking eastbound at a high rate of speed. Note: The unknown aircraft in this and all following times was later confirmed to be AAL77.***
- 0933:00 *This time is approximate based on personnel statements from IAD.* An Operations Supervisor at IAD advised the White House Office of the United States Secret Service of an unknown aircraft heading in the direction of the White House, fast moving. Meanwhile, a controller was providing the same information to controllers working at the Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport Traffic Control Tower (DCA). The IAD Operations Supervisor also provided continuous updates on a critical event teleconference established at the Federal Aviation Administration Headquarters building.
- 0933:00 *This time is approximate based on personnel statements from DCA.* An Operations Supervisor at DCA was advised by IAD of the unknown aircraft. The Operations Supervisor at DCA immediately notified the White House Office of the United States Secret Service of the unknown aircraft's location and provided continuous updates.

Appendix 3 to DOT/OIG Report on Investigation of 9/11 Commission Staff Referral

- 0936:00 Personnel at DCA issued traffic advisories on the unknown aircraft to a military C130 aircraft that had departed Andrews Air Force Base. When the C130 aircraft (GOFER06) reported the unidentified aircraft in sight, the pilot was instructed to follow the unknown aircraft.
- 0938:00 **GOFER06 reported that the unknown aircraft had crashed into the western side of the Pentagon.**

AAT-20
September 17, 2001
6:30 AM

Appendix 4 to DOT/OIG Report on Investigation of 9/11 Commission Staff Referral

	AAL11	UAL175	AAL77	UAL93
First Sign	08:20 ¹	08:46 ²	08:56 ³	09:28 ⁴
Probable time flight was known to be in distress	08:25 ⁵	08:52 ⁶	08:56 ⁷	09:32 ⁸
NORAD** NEADS*** Notification	08:40*	09:05*	09:24*	NA*
Estimated Crash time	08:46	09:03	09:38	10:04
All times are Eastern Daylight Time				

1. AAL11 secondary radar return (transponder) lost.
2. UAL175 assigned transponder code of 1470 changes; communications lost.
3. AAL77 secondary radar return (transponder) and radar contact was simultaneously lost.
4. Two radio transmissions of unintelligible sounds; possible screaming, sounds of a struggle and "get out of here" is heard over the Cleveland Air Route Traffic Control Center radio. The mode C for UAL93 has descended 700 feet from assigned altitude
5. A radio transmission is heard telling passengers "nobody move everything will be ok if you try to make any moves you'll endanger yourself and the airplane just stay quiet."
6. UAL175 has failed to respond to several calls and is observed turning off course.
7. Aircraft is presumed crashed over Pennsylvania.
8. UAL93 is unresponsive to multiple calls from the controller. Additionally, there are three transmissions indicating a possible struggle aboard an aircraft.

*These times are derived from the review of the NEADS log.

*North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD)
Northeast Air Defense Sector (NEADS)

by AAT-20, Revised on September 18, 2001 at 1400

FAA's Response to the 9/11 Commission's May 22, 2003, Question for the Record.

**FAA communications with NORAD
On September 11, 2001**

Within minutes after the first aircraft hit the World Trade Center, the FAA immediately established several phone bridges that included FAA field facilities, the FAA Command Center, FAA headquarters, DOD, the Secret Service, and other government agencies. The US Air Force liaison to the FAA immediately joined the FAA headquarters phone bridge and established contact with NORAD on a separate line. The FAA shared real-time information on the phone bridges about the unfolding events, including information about loss of communication with aircraft, loss of transponder signals, unauthorized changes in course, and other actions being taken by all the flights of interest, including Flight 77. Other parties on the phone bridges, in turn, shared information about actions they were taking.

NORAD logs indicate that the FAA made formal notification about American Flight 77 at 9:24 a.m., but information about the flight was conveyed continuously during the phone bridges before the formal notification.

Pages 151 through 174 redacted for the following reasons:

(b)(5), (b)(6), (b)(7)c

(b)(6), (b)(7)c

APR 26 2005

INTERVIEWS							
LAST	FIRST	DATE	AGENCY	RECRDED	DUP	TRSC	COMMENT
		11/24/2003	9-11 Com	Y		Y	
		4/20/2004	9-11 Com	Y		Y	
		3/25/2004	9-11 Com	Y		Y	
		3/30/2004	9-11 Com	Y		Y	
		4/19/2004	9-11 Com	Y		Y	
		4/8/2004	9-11 Com	Y		Y	
		4/20/2004	9-11 Com	Y		Y	
		10/21/2003	9-11 Com	Y		Y	
		6/30/2004	9-11 Com	Y		Y	
		3/31/2004	9-11 Com	Y		Y	
		3/26/2004	9-11 Com	Y		Y	
		?	9-11 Com	Y		Y	
		3/30/2004	9-11 Com	Y		Y	
		4/6/2004	9-11 Com	Y		Y	
		10/6/2004	OIG	Y	Y	Y	
		2/11/2005	DOD/DOT	N	N	N	MOI generated for this interview
		1/3/2005	OIG	Y	Y	Y	
		9/21/2004	OIG	N	N	N	ROC generated for this interview
		9/29/2004	OIG	N	N	N	MOI generated for this interview
		11/3/2004	OIG	N	N	N	ROC generated for this interview
		3/21/2005	OIG	N	N	N	MOI generated for this interview
		10/7/2004	OIG	N	N	N	MOI generated for this interview
		9/23/2004	OIG	Y	Y	Y	
		9/30/2004	OIG	N	N	N/A	Tape recording did not work MOI
		11/10/2004	OIG	Y	Y	Y	
		11/12/2004	OIG	N	N	N	ROC generated for this interview
		1/27/2005	OIG	N	N	N	MOI (b)(6), (b)(7)c too
		12/7/2004	OIG	Y	Y	Y	
		10/6/2004	OIG	Y	Y	Y	
		10/13/2004	OIG	Y	Y	Y	
		2/24/2005	OIG	Y	Y	Y	
		12/20/2004	OIG	N	N	N	MOI generated for this interview
		9/23/2004	OIG	Y	Y	Y	
		12/1/2004	OIG	Y	N	N	requested confidentiality
		12/7/2004	OIG	Y	Y	Y	
		9/30/2004	OIG	N	N	N/A	Tape recording did not work MOI
		11/9/2004	OIG	Y	Y	Y	
		3/29/2005	OIG	N	N	N	MOI generated for this interview
		9/22/2004	OIG	Y	Y	Y	
		11/19/2004	OIG	Y	Y	Y	
		12/13/2004	OIG	N	N	N	MOI generated for this interview
		3/10/2005	OIG	N	N	N	MOI generated for this interview
		11/12/2004	OIG	N	N	N	ROC generated for this interview
		12/8/2004	OIG	N	N	N	MOI generated for this interview
		12/8/2004	OIG	Y	Y	Y	
		12/7/2004	OIG	Y	Y	Y	
		2/22/2005	OIG	N	N	N	MOI (b)(6), (b)(7)c too
		10/8/2004	OIG	Y	Y	Y	
		12/1/2004	OIG	N	N	N	MOI generated for this interview
		9/22/2004	OIG	Y	Y	Y	
		2/10/2005	OIG	Y	Y	Y	
		10/8/2004	OIG	Y	Y	Y	
		10/14/2004	OIG	Y	Y	Y	
		4/11/2005	OIG	N	N	N	MOI generated for this interview

(b)(6), (b)(7)c

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(b)(6), (b)(7)c	12/14/2004	OIG	N	N	N	MOI generated for this interview	✓
	9/24/2004	OIG	Y	Y	Y		
	11/8/2004	OIG	N	N	N	ROC generated for this interview	✓
	9/23/2004	OIG	Y	Y	Y		
	12/9/2004	OIG	Y	Y	Y		
	9/23/2004	OIG	Y	Y	Y		
	10/7/2004	OIG	Y	Y	Y		
TRANSC.	A date in this field indicates transcripts still pending						

Pages 177 through 199 redacted for the following reasons:

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(b)(6), (b)(7)c

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Report No: 05-INT-1143

May 27, 2005

**OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR GENERAL
OF THE
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE**

We Be People



DEPUTY INSPECTOR GENERAL FOR INTELLIGENCE

**Forensic Capabilities and Incident Reporting
Related to Air Defense Actions**

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Date of source July 20, 2004

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(U)

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Department of Defense Inspector General
400 Army Navy Drive (Room 703)
Arlington, VA 22202-4704

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

hotline

Acronyms (U)

BCS-F	Battle Control System - Fixed
CMOC	Cheyenne Mountain Operations Center
CONR	Continental U.S. NORAD Region
DSEL	Dynamic Synchronization Event Log
FAA	Federal Aviation Administration
JADOC	Joint Air Defense Operations Center
NEADS	Northeast Air Defense Sector
NCS	NORAD Contingency Suite
NMCC	National Military Command Center
NORAD	North American Aerospace Defense Command



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INSPECTOR GENERAL
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
400 ARMY NAVY DRIVE
ARLINGTON, VIRGINIA 22202-4704

May 27, 2005

MEMORANDUM FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR NETWORKS
AND INFORMATION INTEGRATION/CHIEF
INFORMATION OFFICER

SUBJECT: Report on Forensic Capabilities and Incident Reporting Related to Air
Defense Actions (Report No. 05-INTEL-13) (U)

(U) We are providing this report for review and comment.

(U) DoD Directive 7650.3 requires that all issues be resolved promptly.

Management did not comment on the draft report. We request that management provide comments by June 27, 2005. Management comments should indicate concurrence or nonoccurrence with the finding and each applicable recommendation. Comments should describe actions taken or planned in response to agreed-upon recommendations and provide the completion dates of the actions. State specific reasons for any nonoccurrence and propose alternative actions, if appropriate.

(U) If possible, please provide management comments in electronic format (Adobe Acrobat file only) to [REDACTED]@dodig.smil.mil. Copies of the management comments must contain the actual signature of the authorizing official. We cannot accept the / Signed / symbol in place of the actual signature. If you arrange to send classified comments electronically, they must be sent over the SECRET Internet Protocol Router Network (SIPRNET).

(U) We appreciate the courtesies extended to the staff. Questions should be directed to [REDACTED] at (703) 602-[REDACTED] (DSN 332-[REDACTED]) or me at (703) 604-[REDACTED] (DSN 664-[REDACTED]). See Appendix D for the report distribution. The team members are listed inside the back cover.

Thomas F. Gimble

Thomas F. Gimble
Deputy Inspector General
for Intelligence

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Department of Defense Office of Inspector General

Report No. 05-INTEL-13
(Project No. D2004-DINT01-0229.001)

May 27, 2005

**Forensic Capabilities and Incident Reporting
Related to Air Defense Actions (U)**

Executive Summary (U)

(U) Who Should Read This Report and Why? DoD officials who work with air defense and have responsibility for reporting on actions taken in response to air incidents should read this report because it discusses the current forensic capabilities and incident reporting process. For the purpose of this report, forensic capabilities are defined as the capabilities that allow for the recreation of actions taken and information available during a significant event.

(U) Background. On May 23, 2003, DoD officials testified to the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States (9/11 Commission) regarding the DoD's response to the terrorist hijackings. In its testimony, the DoD presented the times when the Federal Aviation Administration notified the North American Aerospace Defense Command of the hijackings and how DoD responded. There were four statements that the 9/11 Commission staff later concluded were inaccurate. In March 2004, DoD notified the 9/11 Commission that the May 2003 testimony was inaccurate. In July 2004, the 9/11 Commission requested the DoD Inspector General and the Department of Transportation Inspector General perform an inquiry into whether the testimony was knowingly false. As part of our review, we assessed DoD's ability to capture and report on future significant events. This report only addresses current reporting capabilities. A joint report from the DoD Inspector General and Department of Transportation Inspector General will address the 9/11 Commission's concerns regarding the May 2003 testimony.

(U) Results. DoD did not accurately report to the 9/11 Commission on the air defense response to the September 11, 2001 hijackings. The inaccuracies in part, resulted because of inadequate forensic capabilities and insufficient actions taken to ensure complete and accurate reporting of the events related to the 9/11 hijackings. Although improvements have been made subsequent to September 11, 2001, DoD might not be able to sufficiently capture and report on actions taken in response to a future significant air event.

Expanded forensic capabilities should be put in place and a more robust investigation requirement established, otherwise the DoD will be vulnerable to Congressional, public, and judicial scrutiny if it is necessary to respond to future significant events. The DoD should establish and install standardized forensic capabilities to include data, voice, and video where possible at U.S. North American Aerospace Defense Command locations, the National Military Command Center, and the Joint Air Defense Operations Center. Also, the DoD should develop and implement procedures for investigating and reporting on significant events similar to the September 11, 2001 incident.

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(U) Management Comments. We did not receive management comments to the draft of this report issued March 18, 2005. The Director, Joint Staff provided unsolicited comments concurring with the need to implement the report recommendations. We request that the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Networks and Information Integration/Chief Information Officer comment on this report by June 27, 2005.

Table of Contents (U)

(U)

Executive Summary i

Background 1

Objectives 2

Finding

Forensic Capabilities and Incident Reporting 3

Appendixes

A. Scope and Methodology 10
B. Summary of Hijacked Events 11
C. Domestic Conferences 13
D. Report Distribution 15

Management Comments

Director, Joint Staff 17

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Background (U)

(U) The North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD) is a binational military organization established in 1958 by the U.S. and Canada to monitor and defend North American airspace. NORAD monitors, validates and warns of attack against North America by aircraft, missiles or space vehicles. NORAD also provides surveillance and control of the airspace of the U.S. and Canada. The area of responsibility ranges from Clear, Alaska, to the Florida Keys, and from St. John's Newfoundland, to San Diego, California. Prior to September 11, 2001, NORAD was focused on aerospace threats outside the borders of the U.S. and Canada. The focal point was not terrorism in the domestic airspace. The events of September 11, 2001 expanded the focus to now include domestic airspace. NORAD's defense of the interior air space is part of Operation Noble Eagle.

(U) NORAD consists of three regions: Alaskan NORAD Region, Canadian NORAD Region, and the Continental U.S. NORAD Region (CONR). CONR is further broken into three sectors (hereafter referred to as the Air Defense Sectors): Western Air Defense Sector at McChord Air Force Base, Washington; Northeast Air Defense Sector (NEADS) at Rome, New York; and Southeast Air Defense Sector at Tyndall Air Force Base, Florida. Supporting the NORAD mission, the Cheyenne Mountain Operations Center (CMOC) assists the air sovereignty mission for the U.S. and Canada, and if necessary, serves as the focal point for air defense operations to counter enemy bombers or cruise missiles. CMOC is instrumental in Operation Noble Eagle as it assists the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) in responding to any threatening or hostile domestic aircraft. As part of Operation Noble Eagle, the Joint Air Defense Operations Center (JADOC) located at Bolling Air Force Base, Washington, D.C., monitors the air traffic in the National Capitol Region. The National Military Command Center (NMCC) is the nation's focal point for continuous monitoring and coordination of worldwide military operations. The NMCC directly supports Combatant Commanders, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Secretary of Defense and the President in the command of U.S. armed forces in peacetime, contingencies, and war.

(U) The Congress and the President established the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States (hereafter referred to as the 9/11 Commission) to investigate the facts and circumstances relating to the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. In May 2003, representatives of DoD and FAA testified to the 9/11 Commission. The testimony set forth the times at which the FAA became aware that each flight was hijacked; the times at which NEADS was notified of the hijackings; and how DoD responded.

(U) The 9/11 Commission staff later concluded that significant aspects of the testimony were incorrect. The testimony contained inaccurate accounts related to when DoD was notified of each hijacking and why the fighter jets were scrambled. In March 2004, DoD notified the 9/11 Commission by letter and in subsequent testimony that the May 2003 testimony was inaccurate. In July 2004, the 9/11 Commission requested an inquiry by the DoD Inspector General and the Department of Transportation Inspector General into the inaccurate testimony.

Objectives (U)

(U) Our initial objective was to assess whether DoD officials knowingly presented erroneous information related to the DoD response to the terrorist hijackings of September 11, 2001. This objective will be addressed in a joint report from the DoD Inspector General and the Department of Transportation Inspector General. We expanded our review and also assessed DoD's ability to capture and report on future significant events. See Appendix A for a discussion of the scope and methodology.

Forensic Capabilities and Incident Reporting (U)

(U) DoD did not accurately report to the 9/11 Commission on the response to the September 11, 2001 hijackings. The inaccuracies resulted in part, because of insufficient forensic capabilities. Further, sufficient emphasis was not placed on investigating and reporting actions taken in response to the hijackings. As a result, the veracity of the DoD Official's testimony was questioned. Although improvements have been made subsequent to September 11, 2001, DoD might not be able to sufficiently capture and report on actions taken in response to a future significant air event.

Recreation of Events (U)

(U) On September 18, 2001, in the aftermath of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, the DoD published a timeline of NORAD's response to the commercial airliner hijackings. The timeline included when the FAA notified NEADS of each hijacking, when the fighter jets were given the order to scramble, when the jets were airborne, airline impact time, and the fighter distance from the impact location. The published timeline was based, in part, on efforts that began on September 13, 2001 by the NORAD Public Affairs Office to collect information to construct a timeline of the events. According to the NORAD Director of Public Affairs, all information used to create the timeline was gathered from CONR and NEADS.

(U) We could not determine who specifically at CONR or NEADS was responsible for creating the timeline. We were able to conclude that information flowed from NEADS through CONR to NORAD via faxes and emails. According to officials interviewed, the timeline was established using hand written logs, Radar Evaluation Squadron data, preliminary transcripts from the audiotapes, and personal recollection of events.

(U) In May 2003, DoD officials testified to the 9/11 Commission. CONR officials using the DoD September 2001 press release timeline, as well as additional information from personal recollections prepared the briefing used for the testimony. The DoD presented the times when the FAA notified NEADS of the hijackings and how the DoD responded. As a result of the testimony, there were four statements that the 9/11 Commission staff later concluded were inaccurate.

- (U) Testimony indicated that the FAA notified NEADS at 9:16 a.m. that United Flight 93 was hijacked. The actual time was 10:07 a.m.
- (U) Testimony indicated that the FAA notified NEADS of the hijacking of American Flight 77 at 9:24 a.m. The actual time was 9:34 a.m.

- (U) Testimony indicated that fighter jets from Langley Air Force Base, Virginia were scrambled in response to the hijacking of United Flight 93 and American Flight 77. The 9/11 Commission later determined that the fighters were scrambled in response to an erroneous report that American Flight 11 was heading south toward Washington, D.C.
- (U) Testimony indicated that officials were tracking United Flight 93 and intended to intercept the aircraft if it approached Washington, D.C. In fact, DoD officials were not aware that United Flight 93 was hijacked until after the flight crashed.

(U) Appendix B provides a description of the events associated with each flight as determined by the 9/11 Commission.

Forensic Capabilities (U)

(U) Our review determined that the lack of adequate forensic capabilities was one of the factors that led to the creation of the erroneous press release and testimony. For the purpose of this report, forensic capabilities are defined as the capabilities that allow for the recreation of actions taken and information available during a significant event. These capabilities include logs, video and audio recordings, and storage of radar information. We also determined that while significant upgrades to forensic capabilities have been made, there are still deficiencies that might prevent DoD from reporting accurately on the actions taken and the justification for a response to future significant events.

(U) **Electronic Logs.** According to the CONR Commander, it was difficult to reconstruct the events of September 11, 2001 due to the absence of a standardized, region-wide log system. Historically, watch centers have used hand-written logs to keep legal and historic records of events taking place during the watch period. The logs were archived in hardcopy form and the legibility of the writing in the books was not always reliable. This was the case on September 11, 2001.

(U)



b2

(U) [REDACTED] Reconciling log times between various commands on when events happened was a significant problem experienced as part of the timeline development.

(U) If the DoD is going to rely on the use of logs as a form of evidence, then there needs to be standardization within the DoD of the type and format of the log. There also needs to be a mechanism in place to confirm that times at each location are synchronized. Further, appropriate retention of the logs will be critical in order to reconstruct an event if one occurs.

(U) **Video Recording.** After the initial testimony to the 9/11 Commission, the CONR Commander realized the importance of having a forensic capability within the CONR Air Operations Center and initiated a short-term fix, which included installation of video recording devices. There are [REDACTED] monitors and [REDACTED] video cameras currently being used and CONR has the capacity to record up to [REDACTED] video channels. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] The data is stored on hard drives and backed up [REDACTED]. Video recording adds to the creditability of evidence available to document how a critical decision, such as scrambling fighters, was made. However, the system installed at CONR does not provide sufficient clarity to enable an accurate reconstruction of events.

(U) **Audio Recording.** DoD's ability to report on its response to the September 11, 2001 hijackings was impacted by insufficient audio recording capabilities throughout the organizations involved. Key positions at NEADS, such as the mission crew commander, and the weapons and identification technicians have audio recording capabilities. On September 11, 2001, these positions were recorded using a Dictaphone taping device. However, NEADS personnel encountered a problem while trying to transcribe the tapes and the tapes were not used to construct the press release nor used in reporting on the events of September 11, 2001 until the 9/11 Commission staff members reviewed the tapes. [REDACTED]

(S) [REDACTED]


(S)



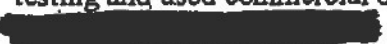
(S)



(U) **Data Recording.** Personnel at the Air Defense Sectors monitor, identify and track potentially hostile aircraft through radar inputs. On September 11, 2001, the Air Defense Sectors were only concerned with identifying and tracking aircraft originating outside the U.S. and Canada.

 -NORAD has devised both short term and long term fixes, which are described below.

(U) **NORAD Contingency Suite (NCS).** The NCS was designed to connect FAA radars throughout the United States to the Air Defense Sectors allowing the sectors to see, identify, and track all U.S. air traffic. NCS was a short-term fix until a permanent solution could be developed. NCS bypassed testing and used commercial off-the-shelf products.

 The ability to reconstruct exactly when planes were identified and what tracking was done could be critical in reconstructing and reporting on a future incident.

(S) [REDACTED]

(U) Table 1 provides an overview of the current forensic capabilities at CMOC, CONR, the Air Defense Sectors, JADOC, and the NMCC.

Table 1. Forensic and Recording Capabilities (U)

(S)

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

(S)


b1

Incident Reporting (U)

(U) Sufficient emphasis was not placed on investigating and reporting actions taken in response to the hijackings. Although improvements have been made, such as additional reporting guidance, DoD may not be able to report accurately on a future significant event. Commanders throughout DoD did not place a high priority on developing accurate information regarding the events of September 11, 2001. DoD relied on NORAD to develop information to be reported to the press and subsequently to the 9/11 Commission. However, after September 11, 2001, NORAD officials primarily focused their efforts on identifying and correcting operational weaknesses. Gathering information related to the events of September 11, 2001 was considered to be an additional duty. Consequently, the events were neither adequately reported nor documented. There were no files maintained at CONR or NORAD tracking how the information reported was developed. Once Operation Noble Eagle began, NORAD, CONR, and NEADS did not have adequate staff to execute their expanded air defense mission. All administrative functions that could be were terminated and personnel were reassigned to operational duties. For example, the historian for NEADS was pulled from his duties of collecting data for historical purposes and placed in the Operation Center working with the radars. Senior officials were working extended shifts.

(U) Further, preparation of the testimony given to the 9/11 Commission was focused on the information developed immediately after the event. Steps were not taken to check the accuracy of the information. The emphasis immediately after September 11, 2001 on improving the air defense posture is understandable. However, the need for accurate information regarding the events of September 11, 2001 should also have been recognized and responsibility for developing and documenting the source of information should not have been tasked as an additional duty. Nor should the responsibility have been placed on a command element that did not have direct access to all the information available. Personnel at CONR did not have direct access to CMOC and NMCC information. Such direct access to information would be easily available to Joint Staff or Office of the Secretary of Defense personnel.

(U) Subsequent to September 11, 2001, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff took action to improve incident reporting by issuing the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Manual 3150.03B, "Joint Reporting Structure Event and Incident Report," July 28, 2003.

 Further, maintenance of sufficient records to support the information reported is not required. Lack of such requirements contributed to the inaccurate information presented to the 9/11 Commission and the impression that information was knowingly presented inaccurately.

Conclusion (U)

(U) The DoD must do everything possible to be in the position to reconstruct all elements related to another event similar to September 11, 2001. The need for forensic capabilities to understand what happened during a significant event is critical. If more emphasis had been placed on determining exactly what happened and why Commanders responded as they did on the morning of September 11, 2001, the 9/11 Commission may not have questioned the veracity of DoD's testimony. We recognize that actions have been taken to improve forensic capabilities; however, the short-term improvements have limitations that may affect the quality and accuracy of incident reporting. If expanded forensic capabilities are not put in place and a more robust investigation requirement is not established, DoD will be vulnerable to Congressional, public, and judicial scrutiny if it is necessary to respond to a future significant event.

Recommendations (U)

(U) We recommend that the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Networks and Information Integration/Chief Information Officer:

1. (U) Establish and install standardized forensic capabilities to include logs, video, and audio recordings and storage of radar information where possible at U.S. North American Aerospace Defense Command locations, the National Military Command Center, and the Joint Air Defense Operations Center.

2. (U) Develop and implement procedures for investigating and reporting on significant events similar to the September 11, 2001 incident. Procedures should include the appointment of an independent investigation team and the archiving of all pertinent records related to the incident.

Management Comments Required (U)

(U) The Assistant Secretary of Defense for Networks and Information Integration/Chief Information Officer did not comment on the draft of this report. The Director, Joint Staff provided unsolicited comments concurring with the need to implement the report recommendations. For the full text of the Director, Joint Staff comments see the Management Comments sections of this report. We request that the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Networks and Information Integration/Chief Information Officer provide comments on the final report.

Appendix A. Scope and Methodology (U)

(U) We reviewed the process and forensic capabilities used for creating the press release timeline and for preparing the testimony provided to the 9/11 Commission. We also reviewed the current and planned forensic capabilities and incident reporting at CMOC, CONR, NEADS, South East Air Defense Sector, JADOC, and the NMCC. We toured each facility and were briefed on their current structure as well as future upgrades. In addition, we reviewed documentation and regulations that pertain to domestic conferencing procedures and reporting procedures. Specific instructions included the Department of Defense Directive 4660.3, "Secretary of Defense Communications," April 29, 1996; Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Manual 3150.01A, "Joint Reporting Structure General Instructions," December 20, 2002; Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Manual 3150.03B, "Joint Reporting Structure Event and Incident Report," July 28, 2003; North American Aerospace Defense Command Instruction 10-19, "NORAD Aerospace Reporting System (ARS)," January 2, 2002; and NORAD/U.S. Northern Command Instruction 10-112, "Domestic Conferencing Procedures," September 1, 2004.

(U) We interviewed officials from NORAD, CONR, NEADS, the South East Air Defense Sector, the NMCC, and the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence, the Office of the Joint Chief of Staff, and the DoD General Counsel.

(U) We performed this review from September 2004 through March 2005 in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards.

(U) We did not review the management control program because the scope was limited to the specific issues identified by the 9/11 Commission.

(U) **Use of Computer-Processed Data.** We did not use computer-processed data to perform this review.

Prior Coverage (U)

(U) No prior coverage has been conducted on forensic capabilities and incident reporting of air defense during the last 5 years.

Appendix B. Summary of Hijacked Events (U)

(U) From November 2002 though July 2004, the 9/11 Commission reviewed 2.5 million pages of documentation and interviewed more than 1,200 individuals. From this, the 9/11 Commission was able to create an accurate depiction of the events associated with each hijacked flight. In March 2004, the NORAD Commander sent a letter to the 9/11 Commission agreeing with their assessment of events.

(U) **American Airlines Flight 11.** American Flight 11 departed from Logan International Airport, Boston, Massachusetts at 7:59 a.m. Just before 8:14 a.m., all communications and flight profile data were normal and American Flight 11 had its last routine communication. Sixteen seconds after that transmission, American Flight 11 was instructed to climb to 35,000 feet. That message and all subsequent attempts to contact the flight were not acknowledged. At 8:21 a.m., American Flight 11 turned off its transponder. At 8:37 a.m., FAA's Boston Center personnel contacted NEADS and at 8:40 a.m. a decision-maker at NEADS was on the phone. At 8:46 a.m., NEADS scrambles fighter jets from Otis Air Force Base in search of American Flight 11 and the jets were airborne at 8:53 a.m. Also at 8:46 a.m., American Flight 11 crashed into the North Tower of the World Trade Center in New York City. At 9:21 a.m., FAA's Boston Center personnel informed NEADS that American Flight 11 was still in the air heading towards Washington, D.C. At 9:24 a.m., NEADS ordered the scramble of fighter jets from Langley Air Force Base. Radar data shows the Langley fighters airborne at 9:30 a.m.

(U) **United Airlines Flight 175.** United Flight 175 departed Logan International Airport at 8:14 a.m. At 8:42 a.m., the crew completed their report on a "suspicious transmission" overheard from another plane (which turned out to have been Flight 11) just after takeoff. This was United Flight 175's last communication with the ground. At 8:47 a.m., United Flight 175 changed transponder codes twice within a minute. At 8:51 a.m., the flight deviated from its assigned altitude, and a minute later FAA's New York Center personnel began repeatedly trying to contact United Flight 175. At 9:03 a.m., United Flight 175 crashed into the South Tower of the World Trade Center. The first indication that the NORAD air defenders had of the second hijacked aircraft, United Flight 175, came in a phone call from FAA's New York Center to NEADS at 9:03 a.m.

(U) **American Airlines Flight 77.** American Flight 77 departed Dulles International Airport, Herndon, Virginia at 8:20 a.m. At 8:51 a.m., American Flight 77 transmitted its last routine radio communication. At 8:54 a.m., the aircraft deviated from its assigned course, turning south. Two minutes later the transponder was turned off and even primary radar contact with the aircraft was lost. At 9:34 a.m., FAA's Washington Center personnel informed NEADS that American Flight 77 was lost. At 9:37 a.m. American Flight 77 crashed into the Pentagon.

~~SECRET//25X5~~

(U) **United Airlines Flight 93.** United Flight 93 departed from Liberty International Airport, Newark, New Jersey at 8:42 a.m., more than 25 minutes later than scheduled. At 9:27 a.m. after having been in the air for 45 minutes, United Flight 93 acknowledged a transmission from FAA's Cleveland Center. At 9:28 a.m., United Flight 93 suddenly dropped 700 feet. Eleven seconds into the descent, the FAA's air traffic control center in Cleveland received the first of two radio transmissions from the aircraft. At 9:39 a.m., the FAA Cleveland Center overheard another announcement indicating that there was a bomb on board. United Flight 93 crashed in Pennsylvania at 10:03 a.m. NEADS first received a call about United Flight 93 from the military liaison at the FAA Cleveland Center at 10:07 a.m.

~~SECRET//25X5~~

~~SECRET//25X5~~

Appendix C. Domestic Conferences (I)

b5

~~SECRET//25X5~~

~~SECRET//25X5~~



bs

Appendix D. Report Distribution (U)

(U)

Office of the Secretary of Defense

Deputy Secretary of Defense
Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller)/Chief Financial Officer
Deputy Chief Financial Officer
Deputy Comptroller (Program/Budget)
Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence
Assistant Secretary of Defense for Networks and Information Integration/Chief
Information Officer
Director, Program Analysis and Evaluation

Joint Staff

Director, Joint Staff

Department of the Navy

Naval Inspector General
Auditor General, Department of the Navy

Department of the Air Force

Assistant Secretary of the Air Force (Financial Management and Comptroller)
Auditor General, Department of the Air Force
Commander, Air Combat Command

Combatant Commands

Commander, U.S. Northern Command/ North American Aerospace Defense Command

(U)

(U)

Congressional Committees and Subcommittees

Chairman, Senate Subcommittee on Defense, Committee on Appropriations
Chairman and Ranking Minority Member, Senate Committee on Armed Services
Chairman and Ranking Minority Member, Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs
Chairman and Vice Chairman, Senate Select Committee on Intelligence
Chairman and Ranking Minority Member, House Subcommittee on Defense, Committee
on Appropriations
Chairman and Ranking Minority Member, House Committee on Armed Services
Chairman and Ranking Minority Member, House Committee on Government Reform
Chairman, House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence

(U)

~~SECRET//25X5~~

Director, Joint Staff Comments (U)



SECRET

THE JOINT STAFF
WASHINGTON, DC

Reply ZIP Code:
20318-0300

DJSM-0589-05
23 May 2005

MEMORANDUM FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE INSPECTOR GENERAL

Subject: Report on Forensic Capabilities and Incident Reporting Related to Air
Defense Actions (Project No. D2004-DINT01-0229.001) (U)

1. (U) Thank you for the opportunity to review the subject report.¹ We concur
with the following comment.

(U) Page 7, 1st paragraph, last two sentences. Delete and replace with:
"Data recording capability for the BCS-F is currently under development in
order to provide forensic capability following a significant air event."

(U) REASON: Clarity, based on development of a data recording capability
for Battle Control System-Fixed.

2. [REDACTED]

3. (U) The Joint Staff point of contact is [REDACTED], USN;
J-3/DDAT/HD-HD; 703-693 [REDACTED]

NASchwartz

NORTON A. SCHWARTZ
Lieutenant General, USAF
Director, Joint Staff

Reference:

- 1 DoD DAIG (IA) memorandum, 18 March 2005, "Report on Forensic
Capabilities and Incident Reporting Related to Air Defense Actions
(Project No. D2004-DINT01-0229.001) (U)"

SECRET

61 65 66

SECRET//25X5

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SECRET//25X5

Team Members (U)

(U) The Department of Defense Office of the Deputy Inspector General for Intelligence prepared this report. Personnel of the Department of Defense Office of Inspector General who contributed to the report are listed below.

Thomas F. Gimble



Department of Transportation Inspector General Team Members



b6

SECRET//25X5

SECRET//25X5

Investigation Summary

User ID: I2HWLO Date: 01/01/2004

Case Details

Case No: 042R0122001 FY Old Status: Open
 Title: FAA-NORAD Statements to 9-11 Commission

Add New Case Add Associated Case Search Brief Brief Edit

Lead Case Agent: (b)(6), (b)(7)c

Assigned Region: Region 2

Case Started: 08/24/2004 Sup. No.:

Shared: ☐ Congressional ? ☐ Qui Tam: ☐

CC#: Civil Comp. No:

DOT Element: Federal Aviation Administration

Priority: Other Investigations

Subject: Other

Jurisdiction / ROI

City & State: NEW YORK NY

Judicial District: Southern District of New York

Last Name First MI

AUSA:

Initial Consultation:

Type Date

Report of Investigation

Days / Costs

Staff Hours: 0

Case Elapsed Days:

Travel Cost:

Base / Associated Cases

	Case No	Title	Status
Base Case:	>		
Associated Cases:	>		
	>		
	>		

IV-MAIR

Text Pages

(b)(6), (b)(7)c

From: (b)(6), (b)(7)c
Sent: Thursday, September 16, 2004 6:06 AM
To: Beitel, Rick
Subject: FW: TODAY'S MEETING WITH DOD IG

Rick, Please advise if you have any different thoughts.

Thanks

(b)(6), (b)(7)c

-----Original Message-----

From: (b)(6), (b)(7)c
Sent: Wednesday, September 15, 2004 6:03 PM
To: (b)(6), (b)(7)c
Subject: RE: TODAY'S MEETING WITH DOD IG

(b)(6), (b)(7)c

Thanks for the update.

(b)(5)

(b)(5)

Rick, Please advise if you have any different thoughts.

Thanks

(b)(6), (b)(7)c

-----Original Message-----

From: (b)(6), (b)(7)c
To: (b)(6), (b)(7)c
Sent: 9/15/04 4:15 PM
Subject: TODAY'S MEETING WITH DOD IG

(b)(6), (b)(7)c

(b)(5), (b)(6), (b)(7)c

(b)(6), (b)(7)c

U.S. Dept. of Transportation
Office of Inspector General
400 7th Street, S.W.
NASSIF Building, Room 7324
Washington, DC 20590-0001
Tel: (b)(6), (b)(7)c
Fax:

(b)(6), (b)(7)c

From: (b)(6), (b)(7)c
Sent: Tuesday, September 14, 2004 3:47 PM
To: Beitel, Rick
Cc: (b)(6), (b)(7)c
Subject: Case Plan



042R0122001_c 042R0122001_c
se plan.pdf (38 .seplan bullets_2.

Rick,

Sorry to bother you again, but I have some additional items for you. It was suggested that since this case is

(b)(5)

(b)(5)

(b)(5), (b)(6), (b)(7)c, (b)(7)e

Thanks

(b)(6), (b)(7)c

P.S.: I will be at the range tomorrow 9-15 but can be reached on my cell phone (b)(6), (b)(7)c
(b)(6), (b)(7)c

(b)(6), (b)(7)c

From: (b)(6), (b)(7)c
Sent: Tuesday, September 14, 2004 2:14 PM
To: Beitel, Rick
Subject: Team 8 Request



9-11Comm_tea
} items requestec

Rick,

Attached, please find a list of items from the Commission's Team 8 list that I proposed we request. If there are any additional items that we should request from the list please advise and I'll make the change. Once this list looks good I will be glad to also submit this request to (b)(6), (b)(7)c Please advise.

Thanks

(b)(6), (b)(7)c

Pages 232 through 236 redacted for the following reasons:

(b)(5), (b)(6), (b)(7)c, (b)(7)e

MODE = MEMORY TRANSMISSION

START=SEP-13 10:54

END=SEP-13 11:09

FILE NO.= 074

STN NO.	COM	ABBR NO.	STATION NAME/TEL.NO.	PAGES	DURATION
001	OK		(b)(6), (b)(7)c	034/034	00:14'51"

-US DOT/OIG NY OFFICE JRI2-

***** -US DOT-OIG NYC - ***** - (b)(6), (b)(7)c *****

**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL
OFFICE OF INVESTIGATIONS**

NORTHEAST REGION (JRI-2)



26 Federal Plaza
Room 3134
New York, N.Y. 10278

FAX FOR: (b)(6), (b)(7)c

UNIT/LOCATION: DOT-OIG

FAX: (b)(6), (b)(7)c PHONE:

FAX FROM: (b)(6), (b)(7)c

FAX: (b)(6), (b)(7)c PHONE: (b)(6), (b)(7)c

SUBJECT:

MESSAGE: Complaint 14 pages MOFJ/Traction 2 pages
Chet 1 33 pages

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MODE = MEMORY TRANSMISSION

START=SEP-13 10:30

END=SEP-13 10:40

FILE NO. = 072

STN NO.	COM	ABBR NO.	STATION NAME/TEL. NO.	PAGES	DURATION
001	OK	2	(b)(6), (b)(7)c	022/022	00:09'10"

-US DOT/OIG NY OFFICE JR12-

***** -US DOT-OIG NYC - ***** (b)(6), (b)(7)c *****

**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL
OFFICE OF INVESTIGATIONS
NORTHEAST REGION (JRI-2)**



26 Federal Plaza
Room 3134
New York, N.Y. 10278

FAX FOR: (b)(6), (b)(7)c

UNIT/LOCATION: DOT-OIG

FAX: (b)(6), (b)(7)c PHONE:

FAX FROM: (b)(6), (b)(7)c

FAX: (b)(6), (b)(7)c PHONE: (b)(6), (b)(7)c

SUBJECT:

MESSAGE: Complaint 14 pages MOI's/Timeline 2 pages

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MODE = MEMORY TRANSMISSION

START=SEP-13 10:09

END=SEP-13 10:16

FILE NO. = 070

STN NO.	COM	ABBR NO.	STATION NAME/TEL.NO.	PAGES	DURATION
001	OK		(b)(6), (b)(7)c	014/014	00:06:51"

-US DOT/OIG NY OFFICE JR12-

***** -US DOT-OIG NYC - ***** (b)(6), (b)(7)c *****

**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL
OFFICE OF INVESTIGATIONS**

NORTHEAST REGION (JRI-2)

26 Federal Plaza
Room 3134
New York, N.Y. 10278



FAX FOR: (b)(6), (b)(7)c

UNIT/LOCATION: DOT-OIG

FAX: (b)(6), (b)(7)c PHONE:

FAX FROM: (b)(6), (b)(7)c

FAX: (b)(6), (b)(7)c PHONE: (b)(6), (b)(7)c

SUBJECT:

MESSAGE: Complaint 14 pages

CONFIDENTIALITY NOTICE

The documents accompanying this facsimile transmission may contain confidential information that is legally privileged. The information is intended only for the use of the recipient named above. If you have received this facsimile in error, please immediately notify us by telephone to arrange for the return of the original documents to us, and you are hereby notified that any disclosure, copying, distribution or the taking of any action in reliance on the contents of this facsimile information is strictly prohibited.

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Pages 240 through 252 redacted for the following reasons:

(b)(5)



Memorandum

U.S. Department of
Transportation

Office of the Secretary
of Transportation

Office of Inspector General

Subject: **INFORMATION:** American Airlines
Awareness of the Hijacking of Flight 77

Date: November 19, 2004

From:

(b)(6), (b)(7)c

JRI-2

Reply to

Attn of:

JRI-2

(b)(6), (b)(7)c

To:

Todd J. Zinser
Deputy Inspector General, J-2

As follow-up to our November 3, 2004, teleconference concerning American Airlines Headquarters' awareness about the hijacking of American Airlines Flight 77 (AA77), I have spoken with

(b)(6), (b)(7)c

(b)(6), (b)(7)c

(b)(5), (b)(6), (b)(7)c

¹ AA's emergency procedures require that access to the computerized flight data for an aircraft involved in an event, such as a hijacking, accident, or unruly passenger, be locked out.

(b)(5), (b)(6), (b)(7)c

- # -

² [REDACTED] (b)(6), (b)(7)c [REDACTED] discuss with [REDACTED] (b)(6), (b)(7)c we should look at the Commission's memoranda for the record concerning their discussions with AA personnel. We currently do not have copies of these memoranda but can request them through the National Archives.

(b)(6), (b)(7)c

From: (b)(6), (b)(7)c
Sent: Friday, November 19, 2004 7:02 AM
To: Zinser, Todd J.
Cc: Beitel, Rick; Lee, Charles H.; (b)(6), (b)(7)c
Subject: AA Awareness of Hijacking of AA77



Memo_AA

reness of hijackir

Please see the attached memorandum, which is in follow-up to our teleconference on November 3rd.

Thanks

(b)(6), (b)(7)c

Pages 256 through 383 redacted for the following reasons:

(b)(5), (b)(6), (b)(7)c

(b)(6), (b)(7)c

(b)(6), (b)(7)c

042R0122001

From: (b)(6), (b)(7)c
Sent: Monday, December 06, 2004 7:54 AM
To: (b)(6), (b)(7)c
Subject: RE: Recording of Interview

Thank you.

(b)(6), (b)(7)c

Howrey Simon Arnold & White, LLP
1299 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20004

(b)(6), (b)(7)c

-----Original Message-----

From: (b)(6), (b)(7)c
Sent: Monday, December 06, 2004 6:27 AM
To: (b)(6), (b)(7)c
Subject: Recording of Interview

(b)(6), (b)(7)c

As we agreed, attached is a copy of the recording that was made of (b)(6), (b)(7)c interview on 12-1-04.

(b)(6), (b)(7)c

(b)(6), (b)(7)c

042R0122001

From: (b)(6), (b)(7)c
Sent: Monday, November 22, 2004 10:39 AM
To: (b)(6), (b)(7)c
Cc:
Subject: Transcripts



dot-oig_intvw_tr
anscripts.zip ...

(b)(5), (b)(7)c

Attached are copies of the transcripts for DOT-OIG's interviews of the following:

(b)(6), (b)(7)c

As we discussed, the page numbers on these electronic copies don't seem to match the printed copies the transcription service sent us.

Please let me know if you want to send anyone on the interviews that we have planned for next week (b)(6), (b)(7)c.

See you on the afternoon of 12-1.

Thanks

(b)(6), (b)(7)c



U.S. Department of
General
Transportation
D.C.

Office of the Secretary
of Transportation

The Inspector General

Office of Inspector
Washington,

Gary M. Stern
General Counsel
National Archives and Records Administration
8601 Adelphi Road
College Park, MD 20740-6001

Dear Mr. Stern:

I am requesting that a designee from our office be afforded access to the 9-11 Commission's "Team 8" files that your agency is currently archiving. We previously identified for [REDACTED] (b)(6), (b)(7)c

[REDACTED] (b)(5), (b)(6), (b)(7)c

Thank you for your cooperation in this matter. If you require any additional information please feel free to contact [REDACTED] (b)(6), (b)(7)c

Sincerely,

Charles H. Lee Jr.
Assistant Inspector General for Investigations

(1) Enclosure

042R0122001

Enclosure to DOT-OIG 10-4-04 Request to NARA

(b)(5), (b)(6), (b)(7)c

Page 388 redacted for the following reason:

(b)(5), (b)(6), (b)(7)c



Memorandum

U.S. Department of
Transportation

Office of the Secretary
of Transportation

Office of Inspector General

Subject: INFORMATION: 9-11 Commission Interviews
of American Airlines Personnel

Date: November 1, 2004

From:

(b)(6), (b)(7)c

JRI-2

Reply to

Attn of: JRI-2
(212) 264-8700

To: Todd J. Zinser
Deputy Inspector General, J-2

During our meeting on October 13, 2004, you asked if the 9-11 Commission

(b)(5)

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(b)(5)

If I can provide additional information on this topic please feel free to contact me.

- # -

Page 391 redacted for the following reason:

(b)(5)

(b)(6), (b)(7)c

From: (b)(6), (b)(7)c
Sent: Monday, November 01, 2004 11:55 AM
To: Zinser, Todd J.
Cc: Beitel, Rick; Lee, Charles H. (b)(6), (b)(7)c
Subject: American Airlines Commission Interviews



9-11

Commission Interviews

Please see the attached memorandum, which is in follow-up to our meeting on October 13, 2004.

Thanks

(b)(6), (b)(7)c

042R0122001

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October 30, 2004

Part of 9/11 Report Remains Unreleased; An Inquiry Is Begun

By JIM DWYER

One last chapter of the investigation by the Sept. 11 commission, a supplement completed more than two months ago, has not yet been made public by the Justice Department, and officials say it is unlikely to be released before the presidential election, even though that had been a major goal of deadlines set for the panel.

Drawing from this unpublished part of the inquiry, the commission quietly asked the inspectors general at the Departments of Defense and Transportation to review what it had determined were broadly inaccurate accounts provided by several civil and military officials about efforts to track and chase the hijacked aircraft on Sept. 11.

David Barnes, a spokesman with the Department of Transportation, said yesterday that if the reviews found wrongdoing, the inspector general could recommend administrative penalties or ask federal prosecutors to begin a criminal investigation.

"The investigation is ongoing," Mr. Barnes said, "and we don't know when it will be done."

In testimony before the commission, officials had described a quick response to the hijackings that narrowly missed intercepting some of the planes, but the commission's investigators later determined from documentary evidence that none of the military planes were anywhere near the four airliners.

In addition, officials at the Federal Aviation Administration testified that they had notified the military within a few minutes of each hijacking, but the investigation found that tape recordings contradicted that assertion.

The commission, in its final report, said that the true picture "did not reflect discredit" on individuals, but that unreliable testimony about the events had made it harder to understand the problems.

Besides the pursuit of the hijacked planes, the supplement, a monograph 60 to 70 pages long, revisits other subjects in the commission's final report of July - telephone calls made from the hijacked airplanes, airline security and orders issued that morning by President Bush and Vice President Dick Cheney - and provides additional detail or context, former commission members said.

The monograph also finds shortcomings in the Transportation Security Administration, the agency formed to buttress airline security after the hijackings, said Bob Kerrey, the former Democratic senator from Nebraska and a commission member.

Mr. Kerrey suggested that presidential politics were behind the delay in the report's release, but a spokesman for the Justice Department, Mark Corallo, said that an ordinary review of the material for

national security clearance was complicated when the commission shut down in August.

"It's unlikely in the next few weeks," Mr. Corallo said of when the supplement would be released. "It was a real legal quandary."

The monograph was submitted to the Justice Department just as the commission's term expired on Aug. 21, a date selected by Congress after long negotiations to avoid bringing out the commission's report at the height of the presidential campaign. It arrived not only as the commission became legally defunct, but also as many commission members and the staff lost their security clearances, Mr. Corallo said. That meant no one from the commission could discuss with the Justice Department lawyers how to edit material that needed to be changed for security reasons, he said.

"Had the commission gotten it to them two or three days before the deadline, they could have resolved any issue in minutes, as they usually do," Mr. Corallo said.

As a result of these complications, the supplement is the first of the commission's documents to be completely controlled by the Bush administration. While the commission was still in business, it was able to exert pressure on the White House when all 10 members, 5 Democrats and 5 Republicans, simply issued a public request for cooperation.

"I am surprised that the process has dragged on this long, and I think it's inappropriate," Richard Ben-Veniste, a Democrat on the commission, said. "It is longer than any other review of written material."

Discussions on the monograph's fate are being held between the Office of Legal Counsel at the Justice Department and Daniel Marcus, the commission's former general counsel.

"I think I've convinced them that even though we don't exist anymore, it ought to be viewed as a public document," Mr. Marcus said.

The monograph has two sections, he said. One concerns airline security, discussing the Federal Aviation Administration and the Transportation Security Administration. The other section, he said, provides a detailed timeline of the movements of the hijacked planes the morning of Sept. 11 and the response by the civil and military aviation officials. On July 29, Mr. Marcus wrote to the inspectors general of the Transportation and Defense Departments requesting reviews of the testimony of those officials. He would not comment this week on the request or the letters, but representatives for both departments confirmed that investigations were under way.

Pages 395 through 398 redacted for the following reasons:

(b)(5)

October 27, 2004

Ken:

Attached is a memo from (b)(6), (b)(7)c about ATC radar coverage. I had asked (b)(6), (b)(7) to help me understand the gaps in radar coverage for Flight 77 on 9/11. (b)(6), (b)(7)b, (b)(7)c memo is interesting and very helpful.

I've also attached excerpts from the Commission report that raised questions about this issue.

TZ

Cc: Lee
Beitel

(b)(6), (b)(7)c

Pages 400 through 403 redacted for the following reasons:

(b)(5)

this stuff is gonna keep on going, we need to take those fighters, put 'em over Manhattan. That's best thing, that's the best play right now. So coordinate with the FAA. Tell 'em if there's more out there, which we don't know, let's get 'em over Manhattan. At least we got some kind of play.¹³⁵

The FAA cleared the airspace. Radar data show that at 9:13, when the Otis fighters were about 115 miles away from the city, the fighters exited their holding pattern and set a course direct for Manhattan. They arrived at 9:25 and established a combat air patrol (CAP) over the city.¹³⁶

Because the Otis fighters had expended a great deal of fuel in flying first to military airspace and then to New York, the battle commanders were concerned about refueling. NEADS considered scrambling alert fighters from Langley Air Force Base in Virginia to New York, to provide backup. The Langley fighters were placed on battle stations at 9:09.¹³⁷ NORAD had no indication that any other plane had been hijacked.

American Airlines Flight 77

FAA Awareness. American 77 began deviating from its flight plan at 8:54, with a slight turn toward the south. Two minutes later, it disappeared completely from radar at Indianapolis Center, which was controlling the flight.¹³⁸

The controller tracking American 77 told us he noticed the aircraft turning to the southwest, and then saw the data disappear. The controller looked for primary radar returns. He searched along the plane's projected flight path and the airspace to the southwest where it had started to turn. No primary targets appeared. He tried the radios, first calling the aircraft directly, then the airline. Again there was nothing. At this point, the Indianapolis controller had no knowledge of the situation in New York. He did not know that other aircraft had been hijacked. He believed American 77 had experienced serious electrical or mechanical failure, or both, and was gone.¹³⁹

Shortly after 9:00, Indianapolis Center started notifying other agencies that American 77 was missing and had possibly crashed. At 9:08, Indianapolis Center asked Air Force Search and Rescue at Langley Air Force Base to look for a downed aircraft. The center also contacted the West Virginia State Police and asked whether any reports of a downed aircraft had been received. At 9:09, it reported the loss of contact to the FAA regional center, which passed this information to FAA headquarters at 9:24.¹⁴⁰

By 9:20, Indianapolis Center learned that there were other hijacked aircraft, and began to doubt its initial assumption that American 77 had crashed. A discussion of this concern between the manager at Indianapolis and the Command Center in Herndon prompted it to notify some FAA field facilities that American 77 was lost. By 9:21, the Command Center, some FAA field facilities, and American Airlines had started to search for American 77. They feared

it had been hijacked. At 9:25, the Command Center advised FAA headquarters of the situation.¹⁴¹

The failure to find a primary radar return for American 77 led us to investigate this issue further. Radar reconstructions performed after 9/11 reveal that FAA radar equipment tracked the flight from the moment its transponder was turned off at 8:56. But for 8 minutes and 13 seconds, between 8:56 and 9:05, this primary radar information on American 77 was not displayed to controllers at Indianapolis Center.¹⁴² The reasons are technical, arising from the way the software processed radar information, as well as from poor primary radar coverage where American 77 was flying.

According to the radar reconstruction, American 77 reemerged as a primary target on Indianapolis Center radar scopes at 9:05, east of its last known position. The target remained in Indianapolis Center's airspace for another six minutes, then crossed into the western portion of Washington Center's airspace at 9:10. As Indianapolis Center continued searching for the aircraft, two managers and the controller responsible for American 77 looked to the west and southwest along the flight's projected path, not east—where the aircraft was now heading. Managers did not instruct other controllers at Indianapolis Center to turn on their primary radar coverage to join in the search for American 77.¹⁴³

In sum, Indianapolis Center never saw Flight 77 turn around. By the time it reappeared in primary radar coverage, controllers had either stopped looking for the aircraft because they thought it had crashed or were looking toward the west. Although the Command Center learned Flight 77 was missing, neither it nor FAA headquarters issued an all points bulletin to surrounding centers to search for primary radar targets. American 77 traveled undetected for 36 minutes on a course heading due east for Washington, D.C.¹⁴⁴

By 9:25, FAA's Herndon Command Center and FAA headquarters knew two aircraft had crashed into the World Trade Center. They knew American 77 was lost. At least some FAA officials in Boston Center and the New England Region knew that a hijacker on board American 11 had said "we have some planes." Concerns over the safety of other aircraft began to mount. A manager at the Herndon Command Center asked FAA headquarters if they wanted to order a "nationwide ground stop." While this was being discussed by executives at FAA headquarters, the Command Center ordered one at 9:25.¹⁴⁵

The Command Center kept looking for American 77. At 9:21, it advised the Dulles terminal control facility, and Dulles urged its controllers to look for primary targets. At 9:32, they found one. Several of the Dulles controllers "observed a primary radar target tracking eastbound at a high rate of speed" and notified Reagan National Airport. FAA personnel at both Reagan National and Dulles airports notified the Secret Service. The aircraft's identity or type was unknown.¹⁴⁶

Reagan National controllers then vectored an unarmed National Guard C-130H cargo aircraft, which had just taken off en route to Minnesota, to iden-

129. FAA memo, "Full Transcript; Aircraft Accident; UAL175; New York, NY; September 11, 2001," Jan. 17, 2002, p. 3.
130. "[N90] New York Terminal Radar Approach controller stated 'at approximately 9:00 a.m., I observed an unknown aircraft south of the Newark, New Jersey Airport, northeast bound and descending out of twelve thousand nine hundred feet in a rapid rate of descent, the radar target terminated at the World Trade Center.'" FAA report, "Summary of Air Traffic Hijack Events September 11, 2001," Sept. 17, 2001. Former NORAD official Alan Scott testified that the time of impact of United 175 was 9:02. William Scott testimony, May 23, 2003. We have determined that the impact time was 9:03:11 based on our analysis of FAA radar data and air traffic control software logic.
131. FAA audio file, Herndon Command Center, New York Center position, line 5114, 9:02:34.
132. Ibid., 9:03; FAA audio file, Herndon Command Center, Cleveland/Boston position, line 5115, 9:05; Michael McCormick interview (Oct. 1, 2003); David LaCates interview (Oct. 2, 2003).
133. FAA Audio File, Herndon Command Center, Boston Center position, line 5115, 9:05-9:07.
134. Joseph McCain interview (Oct. 28, 2003); Robert Marx (Jan. 23, 2004); James Fox interview (Oct. 29, 2003); Dwayne Deskins interview (Oct. 30, 2003).
135. NEADS audio file, Mission Crew Commander position, channel 2, 9:07:32.
136. Daniel Nash interview (Oct. 14, 2003); Timothy Duffy interview (Jan. 7, 2004).
137. Because the Otis fighters had expended a great deal of fuel in flying first to military airspace and then to New York, the battle commanders were concerned about refueling. As NEADS personnel looked for refueling tankers in the vicinity of New York, the mission crew commander considered scrambling the Langley fighters to New York to provide backup for the Otis fighters until the NEADS Battle Cab (the command area that overlooks the operations floor) ordered "battle stations only at Langley." The alert fighters at Langley Air Force Base were ordered to battle stations at 9:09. Colonel Marx, the battle commander at NEADS, and General Arnold, the CONR commander, both recall that the planes were held on battle stations, as opposed to scrambling, because they might be called on to relieve the Otis fighters over New York City if a refueling tanker was not located, and also because of the general uncertainty of the situation in the sky. According to William Scott at the Commission's May 23, 2003, hearing, "At 9:09, Langley F-16s are directed to battle stations, just based on the general situation and the breaking news, and the general developing feeling about what's going on." See NEADS audio file, Mission Crew Commander, channel 2, 9:08:36; Robert Marx interview (Oct. 27, 2003); Larry Arnold interview (Feb. 3, 2004). See also Colonel Marx's statements that "[t]he plan was to protect New York City." *Films, Air War Over America*, p. 60.
139. Commission analysis of FAA radar data and air traffic control transmissions.
139. The Indianapolis Center controller advised other Indianapolis Center personnel of the developing situation. They agreed to "verticalize" the airspace along the flight's westerly route to the safety of other planes would not be affected. John Thomas interview (May 4, 2004).
140. John Thomas interview (Sept. 24, 2003). According to the FAA-produced timeline, at 9:09 Indianapolis Center "notified Great Lakes Regional Operations Center a possible aircraft accident of AMERICAN 77 due to the simultaneous loss of radio communications and radar identification." FAA report, "Summary of Air Traffic Hijack Events September 11, 2001," Sept. 17, 2001.
141. FAA audio file, Herndon Command Center, National Operations Manager position, line 4525; FAA audio file, Herndon Command Center, National Traffic Management Officer, East Position, line 4530; FAA memo, "Full Transcription; Air Traffic Control System Command Center, National Traffic Management Officer, East Position; September 11, 2001," Oct. 21, 2003, p. 13.
142. Primary radar contact for Flight 77 was lost because the "preferred" radar in this geographic area had no primary radar system, the "supplemental" radar had poor primary coverage, and the FAA ATC software did not allow the display of primary radar data from the "tertiary" and "quadrant" radars.
143. David Boone interview (May 4, 2004); Charles Thomas interview (May 4, 2004); John Thomas interview (May 4, 2004); Commission analysis of FAA radar data and air traffic control software logic.
144. John Thomas interview (May 4, 2004); Charles Thomas interview (May 4, 2004). We have reviewed all FAA documents, transcripts, and tape recordings related to American 77 and have found no evidence that FAA headquarters issued a directive to surrounding centers to search for primary radar targets. Review of the same materials also indicates that no one within FAA located American 77 until the aircraft was identified by Dulles controllers at 9:32. For much of that time, American 77 was traveling through Washington Center's airspace. The Washington Center's controllers were looking for the flight, but they were not told to look for primary radar returns.
145. John White interview (May 7, 2004); Ellen King interview (Apr. 5, 2004); Linda Schueller interview (Apr. 6, 2004); Benedict Siney interview (May 21, 2004); FAA memo, "Full Transcription; Air Traffic Control System Command Center, National Traffic Management Officer, East Position; September 11, 2001," Oct. 21, 2003, pp. 14, 27.
146. John Hendenbor interview (Dec. 22, 2003).
147. FAA memo, "Partial Transcript; Aircraft Accident; AAL77; Washington, DC; September 11, 2001," Sept. 20, 2001, p. 7.

148. NEADS audio file, Identification Technician position, channel 7, 9:21:10.
149. NEADS audio file, Mission Crew Commander, channel 2, 9:21:50; Kevin Nasypany interview (Jan. 22-23, 2004).
150. NEADS audio file, Mission Crew Commander, Channel 2, 9:22:34. The mission commander thought to put the Langley scramble over Baltimore and place a "barrier cap" between the hijack and Washington, D.C. Kevin Nasypany interview (Jan. 22-23, 2004).
151. NEADS audio file, Identification Technician position, channel 5, 9:32:10; *ibid.*, 9:33:58.
152. For first quote, see NEADS audio file, Identification Technician position, channel 5, 9:33:50. For second quote, see NEADS audio file, Identification Technician position, channel 7, 9:36:34; Kevin Nasypany interview (Jan. 22-23, 2004). For the third quote, see NEADS audio file, Mission Crew Commander, channel 2, 9:39:37; Kevin Nasypany interview (Jan. 22-23, 2004).
153. Dean Eckmann interview (Dec. 1, 2003); FAA memo, "Partial Transcript; Scramble Aircraft; QUIT25; September 11, 2001," Sept. 4, 2003, pp. 2-4 (Peninsular Radar position); FAA memo, "Partial Transcript; Scramble Aircraft; QUIT25; September 11, 2001," Sept. 4, 2003, pp. 2-5 (East Feeder Radar position).
154. NEADS audio file, Mission Crew Commander, channel 2, 9:38:02; Dwayne Deskins interview (Oct. 30, 2003). The estimated time of impact of Flight 77 into the Pentagon is based on Commission analysis of FDR, air traffic control, radar, and Pentagon elevation and impact site data.
155. Joseph Cooper interview (Sept. 22, 2003); NEADS audio file, Identification Technician position, recorder 1, channel 7, 9:41.
156. NEADS audio file, Mission Crew Commander position, channel 2, 9:42:08.
157. FAA memo, "Full Transcript; Aircraft Accident; N591UA (UAL93); Somerset, PA; September 11, 2001," May 10, 2002, p. 10.
158. The United 93 timeline in FAA report, "Summary of Air Traffic Hijack Events September 11, 2001," Sept. 17, 2001, states that at 9:28:17 "a radio transmission of unintelligible sounds of possible screaming or a struggle from an unknown origin was heard over the ZOB [Cleveland Center] radio." See FAA memo, "Full Transcript; Aircraft Accident; N591UA (UAL93); Somerset, PA; September 11, 2001," May 10, 2002, p. 11.
159. The United 93 timeline in FAA report, "Summary of Air Traffic Hijack Events September 11, 2001," Sept. 17, 2001, states that at 9:28:54 a "second radio transmission, mostly unintelligible, again with sounds of possible screaming or a struggle and a statement, 'get out of here, get out of here' from an unknown origin was heard over the ZOB [Cleveland Center] radio." FAA audio file, Cleveland Center, Lorain Radar position; FAA memo, "Full Transcript; Aircraft Accident; N591UA (UAL93); Somerset, PA; September 11, 2001," May 10, 2002, p. 11. At 9:31:48, ExecJet 56 also called in, reporting that "we're just answering your call. We did hear that, uh, yelling too." The FAA responded at 9:31:51, "Okay, thanks. We're just trying to figure out what's going on." FAA memo, "Full Transcript; Aircraft Accident; N591UA (UAL93); Somerset, PA; September 11, 2001," May 10, 2002, p. 15.
160. FAA memo, "Full Transcript; Aircraft Accident; N591UA (UAL93); Somerset, PA; September 11, 2001," May 10, 2002, p. 15.
161. FAA memo, "Full Transcription; Air Traffic Control System Command Center, National Traffic Management Officer, East Position; September 11, 2001," Oct. 21, 2003, pp. 10, 13; FAA audio file, Herndon Command Center, New York Center position, line 5154.
162. FAA memo, "Full Transcript; Aircraft Accident; N591UA (UAL93); Somerset, PA; September 11, 2001," May 10, 2002, p. 19.
163. *Ibid.*, p. 23.
164. FAA memo, "Full Transcription; Air Traffic Control System Command Center, National Traffic Management Officer, East Position; September 11, 2001," Oct. 21, 2003, pp. 16-17; FAA audio file, Cleveland Center, Lorain Radar position; FAA memo, "Full Transcript; Aircraft Accident; N591UA (UAL93); Somerset, PA; September 11, 2001," May 10, 2002, pp. 26-32.
165. FAA memo, "Full Transcription; Air Traffic Control System Command Center, National Traffic Management Officer, East Position; September 11, 2001," Oct. 21, 2003, pp. 17-19.
166. For 9:46 quotation, see *ibid.*, pp. 19-20. For 9:49 discussion about military assistance, see *ibid.*, p. 21.
167. For 9:53 discussion about scrambling aircraft, see *ibid.*, p. 23. Neither Monte Belger nor the deputy director for air traffic services could recall this discussion in their interviews with us. Monte Belger interview (Apr. 20, 2004); Peter Chellan interview (Mar. 26, 2004). Subsequently Belger told us he does not believe the conversation occurred. Monte Belger, email to the Commission, July 12, 2004. However, tapes from the morning reveal that at 9:53 a staff person from headquarters told the Command Center "Peter's talking to Monte now about scrambling." FAA memo, "Full Transcription; Air Traffic Control System Command Center, National Traffic Management Officer, East Position; September 11, 2001," Oct. 21, 2003, p. 23. For discussions about the status of United 93, see *ibid.*, pp. 24-27.
168. *Ibid.*, pp. 23-27. We also reviewed a report regarding telescope observations on September 11, 2001, whose authors conclude that the impact time of United 93 was "10:06:05±5 (EDT)." Won-Young Kim and G.R. Baum, "Seismic Observations during September 11, 2001, Terrorist Attack," spring 2002 (report to the Maryland Depart-



U.S. Department of
Transportation
Office of the Secretary
of Transportation
Office of Inspector General

Memorandum

Subject: ACTION: Inaccurate Posting on FAA
Website, Re: 9/11/01 Chronology

Date: September 27, 2004

From: Kenneth M. Mead
Inspector General

Reply to

To: Marion C. Blakey
Federal Aviation Administrator

As you know, we are investigating a referral from the 9/11 Commission concerning certain inaccuracies in public statements and reports by DOD and FAA officials, involving communications and notifications between FAA and NORAD on September 11.

In the course of investigating, we discovered on Friday that the attached and highlighted Fact Sheet, posted on FAA's website and entitled "Chronology of Events on September 11, 2001 (August 2002)," contained information that the Commission found to be inaccurate. The subject information in this posting concerns FAA's notification to NORAD about the hijacking of AAL Flight 77, which is a central issue in the Commission's referral.

We notified Laura Brown, Deputy Assistant Administrator for Public Affairs, of this discrepancy on Friday, and the Fact Sheet has since been revised (see Attachment 2). One observation, however, is that the new entry is not identified as a recent revision and we believe such a notation, or errata, should be made given our ongoing investigation.

We have already contacted the individual responsible for preparing the original Fact Sheet and will be interviewing the FAA personnel who provided that source information. We will also determine the accuracy of the revised Fact Sheet entry.

Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at x61959, or my Deputy, Todd J. Zinser, at x66767.

Attachments (2)

Attachment 1

Fact Sheets

close window

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
August 12, 2002
Contact: William Shumann
Phone: 202-267-3883

Chronology of Events on September 11, 2001 (August 2002)

0800. American Airlines Flight 11, a Boeing 767 with 92 people on board, takes off from Boston Logan airport for Los Angeles.

0814. United Air Lines Flight 175, a Boeing 767 with 65 people on board, takes off from Boston Logan airport for Los Angeles.

0821. American Airlines Flight 77, a Boeing 757 with 64 people on board, takes off from Washington Dulles airport for Los Angeles.

0840. FAA notifies the North American Aerospace Defense Command's (NORAD) Northeast Air Defense Sector about the suspected hijacking of American Flight 11.

0841. United Air Lines Flight 93, a Boeing 757 with 44 people on board, takes off from Newark airport for San Francisco.

0843. FAA notifies NORAD's Northeast Air Defense Sector about the suspected hijacking of United Flight 175.

0846. (approx.). American Flight 11 crashes into the north tower of the World Trade Center.

0902. (approx.). United Flight 175 crashes into the south tower of the World Trade Center.

0904. (approx.). The FAA's Boston Air Route Traffic Control Center stops all departures from airports in its jurisdiction (New England and eastern New York State).

0906. The FAA bans takeoffs of all flights bound to or through the airspace of New York Center from airports in that Center and the three adjacent Centers – Boston, Cleveland and Washington. This is referred to as a First Tier groundstop and covers the Northeast from North Carolina north and as far west as eastern Michigan.

0908. The FAA bans all takeoffs nationwide for flights going to or through New York Center airspace.

*

0924. The FAA notifies NORAD's Northeast Air Defense Sector about the suspected hijacking of American Flight 77. The FAA and NORAD establish an open line to discuss American 77 and United 93.

0926. The FAA bans takeoffs of all civilian aircraft regardless of destination -- a national groundstop.

0940. (approx.). American Flight 77 crashes into the Pentagon.

0945. In the first unplanned shutdown of U. S. airspace, the FAA orders all aircraft to land at the nearest airport as soon as practical. At this time, there were more than 4,500 aircraft in the air on Instrument Flight Rules (IFR) flight plans.

[Original Fact Sheet]

1007. (approx.) United Flight 93 crashes in Stony Creek Township, PA.

1039. Reaffirming the earlier order, the FAA issues a Notice to Airmen (NOTAM) that halts takeoffs and landings at all airports.

1215. (approx). The airspace over the 48 contiguous states is clear of all commercial and private flights.

Notes:

All times are Eastern Daylight. For UTC/Zulu/GMT, add four hours.

Flight departures are actual takeoff times, not scheduled or gate departure times.

Questions About This Page

Attachment 2

Fact Sheets

close window

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0908. The FAA bans all takeoffs nationwide for flights going to or through New York Center airspace.

* 0924. The FAA establishes an open phone line with other government agencies and the military to share information about missing or suspicious aircraft.

0926. The FAA bans takeoffs of all civilian aircraft regardless of destination -- a national groundstop.

0940. (approx.). American Flight 77 crashes into the Pentagon.

0945. In the first unplanned shutdown of U. S. airspace, the FAA orders all aircraft to land at the nearest airport as soon as practical. At this time, there were more than 4,500 aircraft in the air on Instrument Flight Rules (IFR) flight plans.

[Revised Fact Sheet]

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Flight departures are actual takeoff times, not scheduled or gate departure times.

Questions About This Page

042R0122001

(b)(6), (b)(7)c

From:

(b)(6), (b)(7)c

Sent:

Tuesday, October 05, 2004 9:01 AM

To:

Cc:

(b)(6), (b)(7)c

Subject: 911 Testamony Review

(b)(5)

(b)(6), (b)(7)c

(b)(5)

If you would like an update on where we are in the review let me know and we can get together.

Thanks,

(b)(6), (b)(7)c

10/5/2004

(b)(6), (b)(7)c

From: (b)(6), (b)(7)c
Sent: Tuesday, October 05, 2004 12:22 PM
To: Beitel, Rick
Cc: (b)(6), (b)(7)c
Subject: Interviews

This week's schedule will include:

(b)(6), (b)(7)c

We are still trying to schedule (b)(6), (b)(7)c

(b)(5), (b)(6), (b)(7)c

(b)(6), (b)(7)c You are welcome to send someone to participate in the interviews this week. If you do not have something already set for (b)(6), (b)(7)c to do on Friday of this week it would be great if he could help out with the interview(s). (b)(6), (b)(7)c has a schedule conflict and can not participate.

Thanks

(b)(6), (b)(7)c

(b)(6), (b)(7)c

From: (b)(6), (b)(7)c
Sent: Tuesday, October 05, 2004 11:43 AM
To: (b)(6), (b)(7)c
Subject: FW: Timeline



timeline-dotoig.xls
1s (46 KB)

-----Original Message-----

From: (b)(6), (b)(7)c
Sent: Thursday, September 30, 2004 5:17 PM
To: (b)(6), (b)(7)c 'OIG DoD'
Subject: Timeline

As we discussed.

(b)(6), (b)(7)c

(b)(6), (b)(7)c

(b)(6), (b)(7)c

042R 0122001

From: (b)(6), (b)(7)c
Sent: Friday, September 24, 2004 2:35 PM
To: Beitel, Rick
Cc: (b)(6), (b)(7)c
Subject: Briefing Document



2004-09-24_brief.doc (35 KB)

Rick,

Attached is a summary of the information that has been gathered this week. The information for the DOD end of this investigation is likely more extensive than I currently have available. We can provide a more detailed briefing on that aspect early next week.

Thanks

(b)(6), (b)(7)c

(b)(6), (b)(7)c

042R0122001

From: (b)(6), (b)(7)c
Sent: Friday, September 24, 2004 9:20 AM
To: Beitel, Rick
Cc: (b)(6), (b)(7)c
Subject: FAA Website



factsheets_2002
-08-12.pdf (26 ...

Rick,
Per our discussion

(b)(5), (b)(6), (b)(7)c

(b)(6), (b)(7)c

(b)(6), (b)(7)c

From: (b)(6), (b)(7)c
Sent: Tuesday, September 28, 2004 6:13 PM
To: (b)(6), (b)(7)c
Cc:
Subject: Re: QFRs

(b)(6), (b)(7)c

I talked to (b)(5), (b)(6), (b)(7)c

(b)(5), (b)(6), (b)(7)c

(b)(6), (b)(7)c

09/27/2004 05:18
PM

To: (b)(6), (b)(7)c <[REDACTED]@big.dot.gov>

cc: (b)(6), (b)(7)c <[REDACTED]@big.dot.gov>

Subject: Re: QFRs (Document link: (b)(6), (b)(7)c)

I will double check with others who were involved. I know I did not handle anything for the record after the May 22 '03 hearing.

(b)(6), (b)(7)c

g.dot.gov>

09/27/2004 04:18
PM

To:

cc:

Subject: QFRs

(b)(6), (b)(7)c

(b)(6), (b)(7)c

As a follow-up to our discussion last week concerning questions for the record. During

(b)(5), (b)(6), (b)(7)c

(b)(5), (b)(6), (b)(7)c
free to contact me at

(b)(6), (b)(7)c

If you have any questions please feel

Thanks

(b)(6), (b)(7)c

042R0122001

(b)(6), (b)(7)c

From: (b)(6), (b)(7)c
Sent: Monday, September 27, 2004 2:37 PM
To: (b)(6), (b)(7)c
Cc:
Subject: Commission interviews
(b)(5)

(b)(6), (b)(7)c

Sorry I was not able to e-mail you last week as discussed. The attached file lists recorded interviews (wave files)

(b)(5)

(b)(6), (b)(7)c

9/29/2004

Pages 419 through 424 redacted for the following reasons:

(b)(5), (b)(6), (b)(7)c

(b)(5), (b)(6), (b)(7)c

From: (b)(6), (b)(7)c
Sent: Tuesday, September 21, 2004 7:56 AM
To: (b)(6), (b)(7)c
Cc: Beitel, Rick; (b)(6), (b)(7)c
Subject: Material Request



9-11comm_inter 9-11Comm_tea
iews-tapes requ.3 items requestec

(b)(6), (b)(7)c

I am writing as a follow-up to our meeting on Sept. 10, 2004, that concerned obtaining materials from the 9-11 Commission. As you know, we are seeking information that might be helpful in the DOT and DOD, IGs' joint review of public statements made by NORAD and FAA

(b)(5)

In the attached documents we have identified the items that DOT-IG is interested in obtaining. The DOD-IG will present a separate request to you.

If you have any questions please feel free to contact me at (b)(6), (b)(7)c

Thanks,

(b)(6), (b)(7)c

Region 2
Dept. of Transportation
Office of Inspector General

(b)(6), (b)(7)c

From: (b)(6), (b)(7)c
Sent: Tuesday, September 21, 2004 12:19 AM
To: (b)(6), (b)(7)c
Subject: RE: Items to be Requested from 9-11 Commission

(b)(6), (b)(7)c

(b)(5)

Will give you a call next week after we have returned to DC.

(b)(6), (b)(7)c

-----Original Message-----

From: (b)(6), (b)(7)c]
Sent: Tuesday, September 14, 2004 3:51 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: Beitel, Rick; (b)(6), (b)(7)c
Subject: Items to be Requested from 9-11 Commission

(b)(6), (b)(7)c

Attached, are lists of interviews and documents that we plan to request from the 9-11 Commission. (b)(5)

(b)(5)

Thanks

(b)(6), (b)(7)c

042R0122001

(b)(6), (b)(7)c

From: (b)(6), (b)(7)c
Sent: Thursday, September 16, 2004 1:04 PM
To: (b)(6), (b)(7)c
Subject: RE: TAPE RECORDING YES OR NO

(b)(5)

(b)(6), (b)(7)c

I understand you got the taping issue resolved with (b)(6), (b)(7)c. Again, if there is anything I can do for you, please let me know.

These are the individuals we have requested meetings with:

(b)(6), (b)(7)c

Additional documentation we would like to review:

(b)(5), (b)(6), (b)(7)c

-----Original Message-----

From: (b)(6), (b)(7)c
Sent: Thursday, September 16, 2004 11:10 AM
To: (b)(6), (b)(7)c
Subject: TAPE RECORDING YES OR NO

(b)(5)

(b)(6), (b)(7)c give me a call (or have (b)(6), (b)(7)c give me a call) regarding (b)(5)

(b)(5), (b)(6), (b)(7)c

(b)(5)

Here is the DOT IG position on this matter:

(b)(5)

If you need to speak with me about this, give me a call at (b)(6), (b)(7)c and/or try my cell at (b)(6), (b)(7)c or emailing your decision will be fine.

(b)(5)

(b)(6), (b)(7)c

U.S. Dept. of Transportation
Office of Inspector General
400 7th Street, S.W.
NASSIF Building, Room 7324
Washington, DC 20590-0001

(b)(6), (b)(7)c

-----Original Message-----

From: (b)(6), (b)(7)c
Sent: Thursday, September 16, 2004 7:28 AM
To: (b)(6), (b)(7)c
Subject: RE: DoD badge
(b)(6), (b)(7)c

Sounds good. If you need anything I am here until 4:00 today and all day tomorrow. See you Sunday.

-----Original Message-----

From: (b)(6), (b)(7)c
Sent: Wednesday, September 15, 2004 4:31 PM
To: (b)(6), (b)(7)c
Subject: RE: DoD badge
(b)(6), (b)(7)c

Let's wait until we get back from Colorado, I have some last minute "stuff" to take care of tomorrow, as I am sure we all have!

(b)(6), (b)(7)c

U.S. Dept. of Transportation
Office of Inspector General
400 7th Street, S.W.
NASSIF Building, Room 7324
Washington, DC 20590-0001

(b)(6), (b)(7)c

-----Original Message-----

From: (b)(6), (b)(7)c
Sent: Wednesday, September 15, 2004 4:15 PM
To: (b)(6), (b)(7)c
Subject: RE: DoD badge
 (b)(6), (b)(7)c

Thanks. Do you want to fit getting the badge in tomorrow or wait until we get back from Colorado?

-----Original Message-----

From: (b)(6), (b)(7)c
Sent: Wednesday, September 15, 2004 4:02 PM
To: (b)(6), (b)(7)c
Subject: RE: DoD badge
 (b)(6), (b)(7)c

(b)(5)

(b)(6), (b)(7)c

U.S. Dept. of Transportation
 Office of Inspector General
 400 7th Street, S.W.
 NASSIF Building, Room 7324
 Washington, DC 20590-0001

(b)(6), (b)(7)c

-----Original Message-----

From: (b)(6), (b)(7)c
Sent: Wednesday, September 15, 2004 3:35 PM
To: (b)(6), (b)(7)c
Subject: DoD badge
 (b)(5)

Hi (b)(6), (b)(7)c

(b)(5)

(b)(6), (b)(7)c

Office of the Inspector General, DoD
 (b)(6), (b)(7)c

(b)(6), (b)(7)c

(b)(6), (b)(7)c

From: (b)(6), (b)(7)c
Sent: Wednesday, September 15, 2004 8:40 AM
To: (b)(6), (b)(7)c
Cc: (b)(6), (b)(7)c
Subject: RE: Items to be Requested from 9-11 Commission

Thanks (b)(6), (b)(7)c Will let you know later today if we want to (b)(5)
(b)(5)

See you in Colorado.

(b)(6), (b)(7)c

-----Original Message-----

From: (b)(6), (b)(7)c
Sent: Tuesday, September 14, 2004 3:51 PM
To: (b)(6), (b)(7)c
Cc: Beitel, Rick; (b)(6), (b)(7)c
Subject: Items to be Requested from 9-11 Commission

(b)(6), (b)(7)c

Attached, are lists of interviews and documents that we plan to request from the 9-11 Commission. (b)(5)

(b)(5)

Thanks

(b)(6), (b)(7)c

(b)(6), (b)(7)c

From: (b)(6), (b)(7)c
Sent: Tuesday, September 14, 2004 3:51 PM
To: (b)(6), (b)(7)c
Cc: Beitel, Rick; (b)(6), (b)(7)c
Subject: Items to be Requested from 9-11 Commission



9-11comm_inter 9-11Comm_tea
iews-tapes requ.) items requestec

(b)(6), (b)(7)c

Attached, are lists of interviews and documents that we plan to request from the 9-11 Commission. (b)(5)

(b)(5)

Thanks

(b)(6), (b)(7)c

From: Beitel, Rick

Sent: Tuesday, September 07, 2004 6:21 PM

To: (b)(6), (b)(7)c

Subject: FW: Document and witness lists for matter referred to DoD and DoT

(b)(6), (b)(7)c

-FYI.

-----Original Message-----

From: Zinser, Todd J.

Sent: Tuesday, September 07, 2004 3:11 PM

To: Lee, Charles H.; Beitel, Rick

Subject: FW: Document and witness lists for matter referred to DoD and DoT

-----Original Message-----

From: (b)(6), (b)(7)c

Sent: Tuesday, September 07, 2004 3:08 PM

To: (b)(6), (b)(7)c

Subject: Re: Document and witness lists for matter referred to DoD and DoT

(b)(5), (b)(6), (b)(7)c

(b)(6), (b)(7)c

----- Original Message -----

From: (b)(6), (b)(7)c

To: (b)(6), (b)(7)c ; todd.j.zinser@oig.dot.gov ; (b)(6), (b)(7)c

Cc: (b)(6), (b)(7)c

Sent: Thursday, September 02, 2004 4:46 PM

Subject: RE: Document and witness lists for matter referred to DoD and DoT

thanks for the info

-----Original Message-----

From: (b)(6), (b)(7)c

Sent: Thursday, September 02, 2004 4:31 PM

To: todd.j.zinser@oig.dot.gov; (b)(6), (b)(7)c

Cc: (b)(6), (b)(7)c

(b)(6), (b)(7)c

Subject: Document and witness lists for matter referred to DoD and DoT

(b)(5), (b)(6), (b)(7)c

Do you Yahoo!?

New and Improved Yahoo! Mail - 100MB free storage!

The following is a list of witnesses you and your staff may want to interview after you have reviewed all the relevant documents.

(b)(5), (b)(6), (b)(7)c

The following is a list of FAA and DoD documents and materials that we recommend you and your staff review in connection with the Commission's referral.

(b)(5), (b)(6), (b)(7)c, (b)(7)e

(b)(5), (b)(6), (b)(7)c, (b)(7)e

Pages 438 through 511 redacted for the following reasons:

(b)(5)

(b)(5), (b)(6), (b)(7)c

(b)(6), (b)(7)b

(b)(6), (b)(7)c



OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

REPORT OF INVESTIGATION	INVESTIGATION NUMBER 042R0122001	DATE Dec. 6, 2004	
TITLE FAA-NORAD Statements to 9-11 Commission Washington, DC False Statements	(b)(6), (b)(7)c	STATUS ACTION LEAD	
		wlo	1/3
	DISTRIBUTION JRI-1 (1), JRI-5 (1) JRI-2 (1)✓	(b)(6), (b)(7)c	

ACTION LEADS

Contact the Quality Assurance managers at Boston (ZBW) and Cleveland (ZOB) Centers to determine when they provided FAA's Evaluations and Investigations Staff (AAT-20) a play back, copy of a recording and a transcript in rough and final form for any communications that its Center may have had with the military on September 11, 2001. Obtain any documentary evidence that supports when each Center transmitted the aforementioned to AAT-20.

We have found that most of the communications between the FAA's Centers and the military occurred between the FAA military operations positions and the North East Air Defense Sector (NEADS) but this is not always the case. In transcripts that have been provided to AAT-20, NEADS is referenced as "Huntress."

JRI-1: ZBW's (b)(6), (b)(7)c is (b)(6), (b)(7)c telephone (b)(6), (b)(7)c. (b)(6), (b)(7)c (b)(6), (b)(7)b may currently be acting for (b)(6), (b)(7)c

JRI-5: ZOB's (b)(6), (b)(7)c is (b)(6), (b)(7)c telephone number (b)(6), (b)(7)c

Conduct an interview of (b)(6), (b)(7)c an employee in the Air Traffic Organization's Resource Management Branch (ANE-540). Following September 11, 2001, (b)(6), (b)(7)c worked with AAT-20 in preparing the FAA's chronologies. Interview (b)(6), (b)(7)c to determine (b)(6), (b)(7)c role in the preparation of the FAA's chronologies. An outline for conducting the interview is attached (Attachment 1).

JRI-1: (b)(6), (b)(7)c Air Traffic Organization, Resource Management Branch, New England Regional Headquarters, 12 New England Executive Park, Burlington, MA (b)(6), (b)(7)c

INFORMATION

This investigation was based on a referral from the 9-11 Commission that certain public statements made by military and FAA officials at Commission hearings and elsewhere were inaccurate. The questionable statements primarily concern when the FAA notified the military on September 11, 2001, about American Airlines Flight 77 (AA77) and United Airlines Flight 93 (UN93).

As is further elaborated in their referral, the Commission has concluded that at its May 23rd, hearing (b)(6), (b)(7)c 1st Air Force, presented a timeline of events from September 11th that contained inaccuracies. Specifically, (b)(6), (b)(7)c told the Commission that the FAA notified the military about UN93 at 9:16am¹. (b)(6), (b)(7)c testimony also indicated that the fighters from Langley Air Force Base, Langley, VA were scrambled as result of the aforementioned notice, that the military was tracking UN93 and that they intended to intercept the aircraft if it approached Washington, D.C. The Commission determined that there was no hijack report at 9:16am; UN93 was proceeding normally at that time. They further concluded that the military did not receive any notice that UN93 had a problem until ZOB called NEADS at 10:07am (EDT) and advised them that UN93 might have a bomb on board. UN93 crashed in Pennsylvania at 10:03am.

(b)(6), (b)(7)c also testified that the FAA notified the military about AA77 at 9:24am, and that the Langley fighters were also scrambled in response to the hijacking of AA77. During its investigation, the Commission discovered that the notice NEADS received at 9:24am was that AA11 had not hit the World Trade Center. ZBW had contacted NEADS at 9:21am and reported that AA11 was still in the air and on its way toward Washington, DC.

The Commission concluded that at 9:34am, FAA's Washington Center informed NEADS that there was a problem with AA77 "We're looking [for]—we lost American 77." Then, at 9:36am, ZBW contacted NEADS and reported that an unidentified aircraft was closing in on Washington, D.C. AA77 was crashed into the Pentagon at 9:37am.

Witnesses have advised that AAT-20 prepared the bulk of the FAA's 9-11 chronologies. This effort began on or about September 11, 2001, and continued through the end of the month. All subsequent chronologies, which we have identified, that were produced by the FAA and that reference military notifications were based upon AAT-20's work products.

¹ All times referenced in this report, unless otherwise noted, are Eastern Daylight Time (EDT). FAA Air Traffic generally uses Universal Coordinated Time (UTC or ZULU). During the month of September EDT is four hours behind ZULU. Therefore, 12:00 ZULU is 8:00am EDT, 13:00 ZULU is 9:00am EDT, and 14:00 ZULU is 10:00am EDT.

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Of the work products produced during this period, there were two of significance; the first is titled *Summary of Air Traffic Hijack Events, September 11, 2001*, and is dated September 17, 2001 (Attachment 2). The second work product has no title but its first page contains a grid with a chronology of four significant events associated with each of the hijacked aircraft, including when NORAD/NEADS was notified, and is dated September 18, 2001 (Attachment 3). Both of these documents indicate that FAA notified the military about AA77 at 9:24 and that FAA did not notify the military about UN93. Further, they use military logs as the source for these notifications. Neither chronology contained any information concerning the false report about AA11 at 9:24am or the actual notice the FAA provided for UN93 at 10:07am.

Witnesses indicate that AAT-20 had access to some information from the military, which they likely received sometime September 13 and 17, 2001. Some evidence and witnesses suggest that AAT-20 had information, from FAA and military sources, concerning the correct time that it notified the military about UN93 (10:08 [sic] EDT) but removed it from its final military notification chronology.

We are requesting that this action lead be accomplished, in part, to assist in determining what information AAT-20 obtained from the military. Further, we are trying to identify the extent of the internal information, which pertained to military notifications, AAT-20 had obtained by the time it completed its chronologies.

During our review of documents from AAT-20 we discovered an electronic copy of ZOB's rough transcript for a conversation between ZOB and NEADS (Huntress) concerning UN93 that had a last save date of September 15, 2001 (Attachment 4). Further, we discovered an electronic copy of an apparently final version of the aforementioned transcript with a last save date of September 18, 2001 (Attachment 5). These transcripts contain the 10:07am conversation that ZOB had with NEADS (Huntress) wherein they notified the military that UN93 might have a bomb on board.

Further, we have located, within AAT-20's records, copies of "wave" files (computerized recordings) for ZBW's military operations position that cover the period of time 8:37am through 8:38am, 8:39am through 8:42am and 8:52am through 8:53am. These files contain a last saved date of September 19, 2001 (Attachment 6). We have been unable to locate any other military operations positions transcripts or recordings from ZBW. We would like to know if this is the extent of the information that ZBW provided to AAT-20 from its military operations positions and if so why. ZBW's military operations position appears to have had the most communications on September 11, 2001 with NEADS (Huntress).

- # -

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Pages 515 through 612 redacted for the following reasons:

(b)(5)

(b)(5), (b)(6), (b)(7)c

(b)(5), (b)(6), (b)(7)c, (b)(7)e

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(b)(5), (b)(6), (b)(7)c

042R0122001

(b)(6), (b)(7)c

From: Beitel, Rick
Sent: Thursday, February 24, 2005 11:17 PM
To: (b)(6), (b)(7)c
Subject: Doc

Thanks for your reminder (b)(6), (b)(7)c

(b)(5)

Rick

Sent from my BlackBerry Wireless Handheld

Pages 635 through 645 redacted for the following reasons:

(b)(5), (b)(6), (b)(7)c

(b)(6), (b)(7)c

042R0122001

From: (b)(6), (b)(7)c
Sent: Friday, January 21, 2005 3:43 PM
To:
Cc: (b)(6), (b)(7)c
Subject: Status : FOUO

(b)(6), (b)(7)c

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(b)(6), (b)(7)c

(b)(5)

Hope you are having a good year.

(b)(6), (b)(7)c

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1/25/2005

Pages 647 through 668 redacted for the following reasons:

(b)(5), (b)(6), (b)(7)c



Air War Over America

Sept. 11 alters face of

air warfare

Air War Over America

*Sept. 11 alters face
of air defense mission*

Leslie Filson

HEADQUARTERS 1ST AIR FORCE
PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE
TYNDALL AIR FORCE BASE, FL
2003

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DEC 8 2003

NATIONAL DEFENSE UNIVERSITY
WASHINGTON

Acknowledgments

When 1st Air Force public affairs officer Maj. Don Arias approached me about writing a book on America's air sovereignty mission and how Sept. 11, 2001, changed everything, I was a little nervous.

How do you tell such a huge, multifaceted story in only a few short chapters? Can you ever give a story of this magnitude justice? I really don't know if you can. All you can do is write the stories you think the reader absolutely must know to get a clear picture of all the changes affecting the mission. Speaking of pictures, how do you gather those essential shots that tell a story all by themselves? Thankfully, Maj. Arias enlisted the help of New Mexico Air National Guardsman and historian Master Sgt. Rod Grunwald, a great photo editor, sounding board, copy editor, grammarian, and wordsmith who gathered countless photos for this project. Thank you for all your help, Rod.

Before I go down the professional list, there's many people I want to thank on a personal level. My biggest thank-you of all goes to my husband and on-site aviation consultant, Mike, who spent endless hours at the park with our daughter, Isabel, while I was sequestered in the office writing a book. There's no way I could have done it without Mike, who had to listen to every single detail about this book every single day for more than a year. Thanks for enduring it all, Mike. I also thank my mom, Paula; sisters Alyson and Betsy; and the rest of my family for helping me get through this as we were all trying to get through losing our dad and hero, John. A firefighter and U.S. Marine Corps Vietnam veteran, he would have loved this story of America's military protecting our homeland.

There are many others to thank for supporting this project. First, I thank retired Col. William A. Scott — an outstanding editor — for his sound

opinion, advice and valuable input. Col. Scott had the answers to any and all questions from, "What's a 'conehead'?" to "What's *Posse Comitatus*?" I truly appreciate all the time you gave, Col. Scott. I am also indebted to retired Maj. Gen. Larry K. Arnold, who wanted this story forever preserved in print. Thank you for your valuable time and many interviews. Special recognition also goes to Col. Bob Marr, commander of the Northeast Air Defense Sector, who gave freely of his time to help with the smallest of details about the air battle on Sept. 11, 2001. Thank you, Col. Marr.

I owe many thanks to the 1st Air Force and Continental United States North American Aerospace Defense Command Region public affairs staff: Maj. Brenda Barker; Staff Sgt. Scott Farley; Master Sgt. Roger Tibbetts; and most of all, Maj. Arias. You were all nothing but supportive through this entire endeavor and Staff Sgt. Farley's editing skills and technical expertise were invaluable!

Several others wholeheartedly supported this project: Lt. Col. Kacey Blaney; retired Brig. Gen. John Broman; Col. John Cromwell; Dr. Charles Gross; Master Sgt. Dale Hanson; Eric Hehs; retired Col. Connie Mac Hostetler; Marty Isham; retired Chief Master Sgt. Bill Johnson; Col. Larry Kemp; Bard Manthey; Dr. Paul McAllister; Maj. Gen. Craig R. McKinley; Gene McManus; Staff Sgt. Mark Morgan; retired Col. Dan Navin; Jerry Schroeder; Master Sgt. Dave Somdahl; Karen Steele; Dr. Rick Sturdevant; Master Sgt. Don Taggart; Brig. Gen. Dave Wherley Jr.; Col. Don Whitehead; Vivian Wilson; and Bob Wright. My sincerest gratitude.

Finally, thank you to the men and women of 1st Air Force and CONR. We can all sleep better knowing you are guarding America's skies.

— Leslie Filson

Foreword

Most Americans remember where they were the morning of Sept. 11, 2001, and will probably never forget. I was in my command center watching live CNN coverage of smoke billowing from the north tower of the World Trade Center, having just scrambled F-15s out of Cape Cod, Mass., toward the possibly hijacked American Airlines Flight 11. When I saw United Airlines Flight 175 hit the south tower, I quickly began to realize this was not a coincidence, that our country was under attack and it was my job to defend against further attacks. Over the next several hours, the men and women of CONR — the Continental United States North American Aerospace Defense Command Region — quickly went about the business of securing America's skies. I am grateful for what they did that day.

We were able to respond quickly Sept. 11 because we had a robust command and control structure in place and some fighter aircraft on rapid reaction alert. The air defense mission, as reflected in the number of fighter aircraft and alert locations, had shrunk over the decades even in the face of the Cold War. To a point, this reduction was justified as the Soviet threat changed from bombers in the 1950s to primarily an Intercontinental Ballistic Missile and submarine ballistic missile threat in the years to follow. Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, the Soviets flew repeated reconnaissance missions off the East Coast of the United States and also developed cruise missile capabilities that posed a threat to the United States. These two facts alone may have kept the air defense and air sovereignty missions alive against air-breathing targets.

With the collapse of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and subsequent dissolution of the Warsaw Pact and the Soviet Union, there was additional pressure to take down our alert aircraft and use that money for other

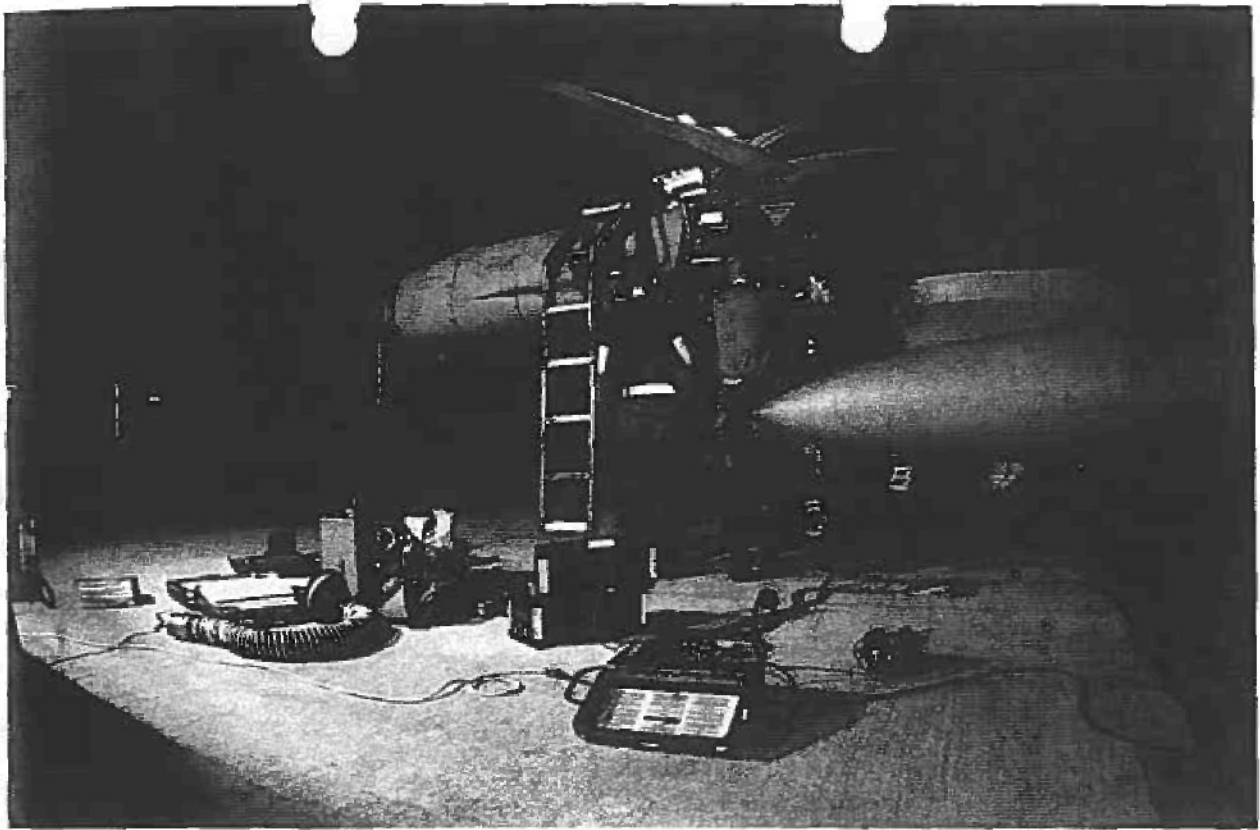


Photo by Eric Hahn, Code One magazine

Retired Maj. Gen. Larry K. Arnold was commander of 1st Air Force and the Continental United States NORAD Region on Sept. 11, 2001.

Air Force priorities. Only through strong leadership and determination by Gen. Howell M. Estes III, then commander in chief of NORAD, was this country able to sustain any modicum of air sovereignty and air defense. It is important to note that Maj. Gen. Philip G. Killey, the Air National Guard general officer in command of 1st Air Force and CONR during those years, fueled the flame that helped focus Gen. Estes' determination.

When I became the 1st Air Force vice commander in January 1997, the Department of Defense had just released its Quadrennial Defense Review. This document indicated that the Air Force would provide only four fighter alert sites for a "four-corners defense." It was a familiar basketball strategy that had no place in the air sovereignty



U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Greg L. Davis

Aircraft maintenance personnel from Shaw Air Force Base, S.C., work on an F-16 late into the night of Sept. 11, 2001. Military personnel from throughout the country were called into action that day as the 14 fighter aircraft on alert exceeded 400 fighter, tanker and Airborne Warning and Control System aircraft just hours after the attacks.

mission. The QDR also called for the reduction of several intermediate Air Force headquarters. Though none of the intermediate headquarters was specifically mentioned in the QDR, 1st Air Force was one of the headquarters on the chopping block. It was only through the actions of Gen. Estes and Maj. Gen. Killey that 1st Air Force continued to exist. Seven fighter alert sites were salvaged — down from 12 in 1993 and 19 in 1991. When Gen. Richard B. Myers became commander of NORAD in 1998, he told the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff that he could provide air sovereignty in name only. He didn't get any more forces.

This was the situation in which we found ourselves on Sept. 11: We had a minimum number of fighters on alert scattered about the country but a well-trained and dedicated command and control system. We took our job seriously, and in briefing

after briefing, reiterated that we believed the greatest threat to the United States was an attack by terrorists, rogues or rogue nations.

In the immediate aftermath of the Sept. 11 attack, we were able to provide command and control of air power over the entire continental United States because the mission had been spared. In 18 hours, we surged from 14 aircraft on alert at seven locations to more than 400 fighter, tanker and Airborne Warning and Control System aircraft on orbit and on alert at more than 60 locations. This was a remarkable job, performed by remarkable people at a remarkable time in our nation's history.

— **Retired Maj. Gen. Larry K. Arnold,**
1st Air Force commander,
December 1997 - July 2002

Introduction

On the morning of Sept. 11, 2001, 14 U.S. Air Force fighters stood alert at seven locations in the Continental United States North American Aerospace Defense Command Region. Aircrews surveyed the glorious fall weather from their alert facilities, updated local airfield conditions, reviewed their Air Tasking Orders, preflighted their aircraft missiles, and maybe enjoyed their first cup of coffee.

In the region's three air defense sectors, air battle managers and technicians sat in darkened rooms, peering into radar scopes aglow with the pulsing green dots of radar returns from aircraft entering the continental United States Air Defense Identification Zone. Region Air Operations Center personnel surveyed sector and NORAD activities and monitored the status of regional radars and communications.

It was a typical morning all-around for a small, tight-knit group of people in a largely unknown and little-acknowledged air sovereignty community.

As this team quietly labored to protect the country from external airborne threats, many Americans cast a concerned but mostly disengaged eye on the Middle East and its spiraling cycle of *Intifada* violence. More laid an interested gaze on the sports page and the upcoming college football season. The country was at peace.

At 8:46 a.m. Eastern Standard Time, American Airlines Flight 11 was deliberately flown into the north tower of New York's famous World Trade Center, transforming it into a smoking black pyre. The gruesome scene was transmitted live by CNN reporting to a shocked America that "a light aircraft has hit the World Trade Center!" Americans gathered somberly in front of their televisions, watching in morbid curiosity as the tower burned in yet another version of "reality TV." At 9:03 a.m., United Airlines Flight 175 speared through the



Two F-16A air defense fighters of the 178th Fighter Squadron, North Dakota Air National Guard, lead an F-15C assigned to the 27th Fighter Squadron, Langley Air Force Base, Va., in formation during a Combat Air Patrol mission on Nov. 17, 2001.

U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Greg L. Davis

south tower, bursting into an incandescent ball of burning jet fuel. Curiosity turned to horror, fascination to fear. Many Americans who witnessed the second strike will always remember thinking, "This is no accident, America is under attack!" As the terror mounted in Washington, D.C., and Pennsylvania, air defenders all over the country swung into action. The country was at war.

Out of a great American tragedy, comes a great American story, the epilogue yet to be written. On Sept. 11, heroic efforts were the order of the day both on the ground and in the air. Military commanders from the Air Force's "Total Force" and from all services ran to the sound of the guns — they were knocking down the Continental United States NORAD Region and air defense sector doors, willing to lend a hand. They came in the midst of war's fog and friction, amid the clamor and chaos of air attacks and reports of 21 additional hijackings that day. Against the backdrop of the second tower exploding again and again in replayed images on national television, they picked up telephones, wanting to know where to send their fighters. How many? How far? How soon?

At this writing, the United States continues to fight the war on terror around the world. The military heroes of Sept. 11 continue to serve in their vein of volunteerism, working hand in hand with CONR and the three air defense sectors: flying Combat Air Patrols, standing alert and doing whatever necessary to protect our vital interests. More than ever, the U.S. Air Force, Air National Guard, Air Force Reserve, U.S. Navy, U.S. Army, U.S. Customs, FBI, Federal Aviation Administration, and many more patriots are making America's skies safe and secure.

Since Sept. 11, the air sovereignty mission has grown tenfold and has evolved into a mission of full air defense. For months after the attacks, armed

fighters, aerial tankers and airborne early warning aircraft flew Combat Air Patrols over American cities and national events — 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Aircraft radar detection and command and control capabilities have been radically improved throughout the country through the Herculean labors of the FAA, civilian contractors, airmen, and soldiers.

The mission has come full circle. Before the Sept. 11 tragedy, air sovereignty was viewed by some as a "sunset mission" — an unnecessary relic of the Cold War. It was hard to envision a nightmare where commercial airliners would be used as fuel-air bombs flown by homicidal pilots. Never before were airline hijackings within the United States considered a military responsibility; they were considered a criminal act and a law enforcement issue. Many things changed that day.

One thing that did not change was the dedication of the men and women assigned and attached to 1st Air Force and CONR. Their loyalty to the mission and sense of responsibility to the country never wavered, even when the mission was ignored, under-resourced and unpopular. As the air defense mission vaulted to the forefront of Department of Defense operations, a spirit of cooperation arose among military and federal agencies to keep our country's skies free.

Our lives and our world changed Sept. 11.

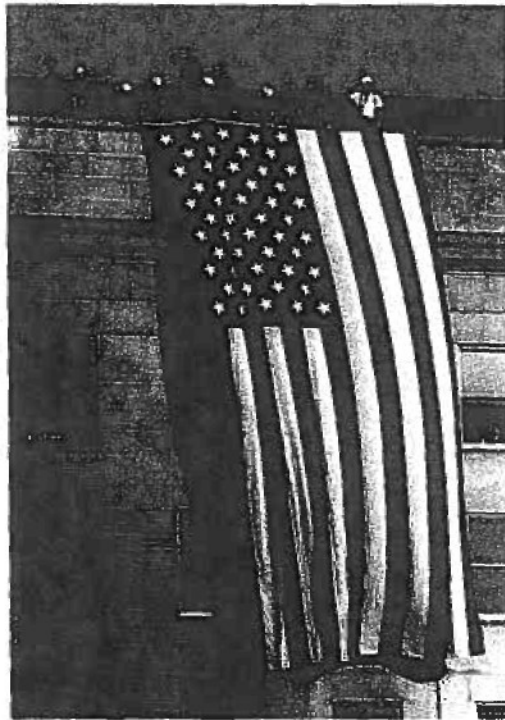
Air sovereignty changed Sept. 11.

This book will chronicle that story.

— Retired Col.
William A. Scott,
1st Air Force
director of plans,
programs and
requirements



*This book is dedicated to the
thousands of innocent people
who lost their lives
Sept. 11, 2001.
We will never forget you
or your loved ones you
left behind.*

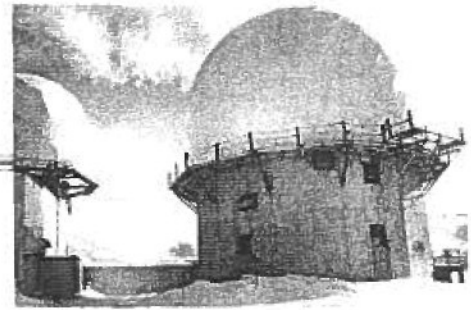


White House photo by Paul Morse

*This book is for the
men and women
fighting the war on terror
in Operation Noble Eagle.*

Contents

CHAPTER 1: "THE COLD WARRIORS: Ready, alert and willing." America's air defense mission changes with Soviet tide. **2.**



CHAPTER 2: "NEW ERA, NEW STRUGGLES: Surviving the post-Cold War." Air National Guard protects America's air borders from the frightening, wily unknown. **22.**



CHAPTER 3: "9.11.01. Air war over America begins." DAY OF TERROR: Nation's air controllers, military fliers and crews fight for America's skies. **44.**



CHAPTER 4: "THE NOBLE EAGLE FLIES: Threat suddenly changes." Air defense new priority as terrorists turn airliners into weapons of war. **92.**

CHAPTER 5: "AMERICAN STORIES: Sept. 11 brings new resolve." Air defenders steadfast amid terror and tragedy. **122.**



CHAPTER 6: "HOME THEATER: NORTHCOM guards air, land and sea." 1st Air Force modernizing to defend skies of a new era. **144.**



ABOUT THE COVER: A Vermont Air National Guard F-16 assigned to the 158th Fighter Wing patrols the skies over New York City on Sept. 12, 2001. The photo was taken by Air Force Lt. Col. Terry Moultrup.



OPPOSITE PAGE: Firefighters unfurl the American flag at the Pentagon on Sept. 12, 2001.

CHAPTER 1

THE COLD WARRIORS:

Ready, alert and willing

America's air defense mission changes with Soviet tide

The young airman at the Phoenix Air Defense Sector gazed at the radar screen in awe — there was nothing there. It was a surreal experience, “strange, really, watching all the planes disappearing from the scope,” Bill Johnson remembers. “It was weird to come to work before midnight and just watch the scope gradually go blank. I was stationed at Luke Air Force Base, (Ariz.), at the time, looking all the way from California to New Mexico, and there wasn’t anything in the sky.”

It was the ultimate Cold War challenge: For 12 hours on Oct. 14, 1961, virtually all North American civilian aviation was halted so the U.S. Air Force could determine its air defense readiness. Air Defense Command’s 41 interceptor squadrons, 25 Air National Guard squadrons and support aircraft from throughout the military — even the Royal Canadian Air Force — fought the simulated air war.

More than 1,000

fighter-interceptors were on full alert when the massive exercise began, and 400 Strategic Air Command bombers and tankers were deployed within 15 minutes to test the air defense ground environment.¹

The North American Air Defense Command exercise—Sky Shield II—was an impressive display of America’s air defense capabilities and the greatest war game of Johnson’s 30-year career. “During peacetime air defense is very difficult, because you’ve got a lot of friendly people flying around,” the retired Air Force chief master sergeant says. “During a ‘war’ it’s easy, because you know who the good guys are. Sky Shield II was a great exercise, because we really got to fight.”

But what really struck Johnson back then was the talk of Russian trawlers picked up by radar off the East and West coasts of the United States. “They weren’t fishing boats, really, but they were out there,” he recalls.

Spies or fishermen —





Photos courtesy of Marty Isham

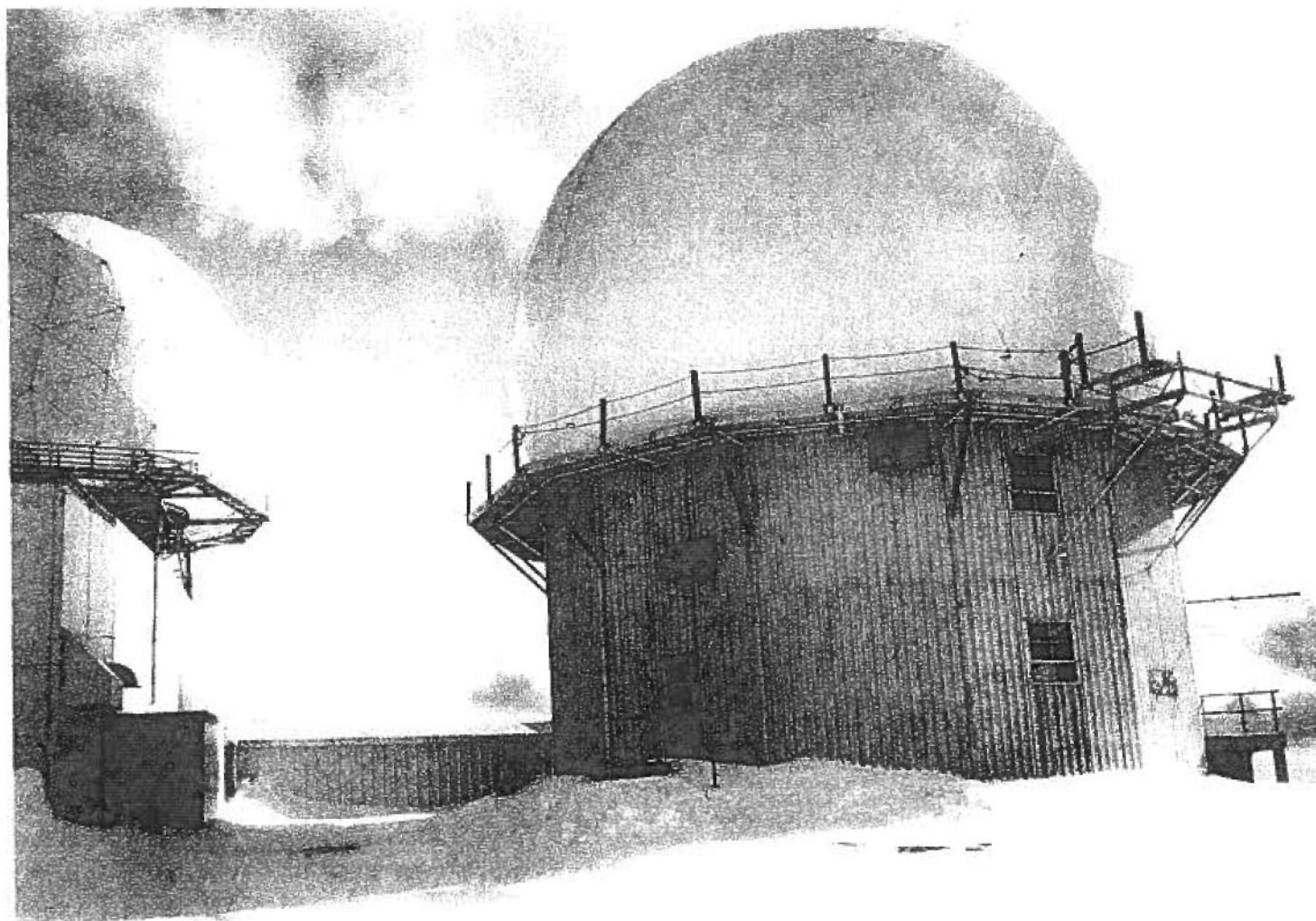
who's to say? But that autumn of 1961, there was the pervading sense that *the Reds were out there*. It was the Cold War, after all, and the Soviet threat scared the hell out of men, women and children from Topeka to Tupelo. America was facing its fears head-on, using the most sophisticated air defense system ever built to thwart a Soviet bomber attack. Sky Shield II proved the system fairly effective, especially at medium and high altitudes. But it also confirmed a weakness: the hostile, low-altitude bomber plane using electronic countermeasures to jam America's radars.²

Above: A flight crew from the 83rd Fighter Interceptor Squadron, Hamilton Air Force Base, Calif., scrambles to its F-101B "Voodoo" in 1961.

Left: A flight crew from the 27th Fighter Interceptor Squadron, March Air Force Base, Calif., scrambles to its F-86A "Sabrejets" in the spring of 1950.

"The threat was the bird with the red star."

— retired Air Force Col. Connie Mac Hostetler,
Cold War F-101 radar intercept officer



U.S. Air Force photo

Perched at the top of a 5,200-foot ridge southeast of Spokane in eastern Washington, Mica Peak Air Force Station definitely had four seasons, including rough winters which made crew changes difficult at times. The 823rd Radar Squadron operated the facility from 1955 through 1975. The facility continues to serve in the air defense role as a Joint Surveillance System site.

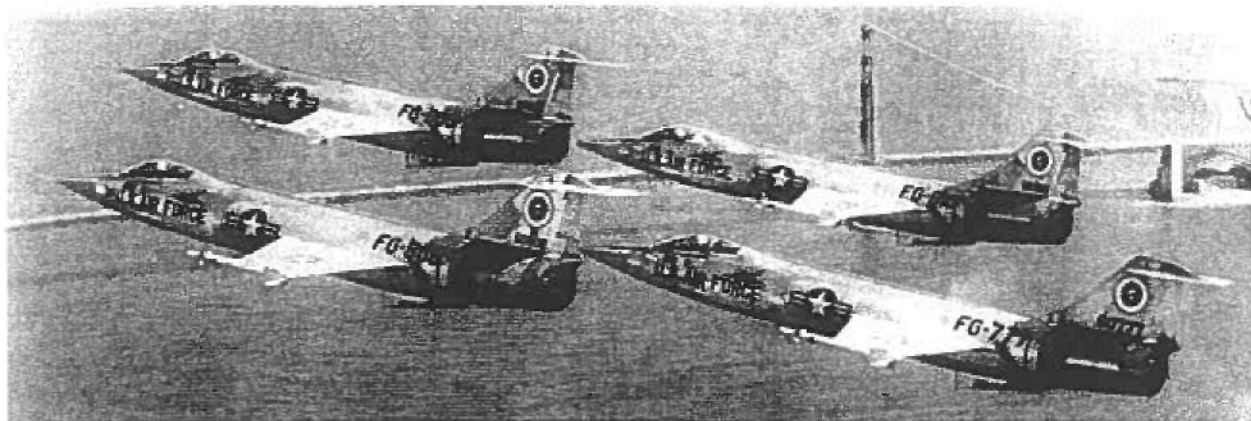


Photo from Marty Isham collection via Doug Barbier

Some F-104A “Starfighter” pilots get a bird’s-eye view of San Francisco’s Golden Gate Bridge. The airplanes were assigned to the 83rd Fighter Interceptor Squadron, Hamilton Air Force Base, Calif., long since closed.

“The threat was the bird with the red star,” says retired Air Force Col. Connie Mac Hostetler, an F-101 radar intercept officer at Dover Air Force Base, Del., in the early 1960s. “I was in the 98th Fighter Interceptor Squadron and there were squadrons like ours all over the country and we all did the same thing. We had aircraft on alert, slept in alert hangars — right at the end of the runway in most cases — and if an ‘unknown’ popped up in the airspace, we were scrambled. The controller would send us out to the unknown, we’d fly up alongside it, take a look and report back what we saw.

“We could be awakened in the middle of the night, 1 in the morning, it didn’t make any difference. And we had to be airborne in five minutes.”

Soviet bombers were indeed a high priority for the binational NORAD and its forces. As the fighting command, NORAD had many support organizations at its disposal: Canadian Air Command, the U.S. Air Force’s ADC, Army Air Defense Command, and Naval Forces Continental Air Defense Command/NORAD. At the time of Sky Shield II, a quarter of a million Canadians and Americans were operating a multilayered and interlocking system of sites, control centers, manned interceptors, and surface-to-air missiles to defend against a potential bomber attack.³

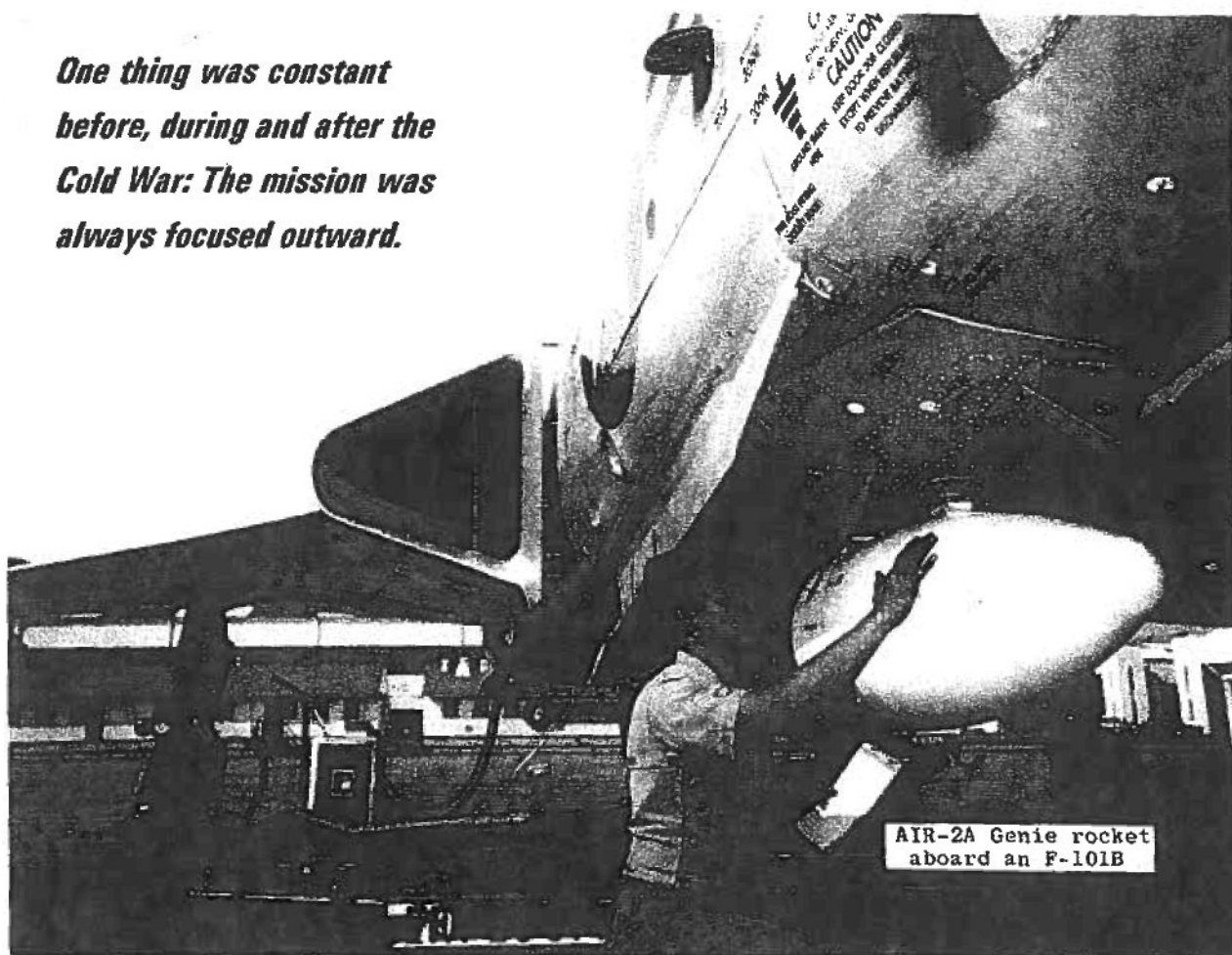
New enemy, new war

Forty years later, and for the second time in American history, civilian aviation was halted again. But this war was real. Sept. 11, 2001, was the deadliest terrorist attack the country had ever seen. Hijackers transformed airliners into weapons of war that day, striking America’s most revered symbols and murdering thousands of people in the grim process. A nation’s heart was broken.

The military action was swift: Air National Guard fighters were immediately scrambled in a desperate attempt to take back America’s skies. Amid the chaos, NORAD Commander Gen. Ralph E. Eberhart ordered a modified version of the Cold War plan SCATANA — Security Control of Air Traffic and Air Navigation Aids — to help the Federal Aviation Administration in its efforts to clear the skies. It was the first time it had happened since Sky Shield II.

A new enemy had emerged and spiraled out of control. Several years earlier America’s air defense mission had become one of “air sovereignty” — the protection of America’s air borders from terrorists, drug runners, rogue nations, and unknown threats. The Cold War was over and America’s perception

*One thing was constant
before, during and after the
Cold War: The mission was
always focused outward.*



AIR-2A Genie rocket
aboard an F-101B

Photo courtesy of NORAD/USSPACECOM History Office

An airman inspects an AIR-2A “Genie” rocket on an F-101B “Voodoo.” When the Voodoo entered service in 1957, it was the heaviest single-seat fighter the Air Force had seen.

of the Soviet bomber threat had changed dramatically.

Seven Air National Guard squadrons were dedicated to the NORAD (since renamed North American Aerospace Defense Command) air sovereignty mission before that tragic September morning; 14 fighter jets were on 24-hour alert, ready to fly when called upon. Airmen at the nation’s three air defense sectors monitored the skies around the clock for any unknowns trying to enter sovereign American airspace.

The mission had changed: The last of the regular Air Force’s fighter-interceptor squadrons — the 48th at Langley Air Force Base, Va., — had closed

in 1991, ADC was long gone, Cold War radar sites had for years been abandoned. A few thousand people — a far cry from air defense forces of the 1950s and 1960s — were performing NORAD’s continental air sovereignty mission as members of 1st Air Force and the Continental United States NORAD Region.

“Our emphasis on the air defense role started fading with the meltdown of the Soviet Union,” says retired Maj. Gen. Larry K. Arnold, 1st Air Force and CONR commander from December 1997 through July 2002. “However, we still maintained an air defense capability.”⁴

One thing was constant before, during and after

the Cold War: The mission was always focused outward. "We always viewed an attack from within our borders as a law enforcement issue, not as an air defense issue," Arnold explains. "The reality is that any attack within the United States by any type of weapon has become an air defense issue."⁵

Cold War frenzy

In the four decades between Sky Shield II and SCATANA, America's air defense operations had seen many changes and challenges.

The Cold War frenzy began the summer of 1949 when America learned the Soviets had detonated an atomic bomb. The North Korean invasion of South Korea on June 25, 1950, only made matters worse. The Air Force, fearful of an all-out war with the Soviets, put its air defense forces on special alert. Major weaknesses were discovered, leading to the development of a new air defense command and control structure and Air Defense Identification Zones along the nation's frontiers.⁶

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers was dispatched, and began building radar sites for America's new permanent air defense network.⁷ By 1951, one of the first command and control stations was under construction at McChord Air Force Base, Wash. America's air defense mission was taking shape and the country was divided into 11 continental United States air defense regions.⁸

Searching for enemy planes wasn't left to the military alone — vigilance was the operative word for soldier and citizen alike. In 1952, the Air Force was actively recruiting for the Ground Observer Corps, civilian volunteers who would eye the skies for bombers penetrating American airspace.

In an era of McCarthyism and backyard bomb shelters, radio spots like this inspired 305,000 people to join: *"It may not be a very cheerful thought, but the Reds right now have about a thousand bombers that are quite capable of destroying at least 89 American cities in one*

*raid. ... Won't you help protect your country, your town, your children? Call your local Civil Defense Office and join the Ground Observer Corps today."*⁹

Air defense enthusiast Gene McManus was a member of the GOC unit "Hotel Kilo 25 Black" in the mid-1950s in Baltimore, Ohio.

"Back in those days, most of my friends and I were interested in the military and really wanted to be a part of it," McManus remembers. "I was in high school at the time ... we operated out of a small building with no facilities whatsoever, but it had windows you could take out and look through. If we heard an airplane, we'd rush out the door, find it in the air with our binoculars and try to identify it as best we could. We'd 'guesstimate' its altitude and heading and what kind of aircraft it was, and then we'd pick up the phone and call the operator at the filter center for an 'aircraft flash.' I think the whole thing was manned by high school kids. But we filled in the gaps until what became ADC radar sites were implemented."

The GOC performed its patriotic duty until its deactivation in early 1959 when short-range radars were deployed to detect low-flying airplanes.



As Hotel Kilo 25 Black searched for enemy bombers, an even scarier threat was emerging: the Soviet Intercontinental Ballistic Missile, or ICBM. America became painfully aware of this new danger on Oct. 4, 1957, when the Soviet Union launched Sputnik — man's first artificial satellite — into space. What frightened the most astute observer was how Sputnik was launched: by a ballistic missile that could carry a nuclear warhead.¹⁰ With Sputnik came the realization that the enemy could possibly circumvent continental air defenses.¹¹

The Soviet ICBM, heavy on the minds of the Cold Warriors, would ultimately change the nature of the mission. Not everyone agreed how the

Soviets would strike, but the Air Force believed an ICBM attack would be followed by waves of strategic bombers.¹² The bomber threat alone was very real, but many Congressmen thought money spent on bomber defense was wasted because of the overwhelming ICBM capability. Budget cuts to radar sites and the new Semiautomatic Ground Environment—SAGE—command and control program followed.¹³

Nevertheless, America's air defenses were mighty. In the late 1950s and early 1960s, nearly 100,000 people were assigned to ADC, the command that provided continental air defense resources for NORAD.¹⁴ And several Air National Guard interceptor squadrons were participating successfully in the runway alert program.¹⁵ By the end of 1961, NORAD controlled more than 100 fighter-interceptor squadrons, including some from the Canadian Forces; Boeing-Michigan Aeronautical Research Center, or "BOMARC," unmanned interceptor missiles; and "Nike" surface-to-air missiles.¹⁶

The SAGE network was completed that year and tied into 78 radar sites on the DEW (Distant Early Warning) Line, which stretched from Cape Lisburne, Alaska, to Cape Dyer, Canada.¹⁷ The Mid-Canada Line, 1,000 miles south of the DEW Line, and the Pinetree Line on the American-Canadian border, bolstered the radar picture, potentially giving the countries a two- to three-hour warning of a bomber attack.¹⁸ If the enemy was coming from either the Pacific or Atlantic, the Texas Tower radar platforms on the East Coast, Navy picket ships and dirigibles, and EC-121 early warning aircraft would act as offshore barriers.¹⁹

Two F-4 "Phantoms" intercept and escort a Soviet "Bear" bomber, the airplane that tested America's air defense force throughout the Cold War. The first of the Air Force's F-4s were delivered to Air Defense Command on May 27, 1963.



Wise SAGE system

Donald Bunce was a weapons controller at the Grand Forks Air Defense Sector, N.D., those booming years. His job entailed the four basic air defense functions: detect, identify, intercept, and destroy, "though we never really got to the last function," the retired Air Force colonel remembers. "We would monitor inbound aircraft from the north, northwest and northeast into our sector and before they got far, we'd identify them as friendly or unknown. If they were unknown, we'd scramble Grand Forks F-101s or F-89s from Fargo, (N.D.), to intercept. We did this by monitoring a radar scope, but SAGE was very new technology then. It was the first automated air defense system ... we had a lot of kinks to work out."

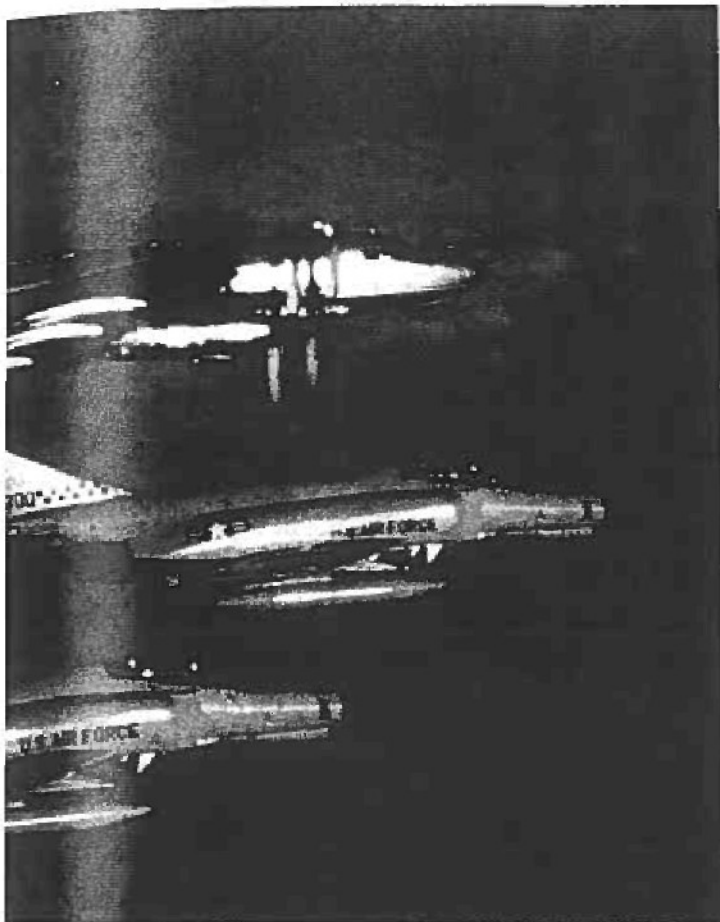


Photo courtesy of NORAD/USSPACECOM History Office



Johnson, too, remembers those early days. A few years before participating in Sky Shield II, his first Air Force assignment was to the SAGE test team in Massachusetts. It was 1955, and he and his fellow airmen were helping develop the AN/FSQ-7, a computer specifically designed for the air defense battle.

"The FSQ-7 actually became the first SAGE," Johnson says. "It did a great job, although it probably didn't have one 'meg' of RAM. But with SAGE you didn't have guys plotting airplanes on Plexiglas anymore. With that manual air defense system, you could only see about 200 miles from where you were located."

In the early 1950s, when airmen charted aircraft positions with a grease pencil, Ground Control

By the end of 1961, NORAD controlled more than 100 fighter-interceptor squadrons, including some from the Canadian Forces.

Intercept sites consisted of a search radar, height-finder radar and devices for communicating with interceptor pilots.²⁰ The high-tech SAGE would use radar and computers to paint a clear picture of the speed, location and direction of all planes in radar range.²¹

"In retrospect ... it was really a phenomenal experience helping put this thing together," Johnson says. "Most of us GIs were just GIs, we had an assignment and didn't see ourselves in the same vein as astronauts or anything. But now I realize we were involved in something that had a big impact on the country."

By 1962, after years of research and development, SAGE was operational at eight regional combat centers and 22 direction centers around the country.²² Each SAGE combat center had many radar sites sending data to its respective SAGE direction center. The SAGE direction center sent the data to its respective air division. The Phoenix Air Defense Sector, for instance, sent its radar data to the 28th Air Division commander at Hamilton Air Force Base, Calif.

As modern and thorough as it was, the Air Force was well aware that SAGE blockhouses were vulnerable to Soviet ICBM attack. In the summer of 1961, even before SAGE was fully operational, NORAD planned for the Backup Interceptor Control system. Studies for an Airborne Warning and Control System were already underway.²³ The command's own control center at Ent Air Force Base, Colo., wouldn't stand up to Soviet attack any better than the SAGE blockhouse. Construction of the "rock" — 170,000 square feet of man-made caverns within Colorado's Cheyenne Mountain — began in 1961 and was completed by 1966.²⁴

Ready to scramble

As the SAGE era progressed through the 1960s, hundreds of fighter pilots continued to guard America's skies from their alert shacks, scrambling to planes like Voodoos and Delta Darts at the first shrill tone of the alarm. Air Force bases dotted the landscape like diners on Route 66. Perrin Air Force Base, Texas; K.I. Sawyer Air Force Base, Mich.; Richards-Gebaur Air Force Base, Mo.; and Malmstrom Air Force Base, Mont.; were just a few ADC installations. Alert facilities were also found at many civil airports, from Atlantic City, N.J., to Walla Walla, Wash.

"There were so many bases in the interior of the country then," says retired Col. John D. Navin, former Vermont Air National Guard fighter-interceptor pilot. "And we had a number of fighter units across the northern tier, because it was popularly believed that a strike from the Soviet Union would come down over Canada. Early on, that's exactly what we were defending against—an attack over the poles."

When that unknown appeared and the alarm sounded, NORAD's fighter-interceptor pilots were ready, whether they encountered a lost civilian prop plane or a Soviet bomber off the coast of New England.

"Deterrence was the name of the game," says former fighter-interceptor pilot and retired Air Force Col. Harry Birkner. "We could not give someone the impression they could come over here and bomb us. That's what we wanted to portray, and that is what we did portray."

The training that pilots like Navin and Birkner received was intense and thorough. All-weather and instrument knowledge was crucial for air defense pilots who often flew their missions at night, when it would be easier for an unknown to enter American airspace.

That mission, in units like the 98th Fighter Interceptor Squadron, was written concisely to the

point: *"To provide active Air Defense for the area assigned by achieving and maintaining a high level of Operational Readiness which will enable the unit to detect, intercept, identify, and/or destroy any unknown or unfriendly forces, under all conditions of weather, daylight or darkness."* 25



Retired Air Force Col. Bill Stanfill remembers learning that very mission as a young lieutenant fresh out of flight school in 1966. "I entered Air Defense Command at Perrin Air Force Base, Sherman, Texas," he says. "It was the training base for ADC, and all ADC interceptor pilots went there first. We had six weeks of instrument training in the backseat of a T-33 under the hood. That made us all pretty darn good all-weather pilots."

"There were three interceptors then: the F-101, 102 and 106. Everyone trained on the F-102, then went on to their assignments from there."

Beyond the basics, the Air Force Interceptor Weapons School was the pinnacle of learning air defense for ground controller and flier alike. "I went twice to Interceptor Weapons School, once as a controller and once as a pilot," Birkner says. "It was one of the best schools for aviators I've ever been through. And for air defense, there was no better school and group of instructors anywhere. Controllers and pilots actually got to debrief the mission together, unlike in the real world where controllers are hundreds of miles away."

A former IWS commander, retired Air Force Col. Ron Stull, says the school "was the heart and soul of teaching air defense." Fourteen-hour training days were not uncommon, he says.

According to *SabreJet Classics* magazine, IWS instructors "considered themselves to be the 'elite' of the all-weather interceptor business, as they were always ready to try something new and different. The instructors developed tactics to counter the electronic countermeasures

NORAD'S FIGHTER FORCE

Through the years, NORAD has controlled the following approximate numbers of interceptor aircraft dedicated to its aerospace control mission, like this F-104A assigned to the 83rd Fighter Interceptor Squadron, Hamilton Air Force Base, Calif.

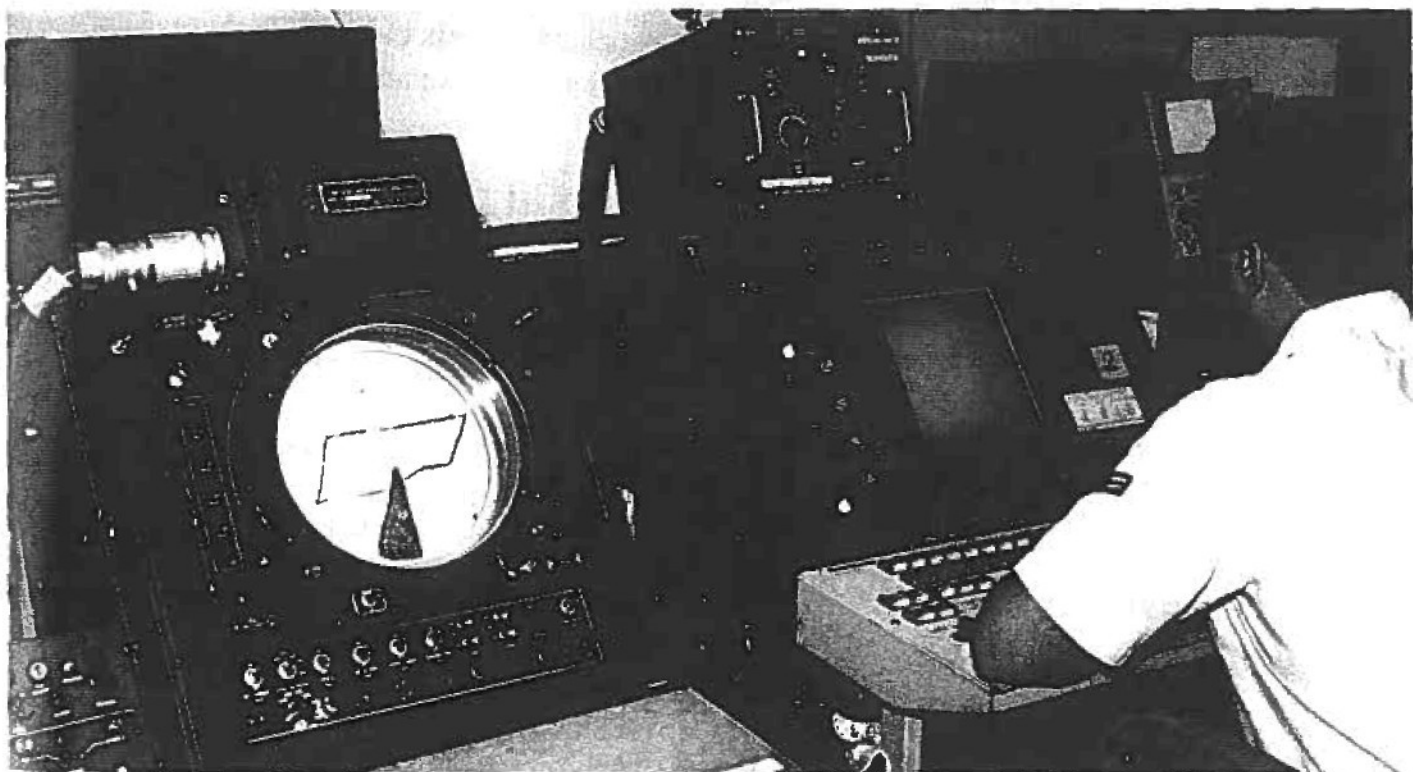
1958	5,800 *
1959	750
1976	325
1990	200
1997	175
2001	20 **



U.S. Air Force photo

**Includes approximately 3,600 reserve aircraft (2,200 active U.S. and Canadian aircraft); **denotes the normal complement of alert fighters arrayed at 10 bases in the U.S. and Canada*

SOURCE: NORAD PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE



U.S. Air Force photo

In early 1970, 13 radar sites upgraded to Backup Interceptor Control capability under the BUIC III program, enabling them to function as mini Semiautomatic Ground Environment direction centers in the event of an attack on the main SAGE command and control facilities. The 637th Air Defense Group operated this BUIC III at Othello Air Force Station, Wash.

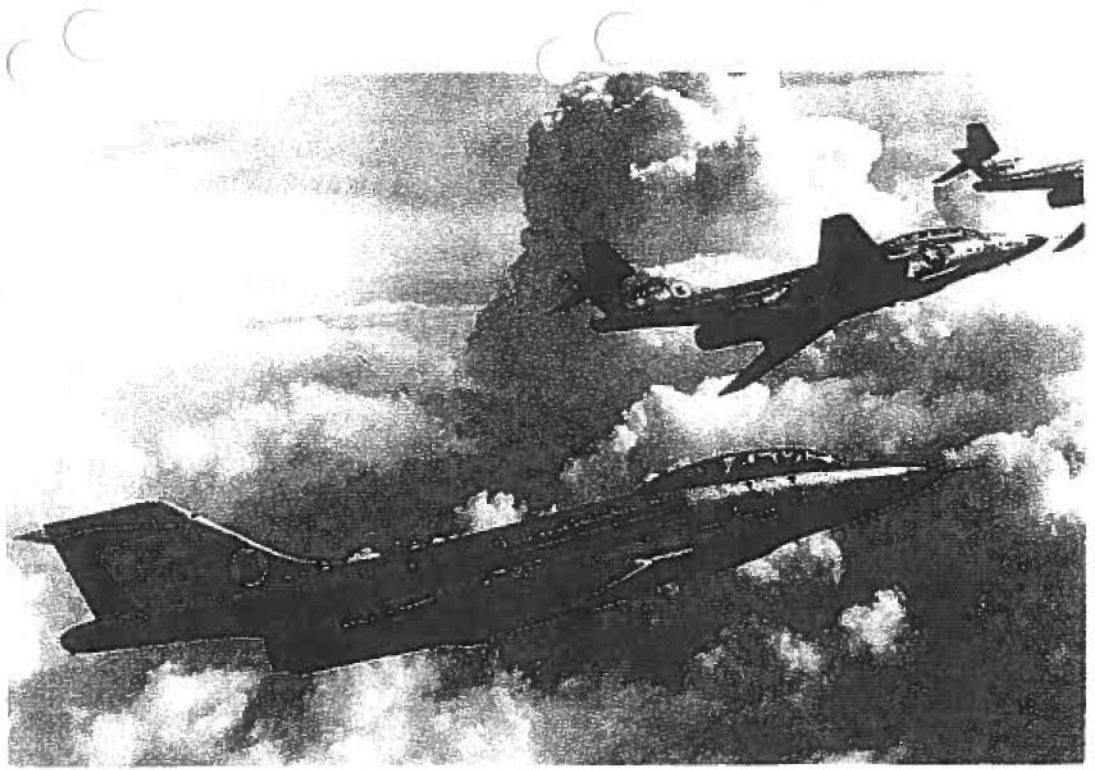


Photo from Marty Isham collection via Doug Barbie

A formation of F-101 "Voodoos" assigned to the 15th Fighter Interceptor Squadron, Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Ariz., flies through the clouds in this circa 1960 photo. Because of its weapons mix, speed and range, the Voodoo had no equal as an air defense interceptor.

anticipated by the Soviet bomber forces, perfected night firing on multiple target situations and regularly flew (illegally) in weather without an available alternate whenever their area of operations was socked in. The IWS instructors literally pushed the envelope of all-weather tactics to the limit (and beyond) of safety." ²⁶

"The Russians knew they could destroy us, but we also could destroy them."

**— Dr. Rick Sturdevant,
deputy director,**

Air Force Space Command History Office

Dying mission

Between the nation's highly trained air defense pilots and controllers — all using state-of-the-art equipment — America's ability to fend off an air attack remained strong. Air defense, however, was not the Air Force's top priority, and never was. It went back to the days of the Army Air Forces, when in the mid-1940s, air power projection advocates such as generals Carl A. Spaatz and Curtis LeMay saw delivery of the atomic bomb as the primary mission. ²⁷ The idea of offensive air power as the best method of defense dominated Air Force thinking for years to come; air defense planners began fighting the budget battle. ²⁸

Years later, the fight was still on. In February 1966, Defense Secretary Robert McNamara put it this way to the House Subcommittee on Department of Defense Appropriations: "The elaborate defenses which we erected against the

Flight crews from the Texas Air National Guard 147th Fighter Interceptor Group sit alert in this circa 1960 photo. In August 1960 the unit began flying the F-102A fighter-interceptor to guard the Texas Gulf coast.



Photo courtesy of 147th Fighter Wing, Texas Air National Guard

Soviets' bomber threat during the 1960s no longer retain their original importance. Today, with no defense against the major threat, Soviet ICBMs, our anti-bomber defenses alone would contribute very little to our damage limiting objective ... for this reason we have been engaging in the past five years in a major restructuring of our defenses." ²⁹

McNamara was speaking at a tumultuous time for the United States military: the Vietnam War. A policy emerged during this era that had fateful consequences for air defense: "Mutual Assured Destruction," the idea that both superpowers would avoid war because a missile or bomber attack would lead to a devastating counterattack. ³⁰

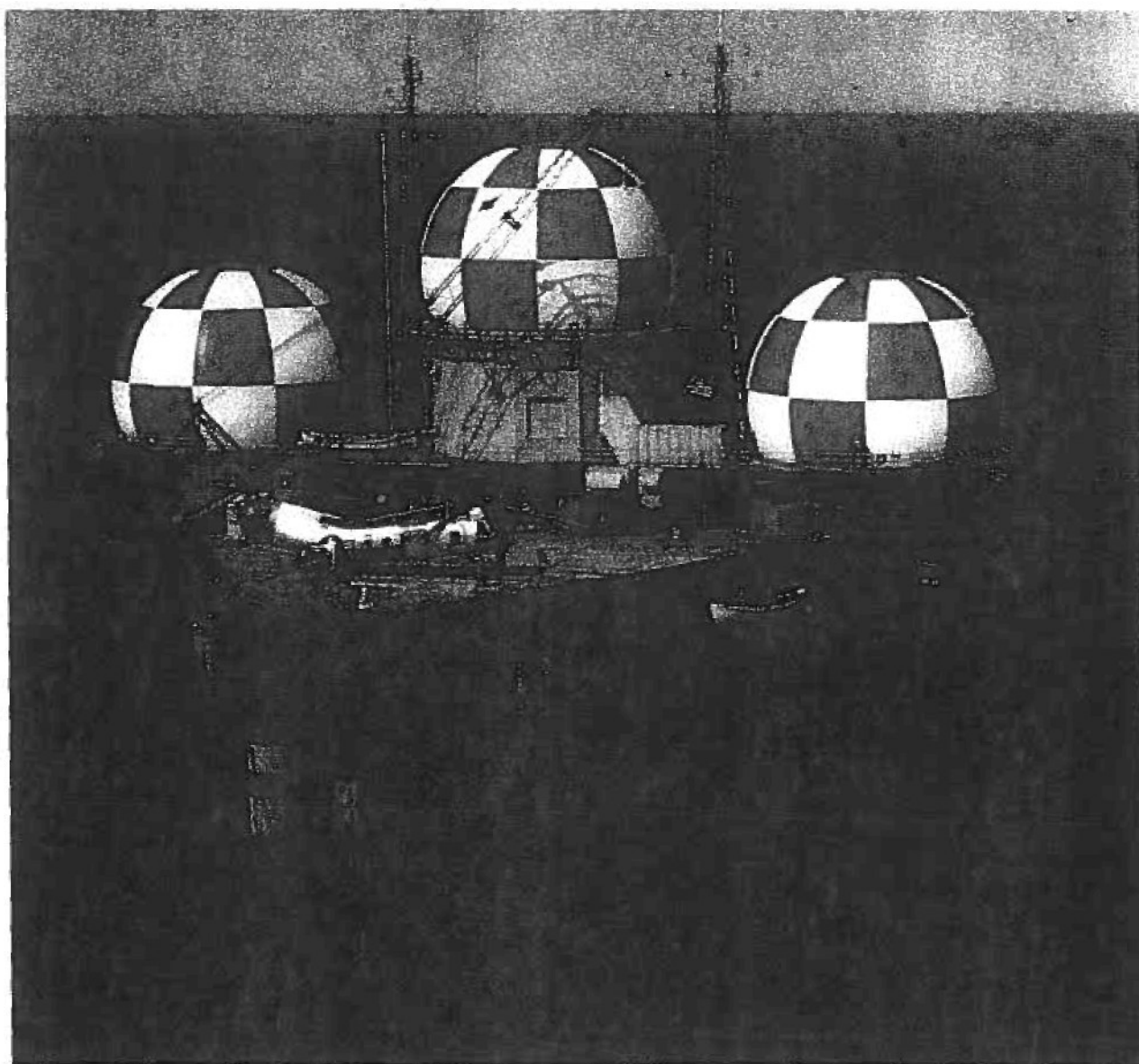
"The MAD concept was employed to avoid nuclear war," explains Dr. Rick Sturdevant, deputy director of the Air Force Space Command History

Office. "The Russians knew they could destroy us, but we also could destroy them. Because each superpower had the capability to obliterate the other many times over, it would have been irrational to engage in direct, full-scale war. Mutual Assured Destruction, which often went by the less alarming euphemism 'nuclear deterrence,' was based on the belief that the Soviet Union would not be likely to launch a first strike if its leaders believed the U.S. would deliver an equally devastating retaliatory blow."

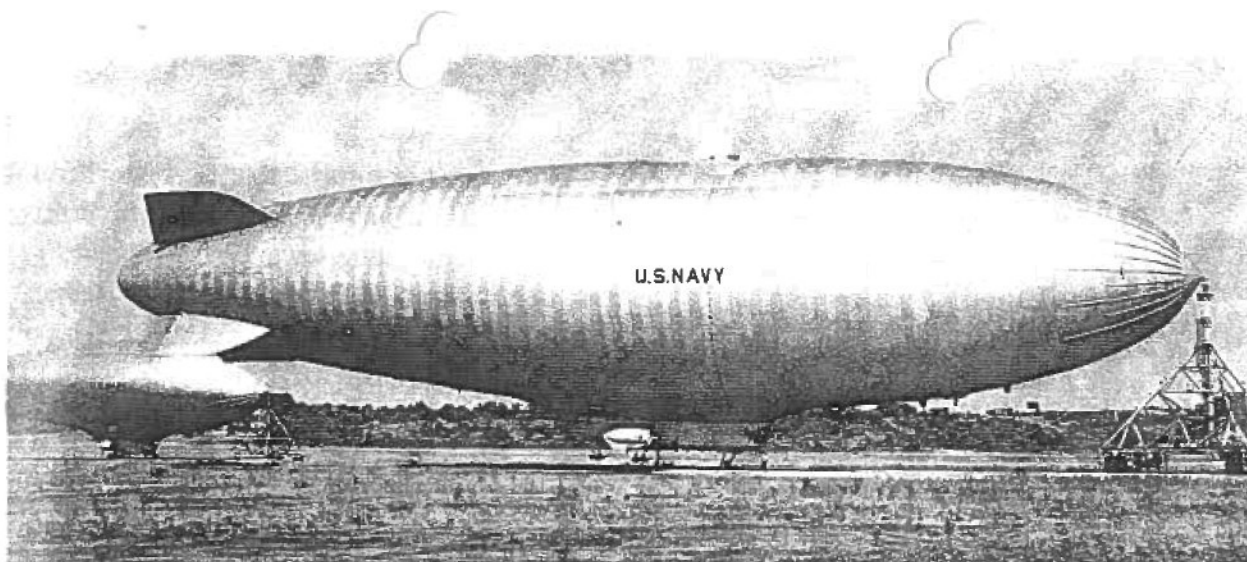
The era of MAD, the ICBM and Vietnam is characterized by many in the business as the end of the traditional air defense mission. "After Vietnam, air defense had really changed," Birkner says, who left the 48th Fighter Interceptor Squadron at Langley for Southeast Asia in 1970. "When there

Right: The U.S. Navy's Airship Airborne Early Warning Squadron One operated manned blimps that were an integral part of the contiguous NORAD radar barrier. The mission of the blimps was to provide warning of an air attack originating from over the North Atlantic in the late 1950s.

Below: The Texas Towers — three manned radar platforms operated in the late 1950s and early 1960s off the East Coast — served as a NORAD control and warning system of over-water attacks. Crews on the towers worked in a perilous environment; on Jan. 15, 1961, Texas Tower No. 4 was ripped apart during a fierce storm. None of the 28 people aboard — a caretaker crew there to renovate the structure that February — survived. The last of the towers, No. 3, was dismantled in March 1963.



Photos courtesy of Marty Isham



were multiple warheads on missiles, it made a little radar site sitting at the tip of Florida somewhere kind of insignificant, and we all accepted that as the mission drew down and went to the Guard.”

As all eyes turned toward Vietnam, 13 regular Air Force fighter-interceptor squadrons closed their hangar doors.³¹

By 1971 there were 12 regular Air Force fighter-interceptor squadrons left in operation; three in the Canadian Forces; and 15 in the Air National Guard.³² The Air Force ADC had been renamed Aerospace Defense Command, and the number of SAGE direction centers in the continental United States had been reduced to six.³³

Retired Air Force Col. Connie Mac Hostetler witnessed the ever-changing mission from an excellent vantage: ADC headquarters in late 1972, upon his return from two tours in Vietnam. Working in the Chidlaw Building, downtown Colorado Springs, Colo., he was responsible for writing operating plans for all air defense units.

“During the time I was in Vietnam, a lot of ADC went over to the Guard units,” he says. “Many of the fighter-interceptor assets went to the Guard and a lot of the fighter-interceptor squadrons folded. The perimeter air defense idea came in and a lot of the internal air defense squadrons closed down.

“The rationale was: ‘Who is going to attack us from the inside? Who is going to attack Kansas City; Lockbourne (Air Force Base), Ohio; or Big Spring, Texas?’ So as the restructuring of air defense began, everyone realized that the Guard

could do the same job as the active duty units and the active duty could be used for active duty needs.”

“I think some people wondered about the Guard,” he says. “But the Guard guys were sharp: their hangars were spotless, you could almost eat off the floor. Their aircraft were extremely good and their crews were good.”

Says retired Air Force Maj. Jim Stumpf, a former F-101 radar intercept officer, 13th Fighter Interceptor Squadron, Glasgow Air Force Base, Mont.: “I got back from a tour in Vietnam and saw all these Guard units with 101s. As I kept watching this happen, the Guard units continued to do good work and take more and more of the mission.”



As America’s air defense posture drew down, one thing remained unchanged: the Soviet threat. The U.S.S.R. continued to develop and refine its bomber defense, even after agreeing to an antiballistic missile treaty in 1972.³⁴ United States policy makers continued to believe a bomber defense was meaningless without a missile defense.

“It was clear to many people in the military, at least in their own minds, that the need for a robust air sovereignty fighter force structure was not necessary,” says Navin, the former Vermont Guardsman and longtime air defense proponent.

“We didn’t all necessarily share that opinion, but there were enough people in the Department of Defense — at the decision-making level — who

***The mission was fading away.
Vietnam was ending, and — in the
military ranks anyway — talk was of
MiG kills and combat, not
continental air defense.***

didn't see it as necessary."

Air defense did get a shot in the arm in October 1971, when a Cuban airplane landed in New Orleans after flying undetected through American airspace. A congressional inquiry into the incident revealed that the 1,500-mile southern border between California and Florida had become virtually defenseless. In May 1972, Secretary of Defense Melvin R. Laird established the Southern Air Defense Network, which consisted of a reopened radar network along the Gulf Coast and alert fighter-interceptors at four bases.³⁵

By sheer coincidence, the Louisiana Air National Guard 159th Tactical Fighter Group, based in New Orleans, had left the air defense business for a tactical role only months before the Cuban plane flew into the port city.

"It was a big surprise to everyone when that plane came in, but we were even more surprised that we were shutting down our alert mission," says Chief Master Sgt. Brian Krail, a Louisiana Air National Guardsman since 1966. "We were transitioning from F-102 fighter-interceptors to F-100s at the time of that incident. The F-100s we got were coming out of Vietnam, and they were outdated. The unit was changing. We had gone from a straight air defense mission throughout the 1960s to an air-to-ground tactical mission."

The Louisiana airmen had spent their Cold War days on alert with loaded F-102s ready to go at the end of the runway.

"We had, right on our ramp, two hangars with F-102s sitting there 24 hours a day, with pilots and crew, 365 days a year," Krail says. "We practiced mass loads and turnaround loads and all the procedures that go along with air defense. We would load everything we possibly could to get airborne to protect the country. Then we did turnaround loads when they'd come back from the mission, which meant we would refuel and reload the airplanes and get ready to launch for a second attack. All of a sudden we had F-100s on the ramp ... it was a shock to all of us."

**The sun sets on
Moriarty Air Force
Station, N.M., — long
since closed — which
was home to the 768th
Air Control and
Warning Squadron.**

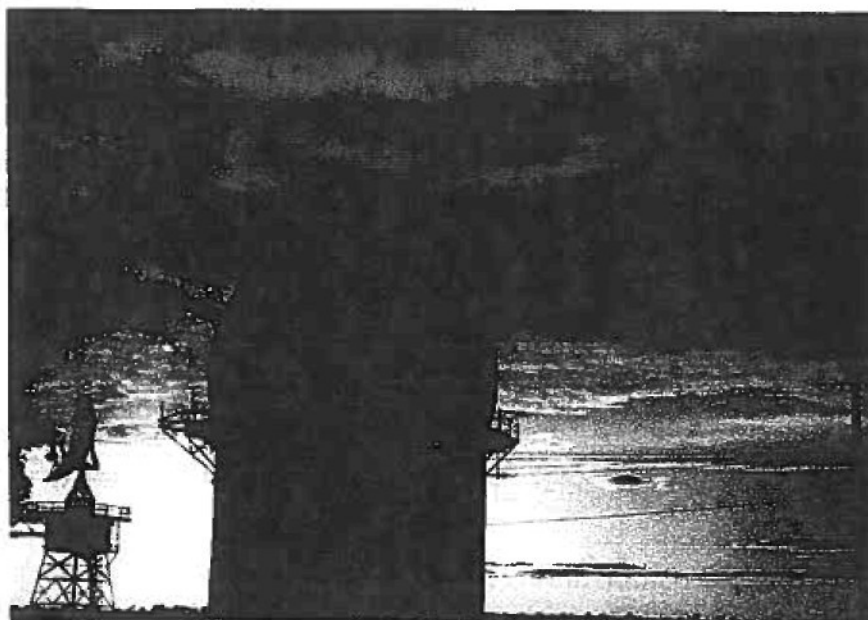
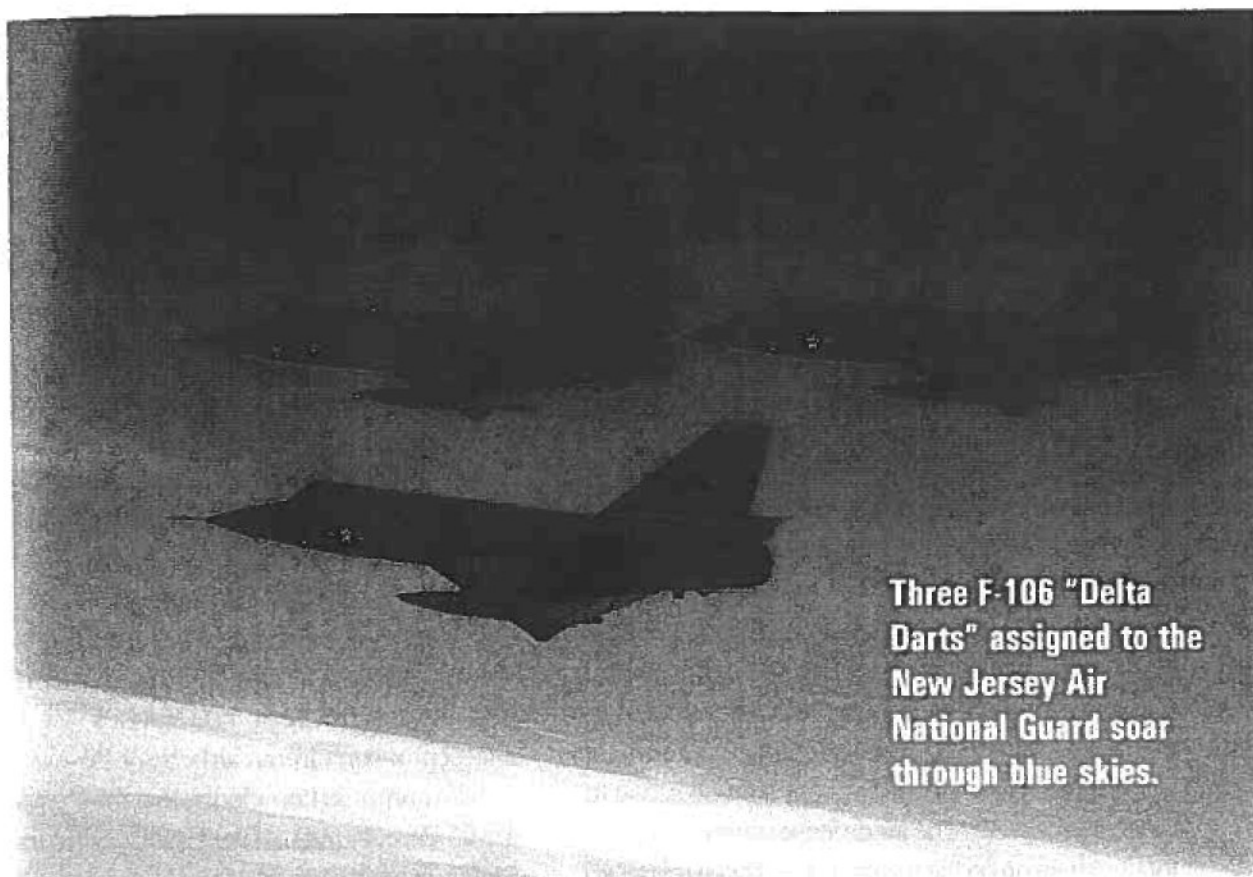
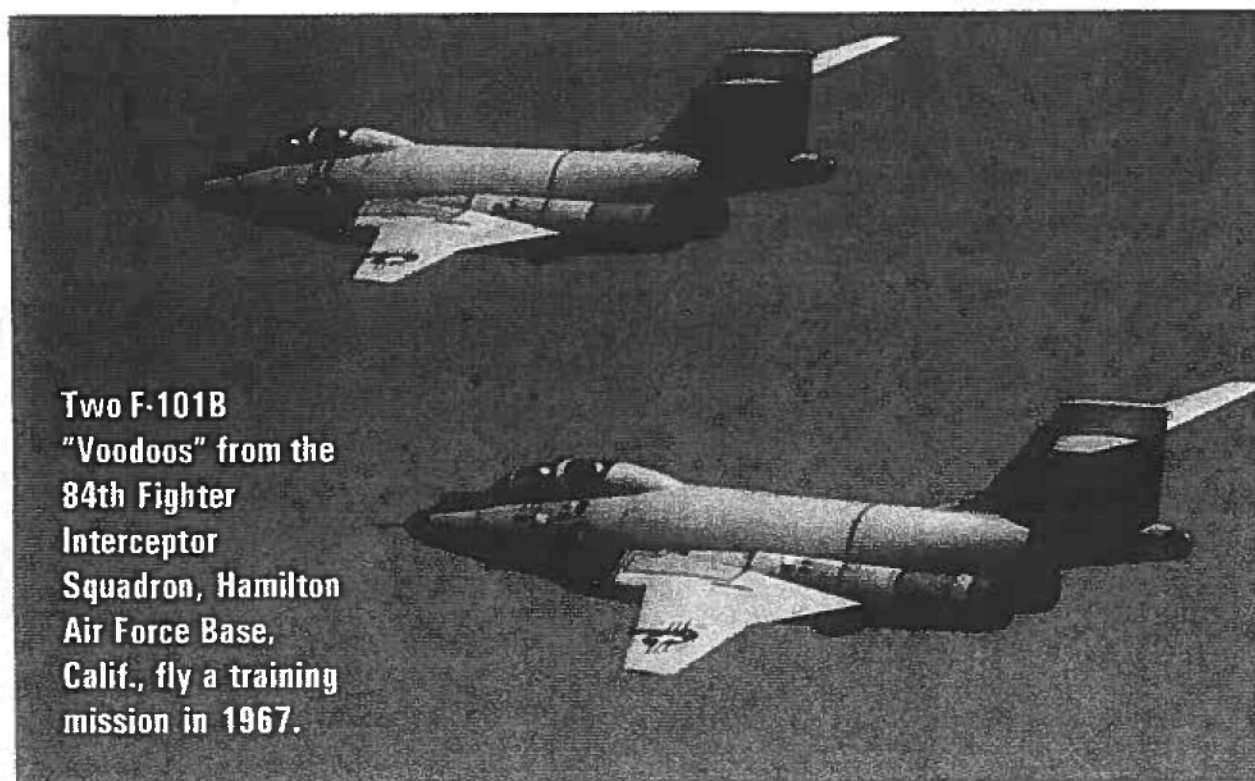


Photo courtesy of Radomes, Inc., The Air Defense Radar Veterans' Association



Three F-106 "Delta Darts" assigned to the New Jersey Air National Guard soar through blue skies.

Photo courtesy of 177th Fighter Wing, New Jersey Air National Guard



Two F-101B "Voodoos" from the 84th Fighter Interceptor Squadron, Hamilton Air Force Base, Calif., fly a training mission in 1967.

U.S. Air Force photo by Kenneth Hackman, courtesy of Marty Isham

Peacetime protection

The mission was fading away. Vietnam was ending, and — in the military ranks anyway — talk was of MiG kills and combat, not continental air defense.

“All the heroes were those who fought the war in Vietnam,” says retired Brig. Gen. John Broman, who spent most of his 34-year career in air defense at the 148th Fighter Wing, Minnesota Air National Guard.

“There is a tremendous society of brotherhood among fighter pilots, unequaled to anything I’ve ever seen. With air-to-air skills comes tremendous prestige. It’s very difficult to compete with that.

“There’s an old saying I find so true, that ‘generals like to train to fight the last war,’ so after Vietnam, we trained fighter-to-fighter,” the former fighter-interceptor pilot says. “Then the radar environment deteriorated so badly, it almost made no sense to have interceptors. The air defense community had totally given up on the mission, it had been relegated to the Guard.”

By 1976, 20 squadrons played an air defense role — 10 were from the Air National Guard. 36 Aerospace Defense Command — referred to as ADCOM by this time — was responsible for “peacetime protection of air sovereignty and early warning against bomber attack.”³⁷

Right: A Soviet “Bear” bomber as photographed from an F-4E.

Opposite page: Two F-15 “Eagles” from the 48th Fighter Interceptor Squadron, Langley Air Force Base, Va., intercept a Bear in this circa 1985 photo.

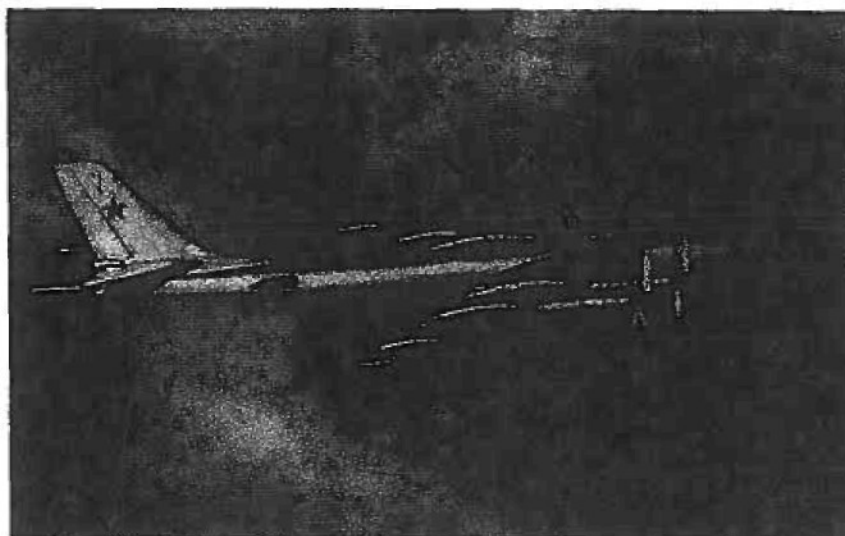


Photo by Marvin Cox, courtesy of Marty Isham

Only a few short years passed before ADCOM was disestablished — most of its assets absorbed into the Air Force Tactical Air Command. The new organization, Air Defense Tactical Air Command, or ADTAC, was established Oct. 1, 1979.³⁸ It was responsible for air defense under NORAD and reorganized as Headquarters 1st Air Force Dec. 6, 1985.³⁹

As America’s air defense operations were downsizing and reorganizing, Russian “Bear” bombers were frequent fliers in North American airspace, flying off the Canadian and Alaskan and East coasts of the United States. America’s air defenders — many flying F-15s and F-16s by then — were perfectly willing to “escort” them through. The Russians kept NORAD’s 18 fighter-interceptor squadrons fairly busy.⁴⁰

“It’s common knowledge that the Russians flew Tu-95 Bear aircraft off the East Coast of the United States on a fairly regular basis,” says Lt. Col. Mark Stuart, a Soviet strategic systems analyst for 1st Air Force in the mid- to late-1980s. “It was a very busy time for air defense. We took the threat of aircraft penetrating United States airspace very seriously, because the Tu-95 is capable of carrying nuclear weapons. They were flying two-ships (a pair of airplanes) of those ... then they’d deploy



Photo courtesy of Marty Isham

Naval assets, the Bear 'D' and 'F' models, into Cuba. And they were all very capable aircraft at the time."

The Russians were proving a point, says Col. Chip Cumm, commander of the Massachusetts Air National Guard 102nd Fighter Wing alert detachment, Loring Air Force Base, Maine, in the late 1980s. "They wanted us to know they could do it and we wanted them to know we could get to them before they could hurt us," he says. "So our pilots picked them up way, way out over the water. Most of our intercepts were actually closer to Iceland than the United States."

"Those missions lasted five to eight hours, and we couldn't do it without a tanker for refueling," Cumm adds. "Once in awhile the AWACS

(Airborne Warning and Control System aircraft) was there, but other times we just went out and found them on our own. With an F-15 radar against a Bear bomber, it's not as hard as it sounds. You can cover a lot of airspace with an F-15 radar against a bomber-size target at 30,000 feet. You can see them a long way away."

The camaraderie in the detachment — about 25 people — was unbelievable, Cumm says. Like family. And like so many other air defense units before it, it would cease to exist. It was 1993. The Soviet Union was no more. The Berlin Wall had fallen. All regular Air Force fighter-interceptor squadrons had deactivated.

The Cold War was over.

But the professionalism and pride in the mission

would never die.

"Even after it was announced the unit would shut down, we had a no-notice NORAD alert force evaluation and got the first 'Outstanding' rating given to an alert detachment — and that was an Outstanding across the board," Cumm says. "Our people were so good, they could teach the inspectors how to do the business. Nobody did it better."

And when all that went away, "It was horrible ... gut-wrenching to see it close.

"It was the best job I ever had."



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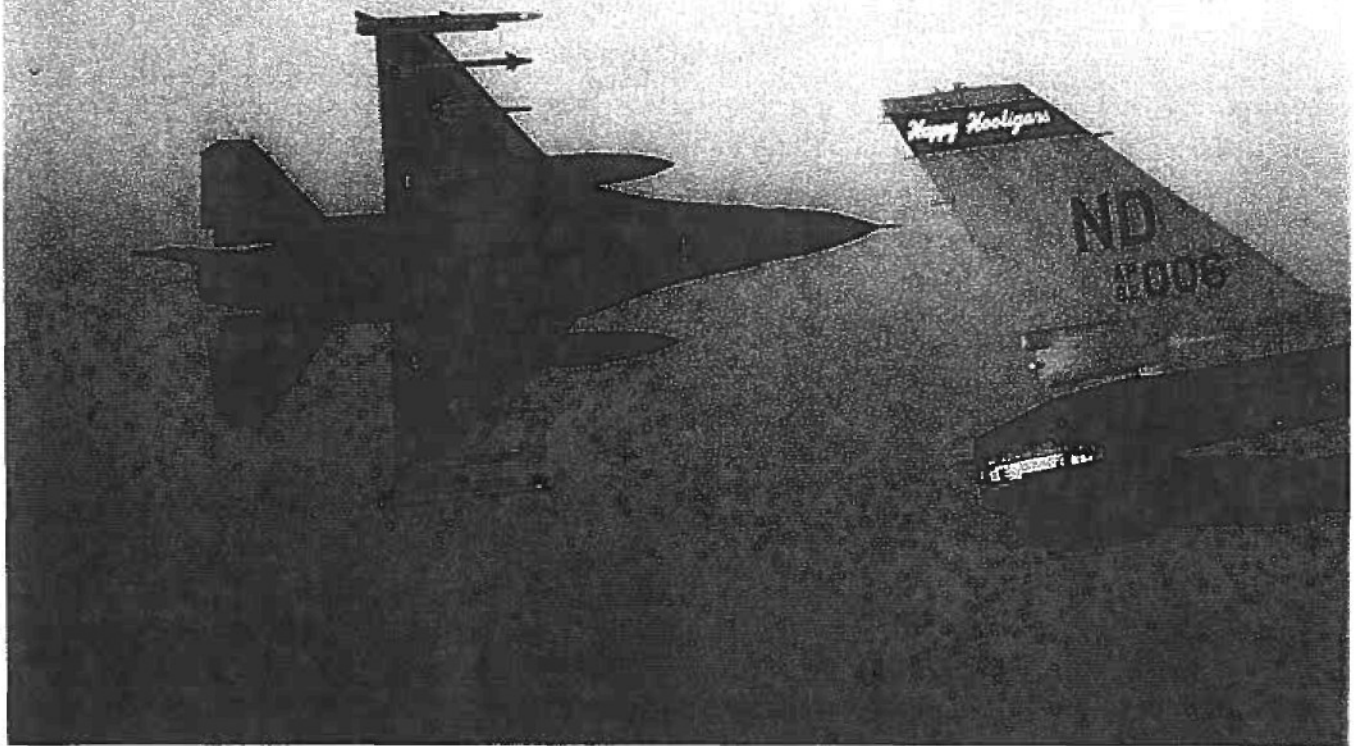
40 *NORAD Dedicated Interceptor Squadrons, 1957-85*.

Four F-106A "Delta Darts" assigned to the 318th Fighter Interceptor Squadron, McChord Air Force Base, Wash., fly over Mount Rainier. The F-106 was similar in appearance to the F-102 with its delta-shaped wing and no tail plane, but had many improvements, most notably, speed. The 177th Fighter Wing, New Jersey Air National Guard, was the last unit to fly the aircraft in an operational role.



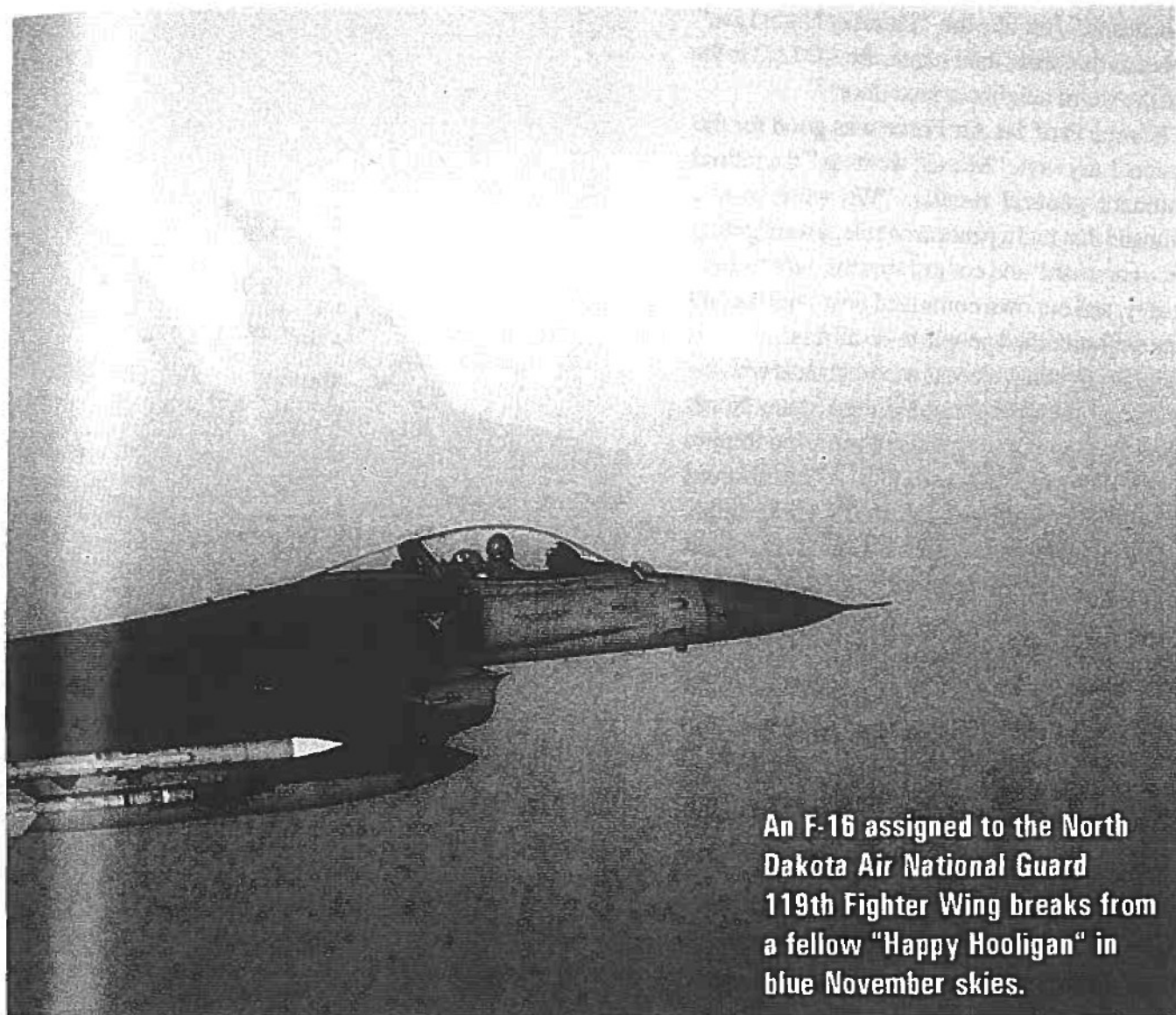
U.S. Air Force photo

NEW ERA, NEW STRUGGLES: **Surviving the post-Cold War**



CHAPTER 2

**Air National Guard protects America's air borders
from the frightening, wily unknown**



An F-16 assigned to the North Dakota Air National Guard 119th Fighter Wing breaks from a fellow "Happy Hooligan" in blue November skies.

U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Greg L. Davis

It was an unusually cold Virginia afternoon, Dec. 6, 1985, the day 1st Air Force reactivated for the third time in history. A precise fingertip formation of four F-15 "Eagles" soared over Langley Air Force Base at the ceremony to celebrate the occasion. As the deafening roar of the jet fighters filled the winter air, Maj. Gen. Buford D. Lary couldn't help but be proud: it was a perfect fly-by and the pilots above were his own, members of the 48th Fighter Interceptor Squadron and part of his new command. First Air Force was taking responsibility for America's air sovereignty and Lary

was becoming the leader of a more focused and—in his words—"cleaner" organization.

First Air Force was replacing Air Defense Tactical Air Command, a staff organization that had lived a strange, confusing existence since 1979. "Nobody even knew what ADTAC was," admits one insider. Although part of Tactical Air Command headquarters and technically in charge of TAC air defense forces, ADTAC was separate from TAC in both structure and operation and never really accepted into TAC's inner sanctum.¹ There was even a nickname for air defenders back then:

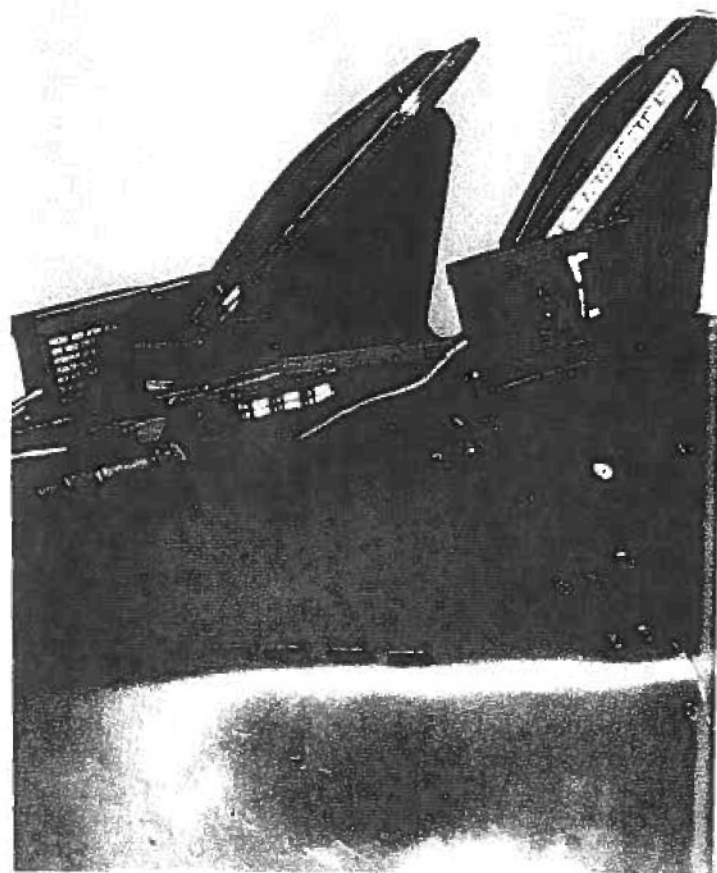
"Coneheads." Just like the "Saturday Night Live" characters that share their name, the ADTAC folks were the weird neighbors next door.²

The rebirth of 1st Air Force was good for the mission, Lary says. "Morale went up," the retired lieutenant general recalls. "We were now a command that had a peacetime role, a warfighting role, a command and control system right there at Langley, and our own command post. And we had some well-qualified people to do all this."

The warfighting role was accomplished with the creation of the Continental United States North American Aerospace Defense Command Region — CONR — in February 1986.³ This ensured air sovereignty remained under NORAD direction; the CONR command structure would parallel that of the Alaskan and Canadian NORAD regions. "I was commander of 1st Air Force in peacetime and commander of the Continental NORAD Region in wartime," Lary says. "You never are one or the other, you are sort of both, but become beholden to the commander in chief of NORAD in the warfighting role and the commander of TAC in peacetime."

Air sovereignty had found its niche: Lary had direct lines of communication with NORAD's four continental air division commanders; the commanders, each with their own geographical area to protect, could launch fighter jets at a moment's notice. Command and control technicians at the nation's air defense sectors were eyeing radar scopes for any "unknowns" approaching the borders. They were all working together under the prestige of a numbered air force, the "senior warfighting echelon of the United States Air Force."⁴ But the years ahead would be challenging as old threats died and new threats emerged.

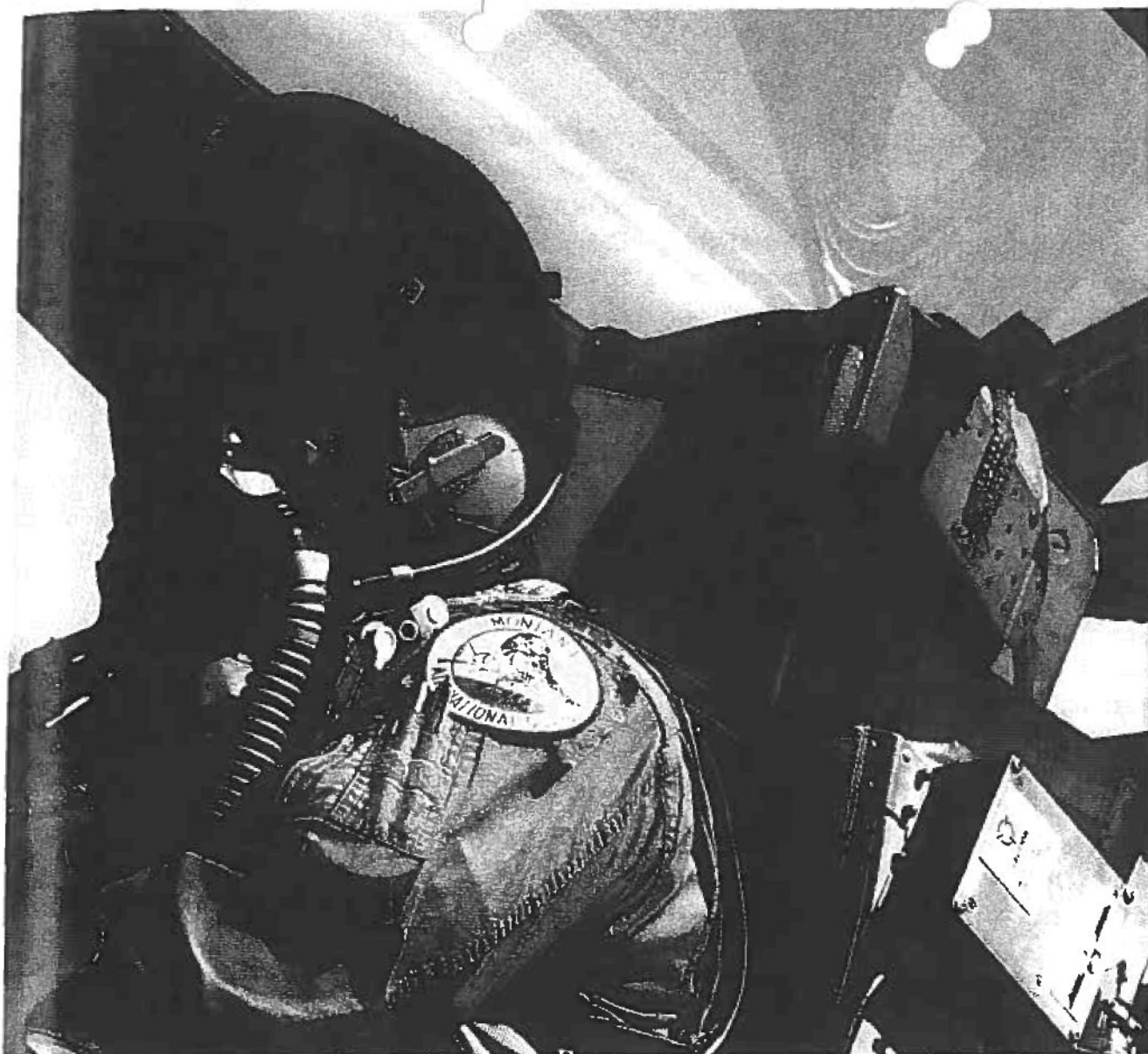
A pilot from the 120th Fighter Wing, Montana Air National Guard, prepares to lower the canopy of an F-16C prior to leaving on a training mission.



That old threat kept 1st Air Force busy during Lary's tenure and was alive and well when he relinquished command to Maj. Gen. Jimmie V. Adams in July 1987.

"The Soviet 'Bear' bomber was the major threat we faced in sizable numbers, even then," says retired Gen. Adams. "We were quite busy contending with active scrambles for that intrusion into our sovereign airspace."

The Soviets deployed bombers to Cuba throughout the 1980s, flying too close to the United States for NORAD comfort. The cat-and-mouse game at 30,000 feet was a nuisance the Air Force



U.S. Air Force photo by Senior Master Sgt. Eric J. Peterson

could handle, but what about the new threat on the horizon? The fast and low-flying Soviet cruise missile could evade radar coverage and presented a new challenge for America's air sovereignty team.

"There was an evolving cruise missile threat associated with the bombers and growing concern about the manned bomber and cruise missile nuclear threat," Adams explains. "And the capability we had against cruise missiles was limited. It is a very small target and very difficult to detect on radar, so I was much more comfortable dealing with the bomber threat."

The American-Canadian partnership at NORAD worked to modernize the aging air defense system and improve the radar coverage the entire mission

relied upon. By the late 1980s the North Warning System was under construction to replace the Distant Early Warning Line arctic radar chain, but wouldn't achieve initial capability until 1995.⁵ The newly created United States Space Command, meanwhile, was charged with providing NORAD missile warning and space surveillance capability.⁶

But North America's strongest line of defense remained its most basic: 52 armed F-106s, F-15s and F-16s operated by both the regular Air Force and Air National Guard. A 1974 Department of Defense study had concluded that two fighters each on continuous alert at 26 sites was adequate to maintain peacetime air sovereignty — a standard that continued through the late 1980s.⁷

Mission impossible?

Despite modernization attempts and the relatively healthy fighter force, a crucial part of America's air defense structure was lost in the 1980s, says retired Brig. Gen. John Broman, former commander of the 148th Fighter Wing, Minnesota Air National Guard. Between 1986 and 1988, 17 of 24 radar sites on the Pinetree Line on the U.S.-Canadian border were closed.⁸ Combined with the subsequent elimination of Canada's Air Defense

Identification Zone —

ADIZ — air defense on the northern tier was becoming "mission impossible," Broman says. With no ADIZ, all flights originating in Canada and crossing the U.S. border were presumed "friendly by origin."⁹

"When the radar sites closed down, there was a particularly interesting lack of capability," Broman explains. "Eventually there was also no radar coverage along the west coast of Canada. An airplane with enough range could enter Canada from the west and then just turn south to fly over the United States at any altitude below positive controlled airspace without any risk of detection by any air defense radar or any interest by Federal Aviation Administration radar."

For years fighter pilots had sat alert at places like Selfridge Air National Guard Base, Mich.; Niagara Falls International Airport, N.Y.; and Hector Field, N.D. But with no way to identify an airborne threat, or "unknown rider," their very existence was called into question.

As 1st Air Force commander, Adams was faced with a dilemma. In 1988 he recommended NORAD close six alert sites near the U.S.-Canadian border — sites operated by the Air National Guard.¹⁰ "Once we took away the Pinetree Line and ADIZ, I had no way of picking up those unknowns because they were friendly by definition, and that was agreed to by the U.S. and Canadian governments as a way to pay for modernizing the DEW Line," Adams says. "The question I had when I came aboard was: 'If I can't identify these guys as unknowns, why would I want

airplanes on alert to go intercept them?' I had no procedures and no radar in place and no capability to exercise an ADIZ. ... It made no sense to spend all this money on 24-hour-a-day alert. But I was a little naïve about the powers of the Air National Guard, and naïve that it was 50 jobs per alert site. ... I created a real fire storm."

The idea didn't materialize right away, but was a sign of things to come. Peripheral defense

— fighter-interceptors at strategic locations on the rim of the continental United States — was the wave of the future.

By 1990 the Department of Defense called for eventual closure of the northern tier alert sites.¹¹ American and Canadian fighters, in smaller numbers but formidable foes nonetheless, were providing North America's air sovereignty: protection from drug-smuggling aircraft and other unknown airborne threats. But the glory days of air defense — when hundreds of NORAD fighters were ready to intercept and destroy fleets of Soviet bombers — were over.

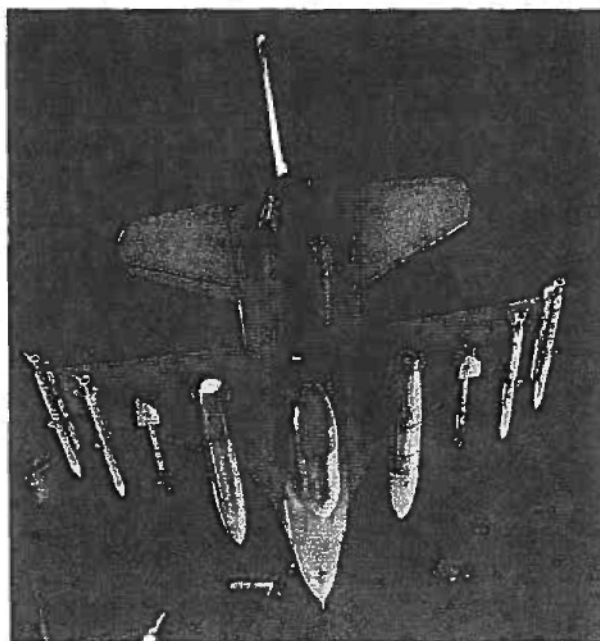


Photo by Master Sgt. Don Taggart, 177th Fighter Wing, New Jersey Air National Guard



Photo by Master Sgt. Roger Tibbetts, 1st Air Force Public Affairs Office

Above: Staff Sgt. Timothy M. Jacobs, a tracking technician at the Southeast Air Defense Sector, Tyndall Air Force Base, Fla., keeps an eye on the Gulf of Mexico for airborne threats to the United States. The command and control aspect of the air sovereignty mission became an Air National Guard responsibility in the late 1990s.

Left: An F-16 from the New Jersey Air National Guard 177th Fighter Wing darts through blue skies, as seen through the canopy of the jet beneath it.



Photo courtesy of 148th Fighter Wing, Minnesota Air National Guard

Fit for a militia

As the Soviet Union crumbled and the decade gave way to overseas operations like Desert Storm and Joint Endeavor, air defense requirements continued to change. America wasn't so worried about Soviet bombers anymore and an attack on U.S. soil seemed unlikely. Money was tight and the Air Force was downsizing and reorganizing. In the early 1990s the Air Force consolidated from 13 to eight major commands and inactivated many proud wings and squadrons; by 1998 it would cut

its 600,000-plus personnel almost in half.¹² As early as 1990, senior leaders were exploring ways to spare the air sovereignty mission from the budget ax.¹³

A smaller 1st Air Force staff moved its headquarters to Tyndall Air Force Base, Fla., in late 1991. All air divisions had inactivated and the continental United States was divided into four air defense sectors. Several 1st Air Force duties had been reassigned elsewhere. By the end of the year, the 48th Fighter Interceptor Squadron — the last regular Air Force squadron of its kind — inactivated, leaving air defense flying to 11 Air

National Guard fighter wings.¹⁴

With all air defense flying in Air Guard hands, it seemed natural to many that air defense sector operations — the command and control aspect of the mission involving aircraft surveillance and identification— also reside there.

A lead supporter of the idea was Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Merrill A. McPeak. "The Air Guard had been performing the mission for many years," says the retired general. "They understood it well. ... Why should they not command the numbered air force that stood at the top of this activity?"¹⁵



Former Air National Guard director, retired Maj. Gen. Donald Shepperd, says McPeak's proposal was right on target. "General McPeak felt the Air National Guard had been the guardian of air defense for years and therefore command and control of the mission belonged with the Guard," Shepperd says. "He also saw great force structure and money problems coming and thought if you put air defense in the Guard it becomes a Guard responsibility. It was one more fight he didn't have to fight."

Saving the mission was paramount, Shepperd believes. "The transition of 1st Air Force was about preserving some type of infrastructure simply because it did not seem wise to leave our air borders open. ... At that point it wasn't about a Soviet attack, but about our air borders and our air sovereignty."

By 1994, Air National Guard Maj. Gen. Philip G. Killey was in command of the federal mission — unheard of for a militiaman. His organization would become a strange hybrid: subordinate to NORAD, part Air Combat Command (formerly TAC), part National Guard Bureau, and misunderstood by many.

Killey, a South Dakotan and longtime fighter pilot, was to reorganize the entire numbered air force — about 1,300 people — from a regular Air

"The transition of 1st Air Force was about preserving some type of infrastructure simply because it did not seem wise to leave our air borders open. ... At that point it wasn't about a Soviet attack, but about our air borders and our air sovereignty."

**— Retired Maj. Gen. Donald Shepperd,
former Air National Guard director**

Two F-16s assigned to the Minnesota Air National Guard 148th Fighter Wing, Duluth, fly across blue skies and light clouds. The 148th operates a 24-hour alert facility at Tyndall Air Force Base, Fla.

Force to Air National Guard organization in less than three years.¹⁶

The Air National Guard fighter wings of 1st Air Force wouldn't be affected. But the airmen at the Northeast, Southeast and Western air defense sectors; the headquarters staff; and two support squadrons; all had to be handled individually. A 1st Air Force transition team was formed to keep the evolving air sovereignty mission going as regular Air Force members were replaced by Guardsmen.



Retired Col. John D. Navin was Killey's right-hand man during the conversion. He emphasizes that the mission was foremost in their minds as they worked to take care of people first.

"We had to keep our people in focus as we turned an entire numbered air force over to Air National Guard command and control," the former Vermont Air National Guardsman says. "Even back then we kept an eye on Soviet long-range aviation capability, and no, didn't envision a wave of bombers coming over the poles like people thought in the 1950s and 1960s. However, we still believed the capability was there, maybe not the intent, but the capability. And we needed to have a capability to thwart that. The newer threat emerging was the rogue actor, the nation-state that had the capability and intent to use cruise missiles. We kept our eye on that threat as we made this transition."

Yes the Cold War was over, but "bottom line, air sovereignty means we need to know who's flying in our airspace," Killey said in a post-transition interview.

"We can't afford to have our skies, our borders

of our airspace, wide open to whoever wants to fly in. We need to know what that traffic is. And we need to have a system of identifying unknown aircraft."¹⁷

Overshadowed by doubt

As Air Guard members joined 1st Air Force in the mid-to late-1990s, many signed waivers acknowledging their job would end if and when the mission did. Job security was no guarantee given the circumstances.¹⁸

Historically, the mission had seen its share of struggles. "Air Force strategy through the years was one of forward engagement overseas," explains retired Col. William A. Scott, a former 1st Air Force vice commander with 30 years' Air Force experience in both air defense and tactical operations. "Back in the 1950s, '60s and '70s,

the Air Force world was split into two commands. Tactical Air Command fought wars 'over there,' and Aerospace Defense Command fought wars 'over here.' When ADCOM merged with TAC in 1979, the mission submerged into the 'over there' crowd who had

little time and little patience for homeland defense."

Was the transition of 1st Air Force even necessary? "There were people who did not believe there was any need for the transition of 1st Air Force and CONR simply because they did not see a need for the mission, period," Navin says.

Some believed air sovereignty was robbing from other areas in a time of Air Force-wide cutbacks, he says. Even some in the Air National Guard were reluctant to see money dedicated to homeland air defense, Navin concedes. "People did not see a need for that kind of Air National Guard manpower

"The newer threat emerging was the rogue actor, the nation-state that had the capability and intent to use cruise missiles."

**— Retired Col. John D. Navin,
1st Air Force adviser**



Florida Air National Guard photo by retired Lt. Col. Chris N. Michalakos



Photo courtesy of 177th Fighter Wing, New Jersey Air National Guard

Above: An F-16 from the Florida Air National Guard 125th Fighter Interceptor Group escorts a Russian "Bear" bomber off the Florida coast in this Cold War-era photo. The 125th began flying F-15s in 1995 and was redesignated a fighter wing.

Left: The Cold War barely over, a New Jersey Air National Guard F-16 assigned to the 177th Fighter Group — now the 177th Fighter Wing — escorts a Russian MiG-29 to and from an air show in the early 1990s.

Staff Sgt. Sarah Davis gathers information on an unknown aircraft while "on scope" at the Western Air Defense Sector, McChord Air Force Base, Wash.

in air defense," he says. "People thought it was an absolute waste to put that manpower into a mission area that would totally go away anyway."

In the early post-Cold War years, the military at large believed the air defense threat nonexistent, Scott says. "There were many people in both the Air National Guard and active duty Air Force who didn't believe in the mission," says the former commandant of the Air Force's Squadron Officer School. "The threat at the time was perceived as nil.

"The vast majority of the hurdles 1st Air Force and CONR faced were at the mid-management staff level of colonels and below. The one common thread of responsibility could be found at the highest levels — once given the specific responsibility of air defense and air sovereignty through their positions as commander in chief of NORAD or Air Combat Command, they wouldn't let the mission die."



Washington Air National Guard photo by Master Sgt. Randy La Brune

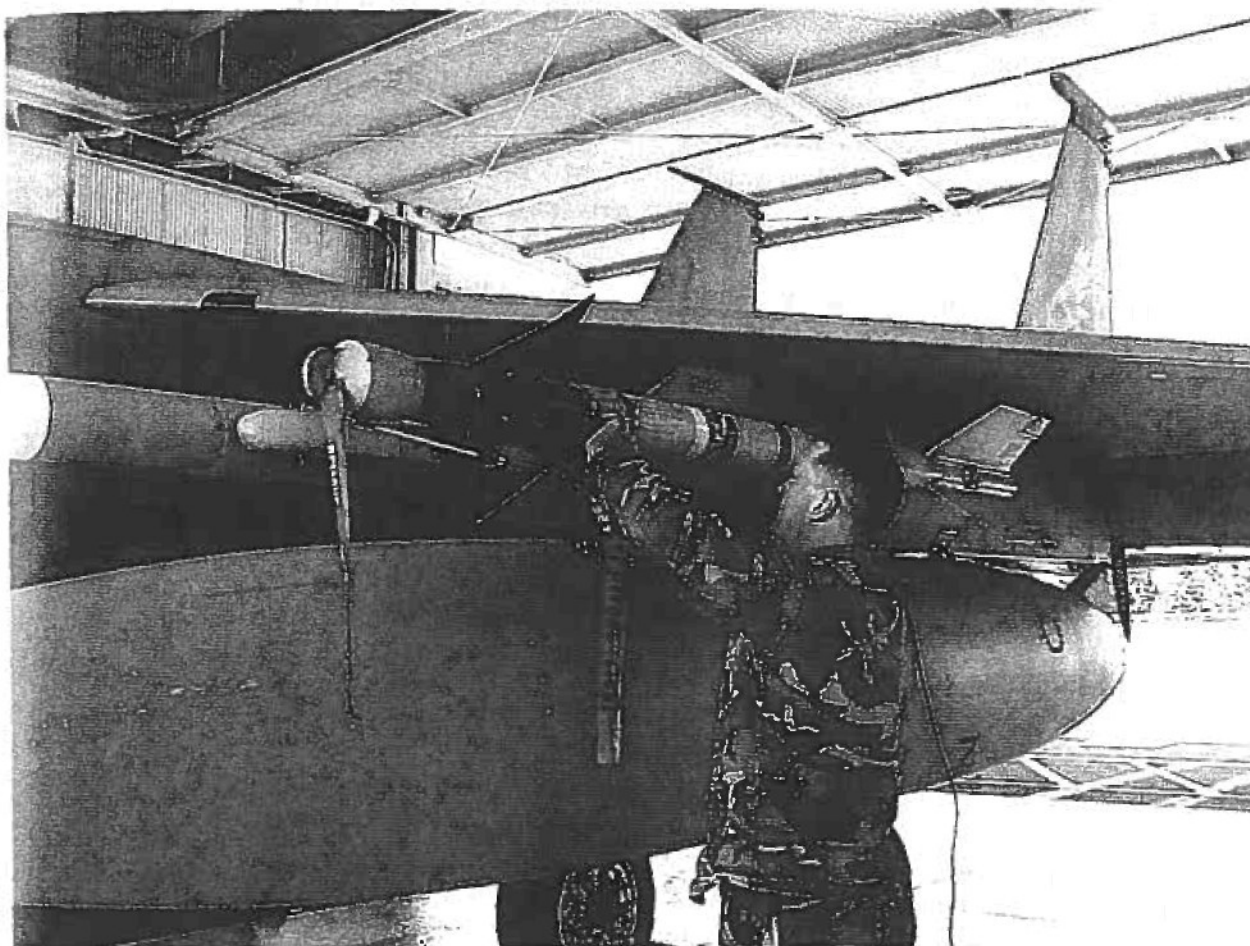


Photo courtesy of Western Air Defense Sector

An Oregon Air National Guard member from the 142nd Fighter Wing prepares an F-15 "Eagle" for flight.

But Scott says the mission remained underfunded and unpopular. A monumental challenge for Navin, Killey and the transition staff was proving to doubting military minds that 1st Air Force was a legitimate organization performing a legitimate mission.

"Major General Killey and I spent more time in the Pentagon trying to convince general officers that the mission was not only viable, but absolutely necessary, than I care to think about," Navin says. "Every single time, you'd walk away from there with that horrible feeling in the pit of your stomach and think, 'We're fighting a losing battle.'"

Shepperd says Air Force leaders may have lost interest in air defense. "We've seen this many times,"

he says. "When a mission is shed to the Guard, the Guard has to really fight for advocacy because there's none left in the Air Force and that has implications for ... funding and political advocacy."



Although the transition wasn't easy and not everyone agreed necessary, Killey believes it was the perfect example of the Total Force concept — the unified powers of the Air Force, Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve.¹⁹ The Air National Guard was relieving the Air Force of an important task as airmen were deploying far and wide and doing much more with

much less. The Air Force didn't have time for the non-war at home; the Gulf War and monitoring no-fly zones in Southwest Asia was much hotter.

Air sovereignty would live by default, Scott says: "Most of what people talked about back then wasn't military action, but the threat of embarrassment to the United States. We didn't think Cuban MiGs would attack us, but they'd embarrass us. That potential for political embarrassment was a problem for us and NORAD."

The reality through the growing pains was the mission itself. Right during the transition, a highly publicized incident reminded people why they were there in the first place.

On Feb. 24, 1996, two Brothers to the Rescue aircraft flew near Cuban airspace and were shot down by Cuban MiG fighter jets. Four people from the Miami-based exile organization were killed.

"First Air Force had the only around-the-clock command and operation centers capable of responding with Combat Air Patrols," Killey said in a 1998 interview. "Our quick and certain response not only proved that we are an indispensable member of the aerospace defense team, but that America was serious about its air sovereignty."²⁰

That winter day was a lively one at Tyndall's Southeast Air Defense Sector. Command and control technicians scrambled F-16s from the alert detachment of the 148th Fighter Wing, Minnesota Air National Guard. In only a few minutes, the pilots were over the blue Gulf waters assisting in the search-and-rescue operation. From monitoring radar scopes to launching airplanes, everyone did exactly what they were trained to do that day: protect America's air borders.²¹

The transition of 1st Air Force to Air National Guard command and control was nearly complete. Critical thinkers in headquarters briefing rooms were discussing the new threat on the horizon. Lurking in the shadows was a dangerous underworld of airborne drug-runners, terrorists and rogue nations with frightening capabilities.

"By about 1995, even before the Brothers to the Rescue incident, people at 1st Air Force were

talking about things like the rogue actors, the nation-states that had the capability and intent to use cruise missiles," Navin says. "We didn't use the word 'asymmetric' but began talking about terrorism."

"And by 1998, many people were talking about 1st Air Force and doing away with the

sectors and said we didn't need the mission," he continues. "That was only two years after the shoot-down of Brothers to the Rescue by the Cuban MiGs. Things faded into the recesses of peoples' minds rather rapidly."

Mission at risk

In December 1997, Maj. Gen. Larry K. Arnold assumed command of 1st Air Force, CONR and a dying mission. Earlier that year, the Department of Defense had released "The Report of the Quadrennial Defense Review." The QDR outlined the conversion of six continental air defense squadrons to general purpose, training or other missions.²² This "four-corners defense" idea called for alert sites at Cape Cod, Mass.; Homestead, Fla.; Riverside, Calif.; and Portland, Ore.²³ The other six squadrons in 1st Air Force, as suggested in the QDR, would convert to a multirole mission.

"There was always a movement afoot to further shut down 1st Air Force, CONR and the NORAD mission in general to the point that I always thought I might be out of there."

**— Retired Maj. Gen. Larry K. Arnold,
former 1st Air Force commander**



Washington Air National Guard photo by Tech. Sgt. Randy LaBrune

Left: American and Canadian forces work together to accomplish the binational NORAD mission, monitoring the scopes at the Western Air Defense Sector, McChord Air Force Base, Wash.

Below: Maj. John Larson, an F-16 pilot with the 119th Fighter Wing, North Dakota Air National Guard, completes a mission.



Photo by Master Sgt. William Quinn, 119th Fighter Wing, North Dakota Air National Guard

"When I first moved down to Tyndall as vice commander of 1st Air Force, the QDR had just been released," Arnold, since retired, says. "I moved to Tyndall and thought, 'well here I am in Florida, I ought to think about buying a boat.' And I never bought a boat because there was always a movement afoot to further shut down 1st Air Force, CONR and the NORAD mission in general to the point that I always thought I might be out of there. So I never bought a boat the whole time I was there.

"The QDR didn't make any sense at all," Arnold continues. "Four-corners defense might be good for basketball, and that's where the term comes from ... but it had absolutely no applicability to defending our country. It was ridiculous yet it became popular. So there was a fight just to maintain the number of alert sites that we had. We felt we could operate fairly reasonably with about 10 sites and thought eight was the absolute highest risk we could take. We ended up with seven. I didn't feel particularly comfortable with seven because there are great large distances between the alert sites."

The four-corners proposal was met with resistance from NORAD Commander in Chief Gen. Howell M. Estes III, who wrote to the Joint Chiefs of Staff that a minimum of seven alert sites were needed to maintain the nation's air sovereignty.

In the end, Estes won the battle and alert sites were added at Hampton, Va.; Panama City, Fla.; and Houston, Texas; where all three multirole squadrons would support air sovereignty.²⁴ But Arnold believes the real issue was the move to close 1st Air Force completely "without any alternative way of doing the mission." There was also pressure to close other numbered air forces, Arnold says, as Air Force leaders searched for better ways to fight wars, which is traditionally through numbered air forces.

As the QDR furor died down, the move to close 1st Air Force did not. By the summer of 1998, Air Combat Command, as the CONR force provider, would search for ways to organize its forces amid



Photo courtesy of 147th Fighter Wing, Texas Air National Guard

In the Internet age, pride in the air sovereignty mission is displayed on the tail of an F-16 assigned to the 147th Fighter Wing, Texas Air National Guard.

personnel shortages and an increased operations tempo. "I got a call from General (Richard) Hawley, who was the commander of ACC, and he said: 'My staff has given me a compelling argument as to why we should move all the forces out of 1st Air Force and move them into 8th, 9th and 12th air forces,'" Arnold recalls. "And he allowed me to respond to him. And when I did respond, he left all 10 units in 1st Air Force."

In another phone call between the two generals, Hawley reiterated to Arnold that the ACC staff was still considering ways to reorganize its numbered air forces. "General Hawley gave them

a very short answer that was exactly the right answer," Arnold says. "It was really a question. He said to his staff: 'I have no position on whether we close 1st Air Force or not, but is there a better way to do the mission?'"

"And that stumped them. I think they thought there was no mission, but as a four-star general, he realized we had to protect our borders. That question alone: 'Is there a better way to do the mission?' put to bed the idea of closing 1st Air Force, at least for awhile."



Hawley says his command was faced with the challenge of best organizing its fighter force at a time of frequent deployments and a serious pilot shortage. "We were trying to figure out how to relieve the personnel tempo of people who were being pulled hither and yond to go cope with Northern Watch and so forth," the retired general says. "(The command needed) more general purpose fighters in the fighter rotation to support the overseas commitments and therefore spread the workload more evenly. ... Most of the 1st Air Force units were specialized solely in air defense, and in our rotations we needed people with a specialty in air superiority and dropping bombs."

"We had two problems," Hawley continues. "We had a lot of numbered air forces and not enough people to man them. The other problem was the operations tempo and personnel tempo and how to get the Air Force organized in a way that we could rotate forces in and out of the fights we had to man on a more rational basis ... to give people some predictability in their lives."

"The air defense issue was one of figuring out a way to absorb the air defense squadrons into the general purpose force structure so that we could use them ... and where that idea fell apart was, 'How do you do this and get the air defense mission accomplished?'"

Although the idea fizzled at Air Combat Command, Hawley says air sovereignty still remained a low Air Force priority. "Many people in the Air Force thought it was a waste of money and time to maintain a dedicated air defense force and the reason is not many people had thought about the basic, national responsibility to maintain sovereignty over our airspace, whether there's a threat to it or not," he says. "Among those who had given it some thought, air sovereignty was important."

A better way?

When the National Guard Bureau began studying 1st Air Force's closure in 1999, Arnold took action. ²⁵ He didn't think there was a better way to provide air sovereignty, but he wanted to prove that to himself and others. He looked toward written doctrine—the Bible of all things Air Force—and says he believed the organization was operating "in a very sound way." But Arnold wanted the issue examined. *Was there a better way to provide continental air sovereignty?*

"I wanted a study before the next QDR that said, 'Here's how we do the mission now, here's alternative ways we can do the mission,'" Arnold explains. "If there was a better way that was doctrinally sound, I was prepared to beat the drums and go do that."

"I wanted a team to talk to the commanders of NORAD and ACC and the leadership all over the Air Force and find out for me, find out if there's no mission," Arnold says. "And I said, 'If there's no mission, we'll shut down now.'"

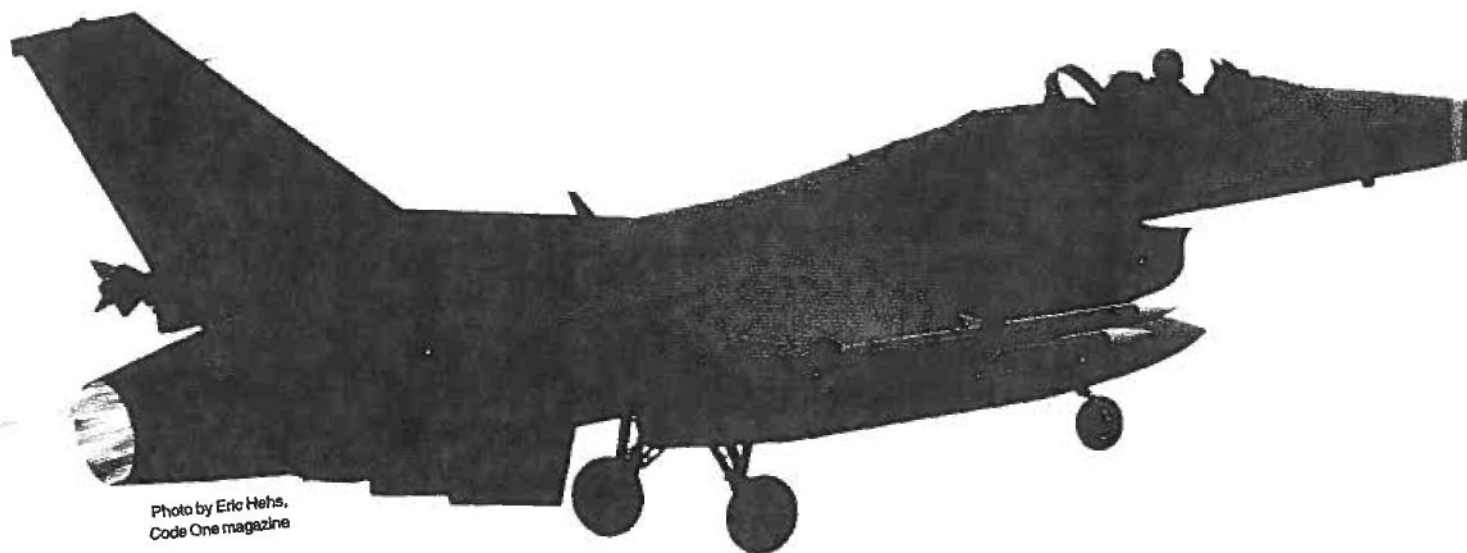
With the backing of Air National Guard director Maj. Gen. Paul A. Weaver Jr., Arnold asked Maj. Gen. Paul Pochmara, a Michigan Air National Guardsman, to form a "Roles and Missions" team. Pochmara was the Air National Guard assistant to Air Force Materiel Command at the time and former commander of the 113th Tactical Fighter Wing,

District of Columbia Air National Guard.

"I was from outside the air defense world," Pochmara, since retired, says. "I flew fighters all my life and when Larry Arnold and Paul Weaver wanted someone to do the study, they wanted someone experienced in fighters with knowledge of air defense, but not a card-carrying air defender. I have sat air defense alert in Japan, but I was never a 1st Air Force-type of person and had never sat alert in the United States. ... I was close enough to the mission to have credibility but far enough away

1999, visiting other numbered air forces, NORAD, the National Guard Bureau, and Air Combat Command to find answers to the questions that kept Arnold guessing. The team was armed with a one-hour presentation that outlined the military's responsibility for protecting the nation's air sovereignty and supported its case with excerpts from the U.S. Constitution, Department of Defense policy and ACC directives.

"Universally, except for going up to NORAD, I think when we walked in the door we were



An F-16 from the Vermont Air National Guard 158th Fighter Wing takes off.

to have credibility. I would not be preaching to the choir."

Pochmara says he initially questioned the need for the study and wouldn't allow himself to be swayed by opinions on either side. "When we put together the team, 1st Air Force wanted me to be an honest broker and I was told to say it like it is," he says. "When I chose the members of this team, I chose some who did not see a need for air defense, some like myself who just didn't know and some from the 1st Air Force staff who were very zealous in their beliefs. ... I assembled people on this team who could balance each other out."

The 12-member "RAM" team set out in late

perceived with neither reticence nor support," Pochmara says. "They weren't necessarily hostile or against us, but we did not walk into friendly audiences either."

Maj. Gen. Mike Haugen, adjutant general of the North Dakota National Guard and RAM team member, says the group discussed everything from technology to the future of the air sovereignty mission to the terrorist threat. "We made some pretty bold predictions in our briefing," he says. "In fact, it included a photo of Osama bin Laden as the world's most dangerous terrorist. ... We didn't predict how the terrorists would strike but predicted they would strike."

Pochmara says the team wanted to convey the definition of air sovereignty. He puts it into basic terms. "You have your house in your neighborhood and you don't want anyone to break into it," he says. "But anyone, at will, can break into your house when you're not there or when you are there. And you can't really stop them. Do you leave your door open, do you unlock your doors because you can't stop somebody?"

"We're not going to do that as a nation; we're going to make some attempt to keep our doors locked and protect ourselves and that's what sovereignty means."

In the end of their year together, the RAM team wrote a report concluding, "there are no better ways, just other ways," to perform the mission. Air sovereignty, the team found, is a valid and necessary military responsibility. Team leader Pochmara found himself a bigger supporter of the mission than he'd realized and the hesitant audiences gained new perspectives. "The overall consensus from people was: 'I understand 1st Air Force is valuable and needs to continue doing the work it does,'" Pochmara says.

Threat of the day

As the RAM team was examining the need for continental air sovereignty, a comprehensive look at America's future was well underway at the highest levels. The United States Commission on National Security/21st Century, led by former Sens. Gary Hart and Warren B. Rudman, released its first of three reports in September 1999. "New World Coming: American Security in the 21st Century," stated that *"America will become increasingly vulnerable to hostile attack on our homeland, and our military superiority will not entirely protect us."*²⁶

"We should expect conflicts in which adversaries, because of cultural affinities different from our own, will resort to forms and

"We made some pretty bold predictions in our briefing. In fact, it included a photo of Osama bin Laden as the world's most dangerous terrorist."

**— Maj. Gen. Mike Haugen,
adjutant general,
North Dakota National Guard**

levels of violence shocking to our sensibilities," reads an excerpt from the report.²⁷

Discussions of new threats were everywhere, Scott says, yet the move to kill air sovereignty remained. "At about the same time this was all happening, there was an emerging debate within military academic circles about the asymmetric threat to the United States," Scott says. "A number of papers were published as we were struggling to stay alive. People did studies, including the Hart-Rudman study, that said we would get hit by terrorism in the next five years.

"This debate was going on in the mainstream of the Department of Defense as we were struggling for survival. What we picked up from that debate was this: 'We need to define those asymmetric threats as they pertain to our mission.'"

"We thought the primary threat was some sort of poor-man's cruise missile or Unmanned Aerial Vehicle from a commercial ship off the coast, maybe some old rickety freighter out in the Gulf," Scott says. "And in one of our briefings, we pointed out that for \$83,000 you can buy an Unmanned Aerial Vehicle with GPS (Global Positioning System) navigation.

"These guys aren't looking for pinpoint accuracy. If you launch it into a metropolitan area, it's good enough. The objective is to kill Americans, as many as you can. That's what we were targeting."

The 1st Air Force mission brief — the basic presentation explaining what air sovereignty is

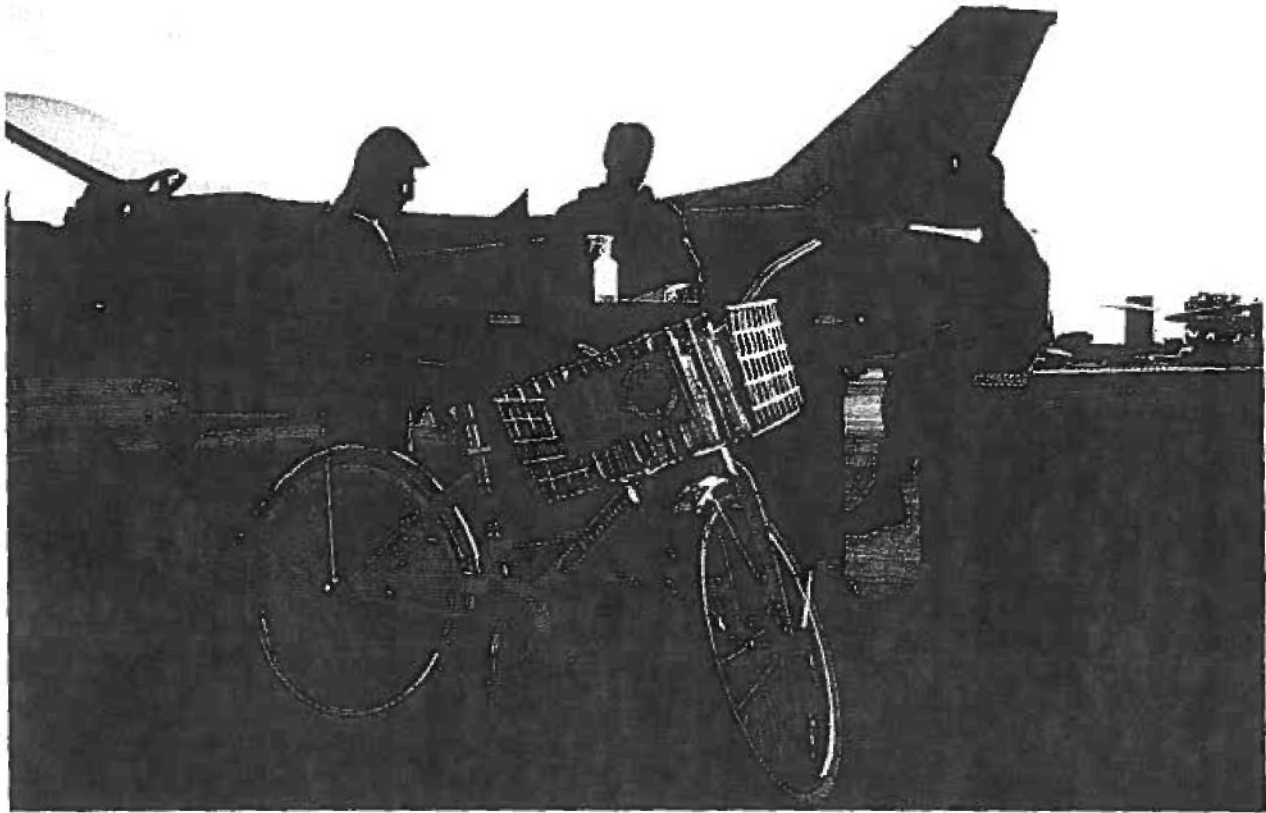


Photo by Lans Stout for Code One magazine

The mission of the 144th Fighter Wing, California Air National Guard, and nine other fighter units assigned to 1st Air Force and the Continental United States NORAD Region, would be turned upside down Sept. 11, 2001.

about — spoke to this scary reality. “As we started talking about Osama bin Laden, the examples we gave in our mission brief were the first World Trade Center bombing, the Tokyo Subway, Oklahoma City bombing, and Atlanta Olympics,” Scott says. “What we did was connect those dots. The conclusion we drew was that we had a viable threat.”

The military buzzword, actually an acronym, defined the latest risk: CBRNE — Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, and Enhanced High Explosive — weapons, Navin says. “Ages ago, we knew who the enemy was,” he says. “Later, there was recognition on our part that terrorism was a threat, but we thought it was a cruise missile threat.”

How and where would the threat happen? Arnold

tried to get in the minds of the terrorists. His “El Paso example” spoke to the nation’s vulnerability. The geographical hole between alert sites in Houston and Riverside, Calif., was so large that he wouldn’t be able to protect El Paso, Texas, with fighter jets if the need immediately arose.

Adds Scott: “There was no military air threat from Mexico, but ... an asymmetric threat from Mexico. Our experience within Mexico with our counterdrug operation is that there are hundreds of unmanned little airfields you can get into and out of very easily.

“Major General Arnold believed that if a terrorist called and said in one hour he would overfly El Paso and spray deadly gas, we would watch it live on CNN because we could not get aircraft to that location in time to stop it.”



At times it seems like Arnold and his staff were gazing into a crystal ball. But, Arnold points out, “we thought the terrorist attack would come from outside the United States.”

Training exercises at 1st Air Force continued to that effect, and occasionally a serious incident would arise. With all eyes focused outside, a tragedy inside foreshadowed the massive coordination required to handle air operations over our own soil.

On Oct. 25, 1999, professional golfer Payne Stewart was killed in a plane crash two miles west of Mina, S.D. The Lear 35 jet, flying from Orlando, Fla., to Dallas, strayed off course over northern Florida and was heading northwest when it ran out of fuel. The plane, believed to have lost cabin pressure, was tracked by the Southeast Air Defense Sector and later the Western Air Defense Sector. Fighter pilots from the 119th Fighter Wing, North Dakota Air National Guard, were scrambled by the Northeast Air Defense Sector. But it wasn't just 1st Air Force involved that day: Regular Air Force pilots from Eglin Air Force Base, Fla., and Guardsmen from Tulsa, Okla., helped escort the doomed airplane and assist the FAA, which had requested the military's help.

The day ended badly, Arnold says, but “the significant thing was we could not see that aircraft and the sectors worked with the FAA to track the airplane and feed information to us. Using the FAA radar and FAA positioning in order to use our fighters, we were able to divert them from training missions and get units like Fargo (119th Fighter Wing) to escort

the plane. What this proved to us is that we couldn't see and couldn't talk to each other over the central part of the United States.”

Had the incident happened over a weekend, chances are military fighters wouldn't have been able to assist, Scott says. “This happened on a normal workday,” he adds. “And the event led the public to believe we were much more ready than we were. This was a mini-scenario where we were garnering nontraditional 1st Air Force forces to execute an operational mission.”

Not two years later, an operational mission on a much larger scale would unfold over the continental United States. That day — Sept. 11, 2001 — would end horribly.

Terror's eve

The day before America was attacked, NORAD was ready for war. The command was

participating in an annual exercise called “Vigilant Guardian.” It was practice. It was war games that would end with lessons on how to fight the better fight. This make-believe air war would happen off America's shores. This was not an air war over America.

“As much as you brief what could

happen in the future, I think from an intellectual standpoint, we realized the greatest threat to the United States prior to Sept. 11, 2001, was going to be a terrorist attack,” Arnold reflects one year after the tragedy. “But I did not envision that it would be hijacked airplanes run into buildings like that. I thought maybe a plane would be stolen and come

“We thought the primary threat was some sort of poor-man's cruise missile or Unmanned Aerial Vehicle from a commercial ship off the coast, maybe some old rickety freighter out in the Gulf.”

**— Retired Col. William A. Scott,
former 1st Air Force vice commander**

from outside the United States and have a biological or chemical or nuclear weapon aboard. That was our thought. That is what our mission was about. Our mission was not about the internal threat. It was about the external threat.”

Hijackings were regarded as a law enforcement — not military — issue, and “in the NORAD business, we were looking outward at things coming into this country, and that is what we practiced in exercises,” Arnold says. “We practiced how to get that airplane to land or how to get approval to shoot it down. ... No, we did not envision people hijacking airplanes from within the United States, taking over those aircraft and using them as fuel-air bombs.”

But when the unforeseeable happened Sept. 11, America’s military was able to respond because the air sovereignty mission had been preserved, adds former Air National Guard director Shepperd. “The transition of 1st Air Force to Air National Guard control gave us the ability to maintain air sovereignty in our country,” Shepperd says. “Thank goodness we had the Air National Guard on Sept. 11. Had we taken down our entire air defense structure, we would never have been able to do what we did and wouldn’t have had command and control or liaison with the FAA.”

On that tragic day, America’s air defense forces in the air and on the ground worked closely with the FAA to clear the skies of terror. “In less than an hour ... the whole world changed,” says Col. Bob Marr, commander of the Northeast Air Defense Sector, who would watch young airmen at the radar scopes as they scrambled the fighters, hoping against hope they’d make it to the World Trade Center and Pentagon on time.

The air war over America had begun. The exercise was over.

Staff Sgt. Keith Driessen, crew chief, 119th Fighter Wing, North Dakota Air National Guard, performs a preflight inspection on an F-16 “Fighting Falcon.”

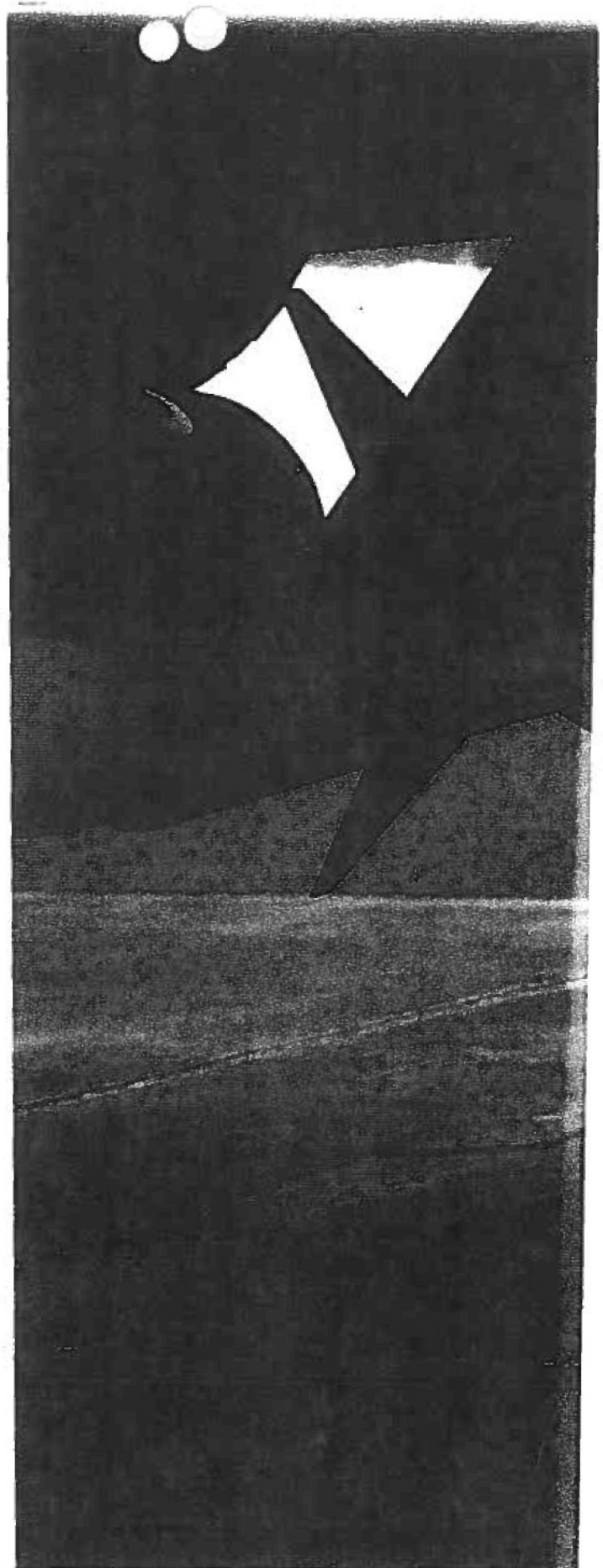




Photo by Master Sgt. William Quinn, 119th Fighter Wing, North Dakota Air National Guard



1 Paul E. McAllister, *TAC Strategic Air Defense Reference Book: October 1979-December 1989* (Langley Air Force Base, Va.: Headquarters 1st Air Force, 1990), 7-8.

2 William A. Scott, conversation with author, 31 July 2002.

3 McAllister, *TAC Strategic Air Defense Reference Book*, 14.

4 United States Air Force, *Air Force Basic Doctrine* (Headquarters Air Force Doctrine Center, Maxwell Air Force Base, Ala., 1997), 69.

5 Thomas Fuller, "NORAD at 40: Historical Overview" (North American Aerospace Defense Command History Office, 1997), n.p.

6 *Ibid.*, n.p.

7 Paul Connors, "The Third Activation: First Air Force from 1985 to 1991" (monograph, 1st Air Force History Office, 1999), n.p.

8 Air Force Space Command, History of United States Space Command, Aerospace Defense Command: January-December 1985 (Air Force Space Command History Office), 212-213.

9 Connors, "The Third Activation: First Air Force from 1985 to 1991," n.p.

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12 Lawrence R. Benson, "Golden Legacy, Boundless Future: A Brief History of the United States Air Force" (Air Force History Support Office), n.p., n.d.

13 Leslie Filson, *Sovereign Skies: Air National Guard Takes Command of 1st Air Force* (1st Air Force Public Affairs Office, 1999), 4.

14 *Ibid.*, 113.

15 *Ibid.*, 5-6.

16 *Ibid.*, 11.

17 *Ibid.*, 17.

18 Don Arias, Dan Navin and William A. Scott, conversation with author, 16 April 2002.

19 Filson, *Sovereign Skies*, 23.

20 *Ibid.*, 85.

21 *Ibid.*, 97.

22 William S. Cohen, "Report of the Quadrennial Defense Review" (Washington, D.C., Department of Defense, May 1997), Section 5.

23 Scott, conversation with author.

24 *Ibid.*

25 Dan Navin and William A. Scott, interview with author, conference call, Tyndall Air Force Base, Fla., 15 July 2002.

26 Gary Hart and Warren B. Rudman, "New World Coming: American Security in the 21st Century" (the United States Commission on National Security/21st Century, September 1999), Phase 1.

27 *Ibid.*, Phase 1.



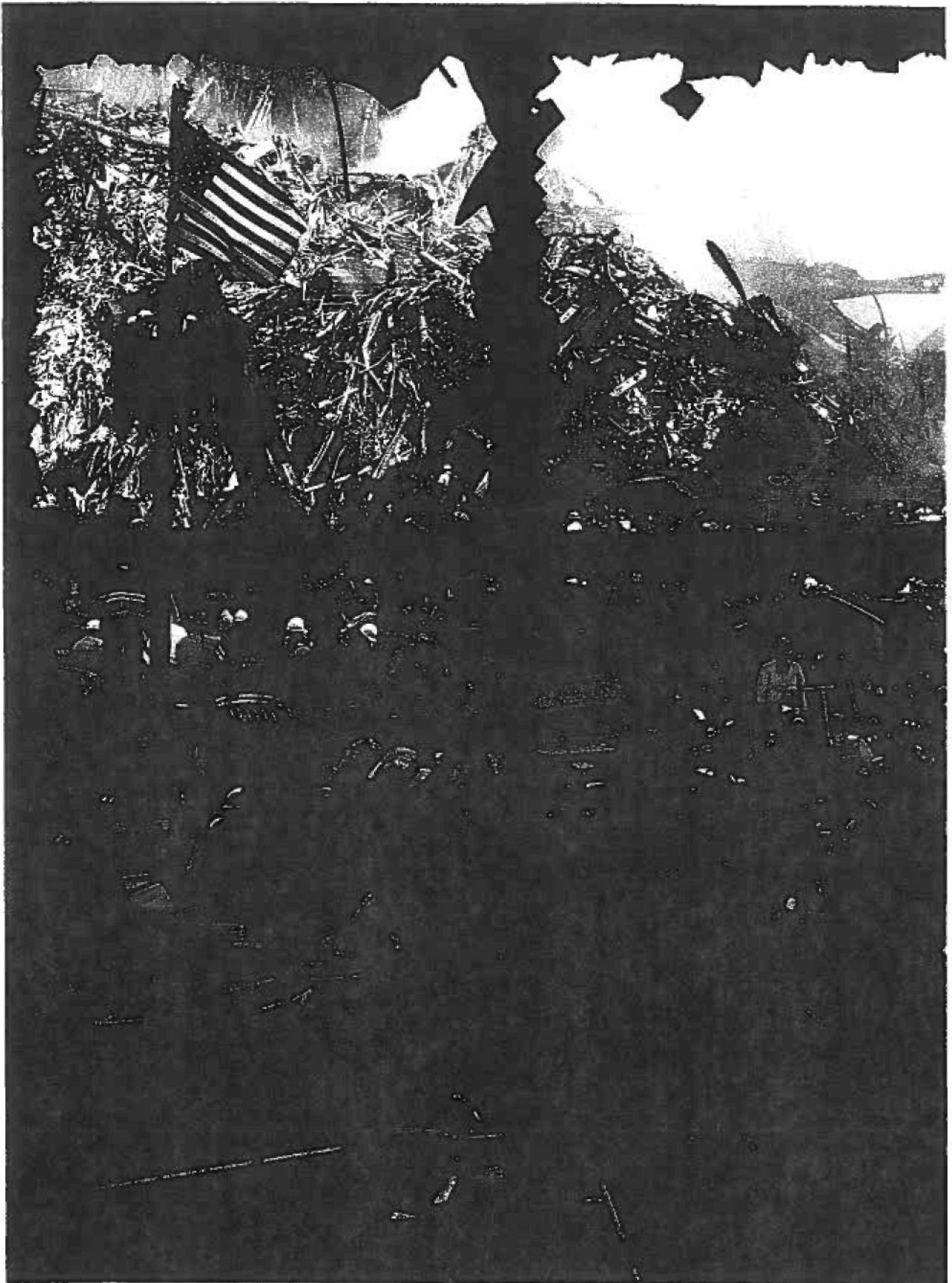
CHAPTER 3

9.11.01

Air war over America begins



Photo by Lt. Col. Bill Ramsay, 102nd Fighter Wing, Massachusetts Air National Guard



U.S. Navy photo by Journalist 1st Class Preston Keres

DAY OF TERROR:

Nation's air controllers, military fliers and crews fight for America's skies

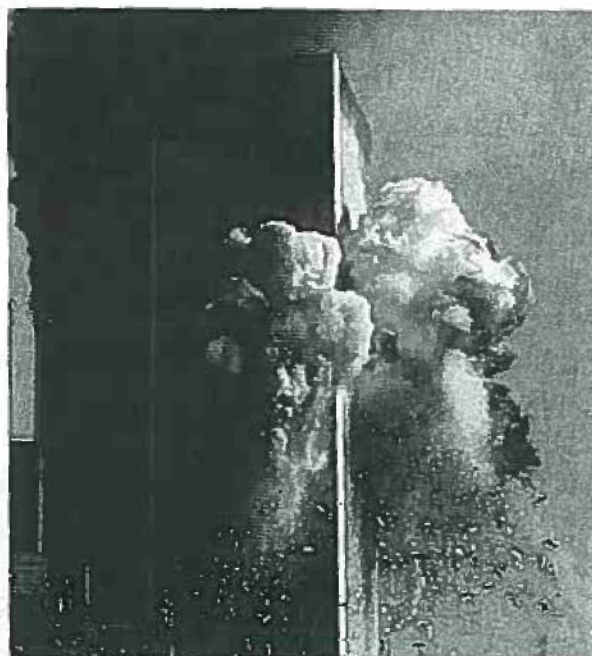
***I**t should have been a perfect day. The skies were clear, blue and beautiful with miles and miles of visibility across the northeast. But what should have been was not. The day's beauty would become ugly and all clarity would fade to a murky fog of hatred, turmoil and terror.*



Desperate plea

Massachusetts Air National Guard pilot Lt. Col. Tim Duffy remembers driving into work the morning of Sept. 11, 2001, disappointed he wasn't on the flying schedule. As he drove through the gate at Otis Air National Guard Base on Cape Cod, he admired the "clear-in-a-million" skies any pilot would crave. It was a pretty — even gorgeous — Tuesday, a great day to fly. Duffy never could have dreamed up the scenario that would unfold in only a few hours, never could have imagined what he'd see from his F-15 cockpit 5,000 feet above Manhattan that crisp fall morning.

Around 8:30 a.m., a Federal Aviation Administration controller in Boston phoned the control tower at Otis with a serious request: American Airlines Flight 11 had lost its identification signal and appeared headed toward Manhattan. It looked like a possible hijacking, and fighters were needed — fast.



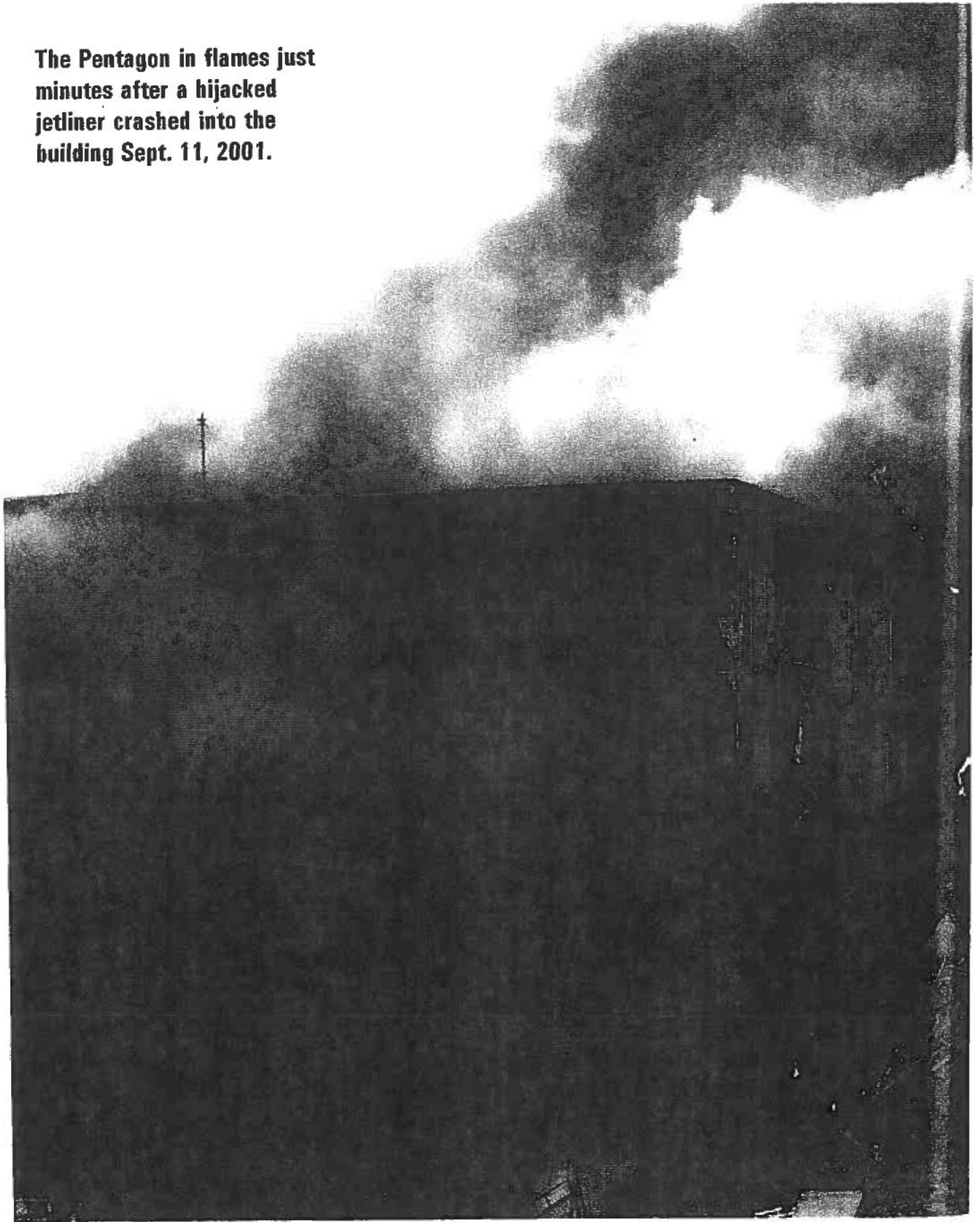
The Associated Press

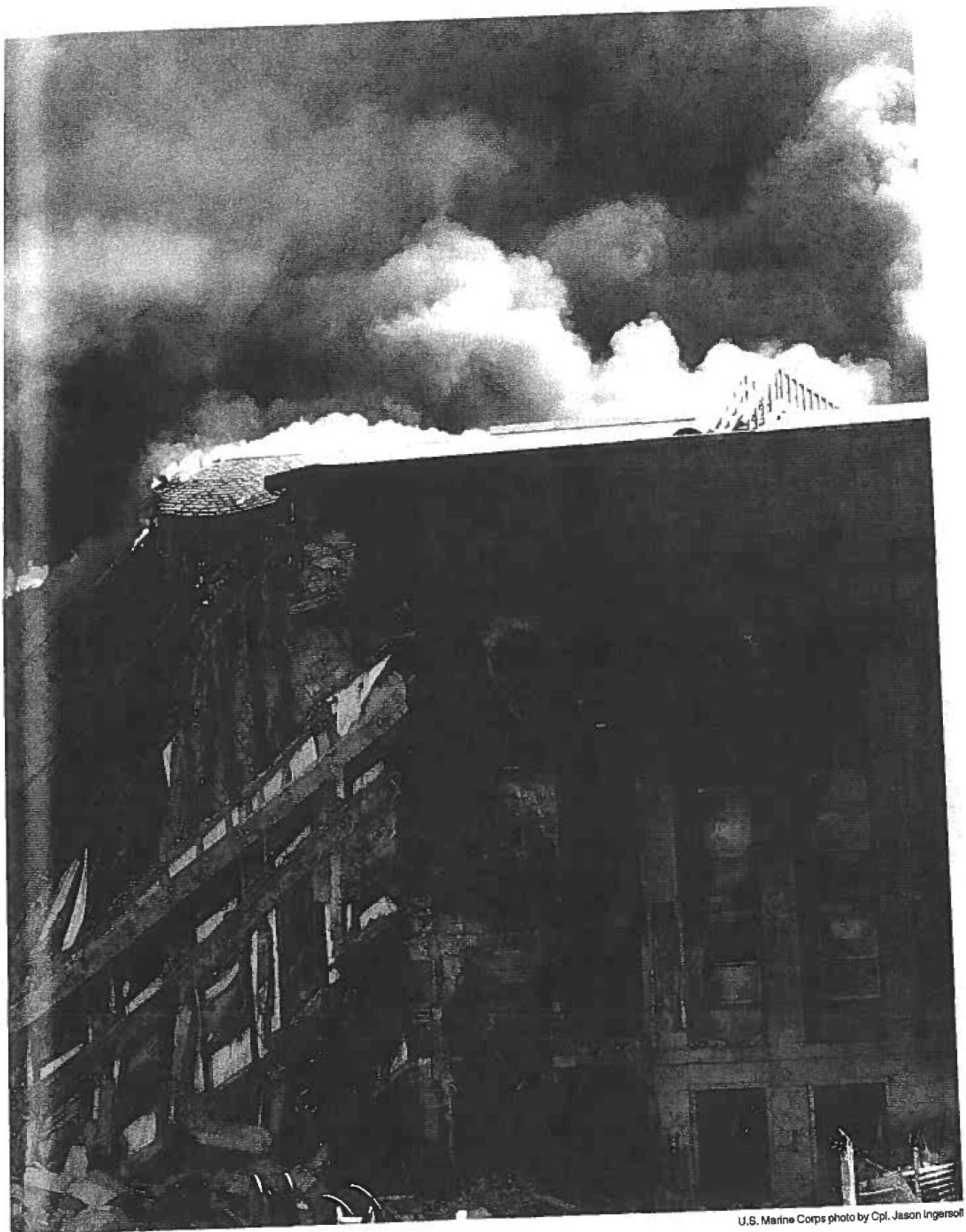
Above: A fiery image is caught on film at the World Trade Center Sept. 11, 2001.

Left: Firefighters walk past the American flag as they work their way toward the heart of the devastation that was once the World Trade Center, Sept. 14, 2001.

Previous page: A pair of F-15s assigned to the 102nd Fighter Wing, Massachusetts Air National Guard; F-16s from the 158th Fighter Wing, Vermont Air National Guard; and a KC-135 from the 101st Air Refueling Wing, Maine Air National Guard; fly a Combat Air Patrol mission over New York City.

The Pentagon in flames just minutes after a hijacked jetliner crashed into the building Sept. 11, 2001.





U.S. Marine Corps photo by Cpl. Jason Ingersoll

The 102nd Fighter Wing at Otis was one of seven alert sites in the continental United States, with two loaded airplanes ready for immediate take-off.

"It didn't happen the way it was supposed to or the way you would hope it would come down," Duffy says. "But the way it came down ... it really didn't hurt us at all. We were the ones who were contacted right away and knew about it before the air defense sector."

"About 8:30, 8:35 out by the ops (operations) desk, I got a phone call from one of the sergeants," he continues. "He said, 'Duffy, you have a phone call from tower. ... Something about a hijacking.' As soon as we heard there was something about a hijacking we got moving. That's not something we throw around lightly, that word. I had the radio with me; we call it the brick. ... So I called for 'Nasty' (Maj. Dan Nash) and I to suit up right away."

Lt. Col. Jon Treacy, commander of the wing's 101st Fighter Squadron, phoned NEADS — the Northeast Air Defense Sector — in Rome, N. Y., to report the FAA's request. The sector commander

would have authority to scramble the airplanes. But the FAA had already gotten through to a young tech sergeant at NEADS just reporting for duty that morning. Jeremy Powell answered a call he will never forget.

NEADS: *"Huntress Weapons, Sgt. Powell."*

FAA: *"All right, Boston Center, we have a problem here. We have a hijacked aircraft headed towards New York and we need you guys to, we need someone to scramble F-16s or something to help us out."*

NEADS: *"Is this real-world or an exercise?"*

FAA: *"No, this is real-world, this is not an exercise, not a test." 1*

"I think about that phone call constantly," Powell, since promoted to lieutenant, says. "I think about it all the time."



Photo by Scott A. Gwilt, Daily Sentinel, Rome, N.Y.



U.S. Navy photo by Journalist 1st Class Mark D. Faram



If normal procedures had taken place that morning, Powell probably wouldn't have taken that phone call. Normally, the FAA would have contacted officials at the Pentagon's National Military Command Center who would have contacted the North American Aerospace Defense Command. The secretary of defense would have had to approve the use of military assets to assist in a hijacking, always considered a law enforcement issue.² But nothing was normal on Sept. 11, 2001, and many say the traditional chain of command went by the wayside to get the job done.

Around the country that morning and many mornings before, 14 fighter jets were loaded and ready to intercept unidentified aircraft approaching the United States. Military controllers at three air defense sectors — in the northeast, southeast and

Above: Medical personnel and volunteers work the first medical triage area set up outside the Pentagon after American Airlines Flight 77 crashed into the southwest corner of the building Sept. 11, 2001.

Left: 2nd Lt. Jeremy Powell of the Northeast Air Defense Sector in Rome, N.Y., — a technical sergeant at the time — took an unforgettable phone call from the Federal Aviation Administration Sept. 11, 2001. The FAA was requesting assistance in intercepting the hijackers.

west — were monitoring the air picture, only a hot line call away from pilots on immediate alert. First Air Force and the Continental United States NORAD Region had protected America's air borders for years. But the command hadn't trained for fighting enemies within, hadn't practiced for coordinated attacks in continental airspace — the radars were always looking outward.

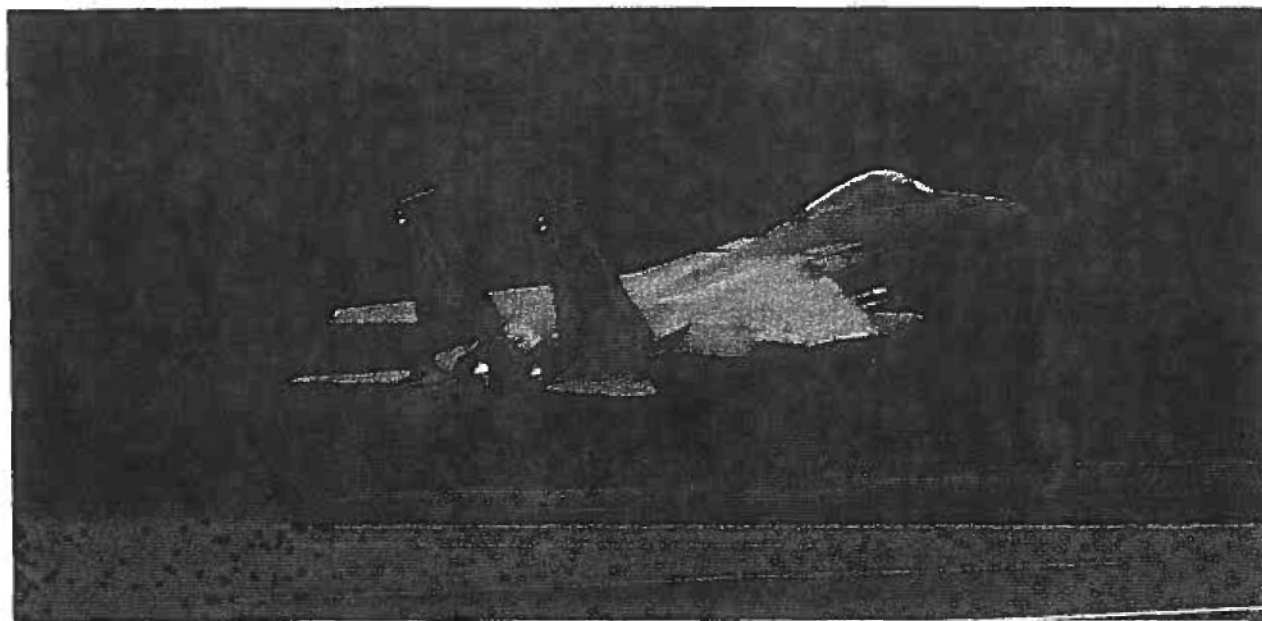
When terrorists took over the skies on Sept. 11, 2001, America's military reacted swiftly. In the northeast, massive efforts began to get every fighter available into the air. Controllers at the Western Air Defense Sector in Washington and Southeast Air Defense Sector in Florida sent fighter pilots into their cockpits to await further orders. Military air controllers worked hand-in-hand with the FAA trying to find possibly hijacked airliners. Military tankers and Airborne Warning and Control System aircraft provided crucial refueling and radar support throughout the day and beyond.



The military response was tremendous on Sept. 11, 2001, and everyone has a story to share of remarkable achievement amid terror and tragedy. But this story focuses mostly on the Air National Guard members who protected America's air borders before that defining autumn day.

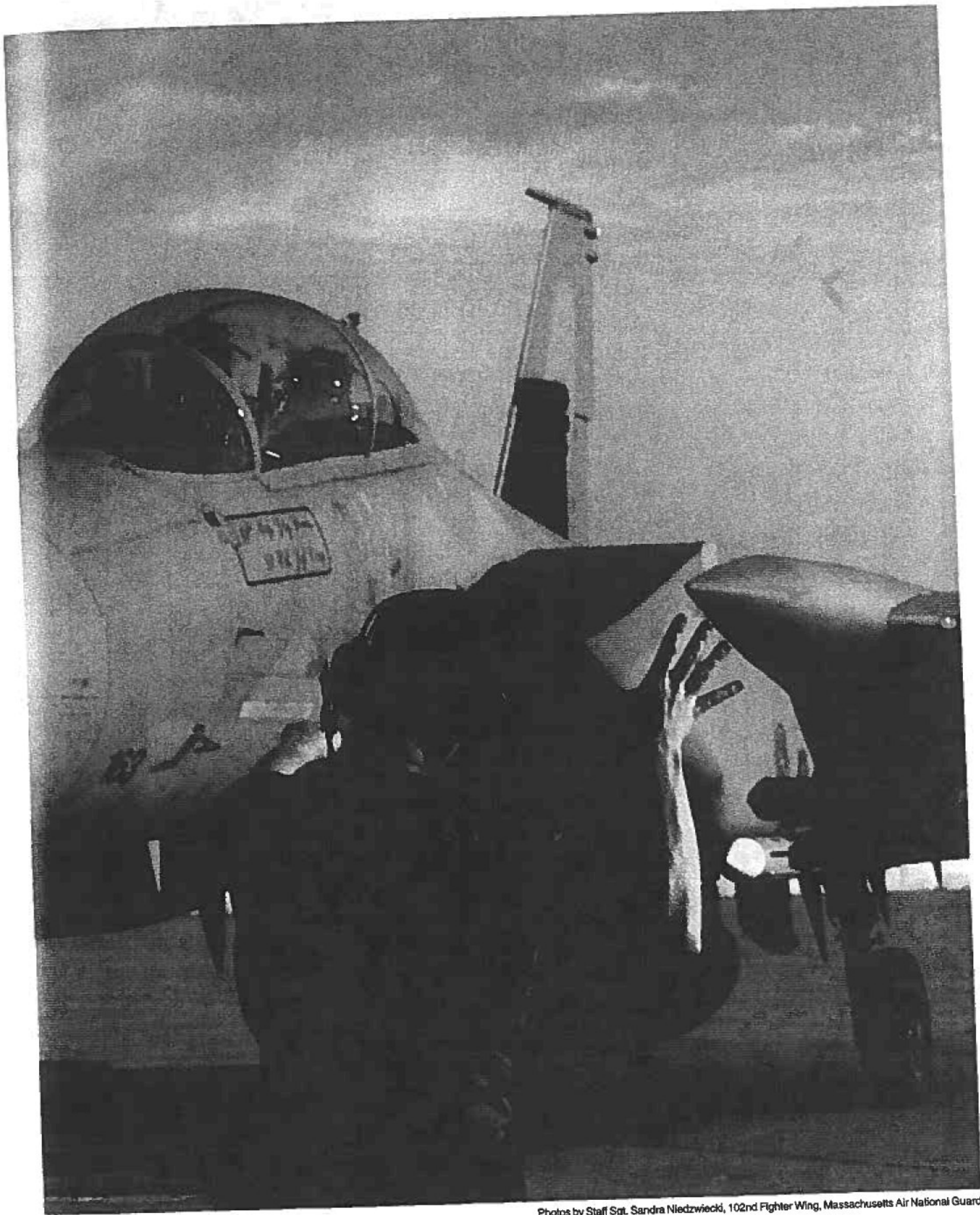
That community grew to astonishing strengths in a matter of hours as the 14 aircraft on alert increased to more than 400 fighters, tankers and airborne early warning platforms.³ Naval warships reinforced that presence as they kept watch in the Pacific, Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico.

Armed with a sense of patriotism, pride and volunteerism, the military response was tremendous on Sept. 11, 2001, but with thousands of lives lost and ruined in a calculated terrorist attack, it was a bittersweet triumph.



Above: An F-15 "Eagle" assigned to the 102nd Fighter Wing, Massachusetts Air National Guard, departs the runway at Otis Air National Guard Base. The wing was the first to scramble and fly Combat Air Patrols over New York Sept. 11, 2001.

Right: A crew chief from the 102nd Fighter Wing maintenance squadron gives a pilot the signal to crank the engine before taxiing down the runway for takeoff.



Photos by Staff Sgt. Sandra Niedzwiecki, 102nd Fighter Wing, Massachusetts Air National Guard

Lt. Col. Ian Sanderson, Northeast Air Defense Sector chief of operations control, says the Sept. 11 hijackings were unlike anything personnel there had trained for. The hijackings didn't fit the usual profile, he says.



Photo by Scott A. Gwilt, Daily Sentinel, Rome, N.Y.

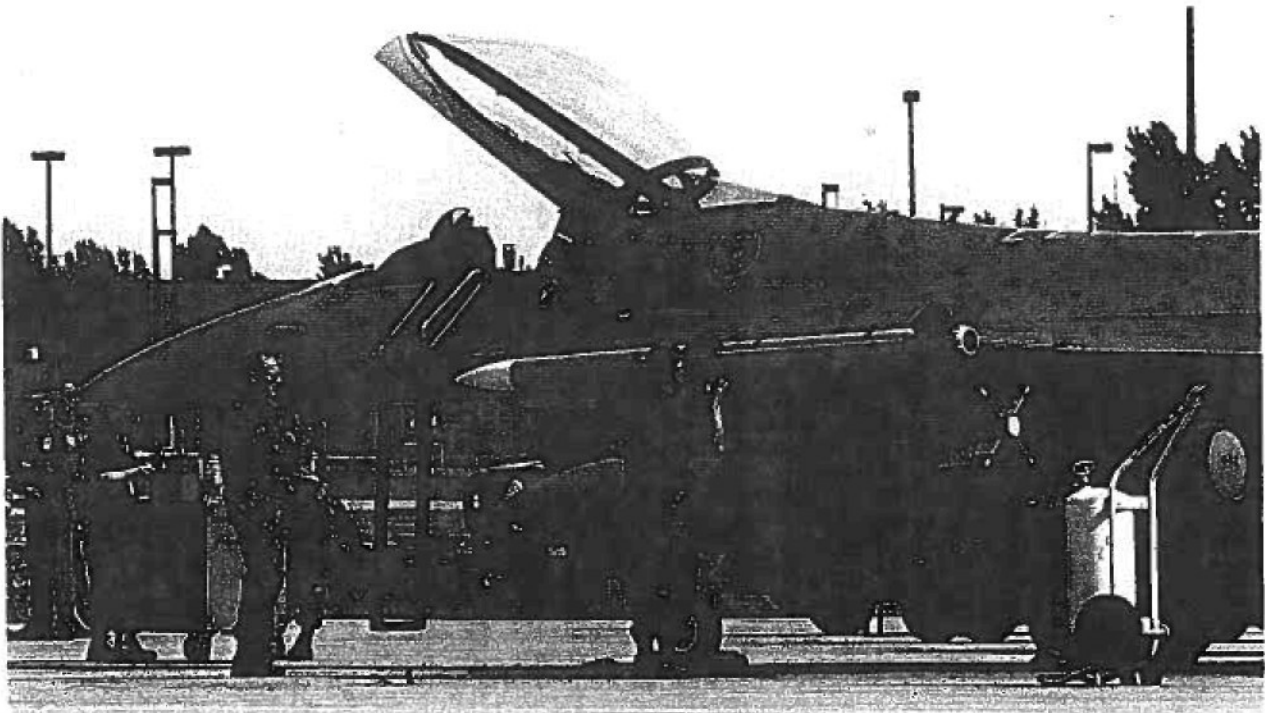


Photo by Master Sgt. William Quinn, 119th Fighter Wing, North Dakota Air National Guard

Senior Master Sgt. Robert Von Hagen attaches wings to an AIM-120/AMRAAM — Advanced Medium Range Air-to-Air Missile — loaded on a wingtip launcher Sept. 11, 2001, at the 119th Fighter Wing, North Dakota Air National Guard. Master Sgt. Bradley Johnson, 119th Logistics Group quality assurance inspector, observes. At far left is 119th Fighter Wing Vice Commander Col. Thomas E. Larson. The "Happy Hooligans" provided F-16 combat capability following the terrorist attacks.

Mad scramble

In a strange twist of fate, that very morning the command and control technicians at NEADS were beginning a 12-hour shift for the NORAD exercise "Vigilant Guardian." Across the command from Alaska to Canada and throughout the continental United States, battle staffs were poised to fight the simulated air war. The unusually high state of readiness was a sheer stroke of luck, many would say later, as commanders made unprecedented decisions with astonishing speed and airmen did everything they could to identify and intercept the hijackers.

"Around 8:40 there was a huddle of people around one of the scopes," says Col. Bob Marr, NEADS commander. "I've seen many exercises ... and as I saw that huddle I said, 'There's got to be something wrong, something is happening here.' You usually see that whenever they find a track on the scope that looks unusual; it's usually an indicator that something is getting ready to kick off."

From the battle cab — a glass-walled room overlooking the dimly lighted sector floor — Marr thought the hubbub was part of the exercise. He sent Lt. Col. Dawne Deskins, mission crew commander, to check it out. She came running back, Marr says, with urgency in her voice: the FAA needed help with a possible hijacking; a civilian airliner had just disappeared from the scope and was headed toward New York.

"At this point our mind-set was the 1970s-vintage hijack," Deskins says. "We didn't have a huge concern this aircraft was going to crash. We were thinking, 'let's get some airplanes up to support it, escort it and figure out where it's going to land.'"

Marr ordered Otis F-15 pilots Duffy and Nash to battle stations — pilots in the cockpits with engines turned off. He says the fliers were halfway to their jets when he phoned his boss, Maj. Gen. Larry K. Arnold, 1st Air Force and CONR commander.

Arnold remembers the phone call well. "By the

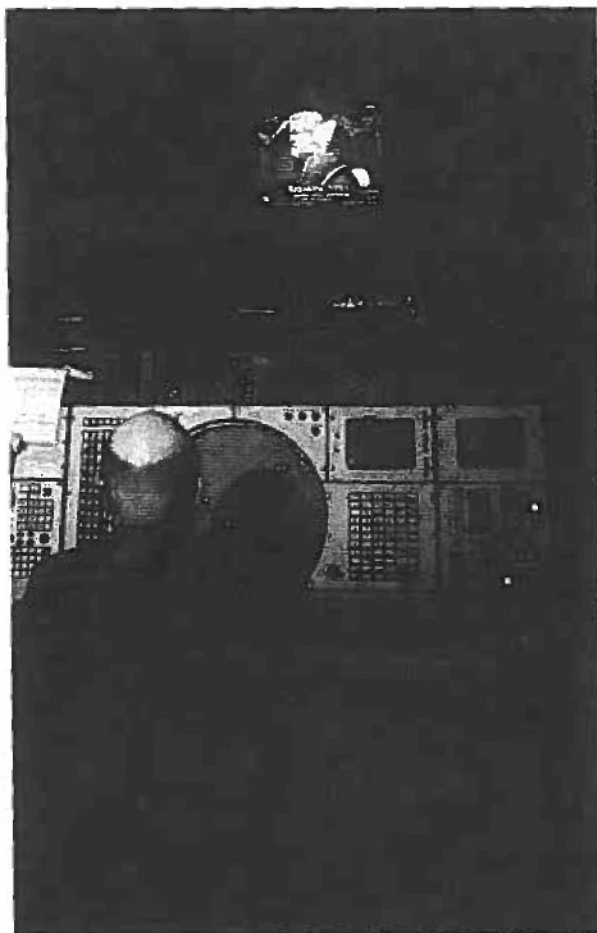


Photo by Scott A. Gwill, Daily Sentinel, Rome, N.Y.

A tracker "on scope" in the darkened operations room at the Northeast Air Defense Sector, Rome, N.Y. Airmen at NEADS were doing all they could to track and intercept the hijackers on Sept. 11.

time I talked to Bob Marr, he said he had the jets on battle stations and would like to get them airborne," he recalls. "I said, 'Go ahead and scramble them and we'll get authorities later.' ... He scrambled them and in the meantime I picked up the phone and talked to the operations deputy up at NORAD and he said, 'Yeah, we'll work this with the National Military Command Center. Go ahead and scramble the aircraft.' "

It was unfamiliar territory, but Marr knew what he had to do. "My intent was to scramble Otis to military airspace while we found out what was going on," he says.

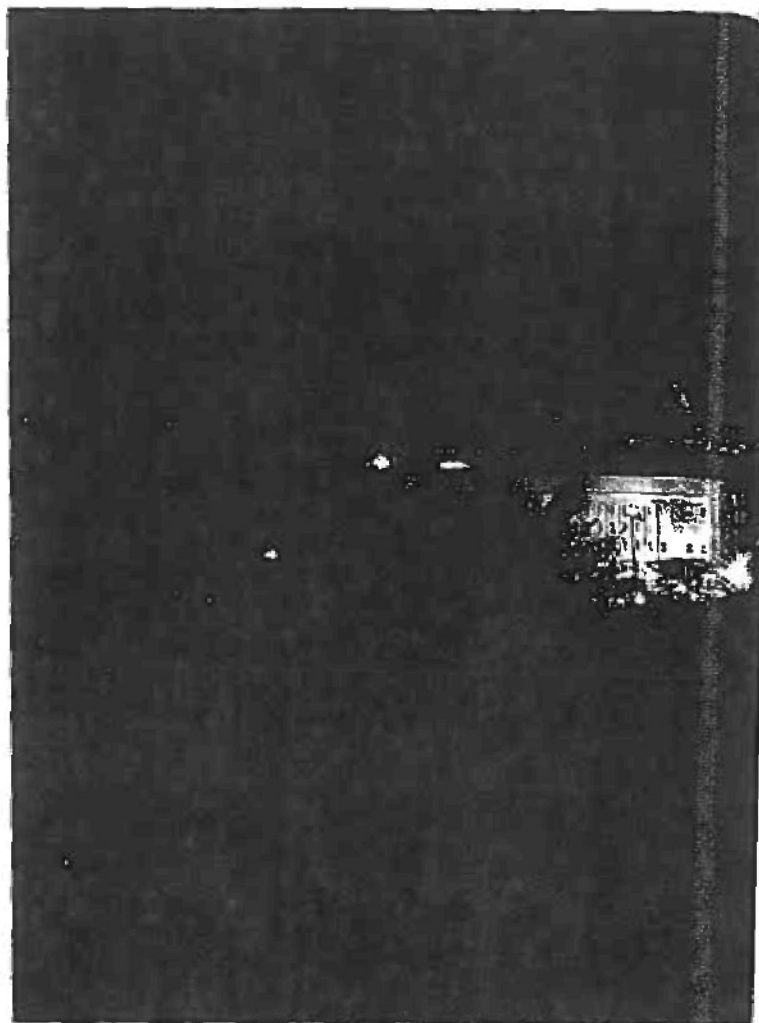


Somewhere on the radar scopes was American Airlines Flight 11, which had deviated from its Boston-Los Angeles flight plan and was not communicating with FAA ground controllers. Workers at the FAA Boston Center were baffled: The pilots weren't talking and a strange, possibly foreign, voice could be heard saying, "*We have some planes.*"⁴ It was fast becoming a frightening situation. The crew at NEADS was desperate to track and intercept the plane.

"When we received that call, all eyes were over New York looking for search tracks," says NEADS Staff Sgt. Larry Thornton, whose job until then had been searching for incoming flights over the ocean. Those "search tracks" can be tough to locate jumbled among hundreds of cooperative aircraft emitting electronic signatures to the radar scopes.

"Once we were called by the FAA, we could find split-second hits on what we thought we were looking for," Thornton says. "But the area was so congested and it was incredibly difficult to find. We were looking for little dash marks in a pile of clutter and a pile of aircraft on a two-dimensional scope."

Each fluorescent green pulsating dot on the scope represented an airplane, and there were thousands out there, especially over the busy north-



The Pentagon burns into the night of Sept. 11.

east United States. To complicate matters, the sector didn't share much of the FAA's interior radar data, especially at low altitudes, and had to piece together the incoming information. But Master Sgt. Joe McCain believes they saw Flight 11 disappear over New York that morning. "We picked up a search track going down the Hudson Valley, straight in from the north toward New York," he says. "It's very unusual to find a search target, which is a plane with its transponder turned off, in that area. This plane was headed toward New York going faster than the average Cessna and was no doubt a jet aircraft. We had many clues. The plane was fast and heading in an unusual direction with no bea-



U.S. Navy photo by Photographer's Mate 2nd Class Robert Houlihan

con. We had raw radar data only. Everything just kind of fit. We watched that track until it faded over New York City and right after that someone came out of the break room and said the World Trade Center had been hit."

On Cape Cod, 160 miles to the northeast, the F-15 pilots were ordered to scramble. As the jets rolled down Runway 5 at Otis Air National Guard Base, American Airlines Flight 11, a Boeing 767 with 92 people aboard, perished in the clear blue Manhattan sky. It was 8:46 a.m. Eastern Standard Time, a tragic tick of the clock that forever seared itself into the American psyche. It was the unforgettable moment when the first of hundreds of in-

nocent victims were killed that day.

It was the moment the sleeping dragon of the world's most powerful military was awakened with a start — much as it was 60 years earlier on Dec. 7, 1941. As the scramble lights flashed green at Otis Air National Guard Base, a new kind of war was beginning. When the F-15s took off with fire igniting behind them, flight lead Duffy told his wingman they would fly supersonic. It wasn't standard procedure, but the Gulf War veteran was filled with an irresistible sense of urgency. "This is one of those things I can't really explain why I did it the way I did it," Duffy says. "When we took off I left it in full afterburner the whole time. So we climbed up, we were supersonic going down to Long Island and 'Nasty' (Nash) called and said, 'Hey Duff, you're super,' and I said, 'Yeah, I know, don't worry about it.'"

"At the time I just wanted to get there ... we were high enough that we wouldn't blow out windows or do any damage to anything. I figured if anyone cared later I could probably take the heat for trying to get there quickly. Again, we have no idea what we are going toward. We are taking off to go help somebody and we needed to get there quickly to assess the situation."

They didn't know American Airlines Flight 11 had just plunged into the twin towers.

Under attack

Could this be the airplane the NEADS controllers were so desperately tracking?

Deskins says they just couldn't be sure. "Our first question was, 'Are we talking about this hijacked aircraft?'" she says. "Our identification section was asking what type of aircraft it was and Boston Center was reporting American 11 still airborne. So we thought it must have been a weird coincidence."

But her gut told her differently: "I remember thinking, 'Oh boy, this is starting to sound really



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Mark Olsen, New Jersey Department of Military and Veterans Affairs Public Affairs Office

The 1st Battalion, 150th Aviation, New Jersey Army National Guard, begins post-attack flight operations over New York in a UH-60A "Blackhawk" helicopter Sept. 11, 2001.

bad,' " Deskins continues. "I didn't want to jump to any conclusions but it seemed logical that the hijacked aircraft had hit the World Trade Center."

Without much to go on, the NEADS controllers continued to search in vain, struggling to lead the Massachusetts pilots toward the airliner. "I was fighting to get the (plane's) tail number," says Master Sgt. Maureen Dooley, noncommissioned officer in charge of identification technicians. "We were trying to grab at anything we could."

And when the FAA reported that Flight 11 had indeed crashed, Dooley says she felt helpless. "I think everybody did. We were doing everything in our power." ⁵

Marr remembers thinking that it must have been a horrible accident. Maybe the pilot had flown too low and lost control upon descent into John F. Kennedy International Airport, N.Y., he reasoned. "I'm thinking this is probably an accident because

there's been a hijack," Marr says. "The guy is going to JFK and every hijack to this date has been an individual who wants to land an airplane somewhere other than where it's supposed to land. ... So we surmise there's been a terrible accident and there's not much we can do about it."

But uncertainty and doubt remained. Says NEADS chief of operations control Lt. Col. Ian Sanderson: "When we got word of the first crash, I heard it but I didn't believe it. I had to go down the hall and look at the TV. And what I remember most is that the hijacking didn't follow the expected profile. It wasn't the type of hijacking we'd trained for. I was thinking, 'this doesn't taste right, feel right or smell right.'"

With the Massachusetts F-15s still headed toward Manhattan, Marr notified New York Air National Guard headquarters to report what he knew. "Our jets are heading down south toward

Whiskey 105 and we don't really have a mission for them at this point, because we don't have any other problems in the air," Marr says.

Whiskey 105, the military training airspace southeast of Long Island, "would put them within a few minutes of New York City to 'CAP' (Combat Air Patrol), burn down gas and wait for further instructions," Marr says. "By this time we start getting CNN showing in the battle cab ... and as we're watching the television we see another aircraft come into view and hit the second tower of the World Trade Center."



Disbelief filled the room. Everyone was floored, Sanderson says: "We had to sort of wrest back control." ⁶

Adds Deskins: "That plane came out of nowhere ... we didn't even know there was a second hijack. Now we knew it was intentional."

From the CONR Air Operations Center at Tyndall Air Force Base, Fla., Arnold and his staff were stunned as they watched the same live images. "When I saw the second plane hit, my thought at the time was, 'My God, was that a replay of the first one?'" Arnold says. "Then I realized there were two smoking holes and not one, and at that time, I think all of us thought it was beyond the realm of probability for two accidents to occur like that. We were under attack at this time."

United Airlines Flight 175 crashed into the south tower of the World Trade Center at 9:03 a.m. with 65 people aboard. Two 767s were gone and it was anyone's guess what might happen next.

"I thought it might be prudent to pull out of the exercise, which we did," Arnold says. "We called NORAD and they were well aware of what had happened obviously. ... As we pulled out of the exercise we were getting calls about United Flight 93 and we were worried about that. Then we had another call from Boston Center about a possible hijacking, but that turned out to be the airplane that had already hit the south tower but we didn't know

that at the time."

At the NORAD command center near Colorado Springs, Colo., an air threat conference call was beginning. Open communication lines were established between top U.S. and Canadian officials to eventually include President George W. Bush, Vice President Dick Cheney and Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld. ⁷ Arnold would find himself on that call when the last suspicious airplane had landed. But that wouldn't be for hours.

In the darkened operations center at NEADS, Marr and the operations crew felt the gravity of



Photo by Scott A. Gwilt, Daily Sentinel, Rome, N.Y.

Lt. Col. Dawne Deskins, Northeast Air Defense Sector mission crew commander, was tracking the movement of American Airlines Flight 77 on Sept. 11, 2001. She had six or seven radar hits before watching the plane's signal fade and disappear from the scope.

the situation. "We had both buildings hit and didn't have any other aircraft at this time except Otis, heading to the World Trade Center in a straight line," Marr says. "At Mach 1 it would take them 16 minutes to get there, that's 10 miles a minute."

Approaching Manhattan, Duffy and Nash were still pursuing Flight 11, trying to get information from NEADS on the plane's location. "I call for bogey dope (target information) and I don't realize American has already hit," Duffy says. "So I'm still chasing American and ... we're going right down Long Island and three or four minutes later I call for bogey dope again and right then they say the second aircraft just hit the World Trade Center. So, confusion in my cockpit: *The second aircraft?*

"I look up and we're about 60 or 70 miles outside Manhattan and I can see the towers burning. ... OK, obviously everything just changed from my personal mind-set. We take off to go help somebody, and now as I look up and can see the burning I say, 'OK, now people are dying.'

"It's kind of hard to explain, but basically you switch into a combat mode where you say, 'OK, this just got real serious real fast.' ... Now people are dying and you're thinking, 'OK, what do I have to do?' And you have to put emotion aside because you don't have time for it."

Hard to believe only a few hours earlier Duffy was thinking about the weather on his drive in to work. "It was one of the prettiest days I've ever flown, literally there was not a cloud in the sky and visibility was probably better than a hundred miles," Duffy says. "It was just crystal clear. When I was driving in that morning and knew I wasn't on the flying schedule I was thinking, 'Oh what a day, what a day to go flying.'"

Now the pilots were shocked and amazed as they watched the smoldering scene below. "We

were going as fast as the airplanes could go," Nash says, then hesitates. "We did everything we could but unfortunately couldn't stop anything."

The F-15s were loaded with extra weapons and fuel because of the exercise and "were ready to engage anything if they had to," Marr says. "But obviously this is peacetime and we have no authority to engage any targets ... but we're thinking New York City is under attack."

More jets would be needed. The NORAD "deep peace" stance meant only two East Coast fighters remained on alert. They were from a detachment of the 119th Fighter Wing, North Dakota Air National Guard. The alert facility at Langley Air Force Base, Va., is several hundred miles from Manhattan, but Marr directed the pilots to battle stations anyway. "The plan was to protect New York City," Marr says.

As tensions continued to build, the FAA took unprecedented measures to clear the skies of the northeast United States. "Air Traffic Control Zero" would soon follow across the nation.⁸

"Now our (Massachusetts) pilots are chasing down traffic that is trying to get on the ground or to Boston or New York," Marr says. "We

didn't know what could have been cruise-missile airliners.

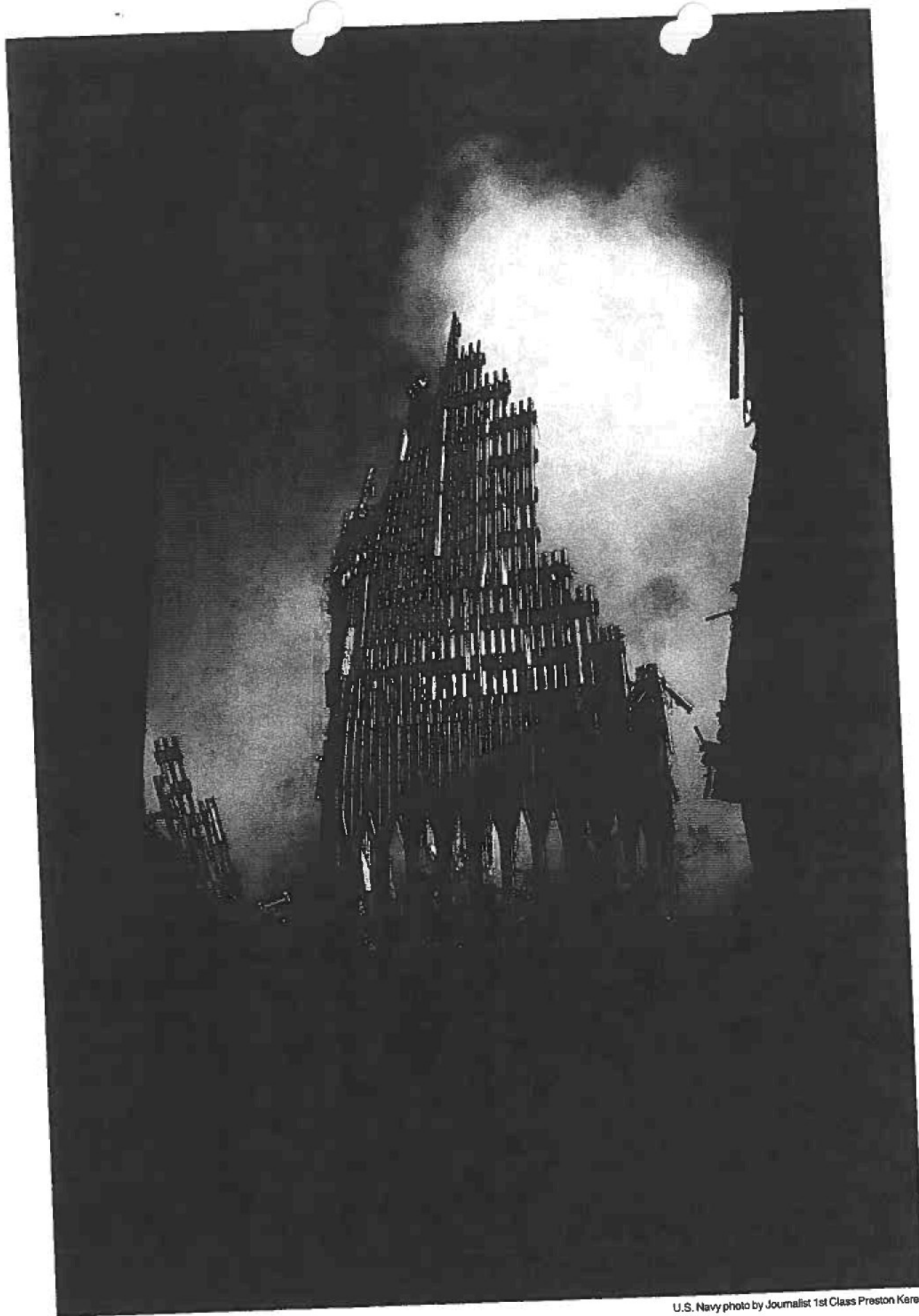
"As the F-15s go over the city, now the fog of war is starting to set in."

On the cool sector floor at NEADS, that fog was thick with misinformation, fear and apprehen-

"As the F-15s go over the city, now the fog of war is starting to set in."

**— Col. Bob Marr, commander,
Northeast Air Defense Sector**

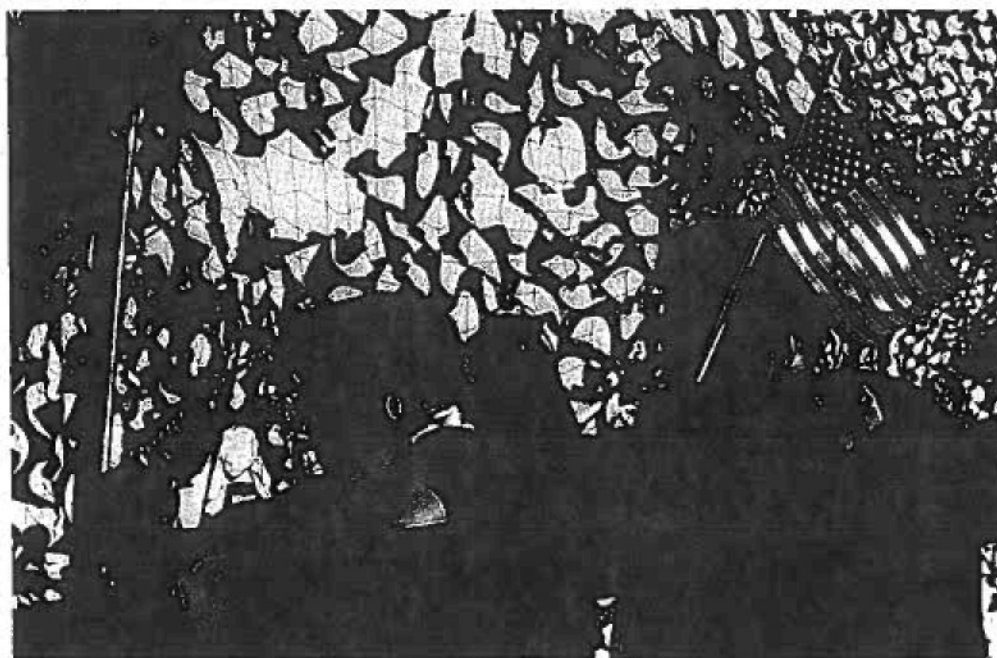
What is left of the south tower of the World Trade Center in New York City stands like a tombstone among the debris and devastation caused by the Sept. 11 terrorist attack.



U.S. Navy photo by Journalist 1st Class Preston Kares



U.S. Army photos by Staff Sgt. John Valceanu



Family members visit the Pentagon Sept. 15, 2001, to pay respects to their loved ones who died in the Sept. 11 attack there.

sion. Many of the phone calls coming in were rumors and there was little way to confirm or deny them. The pilots above Manhattan, meanwhile, were wondering what would come next as they watched the devastation below.

"As soon as I saw the towers burning, I called up Huntress (NEADS) and said 'Huntress, 4, 5, say mission,'" Duffy says. "'What do you want me to do next? What do you need from me right this second?' ... He didn't know what to do."

Huntress would soon have more information: "It only took a couple minutes of us in the area before they came back on and said 'NORAD just took control of all the airspace in the country,'" Duffy says. "'Proceed direct to Manhattan and set up Combat Air Patrol.' I said, 'OK, got that.'"

The pilots requested and were immediately given clearance from the FAA to fly at any altitude necessary. "They just gave us the airspace," Duffy says.

FAA: *"We shut all traffic off at Boston Center, no one departing, and we're rerouting all JFK arrivals and Newark Metro airport's (N.J.)."*

NEADS: *"Copy sir."*

FAA: *"I do have a question for you: In case we have any more aircraft that start deviating, we need to know, do you have anyone on alert or is that something that you can do just in case this happens to any more aircraft?"*

NEADS: *"... I've got fighters in Whiskey 105 right now, and I've got a tanker there as well, I've got other aircraft on alert at Langley as well, I'm getting ready to, I've got trackers over JFK, over Boston and that area, just looking for anything suspicious."*

FAA: *"Anything suspicious, OK, and we'll let you know about the internationals. We're not sure what we're doing about them yet."* ⁹

□□□

With little time to grasp what had happened in New York, ~~the FAA continued to report more shocking information to the Northeast sector. American Airlines Flight 77 and Delta Airlines Flight 1989, both 767s bound for Los Angeles, were possibly hijacked.~~ Somewhere over Cleveland, United Airlines Flight 93 bound for San Francisco was still off course. ||

"The FAA is starting to report more aircraft not following their flight plans," Marr says. "Now we are looking at a host of potential problems. Then we get another call from Boston Center that we have a problem near Washington and 'you'd better check on it.'"

The North Dakota alert pilots were still in their cockpits at Langley Air Force Base. At the squadron operations desk, young F-16 pilot Capt. Craig Borgstrom took a terse phone call from NEADS. "The guy from the sector asked me, 'How many can you get airborne right now?'" Borgstrom recalls. "I told him I had two on battle stations. He then said, 'That's not what I asked. How many total airplanes can you send up?'"

"I said, 'I'll give you three.'"

"And he said, 'Then go!'"

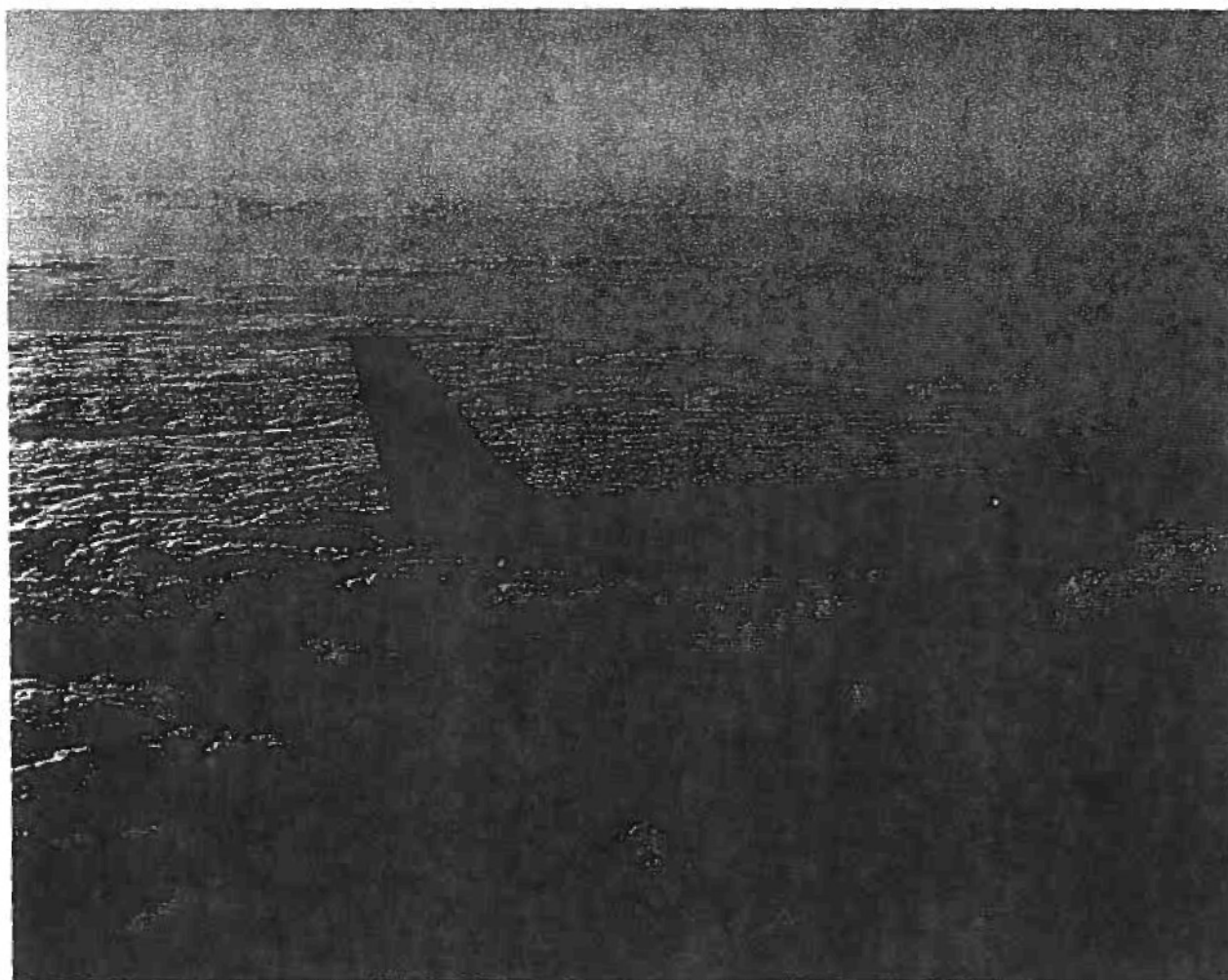
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Just as Borgstrom grabbed his gear to join the others, the Klaxon alarm sounded and the red lights turned green in the alert bam. The active air scramble order had been given. ~~It was 9:24 a.m. and the planes were given highest priority over all other air traffic at Langley Air Force Base.~~ ¹⁰

"We crank and scramble ... we took off, the three of us, and basically the formation we always brief on alert, we'll stay in a two- to three-mile trail from the guy in front," Borgstrom says. "They (NEADS) were giving us the heading and altitude

Right: The Northeast Air Defense Sector called upon the Michigan Air National Guard 127th Wing on Sept. 11, 2001. Two pilots from the Selfridge unit were flying a training mission and would have been asked to intercept United Airlines Flight 93 had it not turned toward Pennsylvania. In this photo taken a few months later, 2nd Lt. Christopher Melka gives the "ready to roll" sign.

Below: An F-15 "Eagle" from the 125th Fighter Wing, Florida Air National Guard, refuels from a KC-135 "Stratotanker" on a Combat Air Patrol mission over central Florida on Dec. 5, 2001. The Jacksonville-based wing is one of 10 assigned to 1st Air Force and the Continental United States NORAD Region.



U.S. Air Force photo by Tech. Sgt. Shaun Withers



U.S. Air Force photo by Tech. Sgt. Dale Atkins

of north-northeast up to 20,000 feet. Then shortly after takeoff they changed our heading more north-westerly and gave us max-subsonic.

"That's as fast as you can go without breaking the sound barrier. I've never heard it before in my short career, but I don't think anyone's heard that order before."

The F-16s were being vectored toward Washington, D.C., instead of New York. As they were scrambling, Deskins was watching a suspicious track on the radar scope. "I had the scope focused in on the D.C. area and got blips of this aircraft that appeared to be going in a turn around D.C.," she says. "It was going fast for where it was located and I remember looking at the guy next to me and saying, 'What is that?'"

"I probably got six or seven radar returns on it before it faded and was just gone. You're thinking, 'What just happened?' I got this feeling in the pit of my stomach and said, 'That's another one.'"

Tech. Sgt. Ronald G. Belluscio, a NEADS se-

nior weapons director technician, sent the F-16s to Washington that morning. "When all of this was happening, we were giving directions as enlisted personnel," he says. "We were empowered and entrusted to certain tasks that we aren't normally accustomed to doing to get the job done. I jumped on a frequency, per the senior director, and was told to ask the Langley birds to vector over the Pentagon. I didn't know it had been hit."

Majs. Dean Eckmann, Brad Derrig and Borgstrom continued flying max-subsonic. "The sector gave us certain coordinates to CAP over a certain point," Borgstrom says. "We all dialed in the coordinates to figure out exactly where we were going and we got to our point and we could see from ... maybe 40 miles out, smoke billowing. We started putting things together."

"OK, we're going toward where that smoke is and as you get closer, you start thinking, 'OK, maybe there's some type of attack going on.' You start correlating Washington, D.C., with New York."

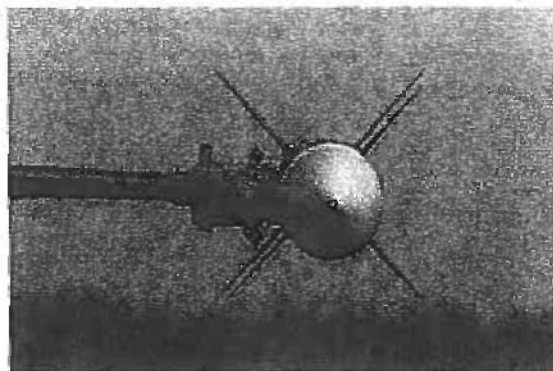
We still have no 'intel' brief of what's going on ... and another building is on fire. ... We knew something terribly wrong was going on. Something severe had happened."

American Airlines Flight 77, with 64 people aboard, had crashed into the Pentagon at 9:38 a.m., but the pilots didn't know that. Borgstrom thought maybe a gas line had burst or a car bomb had exploded. But their mission, he says, was clear: keep all airplanes away from Washington, D.C.

The three pilots, all on different frequencies but sharing a common intra-flight channel, were hearing a lot of chatter but nothing about airliners crashing into buildings, Borgstrom says. "There was some confusion for us, this was very abnormal," he continues. "We were all three on different frequencies ... and were getting orders from a lot of different people."

Only a few minutes after reaching the Washington area, flight lead Eckmann was vectored toward two low-flying aircraft. It was around 9:45 a.m. "As we're coming in, I set up a Combat Air Patrol with air traffic controllers and they come back to me and say there are a couple unknowns heading north on the Potomac River toward the White House," Eckmann says. "We were up in the high 20s and I basically roll inverted and go straight down. It took no time to get there and I get a radar contact on one of them and end up identifying them. One is a military helicopter and the other is a law enforcement helicopter and they're obviously heading toward the Pentagon to aid."

Eckmann flew low over the Capitol and Mall area. "I wanted to clear the area and make sure nothing else was coming in," he says. "I was also looking on the ground for something suspicious and thought if I saw a big fuel tanker truck heading toward the White House I could possibly take him



Arkansas Air National Guard photo by Tech. Sgt. Randy L. Byrd

out with my gun. You have so many thoughts racing through your mind. ... While I'm doing this, Craig (Borgstrom) calls me and says Huntress wants to know the extent of the damage at the Pentagon.

"I fly by the Washington Monument and turn back

down and fly over the Pentagon, just to the south of the Pentagon, and tell them the two outer rings have been damaged," Eckmann says. "They asked me if I knew what it was and I told them I guessed it was a ~~big fuel tanker truck~~ because of the amount of smoke and flames coming up and ~~nobody indicated anything about an airplane~~. And there was no airplane wreckage off to the side."

Eckmann says the scene below was shockingly surreal. "It was almost a feeling of disbelief," he says. "Kind of like watching a bad movie. You can't believe what you're seeing, but you're still watching it."

Eckmann would later hear that the presence of a fully loaded F-16 darting overhead was a great comfort to people below. "A lot of people said it made them feel safe," he says. "They looked up and saw an armed F-16 and I guess they started cheering. I heard stories that people went back in after seeing me fly over to help others out. What would have happened had I stayed up high? They wouldn't have seen me. Now they knew they were safe. It was pure luck that I happened to be down

Right: An F-15 assigned to the Massachusetts Air National Guard 102nd Fighter Wing flies a Combat Air Patrol mission over New York City.

Above: An AMRAAM missile is loaded on an F-16 assigned to the 188th Fighter Wing, Arkansas Air National Guard.

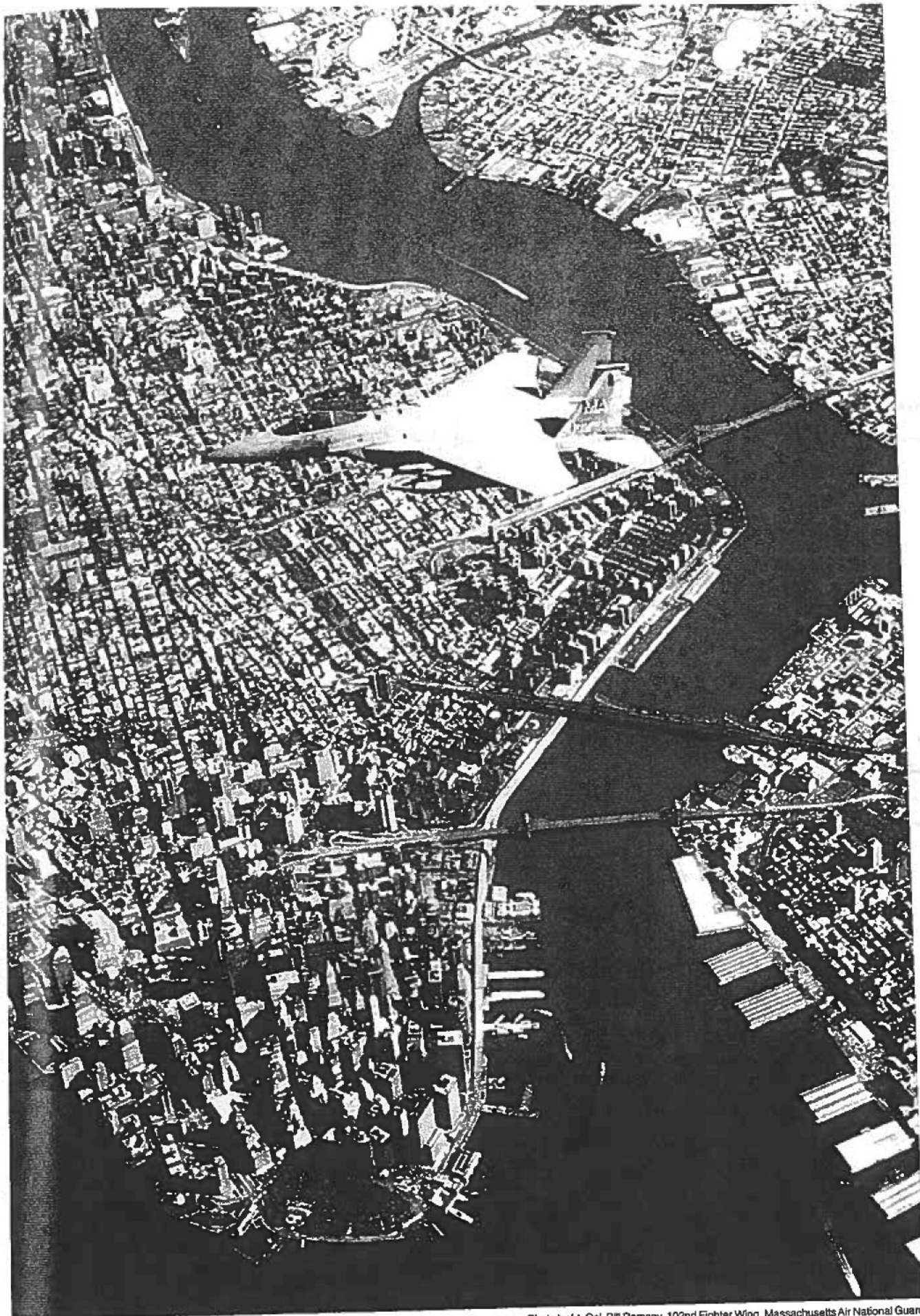


Photo by Lt. Col. Bill Ramsay, 102nd Fighter Wing, Massachusetts Air National Guard

there and called on that initial intercept.”

Shortly, Eckmann would hear an extraordinary request: “*Protect the House.*” A Secret Service agent arrived at one of Washington’s Air Traffic Control towers and wanted to talk to the flight lead.

“I took it to mean protect the White House,” Eckmann says.

Clearance to kill

~~With no available alert fighters in the air, Marr and his crew were still faced with United Flight 93. The plane was headed west, so controllers began looking for any other fighter jets that might be nearby. “We don’t have fighters that way and we think he’s headed toward Detroit or Chicago,” Marr says. “I’m thinking Chicago is the target and know that Selfridge Air National Guard Base (Mich.) has F-16s in the air. We contacted them so they could head off 93 at the pass. The idea is to get in there, close in on him and convince him to turn. ... As United Airlines Flight 93 was going out, we received the clearance to kill if need be. In fact, Major General Arnold’s words almost verbatim were: ‘We will take lives in the air to save lives on the ground.’”~~

But the Selfridge pilots — not part of the NORAD air sovereignty force — were unarmed. Lt. Col. Tom Froling and Maj. Douglas Champagne of the 127th Wing had just fired the last of their 20mm cannon ammunition in routine training. They were oblivious to the events in New York and Washington but heard unusual conversation over their radio frequencies.

“Something strange was occurring and I couldn’t put my finger on what was happening,” Froling says.

A Vermont Air National Guard F-16 from the 158th Fighter Wing patrols the skies above New York City on Sept. 12, 2001.





U.S. Air Force photo by Lt. Col. Terry Moultrup

"Flying over Central Park at 1,000 feet and 500 knots ... trying to identify people, that's just wrong. You should never be doing this over downtown Manhattan, watching the towers burning."

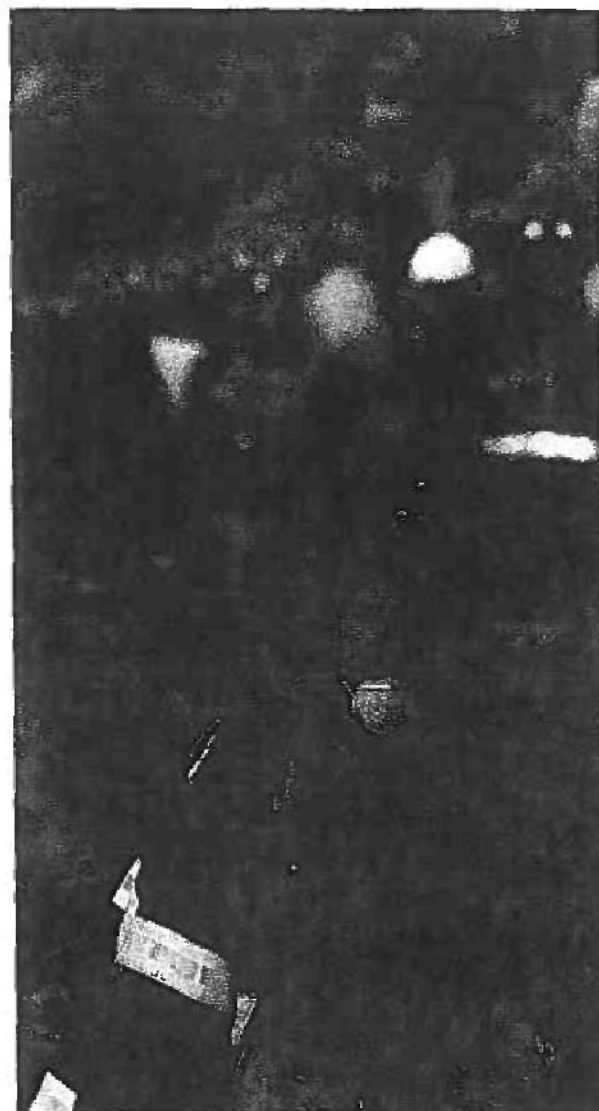
**— Lt. Col. Tim Duffy, F-15 pilot;
Massachusetts Air National Guard**

"I could hear (the FAA) Cleveland Center talking to the airlines and I started putting things together and knew something was up. Then our commander wanted to know if we'd expended our training ordnance. The only thing that went through my mind was maybe there was a problem with our airplane, maybe we missed something and shouldn't have been shooting the gun."

Froling didn't know he was being considered to shoot down an airliner. ~~Without weapons and because United Flight 93 turned away from Chicago, he never faced that decision.~~ The Michigan pilots would safely return to their base. Champagne remembers a squadron buddy running toward his jet as he was taxiing in. "I'll never forget this, it is one of the things I'll remember, I think forever," he says. "I was in the cockpit and I remember him mouthing the words to me, 'It's bad. It's really, really bad.'"

Above Manhattan, Duffy and Nash were given clearance to kill over their radio frequencies, but to this day aren't sure who gave that order. Was it NEADS or a civilian air traffic controller? ¹² Uncertain, they continued to fly over the city.

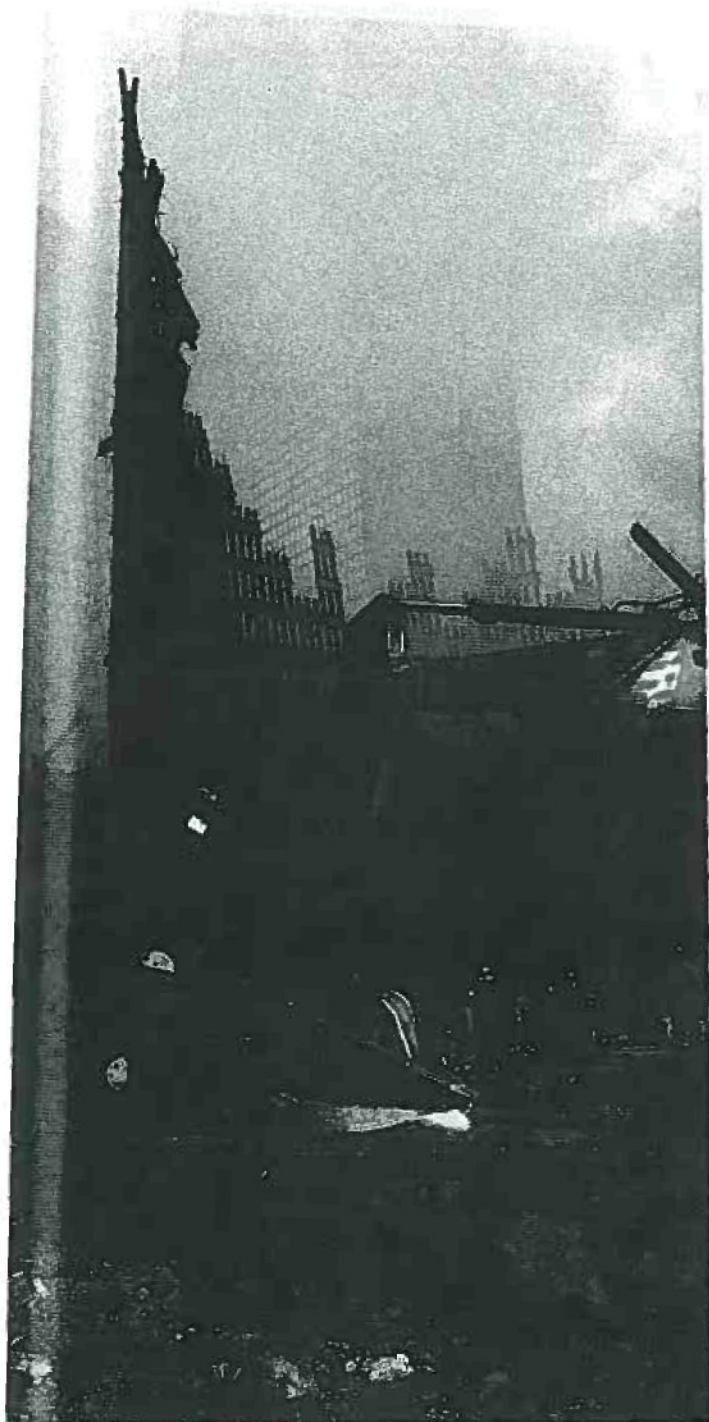
"Flying over Central Park at 1,000 feet and 500 knots ... trying to identify people, that's just wrong. You should never be doing this over downtown Manhattan, watching the towers burning," Duffy says. "We're down over Newark getting people



U.S. Navy photo by Photographer's Mate 2nd Class Jim Watson

Above: A weary New York City firefighter surveys the destruction as he departs the area on Sept. 13, 2001. Emergency personnel worked tirelessly for more than 24 hours immediately following the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks that brought down the World Trade Center.

Right: Days after the attacks, a volunteer steel worker cuts a large part of debris to make it easier to haul away from the former site of the World Trade Center.



U.S. Navy photo by Chief Photographer's Mate Eric J. Tillford

away from the airport, and of course we're trying to get them down on the ground, or identify them. As you're coming back, the Statue of Liberty with the towers burning behind it as we're flying around, you're saying to yourself, 'This is nuts.'"

Clearing the skies

"America was under attack," Marr says, and controllers were still grappling with two planes missing and frightening rumors of bomb threats and airplane crashes that really never happened. "In less than an hour here the whole world changed."

Amid the fog and madness, Arnold and his staff were on the phone with Marr; Col. John Cromwell, Western Air Defense Sector commander; and Col. Larry Kemp, Southeast Air Defense Sector commander. They were making fast decisions as the FAA reported more information. At one point during the four-hour ordeal, 21 planes were unaccounted for, Arnold says. "We were concerned about Flight 93 and this Delta aircraft (Flight 1989) and were trying to find aircraft in the vicinity to help out," Arnold recalls.

"We didn't know where it was going to go. We were concerned about Detroit ... and the fighters up there were out of gas with no armament. Then we called a Guard unit in Toledo, Ohio, because we thought 93 or Delta Flight 1989 might be headed toward Chicago. Then NEADS called another Guard unit in Syracuse, New York, and eventually got them moving in the direction of getting airplanes airborne.

"Then we watched the 93 track as it meandered around the Ohio-Pennsylvania area and started to turn south toward D.C. By now the Pentagon has been hit and we have aircraft on orbit, the 'Happy Hooligans' of the 119th at Fargo, North Dakota, (from the Langley alert detachment). They are now orbiting over Washington, D.C., and have been for awhile. As United 93 headed toward D.C., the desire is to move the fighters toward those aircraft.

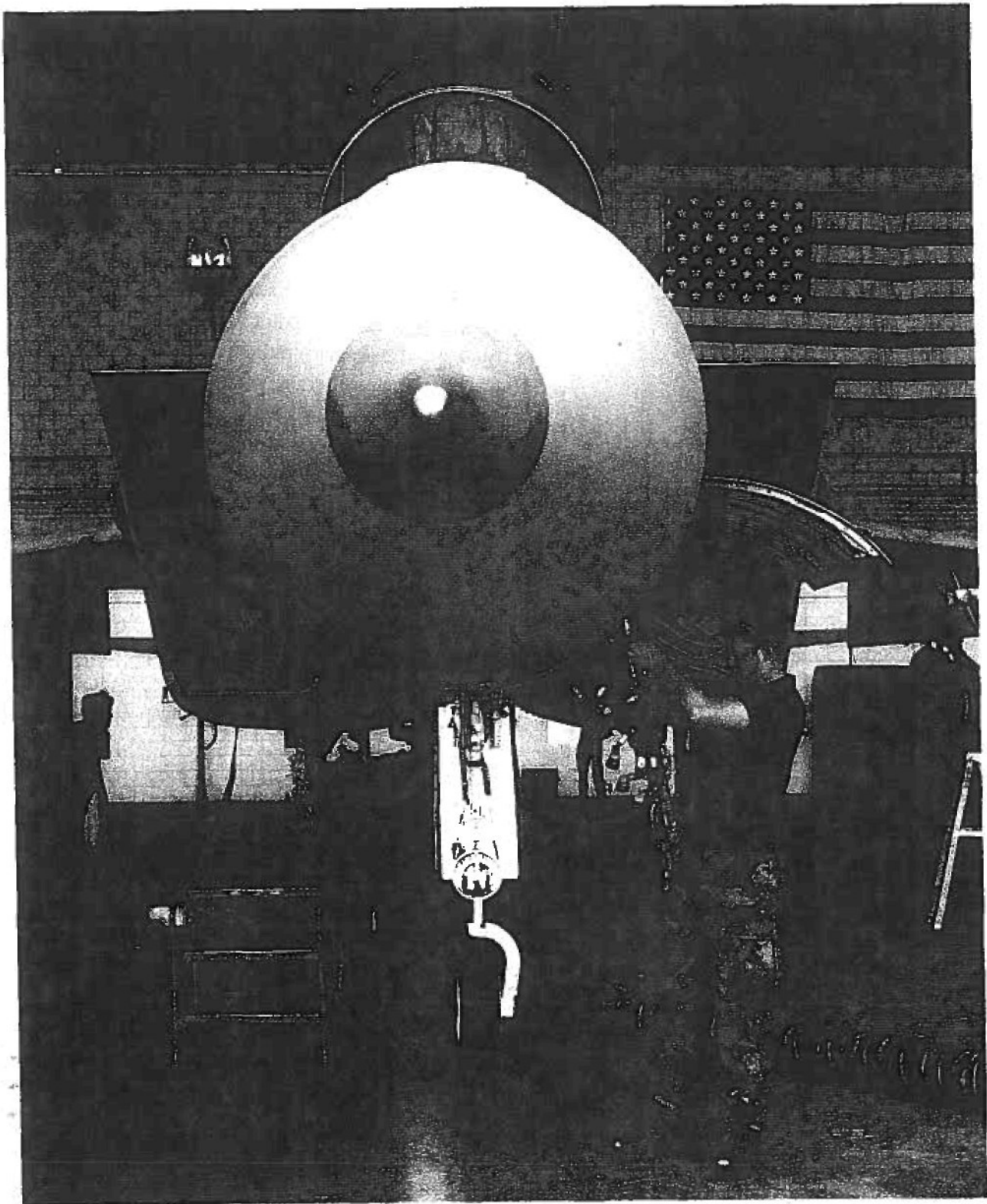


Photo by Staff Sgt. Sandra Niedzwiecki, 102nd Fighter Wing, Massachusetts Air National Guard

Massachusetts Air National Guardsman Senior Airman Joel Milliken, 102nd Maintenance Weapons section, repairs an F-15 during Operation Noble Eagle.

But as we discussed it in the conference call, we decided not to move fighters toward 93 until it was closer because there could have been other aircraft coming in. By now a number of aircraft are being called possibly hijacked ... there was a lot of confusion, as you can imagine."

Missing planes seemed to be everywhere. "There were a number of false reports out there," Marr says. "What was valid? What was a guess? We just didn't know. ... We were in foreign territory; we are used to protecting the shores, way out overseas. Our processes and procedures weren't designed for this."

An obscure military plan, "SCATANA" — Security Control of Air Traffic and Air Navigation Aids — would help the FAA in its efforts to clear the skies. The commander of NORAD, Gen. Ralph E. Eberhart, ordered a limited version of the Cold War-era strategy, and allowed essential aircraft like rescue helicopters to fly. The decision was made during the air threat conference call and was backed by Transportation Secretary Norman Mineta.¹³ The SCATANA order had been implemented only once before, and only for war games in 1961.

Through the fray, Marr remembers hearing that the FAA was evacuating its Cleveland Center. He didn't know why at the time and focused on United Flight 93, headed straight toward Washington. The North Dakota F-16s were loaded with missiles and hot guns and Marr was thinking about what these pilots might be expected to do. "United Airlines Flight 93 would not have hit Washington, D.C.," Marr says emphatically. "He would have been engaged and shot down before he got there."

Arnold concurs: "Thad every intention of shooting down United 93 if it continued to progress toward Washington, D.C., and any other aircraft coming toward it that day, whether we had authority or not."

But as the story goes, the pilots were spared the unthinkable. With the now legendary "Let's Roll" rallying cry, the heroic passengers aboard United



Department of Defense photo

Ray Gould, Military District of Washington Engineers, stands in front of the exit point of American Airlines Flight 77 where it stopped moving through the Pentagon. The hijacked airliner had 64 people aboard and crashed at 9:38 a.m.

Airlines Flight 93 rushed the terrorists in the cockpit, bringing the airliner to the ground near Shanksville, Pa., at approximately 10:03 a.m. The Boeing 757, with 44 people aboard, reportedly dropped 1,200 feet in 12 seconds. ¹⁴ *Lives were taken in the air to save lives on the ground.*

The Langley-based pilots were 96 miles away, Marr says. In Cleveland, Delta Flight 1989 landed safely, but the NEADS crew wouldn't learn that until later.

What was going to happen next? Staff Sgt. Mark Jennings, NEADS tracking technician, remembers asking himself: "Was the fourth one the last one and would there be more? It made me sit back and say, 'Is the world falling apart on us?' It was scary and there was a real feeling of uncertainty."

Marr began thinking out loud: "I turned to the staff and said, 'What more can we do? Let's get everyone in the air and see what they can provide us.'"

They needed help and literally went down the list calling every regular Air Force and Air National Guard unit in the northeast. "We just started opening our phone rosters and were trying to figure out which different Air Force units there were in the interior of the United States," Deskins says. "And we called these units individually to see if they could get planes up."

And it wasn't happening like it normally would, she says. Enlisted personnel were calling colonels directly, asking for their help. Rank didn't matter and virtually everyone would commit to getting fighters airborne. "It was unbelievable," says Tech. Sgt. Michael Cavalier, NEADS senior director technician. "There were Guard units I'd never heard of calling us asking how they could help. And we said, 'Yes, take off.'"

Canadian Forces Capt. Brian Nagel, who was chief of NEADS live exercises, says "guys were getting airborne from a news report and phone call from us."

"I called up one unit and the guy says, 'Who are you and what do you want?'" Nagel recalls. "I

told him to go watch CNN and that I'd phone him back. So I phone him back and he says, 'Here's what we've got and here's what we can do for you.'"

As Col. Robert Knauff, commander of the 174th Fighter Wing in Syracuse, told Marr: "Give us 10 minutes, we can arm up guns; give us 30 minutes, we can put heat-seekers on the wings; give us an hour, and we'll put radar missiles on board." The first two Syracuse-based F-16s were up by 10:44 a.m. ¹⁵ Two more fighters were up a few minutes later, but there was no time to load missiles on any of them. The pilots' mission was vague, but they believed an airliner was heading toward Washington, D.C.

"Our pilots were told to get in the air and get



Photo by Master Sgt. Tom Louis, 177th Fighter Wing, New Jersey Air National Guard

Security Forces Senior Airman Raynaldo Baez of the New Jersey Air National Guard 177th Fighter Wing stands guard on the flight line Sept. 15, 2001.

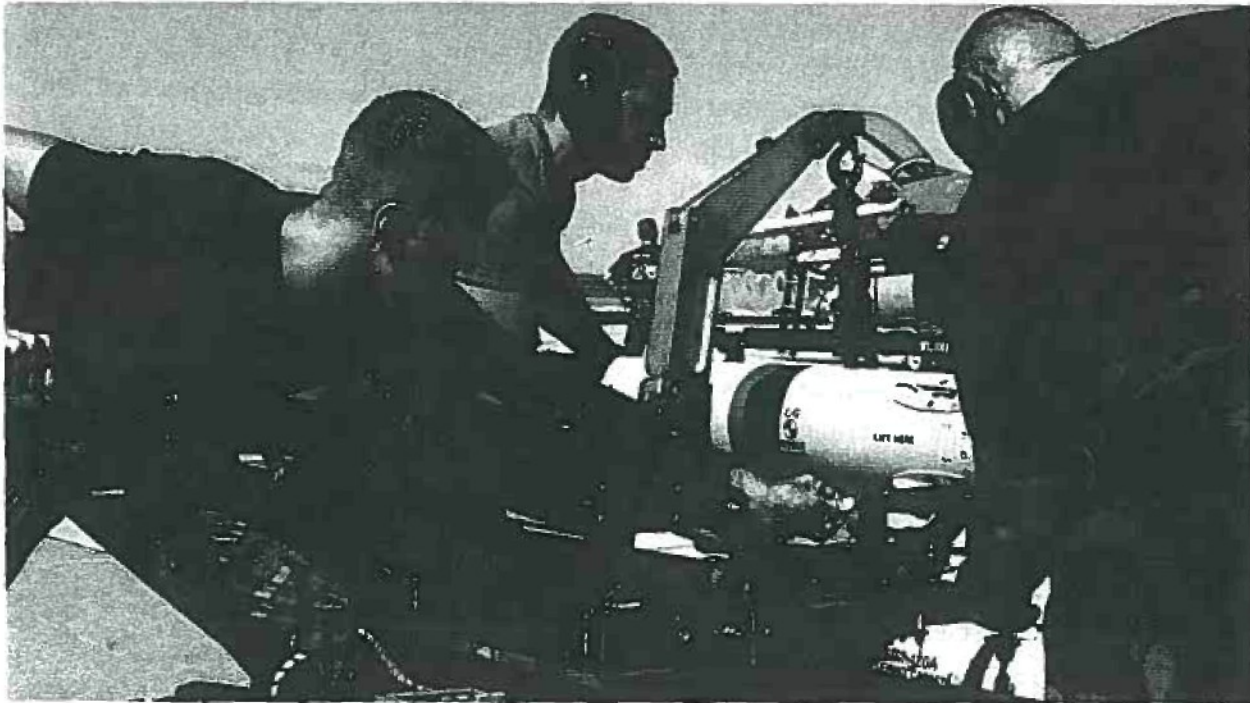


Photo by Master Sgt. Don Taggart, 177th Fighter Wing, New Jersey Air National Guard

From left, New Jersey Air National Guardsmen Senior Airman James Keefe, Airman 1st Class Frank Dolcemasclo and Staff Sgt. Richard Johnson, 177th Fighter Wing weapons load crew members, raise an AIM-120A using an MJ1 bomb lift "Jammer." The missile was loaded onto an F-16 for an Operation Noble Eagle mission.

their tasking from NEADS once airborne," says Col. Tony Basile, 174th Fighter Wing vice commander. "The first two airborne were trying to intercept the flight that crashed in Pennsylvania but that airplane had actually hit the ground. ... There were several others NEADS wasn't sure of, so our mission was to intercept those airplanes."

The Ohio Air National Guard 180th Fighter Wing was the first unit outside the East Coast to answer the sector's plea. Controllers notified the wing at 10:01 a.m.; several armed F-16s departed Toledo Express Airport at 10:17 a.m., according to wing records.

Jets from the 177th Fighter Wing, New Jersey Air National Guard, were airborne within an hour after the Pentagon attack, says Col. Mike Cosby, wing commander. And the F-16s were fully loaded.

"The mind-set a lot of old military guys have is

that the Guard is the standby force," Marr says. "But these Guard guys got up very, very quickly."



As pilots and aircrews throughout the country went to battle, historic events were taking place at the highest levels.

"As this is all transpiring extraordinarily rapidly ... some five minutes after United Flight 93 crashed in Pennsylvania, President George W. Bush, through Vice President Dick Cheney, gave authority to shoot down civilian airplanes that looked like they were going to be used as fuel-air bombs," Arnold says. "I have the authority in case of an emergency to declare a target hostile and shoot it down under an emergency condition ... but it was comforting to know we legally had the authority

from the president of the United States."

The order would go even further in Washington, D.C., where local airspace was declared a "weapons-free" zone.¹⁶ Fighter pilots were given unparalleled orders to fire upon anything around the nation's capital that refused to respond to Air Traffic Control or NORAD direction.

"The president had declared Washington, D.C., and national capital region to be a free-fire zone," Arnold says. "That is very unprecedented. It meant if a pilot saw an airplane within a 30-mile radius of Washington, D.C., and couldn't determine if it was a doctor flying back to his hometown, that pilot was not only allowed to, but expected to shoot that airplane down."

Some F-16 pilots from the 113th Wing, District of Columbia Air National Guard, were prepared to do it. They weren't in communication with NEADS that morning but knew their home city was in trouble. The wing, at Andrews Air Force Base, Md., is not part of the NORAD air sovereignty force and did not have an alert mission. But that did not stop pilots there from taking off to protect Washington, D.C., just miles from their own flight line.

Weapons-free zone

As the twin towers were burning live on CNN, weapons officer Maj. Dan Caine was worried. Not only was the country under terrorist attack, but three of the 113th Wing's F-16 pilots had not returned from a training mission. As the "SOF" — Supervisor of Flying — that morning, Caine was responsible for seeing those jets return safely to base.

"I called the Andrews tower and asked them if any Air Traffic Control measures were starting to go into effect with an eye toward the recovery of our airplanes," Caine says. "They indicated there was not and I called our contact at the Secret Service. He told me he wasn't sure, but that things were happening and he'd call me back. It was a very quick, confusing conversation."

Andrews is home to Air Force One, and 113th Wing pilots are used to working with the Secret Service, but "weren't thinking about defending anything," says Lt. Col. Marc Sasseville, commander of the wing's 121st Fighter Squadron. "Our primary concern was what would happen with the air

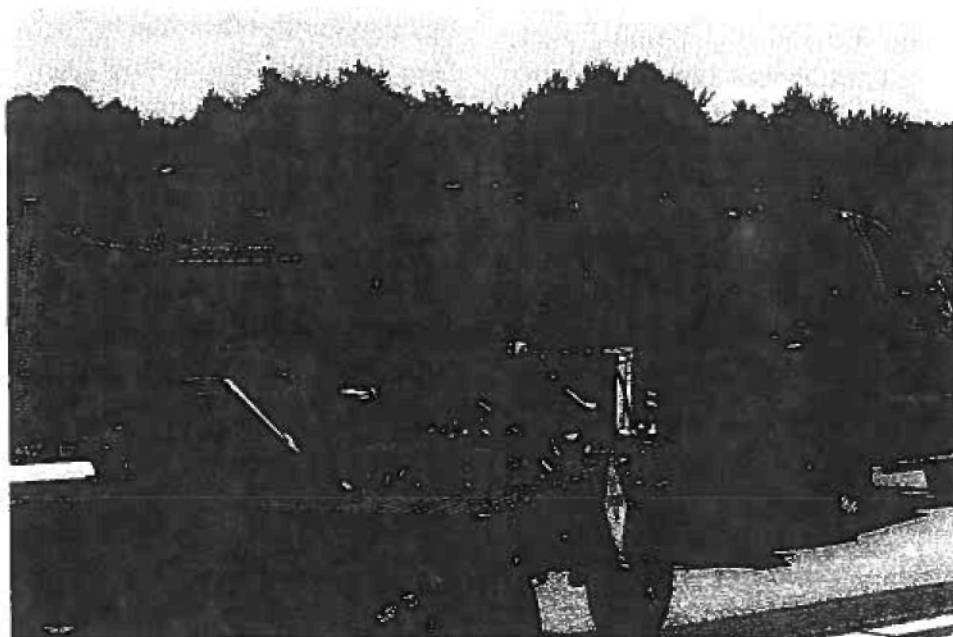
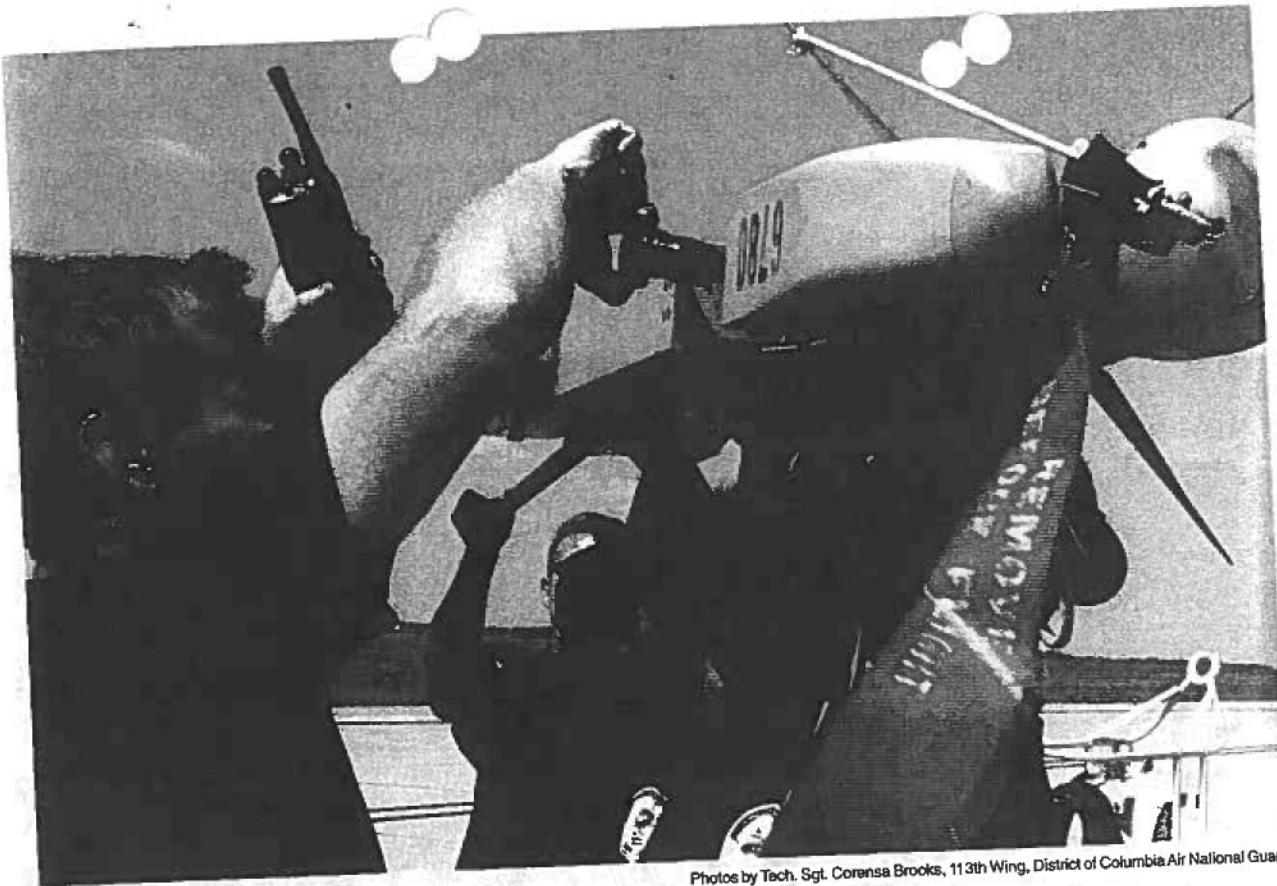


Photo by Tech. Sgt. Corense Brooks, 113th Wing, District of Columbia Air National Guard



Photos by Tech. Sgt. Corensa Brooks, 113th Wing, District of Columbia Air National Guard



Above: Weapons load crew members from the 113th Wing, District of Columbia Air National Guard, work feverishly to arm an F-16 for a mission over Washington, D.C., on Sept. 11, 2001.

Left: District of Columbia Air National Guardsman Master Sgt. Steve Proctor, 113th Wing aircraft generation squadron, loads bullets onto an F-16.

Opposite page: The weapons are driven across Andrews Air Force Base, Md., for delivery to the flight line on Sept. 11.



Photos by Tech. Sgt. Corensa Brooks, 113th Wing, District of Columbia Air National Guard

Above: District of Columbia Air National Guardsmen Lt. Col. Marc Sasseville, 113th Wing F-16 pilot, and Senior Master Sgt. Jackie Dade, 113th Wing aircraft generation squadron flight chief, discuss the mission prior to takeoff on Sept. 11, 2001.

Right: An F-16 maintainer from the 113th Wing directs a jet on the runway at Andrews Air Force Base, Md., on Sept. 11, 2001.

traffic system.”¹⁷

But the Secret Service would soon call back: “(The agent) asked, ‘Can you get airplanes up?’” Caine recalls. “Then he told us to stand by and that somebody else would call. When I heard the tone in his voice, I called our bomb dump and told them to uncrate our missiles.”

On the opposite side of Andrews Air Force Base, the 113th Wing munitions crew began unloading bullets and AIM-9 “Sidewinders” from storage sheds. “There were six of us there and we had 28 missiles to unload, and they each have three components” says Senior Master Sgt. David Bowman, 113th Wing munitions supervisor. “And if you

drop one, you can’t use it anymore. We were doing it as fast as we could, because for all we knew the terrorists were getting ready to hit us.”

As the crew carefully but quickly loaded the weapons onto a flatbed trailer, the phone was ringing again at the squadron operations desk. Caine answered a phone call from someone in the White House requesting armed fighters over Washington. “I could hear plain as day the vice president talking in the background,” Caine says. “That’s basically where we got the execute order. It was ‘VFR (Visual Flight Rules) direct.’”

“I handed the phone to my commander and said, ‘I’m going to go fly.’”

Brig. Gen. David Wherley Jr., 113th Wing commander, had just arrived at the operations desk. He would find himself on several phone calls that morning, desperately seeking airborne authorization for his fighters. "I dial the White House JOC (Joint Operations Center) and the news is showing the White House with people running out the front door," Wherley says. "And the phone rings about eight times before somebody picks up and ... they have nobody in uniform, it was all Secret Service people and a team communicating with the president."

A woman at the JOC — the Secret Service command and control center — answered the phone.

"I'm thinking these are civilians and they don't deal in the language of the military, the rules of engagement, so I asked her, 'What do they want me to do?'" he recalls. "She was standing next to the vice president (Dick Cheney) and she said, 'They want you to put a CAP up.'"

"Basically what they told me, and this is another one of those things that's clear in my mind ... 'We want you to intercept any airplane that attempts to fly closer than 20 miles around any airport around the Washington area. ... Attempt to turn them away, do whatever you can to turn them away and if they won't turn away use whatever force is necessary ... to keep them from hitting a building downtown.'"

Everything was happening at once, says wing safety officer Lt. Col. Phil Thompson, who was now the acting SOF. "We were taking calls from the Secret Service and Washington Center," he recalls. "We have a special relationship with the Secret Service and know these guys by name and face. ... They were worried about Flight 93."

In the 113th Wing intelligence office, Maj. David

McNulty and Senior Airman Juan Garcia were hurriedly calling every agency from the CIA to FBI to FAA to authenticate the flood of information. "I even called the National Security Agency 24-hour information desk and they knew nothing more than I did," McNulty says. "We were all getting our information from CNN. But the White House JOC told me eight planes were unaccounted for."

Three wing F-16s, meanwhile, were still airborne. "We had gone up to (the gunnery range in) Dare County, North Carolina, to drop some bombs and hit a refueling tanker and come on back," says flight lead Maj. Billy Hutchison. "It was going to be an uneventful day. It was actually a beautiful day."

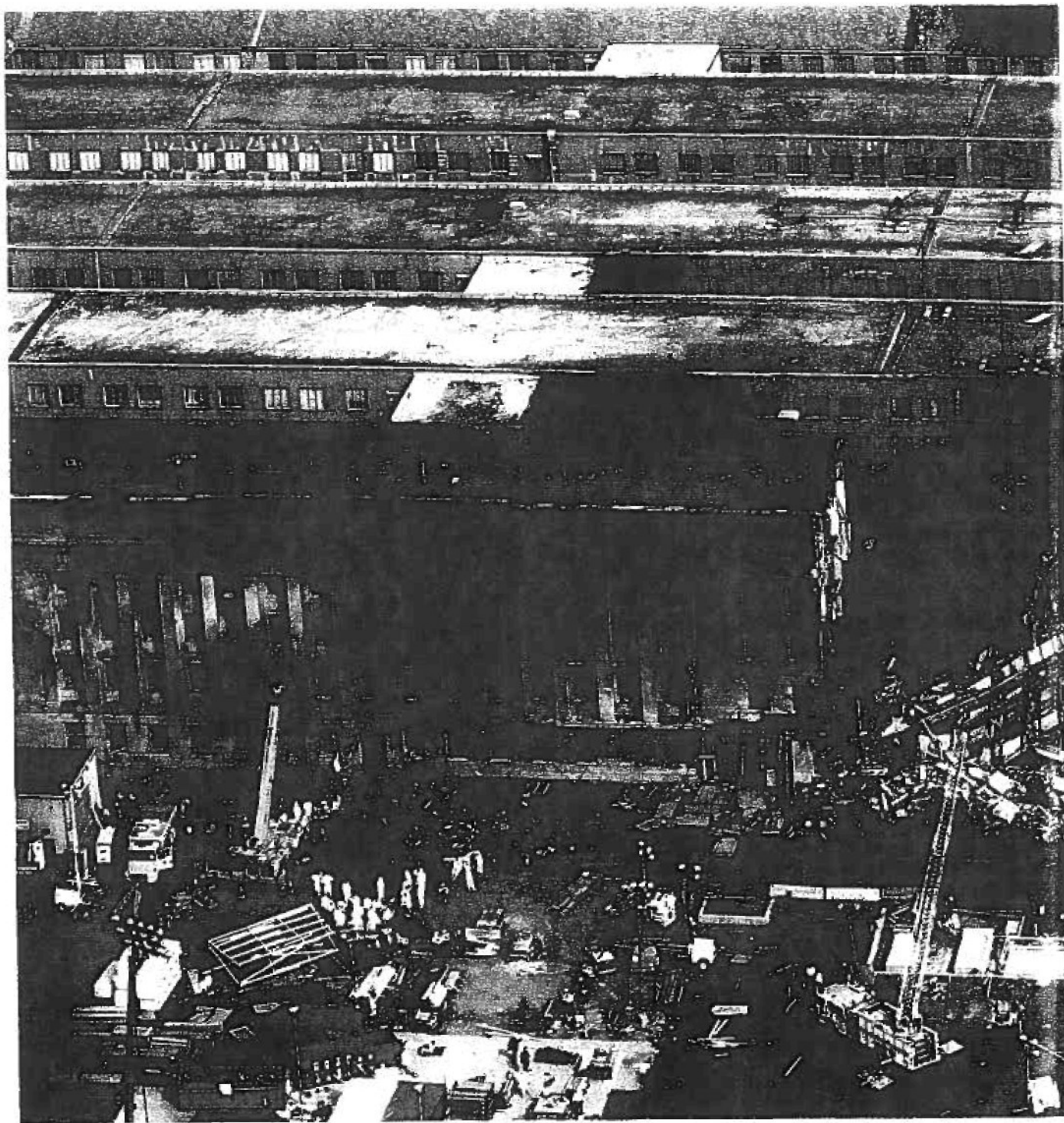
"We're about halfway back when I am able to talk to the SOF, Lt. Col. Phil Thompson, who is at the desk with Brigadier General Wherley," he says. "Because they've seen what has happened on TV, they tell me to return to base 'buster'; buster means as fast as the aircraft will fly. So we light afterburners and we are coming back at Mach as

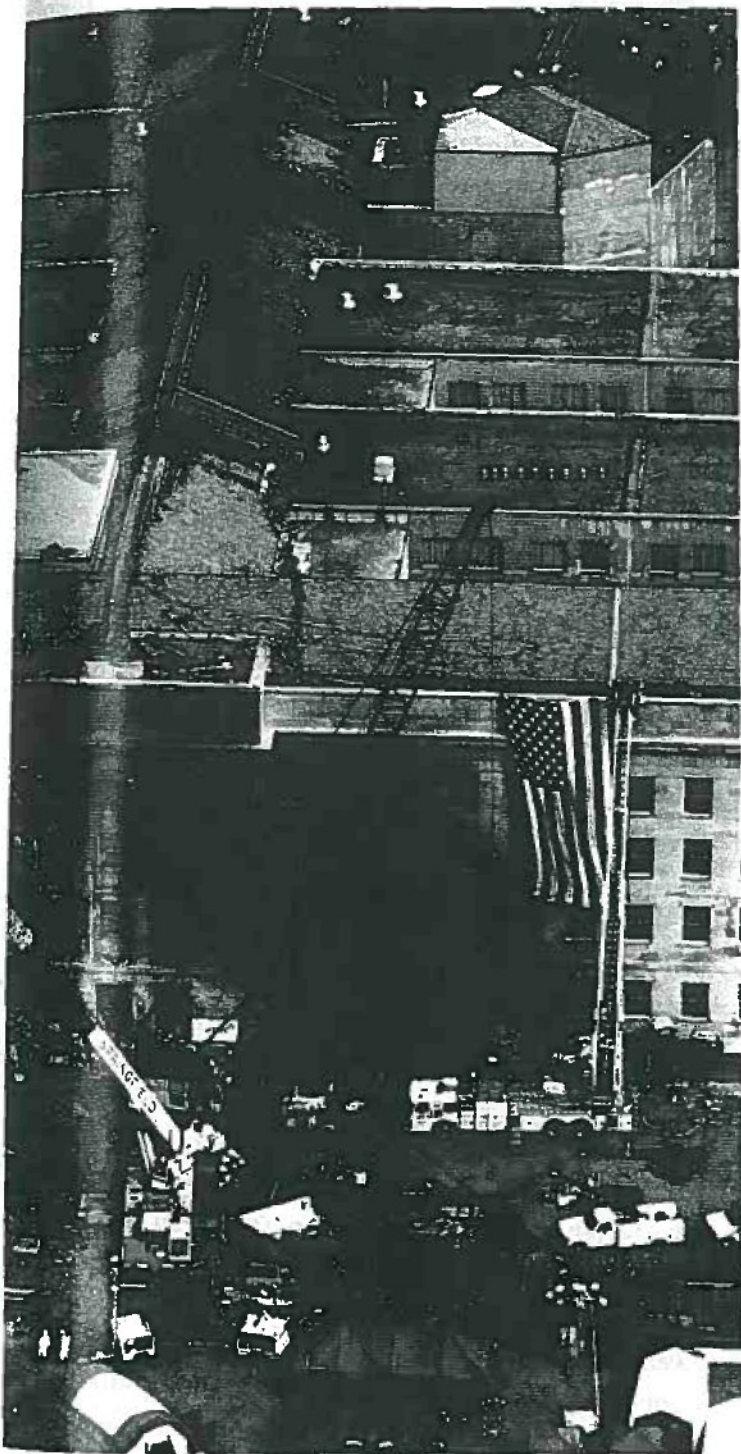
quick as we can get back. ... As I get back, I cross the Potomac River on the south end of Maryland and Virginia, and I see a big column of smoke. It was so clear and there was no haze in the air. I tell the SOF, 'It looks like there's been an explosion near (Ronald Reagan Washington) National Airport. What's going on?'"

"He said, 'We know. Just keep coming.'"

As Hutchison approached the runway to touch down, Thompson and Wherley inquired over the radio about the trio's fuel status. Nobody had enough gas, but Hutchison had the most. Although he was at 2,800 pounds — like one-eighth a tank in your car — Wherley told him to take off again.







Department of Defense photo by Tech. Sgt. Cedric H. Rudisill

An aerial view Sept. 14, 2001, of the destruction caused when a hijacked commercial jetliner crashed into the Pentagon on Sept 11, 2001.

"I was given information to intercept an aircraft coming toward D.C. and prevent it from reaching D.C.," Hutchison says.

"We had something coming down the Potomac at low altitude," Thompson says. "Brigadier General Wherley is standing here and we've got the tower with the Secret Service agent and they want us to launch anything we've got. And the general said, 'Do it.'"

Hutchison taxied at high speed down the runway and took off at 10:33 a.m. "I was already cleared through tower, who is listening to Washington Approach frantic with what they seem to think are aircraft coming their way. ... There is another aircraft, and it's United Flight 93. They don't know what's going on, but only know the direction it's coming and apparently have been given information that it's coming their way."

In reality, United Airlines Flight 93 had crashed 30 minutes earlier, but in the haze and fog of war that tragic day, that information was unavailable. Hutchison continued looking for the plane. "I took off without afterburner to conserve fuel, go across the White House over the Georgetown area and continue northwest up the Potomac," he says.

When Hutchison reached the northern part of the river near Frederick, Md., controllers at Washington Center asked him to change course. "They asked me to turn to D.C. and all the while my gas is depleting," he says. "And I don't have live bullets, just training rounds."

"I terminate the intercept and come back to D.C.," Hutchison says. "Washington Center is still vectoring me around trying to pick up potential threats to the area which happened to be helicopters actually responding to the Pentagon scene. All the while, when I took off from Andrews, I could see what was going on over the Pentagon because I was so low. But it wasn't until I actually flew past it that I actually saw it was the Pentagon. I circled at a couple of hundred feet at the most just to, one, investigate, and two, give the people on the ground some semblance of security of an American fighter

coming by. And apparently it changed the mood for a lot of people when they saw that.

"After that point, I'm emergency fuel, the lowest I've ever been in an F-16, and tell Washington Center I must leave and they say I'm cleared to return to base and that two more aircraft are coming out of Andrews."



Sasseville and Capt. Heather Penney were on their way. Before they stepped to the jets, Wherley made very clear what they might have to do: "My translation of the rules to 'Sass' was, 'You have weapons-free flight-lead control,'" Wherley says. "I said, 'Do you understand what I'm asking you to do?'"

"And they both said: 'Yes.'"

"And I told them to be careful. It was important for them to understand that this was weapons-free."

Weapons loaders on the ramp were working feverishly to arm missiles, but there was no time. Sasseville and Penney took off from Andrews at 10:42 a.m.¹⁹ Their planes were loaded with 20mm training rounds, hardly enough to bring down an airliner, they concede. "Sass looked at me and his eyes were just burning," says Penney, a rookie pilot and lieutenant at the time. "We were running to the jets and jumped in our airplanes and we didn't even have a full load on the guns. I'd never scrambled before, I'd never done this."

"I was screaming to the maintainers to pull the chocks and the guys were pulling the pins to arm the guns," she recalls. "We were going without INS (Inertial Navigation System)."

The two were in their jets watching Hutchison take off before them and listening to scants of in-

formation on their radio frequencies. "I don't have the whole picture, but have word from Washington National Approach that something is coming," Sasseville says. "We had hot guns, but only training bullets. ... I'm thinking, 'Wow, we're in a little trouble here.'"

Penney and Sasseville would fly at low altitudes over the capital, Pentagon burning in the distance, unaware the North Dakota pilots were hovering around 20,000 feet. The North Dakota pilots were communicating with controllers at NEADS; the Washington, D.C., pilots with civilian controllers at the FAA. The pilots were on different radio frequencies, but would all hear remarkable words on a shared channel: "*Attention all aircraft monitoring Andrews tower frequency. Andrews and Class Bravo airspace is closed. No general aviation aircraft are permitted to enter Class Bravo airspace. Any infractions will be shot down.*"²⁰

"When we took off I hadn't even thought about how I would down an airplane," Penney says. "Later I'm thinking, 'I only have 100 bullets. What am I going to do?'"

"I could make one pass with the gun, maybe I could scrape my gear on the wing, but it didn't hit me until two weeks later that's what they expected us to do. ... I was in war mode; the emotional element wasn't relevant to what I had to do."

Sasseville, an airline pilot on a military leave of absence, also thought about how he might bring down an airliner, and says it was a scary proposition. "We're talking about shooting down a U.S. air carrier with Americans on board, the whole gamut, women and children," he says. "We had no real weapons and we didn't have a whole lot of options. Once you make that decision, how are you going to do that with the limited ordnance you have? In combat, as long as you can disable an airplane, depending on your role, you've done your job."

"I was going into this moral or ethical justification of the needs of the many to the needs of the few," he says. "The passengers on United Flight 93 went through that same thing. They made the

Airplanes line the runway of Halifax International Airport, Nova Scotia, after being diverted there Sept. 11, 2001. More than 7,000 passengers were affected.

"The events of 11 September were an imponderable, unknowable circumstance. We performed magnificently."

**— Gen. John Jumper,
Air Force chief of staff**

decision we didn't have to make."

With minds racing, Sasseville and Penney continued flying and say they found an aerial ghost town over the normally busy Washington, D.C. Two more 113th Wing F-16 pilots, Caine and Capt. Brandon Rasmussen, would take off a few minutes after them, but their jets would each be armed with hot guns and two AIM-9 Sidewinder missiles.

Chief Master Sgt. Roy Belknap, 113th Wing production superintendent, watched in amazement as crews loaded live ordnance with pilots in the cockpits. "That's the first time that has ever happened here," the 33-year veteran says. "Our guys were hanging live AIM-9s with aircrews in airplanes waiting for us to get done so they could crank and go. What they did was unprecedented."

By the book, it takes three hours to bring weapons from storage sheds and load them on the jets, but on Sept. 11, 2001, it took the 113th Wing weapons crews 45 minutes, Belknap says.

Rasmussen says his adrenaline level was high as he took off toward the great unknown. "Once maintenance armed us up, we took off," he says. "I had never flown with real missiles and had never so much as seen them on the jet."

"We take to the air and are talking to Washington Center on the radio and we're used to working with AWACS (Airborne Warning and Control System) weapons controllers or GCI (Ground Control Intercept). ... We knew NORAD had implemented SCATANA and three things have already been hit when we get up in the air. So we're trying to identify people who are not talking to Air

Traffic Control. ... We probably intercepted five to 10 aircraft apiece."

Although they were in weapons-free airspace, none of the pilots believed anything they encountered was enough of a threat to actually shoot, but "quite a few people got scared out of the air," Rasmussen says. "On that day, we owned the universe over D.C. at any altitude, any location, as long as it was in the interest of protecting the capital."

Adds Caine, "Certainly there were times when rules of engagement triggers were met, but not executed and thankfully so. Cooler heads prevailed or it could have been an even uglier day than it was."



In efforts to clear the skies above Washington, Happy Hooligan F-16 pilots Eckmann and Derrig were directed to intercept some low-altitude unknowns. Those "unknowns" were their military brethren from the District of Columbia Air National Guard.

"Air Traffic Control had started turning everyone away from Washington, D.C.," Eckmann says. "Normally it's a pretty busy area and we were getting vectored on people who weren't obeying that. We got vectored on the D.C. guys taking off out of Andrews ... the military knew they were taking off but Air Traffic Control didn't realize they were military."

The 113th Wing pilots "started in a low Combat Air Patrol and didn't even know we were there," Eckmann says. "They did a fantastic job getting there in the amount of time they did. That was great, considering they weren't on alert. I know how much time it takes to put missiles on planes, and they were fast."

Soon the pilots would all end up on the same frequency. "About halfway through our sortie, we learned about three other F-16s that had been airborne a lot longer than we had," Sasseville says. "We were all airborne at the same time but nobody knew it."

As Sasseville was commanding the low-altitude



Photo by Steve Emmons

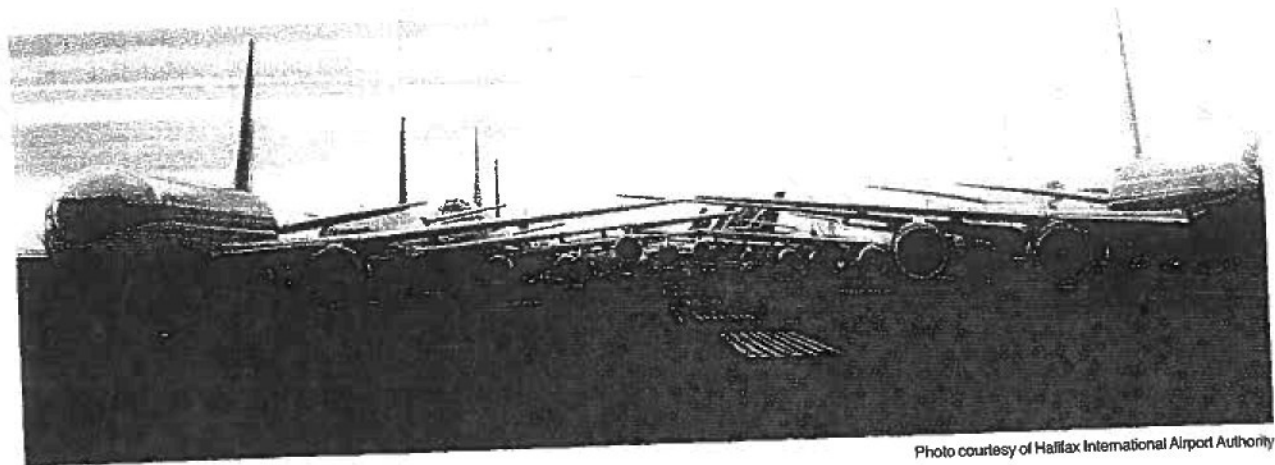


Photo courtesy of Halifax International Airport Authority



U.S. Navy photo by Photographer's Mate 2nd Class Jim Watson

Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld conducts the first Pentagon briefing after the terrorist attack there Sept. 11, 2001. He is joined by Gen. Henry H. Shelton, who was chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, since retired, and Sen. John Warner, Virginia.

CAP, the Happy Hooligans commanded their own CAP several thousand feet above. "At first a low CAP and high-altitude CAP emerged," Eckmann says. "It took awhile before we were all talking on the same radio. We had two different units here and two different things going on. I had set up a racetrack CAP and he (Sasseville) had set up a tactical CAP.

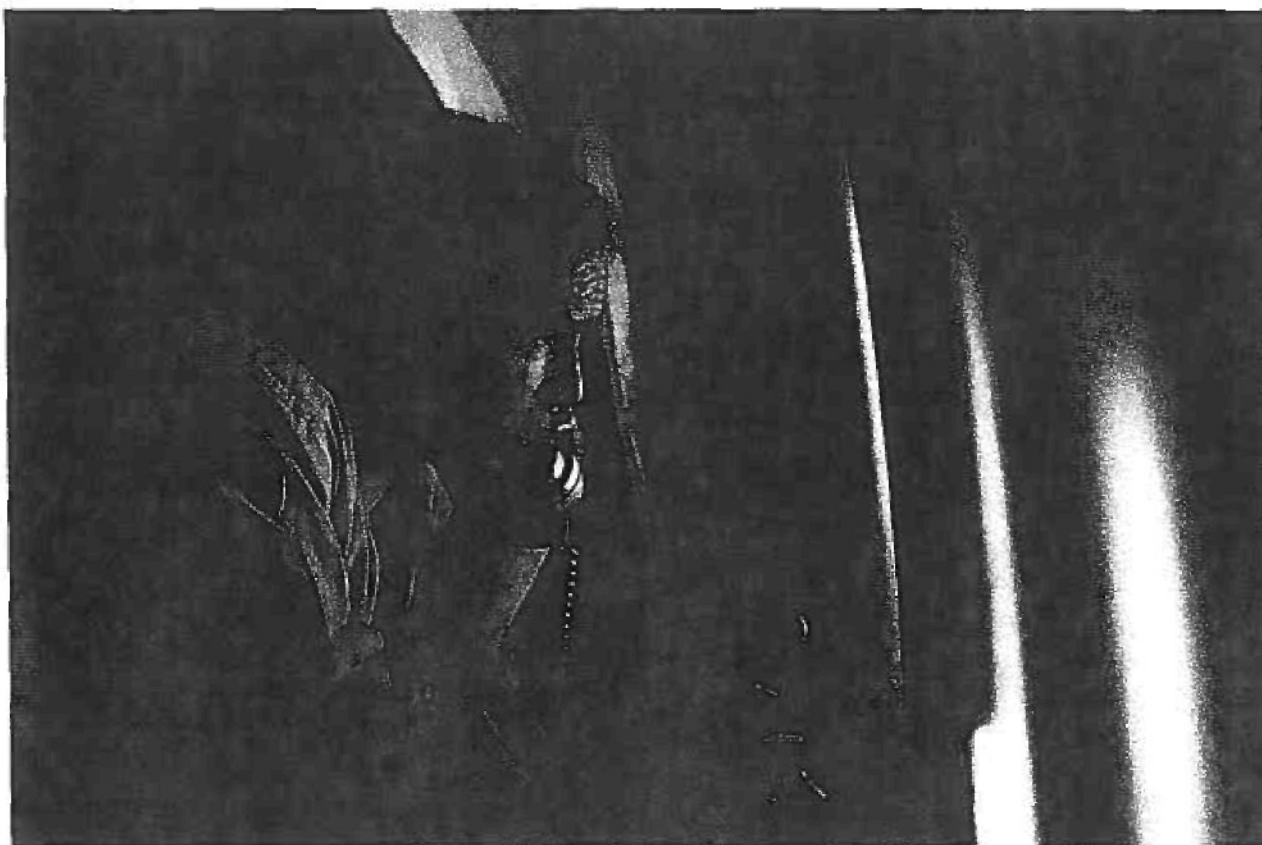
"We eventually said, 'Here's what we're going to do, we'll take care of the high CAP and you guys take care of the low CAP.' As it progressed ... planes started moving up for fuel conservation and soon the lowest CAP altitude was 10,000 feet, but at that time we had everything cleared."

Essential AWACS and refueling aircraft would arrive sent by the CONR and NEADS leaders.

With a good radar picture and enough fuel, Sasseville and the other pilots used Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport as their "bull's-eye." By dividing the airspace into four sections, they could better communicate with the FAA about the locations of unknown aircraft. Virtually every pilot who flew that day has nothing but praise for FAA controllers who quickly learned to speak the language of the military.

"Nobody had trained to do this," Sasseville says. "But everybody pitched in to make it happen. Everybody was doing smart, safe things, from operations crews to the maintainers setting up airplanes and loading live AMRAAMs (Advanced Medium Range Air-to-Air Missiles)."

Gen. John Jumper, Air Force chief of staff, would



White House photo by Eric Draper

After departing Offutt Air Force Base, Neb., President George W. Bush confers with Vice President Dick Cheney from Air Force One during his flight to Andrews Air Force Base, Md., Sept. 11, 2001. The president's aircraft was escorted by armed fighter jets, including F-16s from the 147th Fighter Wing, Texas Air National Guard. The president was a member of the Houston-area unit in the early 1970s.

later reflect: "The events of 11 September were an imponderable, unknowable circumstance. We performed magnificently."²¹

Eberhart, NORAD commander, concurs: "I will always believe there would have been other attacks had we not grounded airplanes and got the fighters airborne."²²

Guarding the president

As Air National Guard pilots were flying CAPs above Washington, D.C., President Bush was departing Sarasota, Fla., on Air Force One. Arnold

and his staff at the CONR Air Operations Center were coordinating the president's movement and scrambling fighters to keep him safe. All the while, reported hijackings were rampant.

"An AWACS was flying a training mission off the coast of Florida," Arnold recalls. "President Bush was in Sarasota and we moved the AWACS toward the president. Then we received tasking from the Secret Service through the Joint Staff and NORAD to follow the president and protect him."²³

Months earlier, Arnold had made arrangements with Brig. Gen. Ben Robinson, then-commander of the 552nd Air Control Wing at Tinker Air Force Base, Okla., for AWACS support during exercises

simulating attacks on the United States. Now the AWACS would be flown in a real-world scenario that only hours before was unimaginable.

"The AWACS pilot thought it was an exercise and we then told him what happened at the World Trade Center," Arnold says. "He realized his responsibility was to follow the president. We told him to follow Air Force One and he asked the question we all asked: 'Where is it going?' We said, 'We can't tell you. Just follow it.'"

The Southeast Air Defense Sector — SEADS — put pilots from the Minnesota Air National Guard 148th Fighter Wing at Tyndall Air Force Base on battle stations. Pilots sat in their cockpits awaiting word to go, but Air Force One moved so quickly they were never scrambled. Alert fighters from Ellington Field, Texas, were scrambled instead. Four F-16s from the 147th Fighter Wing, Texas Air National Guard, escorted President Bush from the panhandle of Florida to Barksdale Air Force Base, La. The president was being escorted by some of his own — he flew F-102 interceptors for the Houston-area unit in the early 1970s.

By the time the president landed at Barksdale, the Louisiana Air National Guard 159th Fighter Wing, New Orleans, already had four of its F-15s loaded with live missiles. The unit, not normally part of the NORAD alert system, was scrambled by SEADS about the same time the president was leaving the base. "As we were all watching the news, the wing leadership decided to configure our jets and get ready," says Maj. Jeff Woelbling, 122nd Fighter Squadron weapons officer. "Our weapons guys were hustling to get missiles on the rails. When I got to the jet, the maintainer told me he needed five more minutes. I said, 'You've got three.' He did it in about a minute and a half."

Nobody knew where the president was headed. "When Air Force One took off out of Barksdale, we were scrambled because SEADS didn't know his route of flight," says Lt. Col. Randy Riccardi, who was the 122nd Fighter Squadron commander at the time. "We were in a four-ship and turned

north toward Barksdale and the president was already airborne. We were 300 miles behind him since SEADS didn't know where he was going."

"It wasn't until the president was near Offutt (Air Force Base, Neb.), that we turned around and came back," Riccardi says. "That was about a 90-minute mission and later, at about 5:15, we were scrambled again."

"We ended up flying a six-hour and 15-minute mission over Houston that night," Riccardi says.

The response in Louisiana that day was indicative of the quick reactions across the Air National Guard map. The military's homeland defense mission was just beginning.



Somewhere in the southern skies was Air Force One, having left Barksdale for an undisclosed location. "When we left Barksdale we didn't know where we were going," says Maj. Shane Brotherton, a Texas Air National Guard F-16 pilot who escorted the president's plane that morning. "We were actually about to run out of gas when a SEADS controller told us a tanker was on its way. We were flying north two miles directly behind Air Force One and didn't know where we'd be landing. They wouldn't tell us, so we just kept getting more gas."

By the time Air Force One landed at Offutt Air Force Base, the F-16s were so heavy from refueling that the pilots had to burn off gas before they could land, Brotherton says. Once on the ground, they had a meeting with the pilot of Air Force One, who asked them about the capabilities of the F-16. The Air Force One aircraft commander couldn't tell them where they were going next, so the F-16 pilots couldn't file a flight plan. They got a candy bar and soda instead.

As the pilots were waiting, President Bush and his team were joining the air threat conference call. By this time, Arnold and Marr were also on the line.

"We were watching potentially hijacked air-

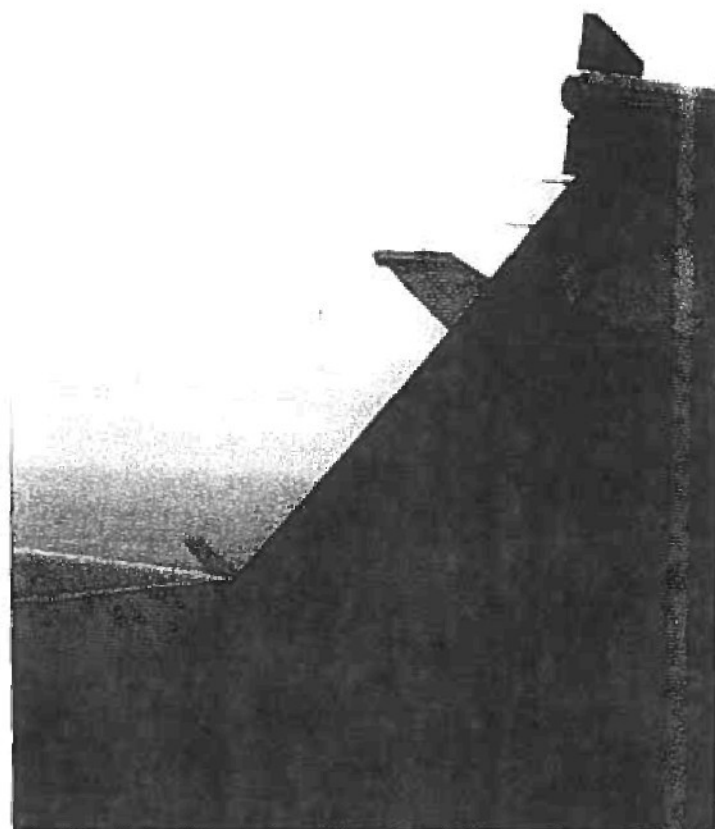
craft," Arnold says. "I'm on the phone listening to the president talk to the secretary of defense and they were concerned about an aircraft that had taken off from Madrid and was going to land at John F. Kennedy International. ... We didn't know where that plane was. About that time, Bob Marr calls me, who was also on the conference call, but called me directly and said, 'We just talked to the airline and that aircraft is back on the ground in Madrid.' "

"I picked up the hot line and said, 'Mr. President, this is the CONR commander. ... No problem with Madrid.' It was valid information and the president said, 'OK, then I'm getting airborne.' "

The F-16 pilots there to escort the president were still waiting word to go. "The Air Force One pilot had gotten our cell phone numbers and said he'd call us when we'd be leaving," Brotherton says. "We were eating our snacks and heard jet noise. It was Air Force One and they'd never called us. We got to the jets and he's taxiing fast and never stopped. Now we're taxiing fast and we blast off. By the time we got airborne, he was 100 miles in front of us. ... Air Force One is fast but you wouldn't think so. But it can move. There were some Sioux City guys (Iowa Air National Guard) up there but the Air Force One pilot told them he'd had the Texas boys with him from the start. All across the country we were playing catch up, because he was moving. And we didn't catch up until we were nearing Washington."

As the president's 747 was approaching Andrews Air Force Base, the North Dakota and District of Columbia pilots were still flying CAPs over the city. A number of fighter jets from across the northeast had joined them. "It was like someone kicked a hornet's nest," one pilot remembers.

Soon the FAA would report an aircraft racing toward Air Force One. Fighter jets quickly intercepted the unknown, a Lear business jet in the wrong place at the wrong time. Air Force One touched down safely at Andrews, surrounded by



armed fighter escorts. The president boarded his Marine One helicopter and arrived at the White House around 7 p.m.

The airplane that had landed in Madrid was the last possible hijacking in the air that day.



From his radar scope, NEADS Master Sgt. Joe McCain believes he saw American Airlines Flight 11 disappear over New York on Sept. 11, 2001. It was 8:46 a.m. Eastern Standard Time, a tragic tick of the clock that forever

Two F-16 fighters assigned to the Texas Air National Guard 147th Fighter Wing are armed and ready to respond to unknown threats. Pilots from the Houston-area unit escorted Air Force One across the country Sept. 11, 2001.

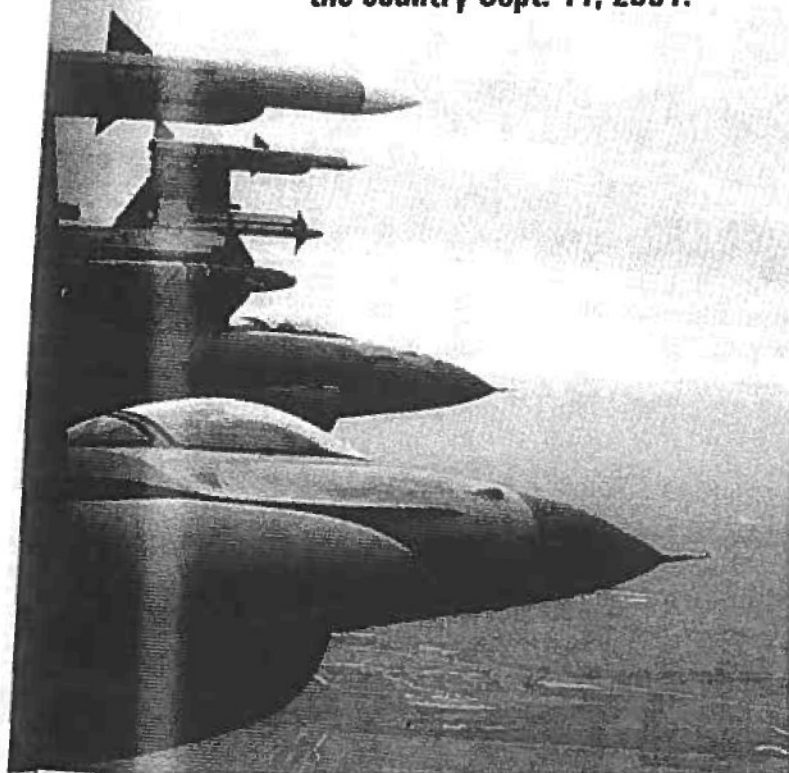


Photo by Lens Stout for Code One magazine

seared itself into the American psyche. It was the unforgettable moment when the first of hundreds of innocent victims were killed that day. Twelve hours later, after a day that seemed like an eternity yet flew by remarkably fast, Joe McCain was home with his family.

"I have three kids and my youngest is 8," McCain says. "I'm sitting there at the kitchen table taking off my boots. It's the worst day I've ever had in the service and my son asks, 'Daddy, are they going to get us?' I told him he was safe, but the next few days I'd be gone a lot.

"That's what brought it home for me."

□□□

1 Northeast Air Defense Sector, transcript of recorded phone conversations between the sector and Federal Aviation Administration, 11 September 2001, n.p.

2 Larry K. Arnold, telephone interview with author, 25 July 2002.

3 William A. Scott, 2001. *Operation Noble Eagle: September 11, 2001, Air War Over America*. Panama City, Fla.: Microsoft PowerPoint presentation.

4 H. Darr Beiser, "Amid terror, a drastic decision: Clear the skies," *USA Today* online, 16 August 2002, n.p.

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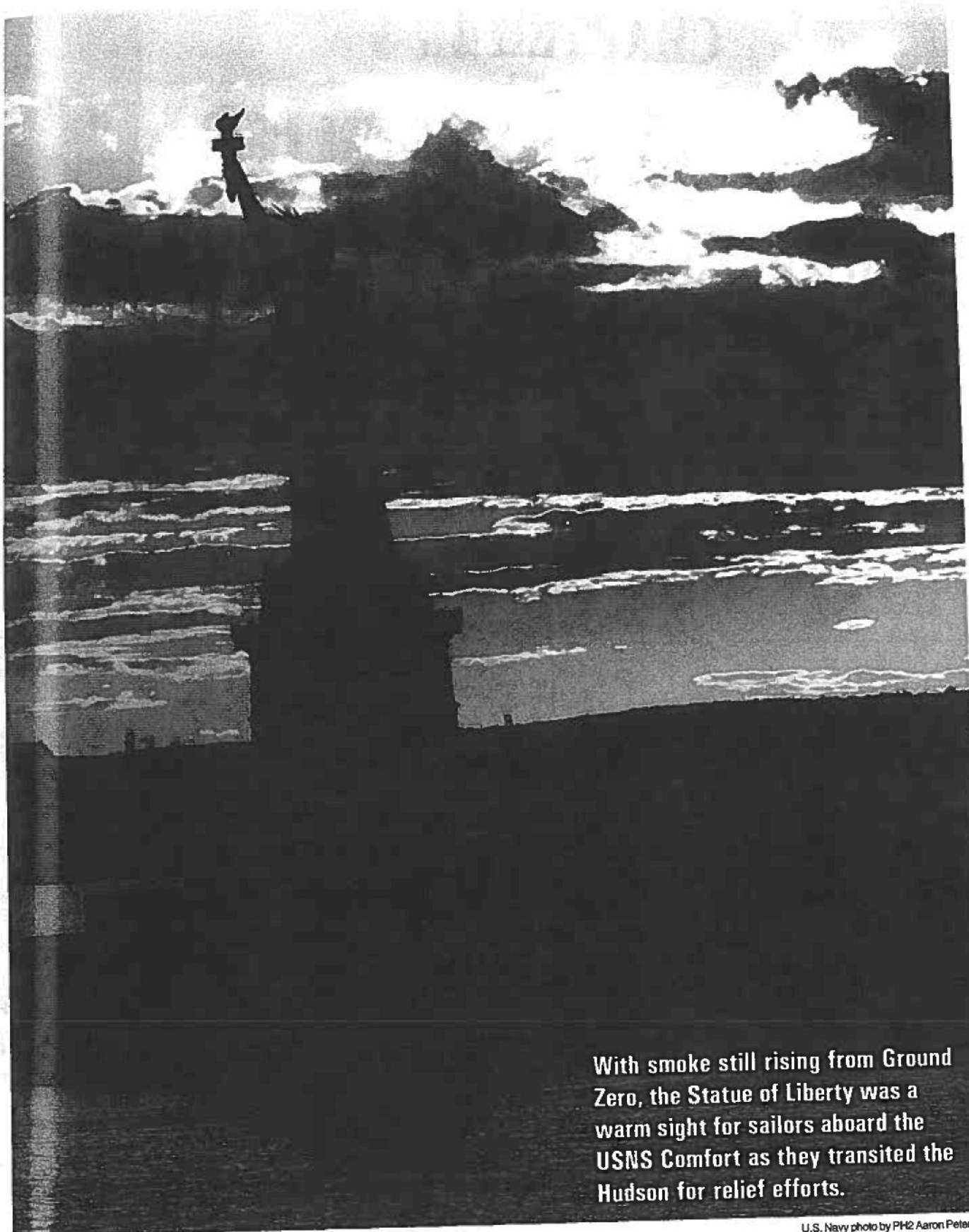
20 Heather Penney, interview with author, 18 September 2002; recording from cockpit provided to William A. Scott by David F. Wherley Jr.

21 William A. Scott, conversation with author, 16 December 2002, said in a speech by Gen. John Jumper at 2002 CSAF Doctrine Summit, Maxwell Air Force Base, Ala., 10 December 2002.

22 Ralph E. Eberhart, press conference at Tyndall Air Force Base, Fla., 1 August 2002.

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With smoke still rising from Ground Zero, the Statue of Liberty was a warm sight for sailors aboard the USNS Comfort as they transited the Hudson for relief efforts.

U.S. Navy photo by PH2 Aaron Peterson

CHAPTER 4

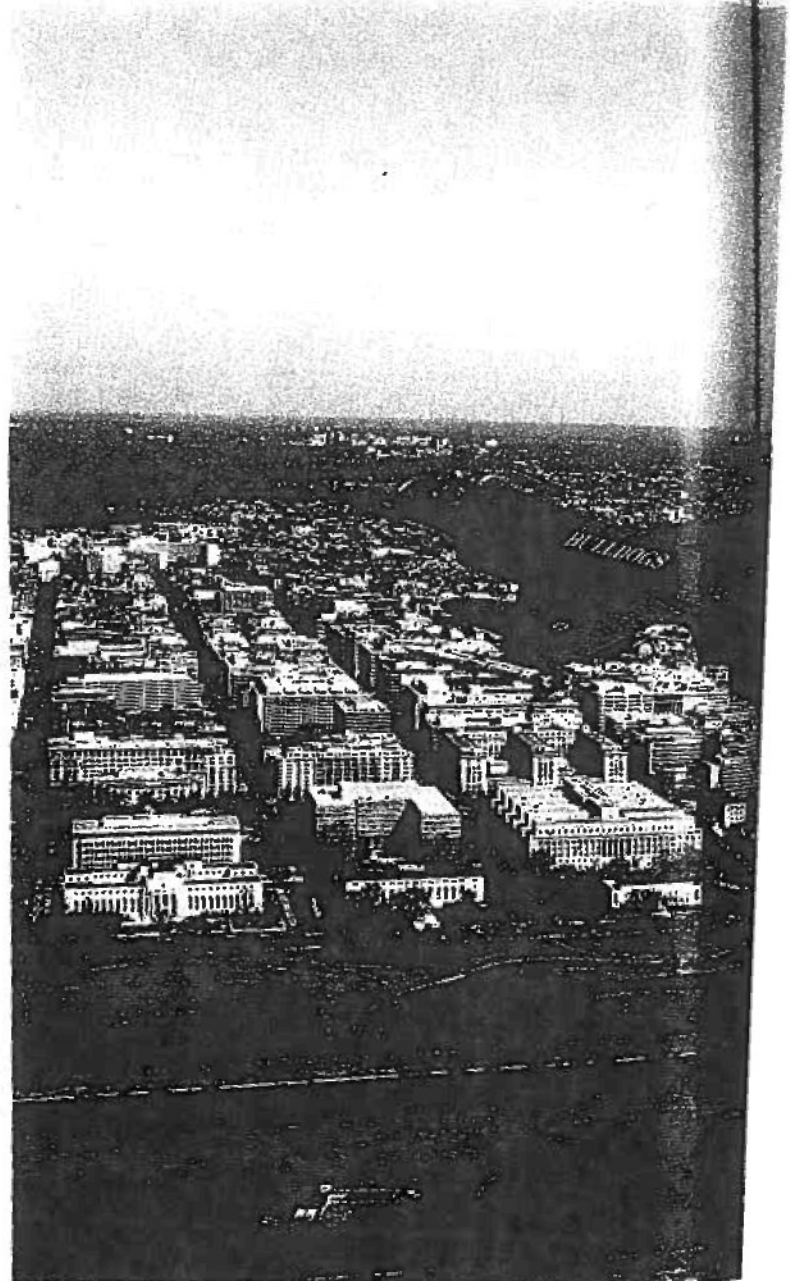
THE NOBLE EAGLE FLIES: Threat suddenly changes

**Air defense new priority
as terrorists turn airliners
into weapons of war**

The images that kept Maj. Gen. Larry K. Arnold awake at night were like eerie plots in a sci-fi horror film: cruise missiles, nukes, biological warfare, chemicals, and airplanes in the hands of terrorists.

"I lie awake worrying," Arnold told The Associated Press in early 2000. "It is one thing to put a truck inside the twin trade towers and blow it up. It is quite another to be able to fly a weapon across our borders. That is an attack, a direct attack, an unambiguous attack from outside our country."¹

Then Sept. 11 happened, a twisted nightmare far scarier than Arnold ever could have imagined. With a Cold War mentality that the demons would come from outside America's shores, Arnold and his staff were blindsided when the fear struck from within. "No, we did not envision people hijacking airplanes from within the United States, taking over those aircraft and using them as fuel-air bombs," says the retired commander of 1st Air Force and the Continental United States North American Aerospace Defense Command Region. "As much as you brief what could happen in the future, I think from an intellectual standpoint, we realized the





**Minnesota Air National Guard F-16s
assigned to the 148th Fighter Wing fly
Combat Air Patrol missions over
Washington, D.C., in support of Operation
Noble Eagle.**



Photos by Master Sgt. Dean Kuhlman, 148th Fighter Wing, Minnesota Air National Guard

greatest threat to the United States prior to Sept. 11, 2001, was going to be a terrorist attack. But I did not envision that it would be hijacked airplanes run into buildings like that.”

In the world before Sept. 11, Arnold had visions of light aircraft sneaking across America’s air borders to wage biological, chemical or nuclear attack. And he wasn’t convinced the NORAD alert fighter force was big enough to stop it. The asymmetric threat — the small, unknown enemy preying upon the behemoth United States — was a nagging, constant worry. “That was our thought,” Arnold says. “That is what our mission was about. Our mission was not about the internal threat.”

“We thought an attack in the United States was a law enforcement issue, and it was, right up until Sept. 11.”

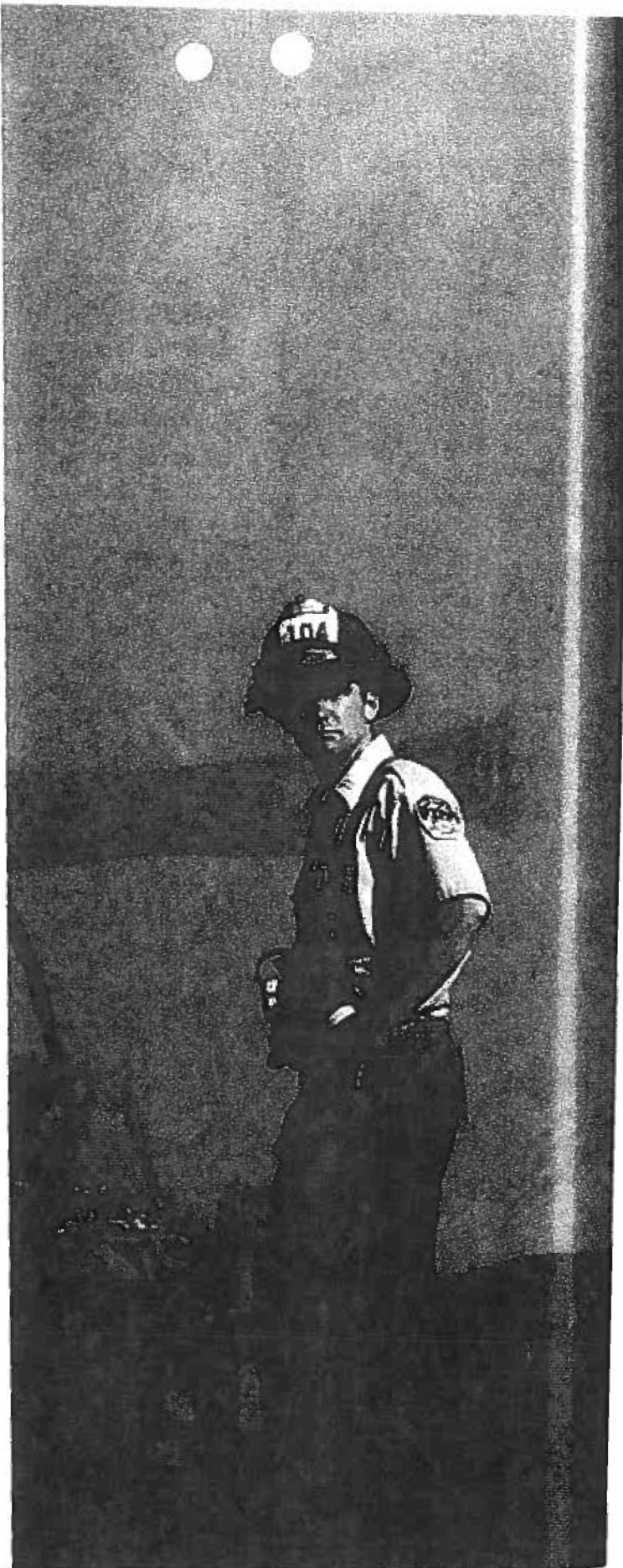


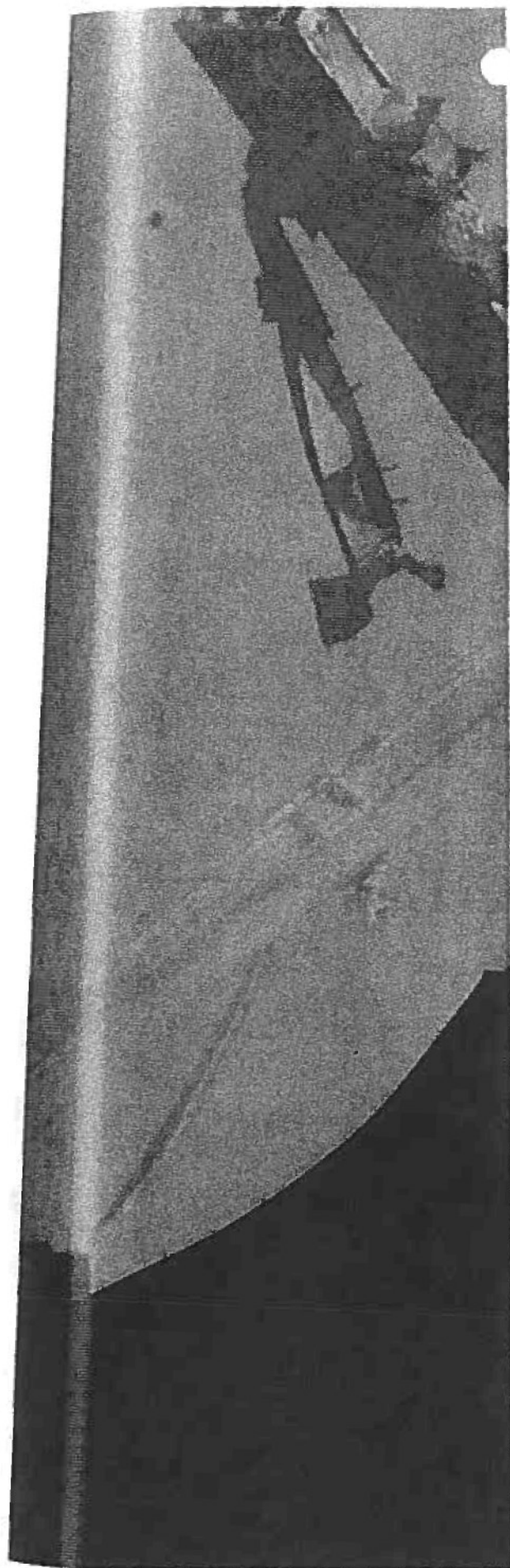
The night of the attacks, 119th Fighter Wing pilot Capt. Craig Borgstrom descended his F-16 “Fighting Falcon” into Langley Air Force Base, Va., after hours of intercept missions over Washington, D.C. As he taxied his aircraft safely in, he still didn’t know all that had happened in his country that day. But the scene through the jet canopy told him everything had changed.

“When we recovered into our alert facility, there were more missiles on our ramp than my eyes have ever seen,” the North Dakota Air National Guardsman says. “At this point, I still had no idea about the airliners. I pulled into the alert barn and there were load teams with missiles and trailers everywhere. I talked to the crew chief and my first question was, ‘What else did they get?’ He wasn’t sure, but thought there were others at that point. I knew a really terrible thing had happened.”

There was a new threat now: It was on the inside and sent America’s air sovereignty mission reeling.

When Arnold went to sleep Sept. 10, 2001, he had 14 alert fighters on his watch, all dedicated to





U.S. Navy photo by Journalist 1st Class Preston Keres

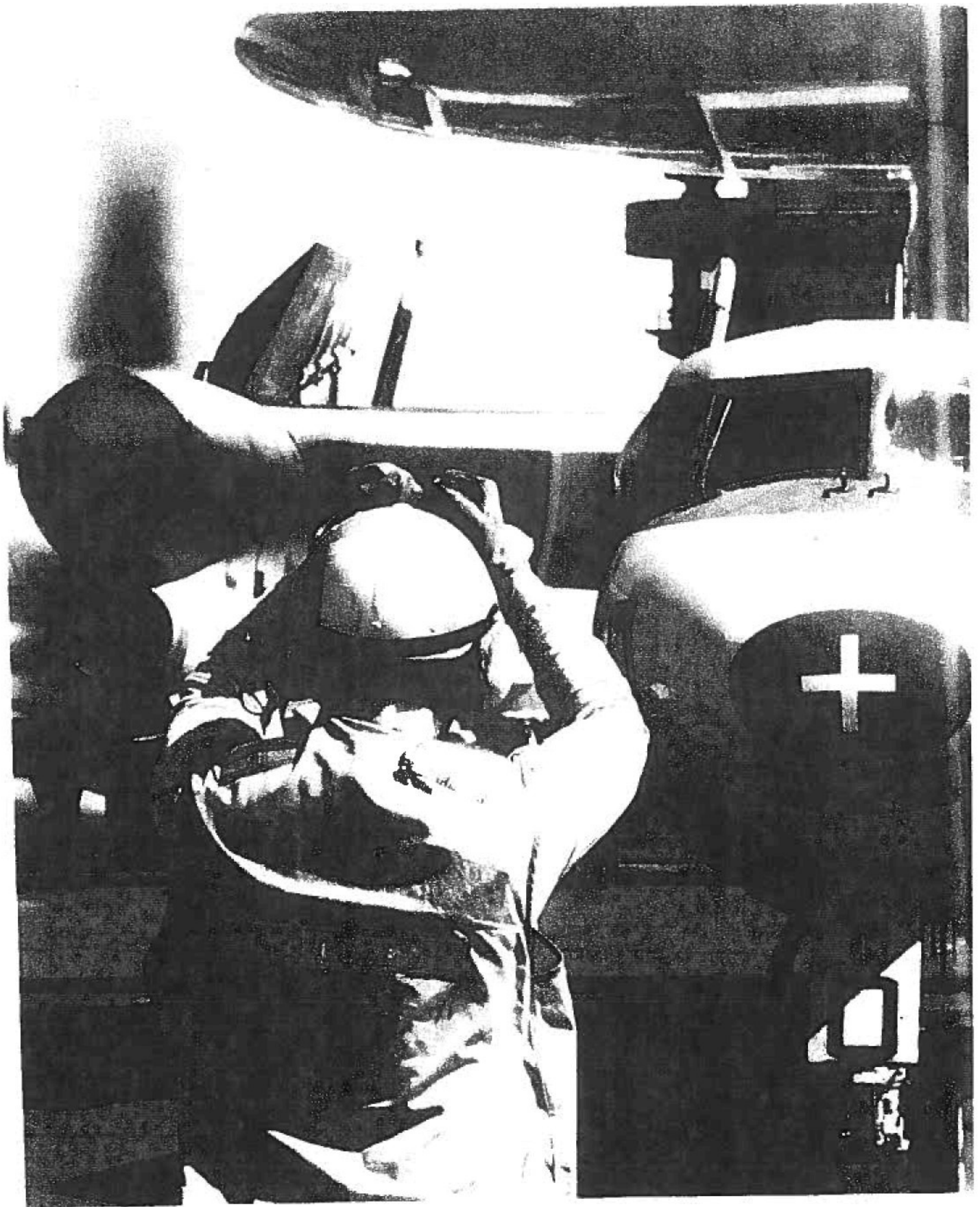
protecting thousands of miles of American air borders. When Arnold finally went to sleep just before sunrise Sept. 12, America's air sovereignty force had been catapulted into a full-fledged air defense arsenal, with more than 400 alert fighters, Airborne Warning and Control System aircraft and tankers postured for battle.² The seven alert sites around the periphery of the continental United States grew ten times over to 69-plus sites scattered about the country.³ Not even the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962 saw such a build up of raw air power.⁴ Within days, America's military had a new mission: Operation Noble Eagle. The Noble Eagle name encompasses U.S. military operations associated with homeland defense and civil support to federal, state and local agencies — air defense playing a major role.⁵ More than 30 Air National Guard fighter wings and nearly two dozen refueling wings were immediately mobilized; President George W. Bush, meanwhile, approved the call up of up to 50,000 military reservists.⁶

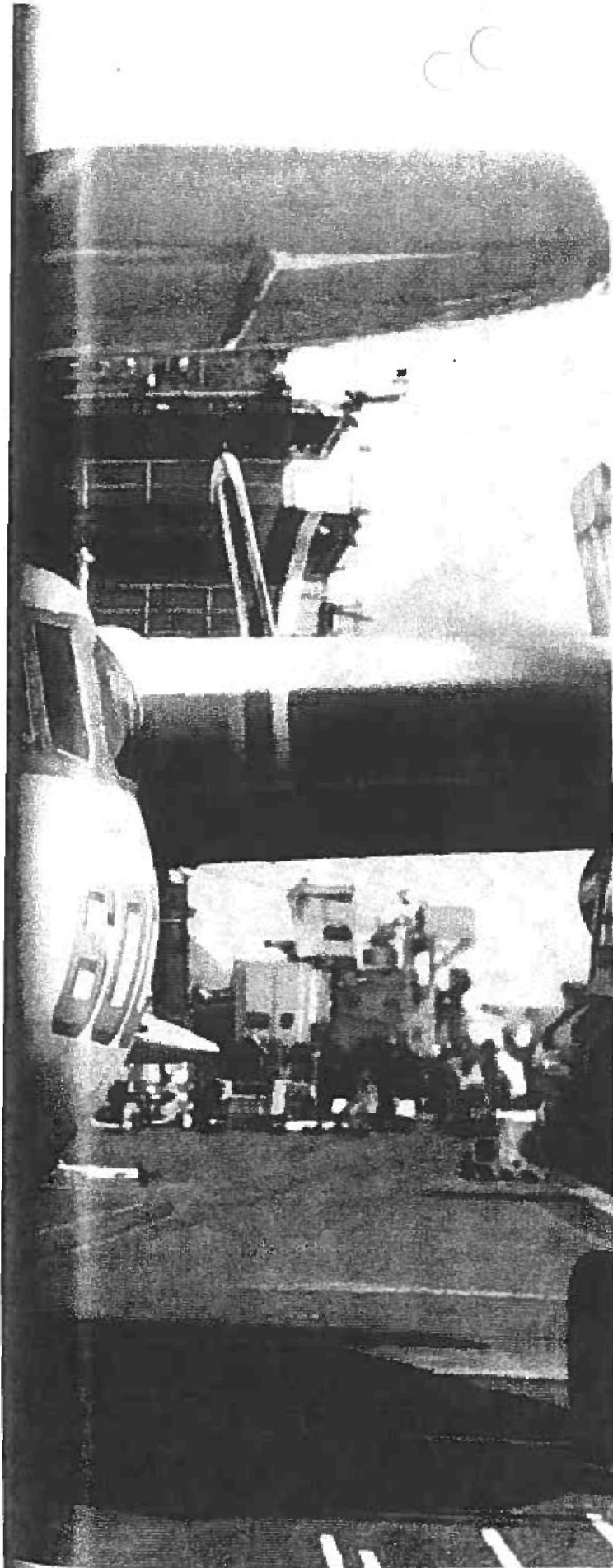
Long-standing principles succumbed to the rapid response. A Civil War-era military code, the Posse Comitatus Act that prohibits federal troops from performing civil law enforcement duties, was waived at the highest levels. "Operation Noble Eagle operations were cleared of Posse Comitatus issues by the National Command Authorities," says retired Col. William A. Scott, 1st Air Force director of plans, programs and requirements. "The NCA directed this response because law enforcement agencies don't have the capabilities we have to deal with a hijacked airborne threat."

As for formal deployment orders, initially there were none. "The kinds of missions our people were flying were the kinds of missions you'd fly in defense of counterair in any theater deployed to, like Southern Watch or Northern Watch," Arnold says. "But our people weren't deployed anywhere."

Instead of Baghdad, airmen found themselves flying defensive patterns over their own cities and homes like San Francisco and Dallas, a radically different concept for the NORAD

A New York City firefighter pauses amid the devastation of the World Trade Center Sept. 15, 2001.





U.S. Navy photo by Petty Officer 3rd Class J. Scott Campbell

air sovereignty force. Suddenly, 1st Air Force and CONR were coordinating air defense operations within America and still maintaining the traditional look outward.

"Early on, which made things a lot simpler, Gen. (Ralph E.) Eberhart, the commander of NORAD, named me the Joint Force Air Component Commander," Arnold explains. "Along with that title, I was the Area Air Defense Commander and along with that the air control authority for the continental United States. ... If someone wanted to fly a plane, they had to come through us, when we the military, still had control of the airspace."

Essentially, Arnold was responsible for "anything that flew in the United States," he says, and could order a civilian airliner shot down by one of his own. It was a tall order, but Arnold is a tall man.

Guarding the homeland

In the immediate wake of Sept. 11, civilian aviation was brought to a historic standstill. Hundreds of planes were packed like sardines on Canadian runways in Newfoundland and Nova Scotia.

For several weeks, NORAD and the joint Department of Defense and Federal Aviation Administration Air Traffic Services Cell served as the hub of all government and civilian air traffic in the United States.⁷ In that dramatic twist to NORAD's traditional mission, scores of fighters, tankers and surveillance aircraft were flying both planned and random Combat Air Patrols across the nation and

Petty Officer 3rd Class Edmond Scott directs an E-2C "Hawkeye" from Airborne Early Warning Squadron 125 into launch position on the flight deck of the USS George Washington (CVN 73), Sept. 13, 2001. The Norfolk, Va.-based ship was providing air defense to New York City while waiting for tasking from NORAD.

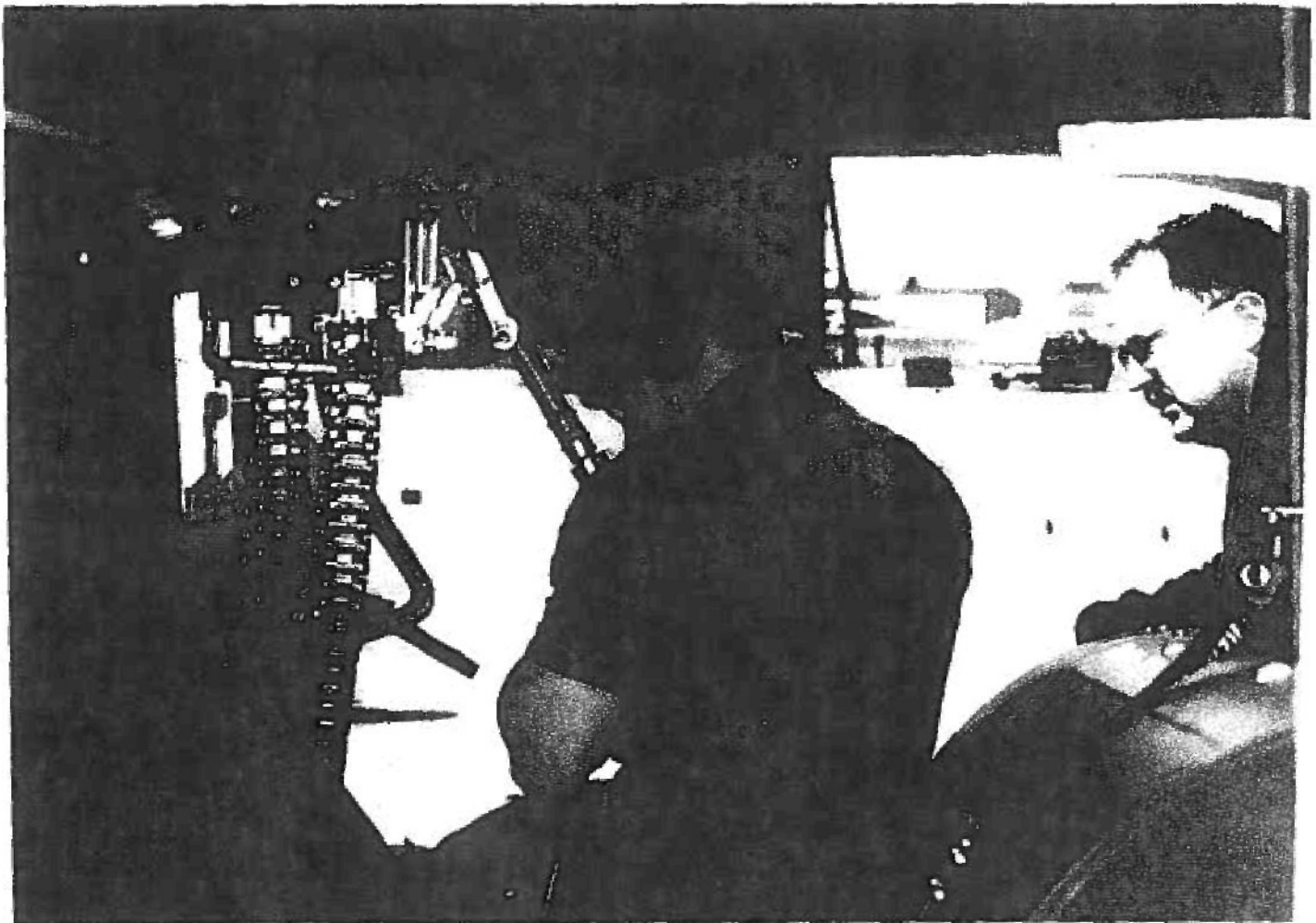


Photo by Senior Airman Brett R. Ewald, 148th Fighter Wing, Minnesota

round-the-clock sorties over New York and Washington, D.C. Instead of 14 jets, more than 100 fighters were on alert at 30 bases around the country.⁸ Just as many tankers and AWACS were available to counter the domestic air threat.⁹

For F-15 pilots Maj. Robert Martyn and Martin Richard, Operation Noble Eagle began the day they saw the World Trade Center burn. The Massachusetts Air National Guardsmen were some of the first scrambled when hijackers took over the skies Sept. 11. Running to their "Eagles," they were fixated on what they just heard from the 102nd Fighter Wing intelligence officer: *"There could be 20 more of these out there."*

The frantic scramble orders of Sept. 11 evolved into six months of nonstop patrols over cities; "National Special Security Events" like the 2002 Winter Olympics; and key infrastructure across the nation. Martyn, Richard and thousands of other airmen were suddenly and urgently defending their own country against an unknown, intangible aggressor. "We have basically drilled holes in the sky since that day," Martyn said a year after the attacks.

Operations at home bring a unique sense of responsibility. "On missions overseas, there's more of an individual, a personal threat to you," Martyn says. "If your motors quit, you're going to have a

tough life in Iraq. And it's a team burden to the Air Force. Over the States, there's more the feeling you're a policeman. I'm not the one being threatened here. ... The threat is much higher to civilians and everyone else than it is to us. I feel more like I'm protecting my kid than myself. Ultimately, there is no threat to me flying around in an F-15. It's safer than driving around in my car, but Southwest Asia is not like that."



Homeland air defense wouldn't come without costs and presented new challenges for NORAD and its forces. Round-the-clock sorties and the support needed to fly them was stressing the jets, robbing pilots of crucial training and working maintenance troops overtime.

"Right after Sept. 11, and what became very obvious, was the operations tempo of our flying units," Arnold says. "We would have to persuade Air Combat Command and the rest of the Air Force to put Operation Noble Eagle into the Aerospace Expeditionary Forces."

The AEF Center cycles Air Force units through deployments like operations Northern and Southern Watch. "Prior to Sept. 11, we'd been unsuccessful in getting the AEF Center to be responsible for relieving our air defense units when they went overseas," Arnold says. "In the aftermath of Sept. 11, it became critical that we become a part of the AEF system. But it took awhile ... until about November, when we were able to persuade the Air Force there had to be relief, that these people could not do this."

Within the first five months of the operation, Noble Eagle sorties exceeded those flown over Afghanistan for Operation Enduring Freedom. ¹⁰ According to NORAD records, from September to December 2001, the command responded to 214 domestic aviation events in response to FAA requests. In 88 of those instances, alert fighters were scrambled; 126 others were diverted from Com-



Photo by Eric Hehs, Code One magazine

Above: Maj. Gen. Larry K. Arnold was commander of 1st Air Force and the Continental United States NORAD Region from December 1997 until August 2002. Following the Sept. 11 attacks, he directed Operation Noble Eagle forces and spearheaded major improvements in America's air defenses. He retired after 37 years of service.

Left: Senior Airman Adam Skadsberg, weapons loader, 148th Fighter Wing, Minnesota Air National Guard, uploads 20mm ammunition into the F-16 gun system as Tech. Sgt. Kent Larson stands by. Both airmen and hundreds of others from the unit were activated in support of Operation Noble Eagle.

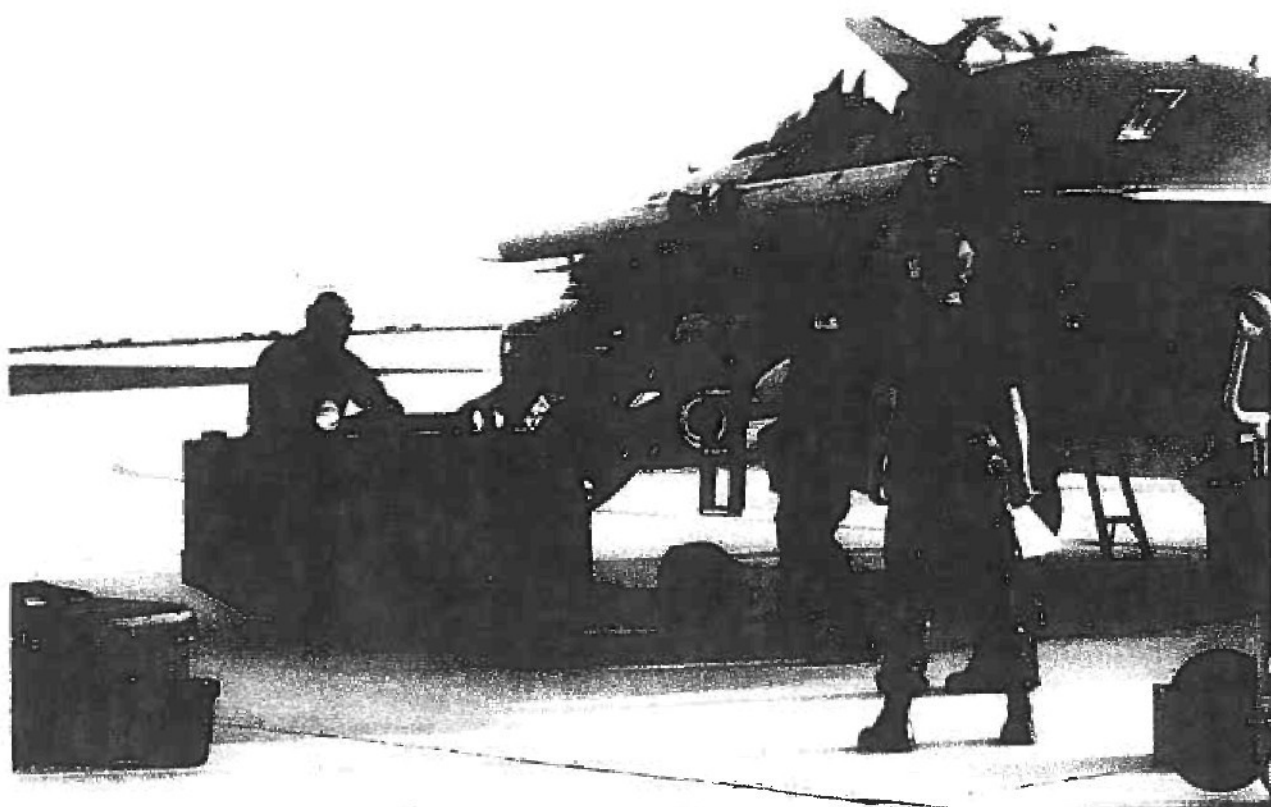


Photo by Master Sgt. Don Taggart, 177th Fighter Wing, New Jersey Air National Guard

Weapons load team members from the 177th Fighter Wing, New Jersey Air National Guard, load an AIM-120 on an F-16 Oct. 4, 2001, in support of Operation Noble Eagle. Tech. Sgt. Wendell Hunte operates the MJ1 "Jammer" bomb lift; Master Sgt. Frank Buzby and Senior Airman James Keefer attach the AIM-120 to the aircraft; Senior Airman Neil March performs gun maintenance inside the access panel; and Senior Airman Tina Chaffins waits to install the control surfaces on the AIM-120.

bat Air Patrols. In the same period a year earlier, NORAD scrambled or diverted fighters 21 times.¹¹

The scrambles — and sometimes intercepts — have drawn their share of media attention. In the summer of 2002, controllers at the Western Air Defense Sector scrambled two Arizona Air National Guard F-16s toward a Cessna squawking a hijack frequency.¹² It turned out to be a rookie pilot who accidentally hit the wrong switch.

In another incident, the Washington-based sector scrambled Oregon Air National Guard F-15s when a pilot threatened to ram his small plane into the tallest building in Portland.¹³ It happened to be the same day a movie was being filmed nearby.

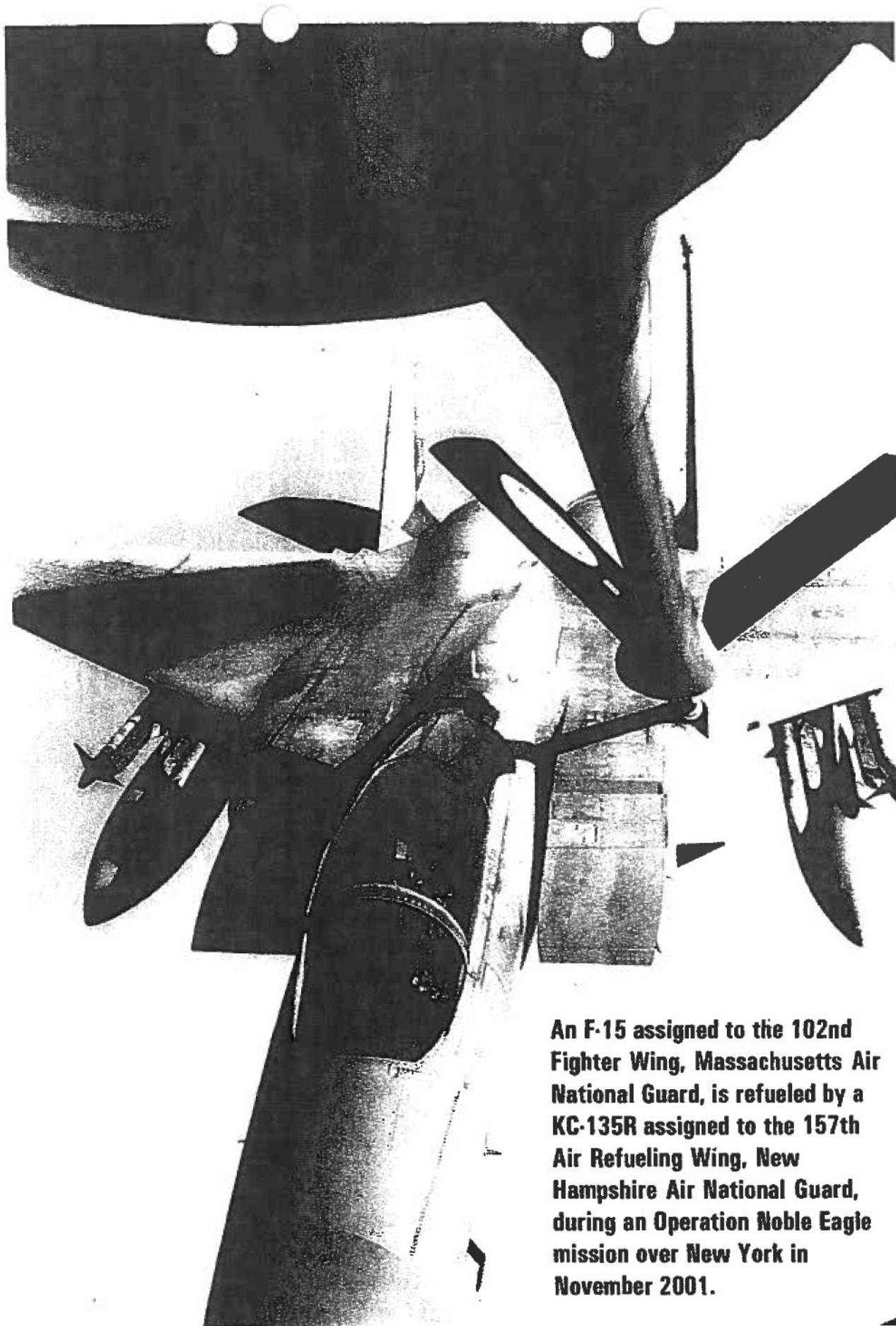
"We scrambled F-15s from the 142nd Fighter Wing in Portland and the pilot saw explosions on the ground," says WADS Commander Col. John Cromwell. "He had a sickening feeling that he failed until he found out the explosions were coming from a movie set."

Commercial flights have been under extreme scrutiny since Sept. 11. "There was a bomb scare on a flight from Honolulu to Seattle," Cromwell says. "We scrambled F-15s to escort the plane over the Pacific into Seattle and it was an uneventful landing. ... If an F-15 or F-16 is on your wing, it's not always a bad thing. Our job is to provide that emergency escort and assist if necessary."



Photo by Master Sgt. Tom Louis, 177th Fighter Wing, New Jersey Air National Guard

Senior Airman Daniel Hassler, left, and Airman 1st Class Edward Grandy, members of the New Jersey Air National Guard 177th Fighter Wing maintenance squadron, remove an oil filter from a jet engine Oct. 3, 2001. Extra maintenance was required after the Sept. 11 attacks.



An F-15 assigned to the 102nd Fighter Wing, Massachusetts Air National Guard, is refueled by a KC-135R assigned to the 157th Air Refueling Wing, New Hampshire Air National Guard, during an Operation Noble Eagle mission over New York in November 2001.

Photo by Tech. Sgt. Alan Beaulieu, 157th Air Refueling Wing, New Hampshire Air National Guard

U U U

The air defense boom was hardest in the Northeast, Arnold says, where fighters were flying nonstop over New York and Washington, D.C. Maintenance troops were getting valuable operational training, but pilots were seeing their tactical skills wane.

"Training was just gone," says Massachusetts F-15 pilot Richard. "When you're flying the CAP (Combat Air Patrol), it's mostly flying circles and if you have an intercept there's about four minutes of adrenaline. ... This was a situation we certainly didn't anticipate. But we are a cohesive combat fighter squadron and that's how we made it work. We have maintenance guys who had to leave fairly lucrative civilian jobs in Boston and now have a two-hour commute to work. If people hadn't volunteered and seriously sacrificed, it never would have gotten done."

The sacrifices are felt military wide, but the reserve status of the National Guard means people leave their civilian jobs behind when called to duty. Throughout the ongoing operation, the military has provided assistance to federal agencies in many areas: medicine, engineering, security, military working dogs, logistics, and communications. ¹⁴ Operation Noble Eagle is more than CAPs: Guardsmen have been dispatched to the nation's airports, nuclear power plants, international borders, national parks, bridges, and more. Security forces have shouldered a heavy burden. Some 70 percent of Guard members were partially mobilized; the call up can last two years. ¹⁵

"Family is first, your civilian job is second and your military job is third," says Col. Mike Cosby, commander of the 177th Fighter Wing, New Jersey Air National Guard. "People have sacrificed, not in the way the people in the World Trade Center or Pentagon did, but they have put their professional and personal lives on hold to come out here and serve the country and have done it with dis-

"People have sacrificed, not in the way the people in the World Trade Center or Pentagon did, but they have put their professional and personal lives on hold to come out here and serve the country and have done it with distinction."

— Col. Mike Cosby, commander,

177th Fighter Wing, New Jersey Air National Guard

tion. And the American people have recognized that."

In the days and months following the attacks, Atlantic City Air National Guard Base served as a home for several airmen protecting the Eastern skies.

"We hosted units from Houston, Albuquerque, (N.M.), Sioux City, (Iowa), and many more," Cosby says. "They bring pilots, airplanes and a limited number of maintainers and experts in the back shop (fighter wing repair facility), and we provide weather, base operations, intelligence, command post, and gas in the airplanes. They came right in here and rolled with the punches and did a fantastic job of supporting NORAD and the Noble Eagle mission."

Between Atlantic City's 177th Fighter Wing and other units deployed there, more than 1,200 sorties were flown from September 2001 until March 2002, for more than 4,480 hours of flying time, Cosby says. Atlantic City's fleet of F-16s, manufactured in 1983, saw a year's flying time in six months, he adds.

Across the alert force, the 24-hour combat sorties equated to crew rest and scheduling problems, no time for personal leave and 12-hour shifts. "There will be turbulent times between now and until we establish the new normal for America," Cosby said nine months into Operation Noble Eagle. "Everyone from the command posts, security forces to fire departments is doing a great job, but after awhile it has to get to you, working five to six days a week, 12 hours a day."

At various times during Noble Eagle, some 90

Air Force, Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve wings have been under NORAD command and control.¹⁶ Canadian Forces and planes have provided assets for the operation along with U.S. Marine Corps flying squadrons and the U.S. Naval 3rd Fleet.¹⁷

That unwavering support began Sept. 11.

Col. Bob Marr, Northeast Air Defense Sector commander, says 81 Air Force and Air National Guard units helped secure the skies that day. "The Terre Haute guys (181st Fighter Wing, Ind.) locked down their base as soon as the towers were hit and started loading missiles, anticipating someone would be calling for help, which we did," he says. "The Burlington guys (158th Fighter Wing, Vt.) were some of the first in the air heading straight for New York as a unit that was familiar with the NORAD mission. People were launching jets in record time."

In the six days following the attacks, Air Guard pilots flew more than 600 fighter sorties.¹⁸ A number of the aircrews had never performed in an air defense capacity. And many of the fighters were parked on bases that weren't equipped to store munitions — one of many details that had to be addressed.

"Bottom line, people handled this very well," Arnold says. "People know how to fly CAPs. The biggest problem was somehow personalizing this thing. Some of these units did not know us personally and it's difficult to resolve that. One of the things we eventually did was send some of our people to all the units that were pulling alert and flying CAPs for us around the country. They were a sight for sore eyes for those units. Those units were des-

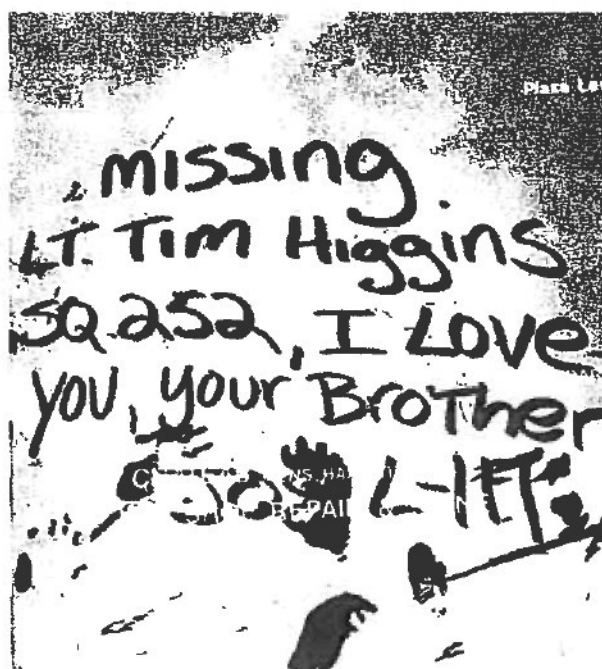


Photo by Tech. Sgt. Mark Olsen, New Jersey Department of Military and Veterans Affairs

perate to talk to somebody at 1st Air Force. People had questions. Alert facilities needed work and we were able to help by being an advocate for that."

At Selfridge Air National Guard Base, Mich., home of the 127th Wing, the local fire department vacated its building so F-16 aircrews had a place to sleep and work. Airmen had been sleeping in tents on the flight line for almost a month after Sept. 11.¹⁹

"We can solve the lack of crew quarters in many different ways," Arnold says. "Some units have rented Winnebagos."²⁰

Housing alert aircraft posed yet another problem, especially in cities with harsh winters. "Before Sept. 11 our mission was to train, so we could afford to let the snow melt before we flew," says retired Brig. Gen. Wayne L. Schultz, former commander of the Colorado Air National Guard 140th Wing near Denver.²¹ An accelerated contract bid resulted in six temperature-moderated shelters to protect the F-16s and keep them in top shape for alert sorties. Even on the coldest days, deicing of aircraft will be unnecessary, improving response times.²² At Andrews Air Force Base, Md., home of the 113th Wing, District of Columbia Air National Guard, five aircraft shelters were quickly built for the new F-16 alert commitment there.²³

Modernizing a mission

Generating thousands of unprecedented combat flights over the continental United States was going to be a feat in and of itself. Since NORAD



Photo by Master Sgt. Michael T. Smith, 109th Airlift Wing, New York Air National Guard



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Mark Olsen, New Jersey Department of Military and Veterans Affairs Public Affairs Office

Above: A chaplain counsels an Army National Guard member serving in New York City in late September 2001.

Left: Firefighters break from the destruction Sept. 14, 2001.

Opposite page: A brother reaches out through a dusty message as seen in this Sept. 14, 2001, photo. Firefighter Lt. Timothy Higgins, 43, was killed Sept. 11.

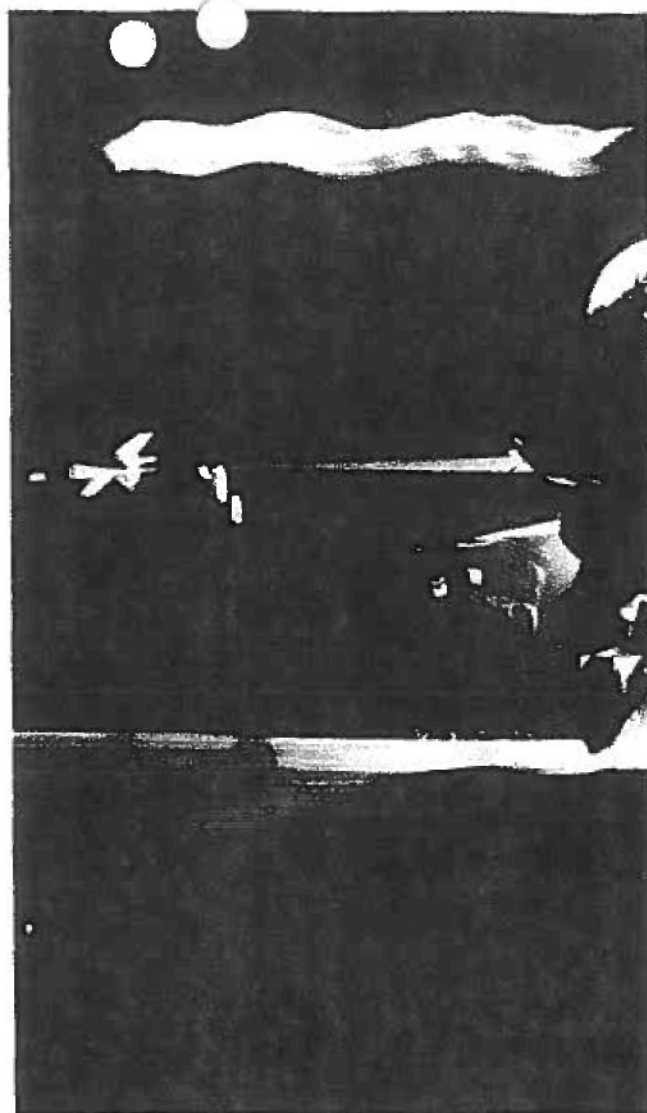
had always looked outward, its interior radar coverage was dismal. "Now we were suddenly looking in the interior of the country and didn't have the capability to do it," Arnold says.

Airborne surveillance was an immediate, yet partial, solution in the early days of the operation: Air Force E-3 AWACS, Navy E-2C "Hawkeyes" and U.S. Customs Service P-3s provided radar feeds to forces on the ground and in the air. ²⁴ Navy Aegis cruisers also contributed to the new view inward. ²⁵ But much more was needed to sustain effective 24-hour combat patrols over America. "We had three things to do," Arnold says. "We had to hook up radars so we could see the interior, had to have radios to talk to pilots and a command and control system capable of plugging in all those radars and radios ... so the air defense sectors could actually see and talk to our fighters."

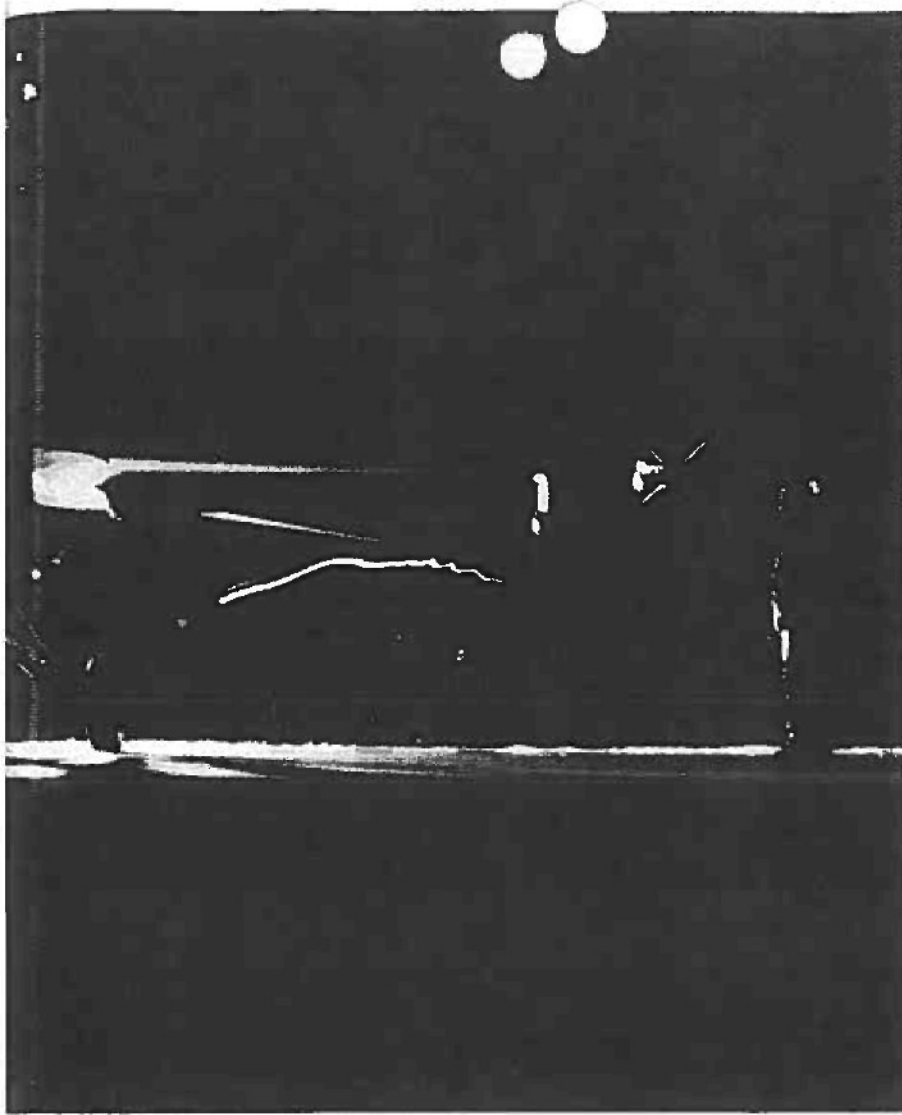
The Air Force began revamping every facet of the mission as mandated at the highest levels of government and the Department of Defense. Air sovereignty fundamentals raced into the 21st century with Mach-like speed.

"We got better at everything we had to do, better at working with the Navy, better at scrambling and controlling airplanes and better with our radars," says Lt. Col. Clark "Buck" Rogers, deputy commander for operations at the Southeast Air Defense Sector, Tyndall Air Force Base, Fla. "The amount of change the air defense business went through is phenomenal. I don't think that in the history of the military you can find more rapid change in such a short period of time. It used to be months of funding and questions. We didn't have any of that. We said, 'You guys need to be on alert and the next thing you know, people are setting up tents and 'Winnebagos.'"

In the world before Sept. 11, America's long-range radars — Joint Surveillance System sites and tethered aerostats around the periphery of the country — were focused on planes coming toward the United States. Flights originating in the country and crossing the interior were automatically considered



U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Michelle Leonard



U.S. Air Force photo by Senior Airman Michele G. Mislano

Above: Weapons loaders from the Virginia Air National Guard 192nd Fighter Wing perform end of runway procedures before an F-16 takes off in support of Operation Noble Eagle on Oct. 30, 2001.

Left: Smoldering fires at the World Trade Center are reflected in the visor of a United States Air Force MH-53M helicopter flight engineer days after the Sept. 11 terrorist attack on the United States.

friendly.²⁶ And the dated NORAD Q-93 computers could not connect with the scores of FAA radars dotting the interior landscape.

"On Sept. 11, we were looking out — looking for the external threat," NORAD Commander Eberhart said months after the attacks. "We assumed anything in the United States was authorized to be there and did not constitute a threat. Tragically, we were wrong."²⁷

One of the greatest technological advances in NORAD's 45-year history would come immediately on the heels of the terrorist attacks.²⁸ The "NORAD Contingency Suite," a computer software program purchased with \$9 million in emergency response funds, would link NORAD with several interior FAA radars, giving controllers the capability to view more than 15,000 tracks at any moment per sector instead of 300 tracks before Sept. 11.²⁹

"The beautiful map on the NORAD Contingency Suite enables us to see everything," says Maj. Sue Cheney, a WADS assistant flight commander. "We can see the airports, see where the planes take off and see the history of a track. We can look at a track and see if it took off in the United States."

The sharper view — in color on a graphics-intensive flat panel screen — is especially important in the West, where controllers keep a watchful eye on the Mexican border, she adds.

Cheney marvels at how quickly NORAD acquired the new technology. "In only a couple of months we were getting a whole new system installed," she says. "From the 11th of September, for the Air Force to buy and field a new system, that's just unbelievably quick. We'd done modernization for the better part of the decade and spent

millions of dollars and got nothing. Two months after Sept. 11, we had a new system for a tiny fraction of that cost.”

That rapid capability arose from a cruise missile defense “Advanced Concept Technology Demonstration” 1st Air Force had been conducting for more than a year — a prescient stroke of luck for NORAD and the United States.

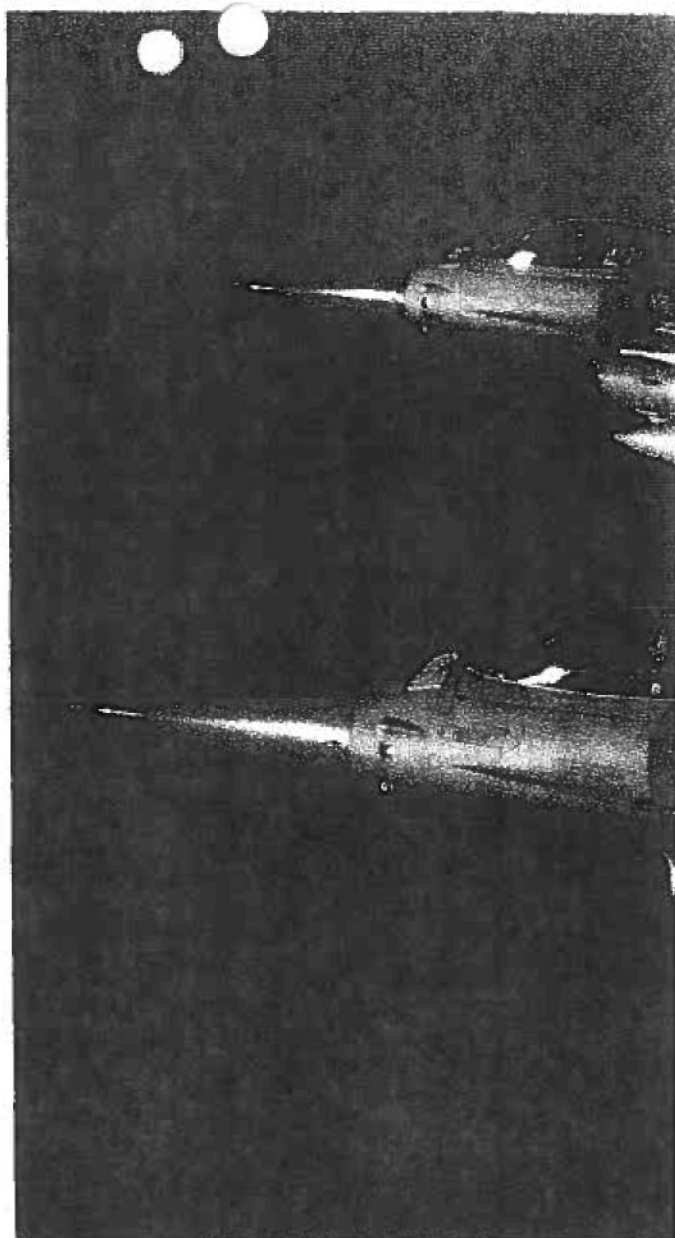
Planning for war

Better radar pictures are just part of the story of how a mission changed overnight. Within a few days of the Sept. 11 attacks, the CONR Air Operations Center, run by the 701st Air Defense Squadron, would become a bona fide war machine.

The heart of Noble Eagle beats at the CONR AOC, the combat center in the continental United States dedicated to its defense. Much like a movie theater, only colder, the AOC is a typical air defense facility: dim, drab and windowless. It’s where highly classified plans to protect the nation are born, approved and disseminated across NORAD. “Our command post, before Sept. 11, had 38 people that ran our AOC day to day,” Arnold explains. “We eventually had 500 people running it.” The first group of what would be more than 400 people arrived within nine days of the attacks, Scott says.

“The importance of the CONR Air Operations Center grew dramatically in the days following Sept. 11,” says retired Col. Joe Kahoe, former 1st

Two F-16s assigned to the North Dakota Air National Guard 119th Fighter Wing fly a Combat Air Patrol mission over Washington, D.C., in support of Operation Noble Eagle.



Air Force and CONR assistant chief of operations. “We always thought we had an important role to play in defense of the homeland. In a matter of days, 1st Air Force and CONR received hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of computers and communications equipment that we had been struggling to obtain for years.”

From the AOC comes the ATO — the Air Tasking Order — for a day’s worth of Noble Eagle sorties. “Combat plans became a huge function,” Arnold says. “We were used to writing a single ATO every week for all our alert prior to Sept. 11 and after Sept. 11, had to write an ATO every day that was larger than Northern Watch and Southern



Photo courtesy of 119th Fighter Wing, North Dakota Air National Guard

Watch combined. This was not a small effort.

"Now you had combat plans people writing the ATO, had current operations people on the floor representing every specialty we had — command and control, AWACS, fighters, logistics. ... We had to have these people on duty. If there was a change to the ATO, we had to adjust the ATO and have the coordination for all of it to happen."

It was a tough, but attainable task, Arnold says: "I had confidence in our people. We trained daily, we conducted exercises and were inspected so we already knew our people were capable of doing the job. We knew how to run an AOC and how to obtain, allocate and apportion resources."

Grass roots efforts

High-visibility changes were everywhere as air defense was taking center stage across the terror-struck nation. The Department of Defense 2001 "Report of the Quadrennial Defense Review" would conclude: "*The highest priority of the U.S. military is to defend the Nation from all enemies.*"³⁰ Grass roots efforts at the nation's air defense sectors were true to the cause.

Master Sgt. Jon Smith is the noncommissioned officer in charge of radio maintenance support at the Southeast Air Defense Sector. His wife gave birth to their first child in an emergency delivery Sept. 7, 2001. When the phone rang Sept. 11, they'd been home from the hospital one night, sleepless and unaware of the unfolding catastrophe.

"Col. (Dave) Webster (SEADS chief of communications and computer systems) asked me what it would take for us to install radios," Smith says. "I said, 'Sir, we can install radios wherever we need to as long as we can get telephone circuits.'"

Just a few days after the attacks, Smith and Master Sgt. Bruce Griswold, chief of computer maintenance, loaded up their equipment and headed to Dobbins Air Reserve Base in Georgia. Their mission: wire radios so ground controllers could communicate with fighter pilots flying over Atlanta.

"The point of the radios was to have connectivity," Smith explains. "The voice circuit and data circuit were routed back to Tyndall over telephone lines so the SEADS operators would have remote control of the radio. Now they could talk to the fighters for Combat Air Patrol missions."

Smith reported back to his boss. "I told Col. Webster we were looking good here and he said, 'Good work. The bad news is, I need you to get back ASAP for your day off with your wife and baby. When you get back, I'll tell you where you're going next.'"

The next stop was Louisiana. Then Texas —

the president's ranch in Crawford needed protection. Then Arkansas. Another team installing the "radios on a stick," as crews dubbed them, went to North Carolina. Then Tennessee. Then Alabama.

"When you're in a crisis, you want people who can thrive without structure, who can just create it as they go along," says Col. Larry Kemp, SEADS commander.

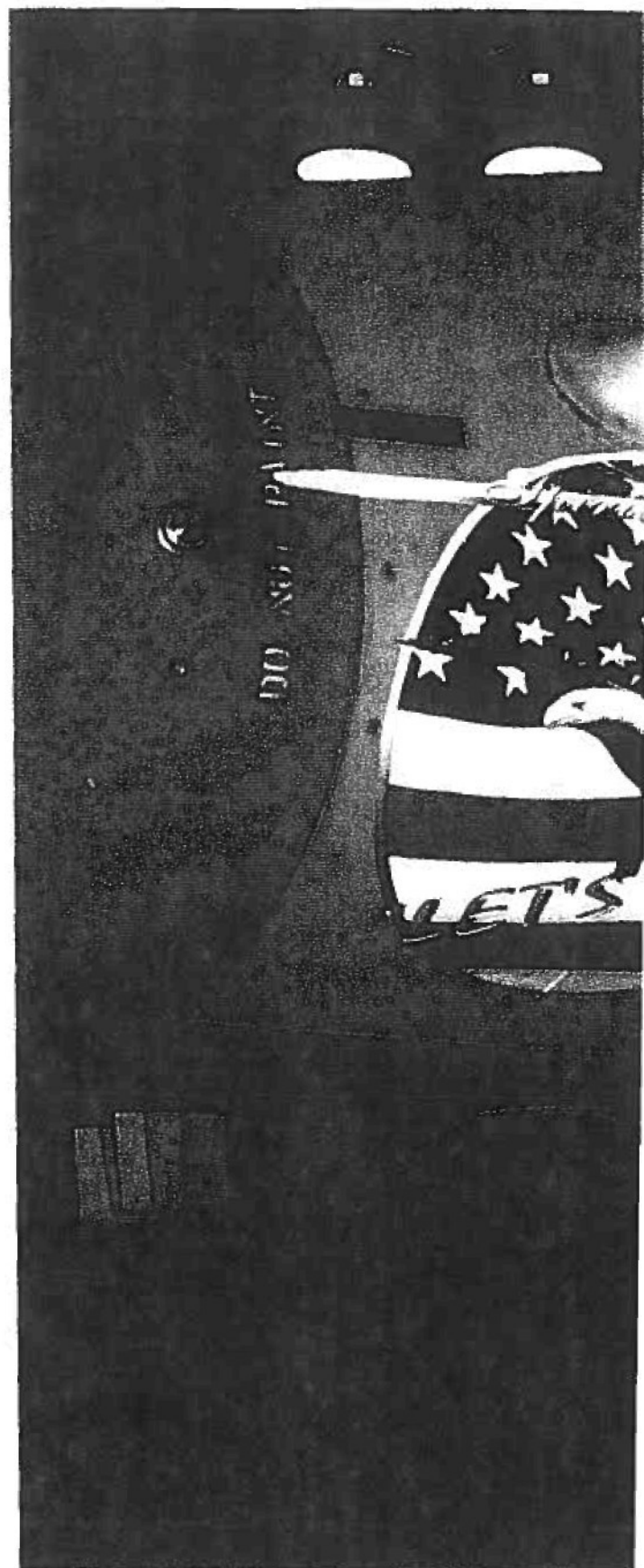
For several weeks, Smith, Griswold and other SEADS specialists drove around the South, often getting supplies at the local Home Depot, so U.S. Air Force fighters could protect the country. "We had great support wherever we went," Smith says. "People bent over backward helping us out."



Hundreds of miles away at the Northeast Air Defense Sector, airspace specialists initiated an unprecedented 24-hour telephone bridge between the military and FAA. The crucial communication link began Sept. 11 and has been up ever since.

"It took about two seconds to realize that how we operated before Sept. 11 was not going to work," says Bill Ayers, Department of Defense airspace manager for NEADS. "We couldn't get the

Lisa Beamer, whose husband Todd Beamer was killed on United Airlines Flight 93, attends a dedication ceremony March 25, 2002, in Egg Harbor Township, N.J., headquarters of the New Jersey Air National Guard 177th Fighter Wing. A decal depicting Todd Beamer's inspiring words is displayed on Wing Commander Col. Mike Cosby's F-16. The phrase "Let's Roll" has come to represent the heroic spirit of those killed in the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks.



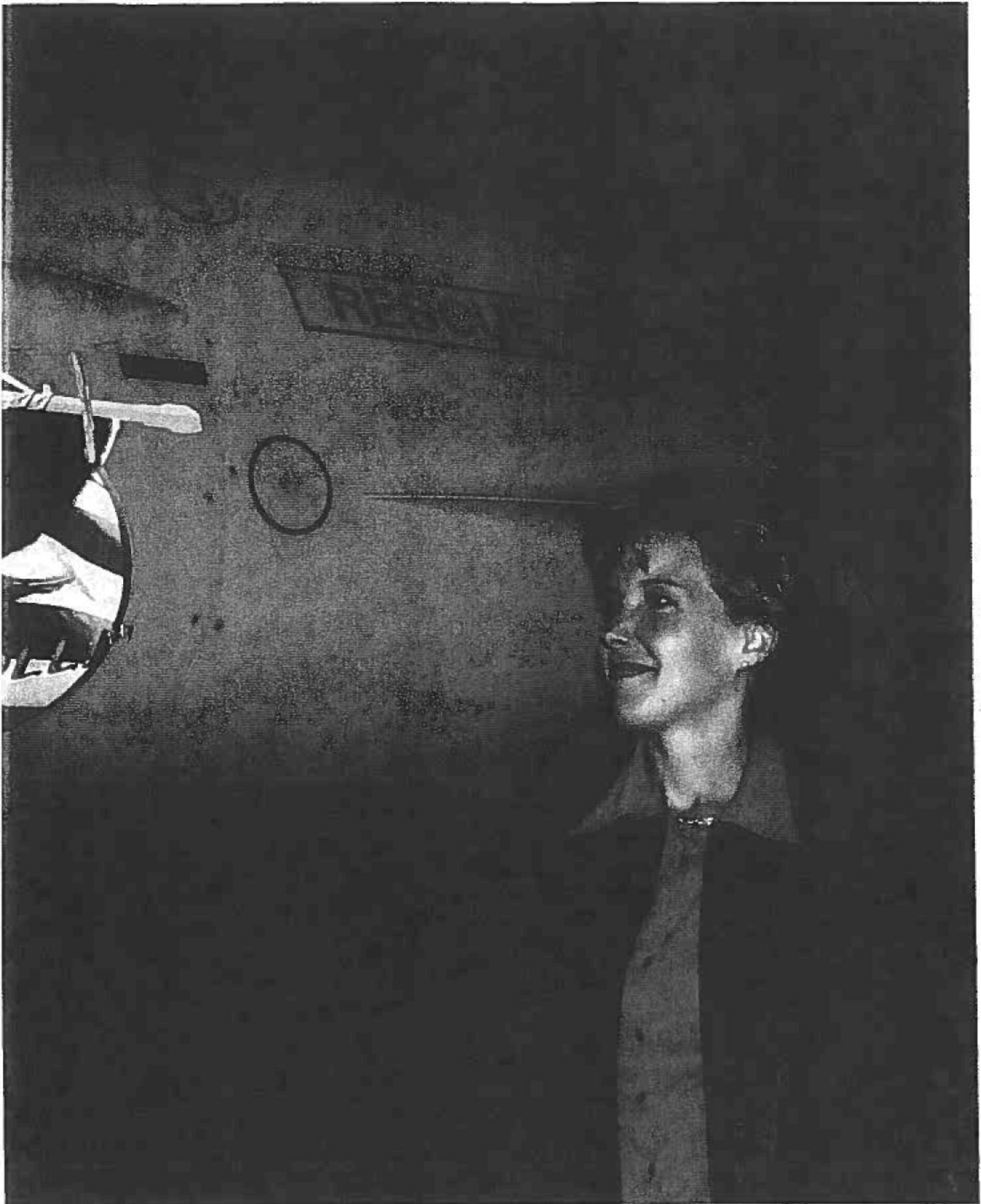
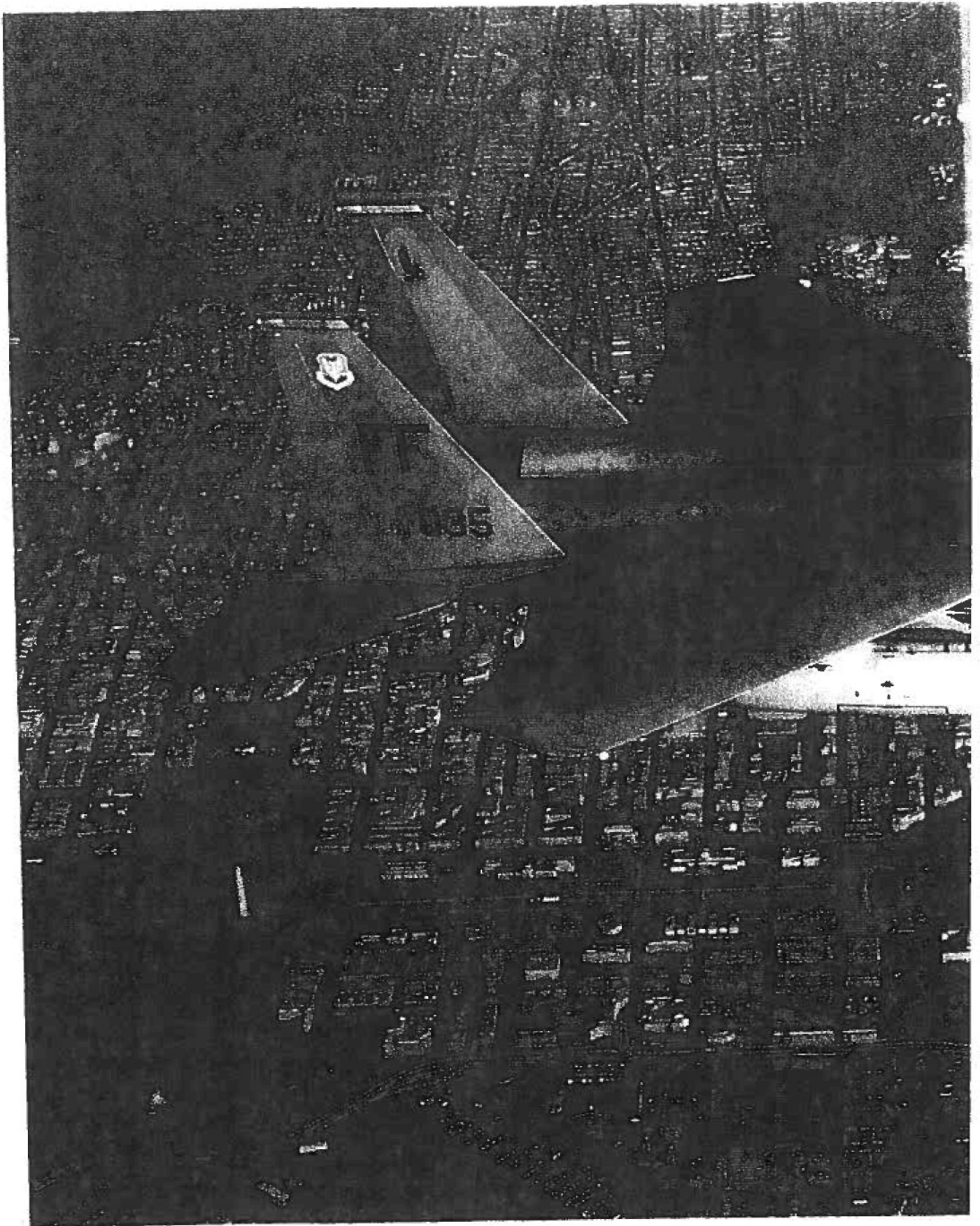
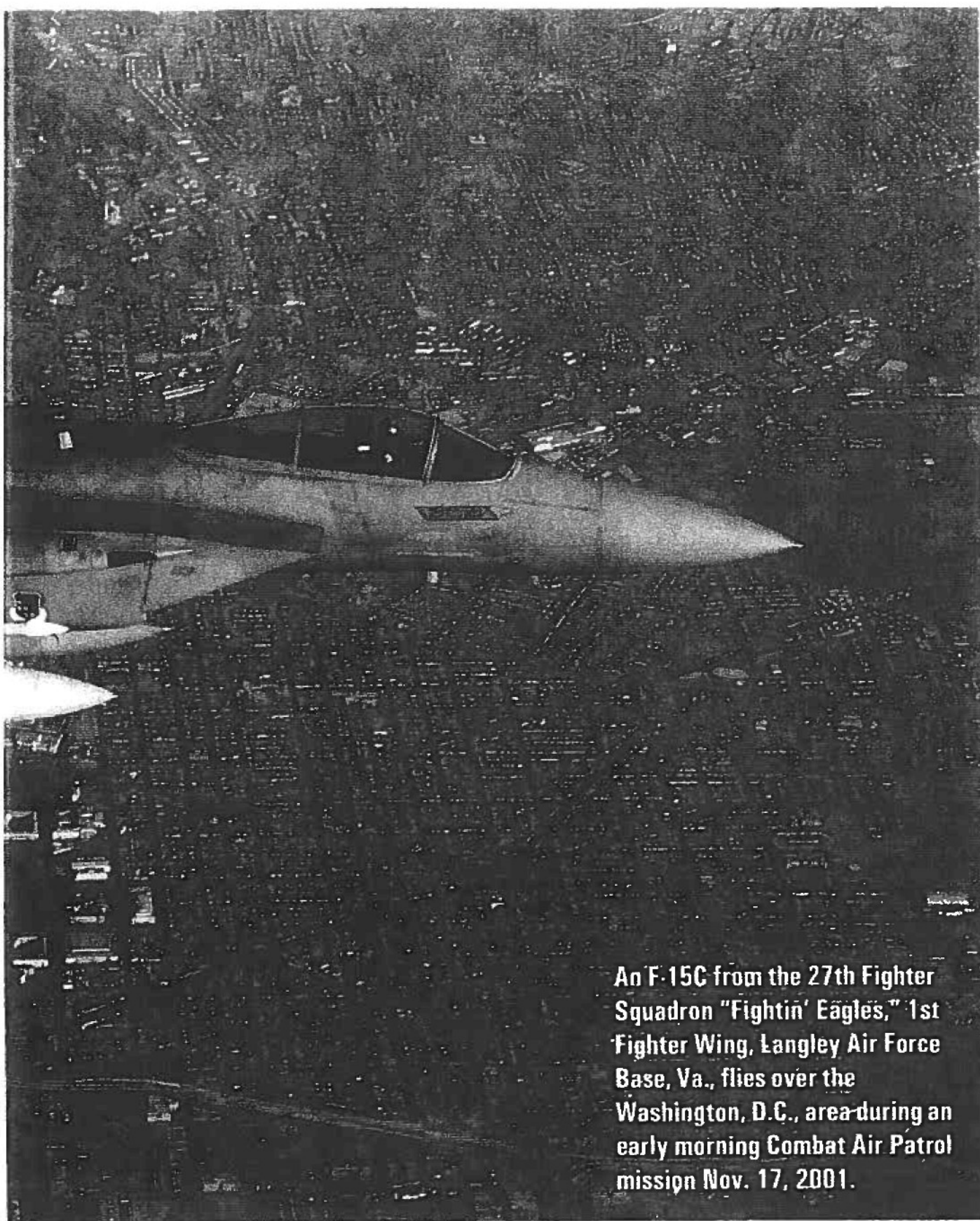


Photo by Senior Airman Andrew J. Merlock Jr., 177th Fighter Wing, New Jersey Air National Guard





An F-15C from the 27th Fighter Squadron "Fightin' Eagles," 1st Fighter Wing, Langley Air Force Base, Va., flies over the Washington, D.C., area during an early morning Combat Air Patrol mission Nov. 17, 2001.

U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Greg L. Davis



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Mark Moore, 138th Fighter Wing, Oklahoma Air National Guard

Above: Master Sgt. Patrick Owens looks across the runway of the 138th Fighter Wing, Oklahoma Air National Guard, while conducting countersniper operations. Owens is a member of the 138th Security Police Squadron participating in Operation Noble Eagle.

Right: Traditional Guardsmen, Senior Airman Darrell Webb and Staff Sgt. Denise Office of the 151st Services Flight, Utah Air National Guard, prepare "midnight chow" for personnel activated in support of Operation Noble Eagle, Oct. 3, 2001.

information fast enough."

"This phone bridge brought the command structure throughout the United States into one telephone call," he says.

With all eyes focused on the dense Northeast corridor, the open line has enabled NEADS controllers to assist the FAA numerous times since Sept. 11. "We had a Boston departure turning toward JFK (International Airport, N.Y.) and there was a horse in the cargo hold that was kicking and making a rather large disturbance," Ayers says. "The crew thought it was an unruly passenger."

On an international flight bound for Boston, a Russian passenger retrieved something from the overhead bin and got into a scuffle with a flight attendant. By the time word reached NEADS, controllers believed somebody was rushing the cockpit, Ayers says.

"Before Sept. 11, there were limited communications between the air defense sectors and FAA centers," says Steve Culbertson, FAA air defense

liaison officer for NEADS. "We had no way to talk. Now, we are hooked up to all the FAA centers and the FAA Command Center in Herndon, Virginia."

Adds assistant airspace manager Master Sgt. Jerry Lee, a civilian activated on Sept. 11: "We are able to talk to the FAA in their language and relay that information to our command and control specialists in their language."

Their finest hour

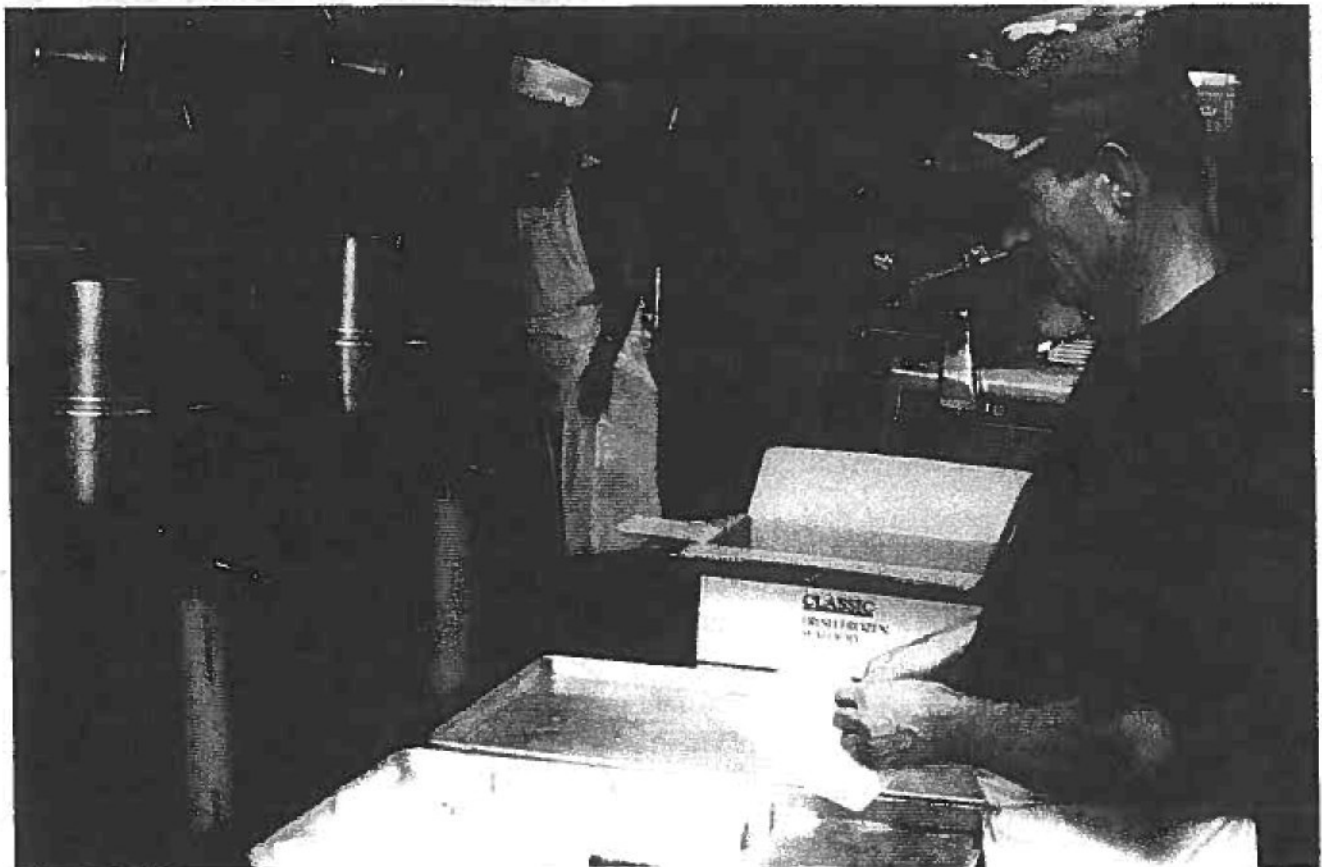
Displays of volunteerism and patriotism were apparent not only across NORAD, but service-wide. "Sept. 11, 2001, was a horrible tragedy," Scott says. "But the great American story of Sept. 11, 2001, is that people were knocking down our air defense sector doors. Guard units everywhere wanted to help. We had every Air Force unit out there saying, 'What can I do?'"

More than 60,000 Guardsmen reported to their bases Sept. 11, says retired Air National Guard Brig. Gen. Paul S. Kimmel, former assistant for operational readiness to the director of the Air National Guard. "I think we did what Guardsmen always do," Kimmel says, "and that's respond and respond well when there's a need. ... The initiative people took on their own without direction was amazing and showed the real value of the Air National Guard."

"This was probably our finest hour since Bunker Hill, and that says a lot."

Guardsmen are tough and resilient, WADS Commander Cromwell says. "People were focused and because of the tragedies, the motivation was there. About 100 of our traditional Guardsmen at WADS were suddenly mobilized and pulled out of their civilian jobs without notice. Everyone, including their employers and families, made great sacrifices."

From the first days of the tragedy well into Noble Eagle, the Air National Guard has been deeply en-



Utah Air National Guard photo by Master Sgt. Mark Savage

In October 2001, upon the United States' request, history was made when NATO deployed five of its E-3A AWACS aircraft to support America's homeland defense mission.

trenched in the operation, but "the commitment is to the Air Force," Arnold says. The Air National Guard provides the majority of CAPs and fulfills most of the alert requirements because of the high number of its units in nearly every state, Arnold says.

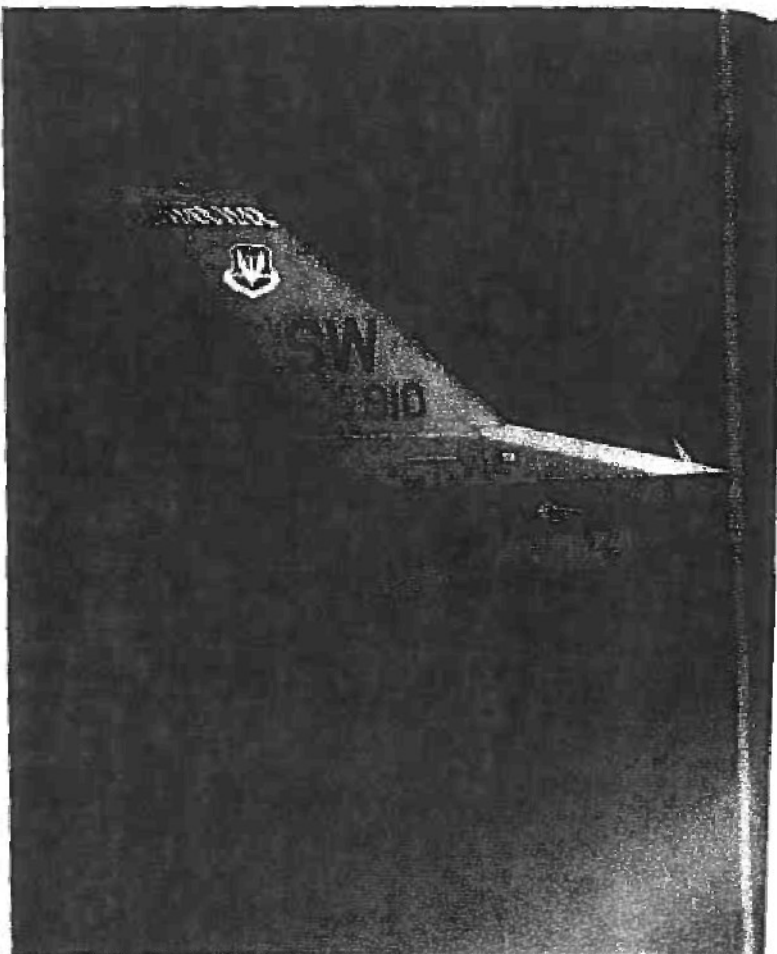
That's not to say the regular Air Force hasn't done its share. The 1st Fighter Wing, Langley Air Force Base, Va., for instance, provided F-15 Combat Air Patrol coverage over Washington, D.C., on Sept. 11, and continues to provide its resources. The 33rd Fighter Wing, Eglin Air Force Base, Fla., deployed some of its F-15s to Langley to help in the CAP efforts.³¹

The 366th Wing, Mountain Home Air Force Base, Idaho, has employed three of its squadrons for Operation Noble Eagle: the 390th Fighter Squadron, the 22nd Air Refueling Squadron and the 726th Air Control Squadron.

"We're a combat unit," says Lt. Col. Kathy Stoddard, 726th Air Control Squadron commander. "We usually deploy into a battle theater and our team provides radar coverage of enemy territory. Guarding America through Operation Noble Eagle is something we never expected we would have to do."

"All U.S. military operations require control of air, space and information," she continues. "We find, fix, assess, track, target, and engage everything of military significance. Our contribution to aerospace power is vital to our forces' effectiveness and our ability to fight and win with minimum loss of life — and that's anywhere in the world, including over the skies of the United States."

The 726th, known as "Hard Rock," was in-



involved in round-the-clock Noble Eagle operations for 170 days.³² The unit maintained a 97-percent mission readiness rating after deploying members to other air control squadrons in Washington, New York and Nevada.³³ Hard Rock was released from its Noble Eagle tasking on Feb. 28, 2002.

The blood flows backward

The cooperative Noble Eagle spirit was coming from near and far. In October 2001, upon the United States' request, history was made when NATO deployed five of its E-3A AWACS aircraft to support America's homeland defense mission.³⁴ Nearly 200 troops from Geilenkirchen, Germany, landed at Tinker Air Force Base, Okla., to assist



Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Greg L. Davis



Photo courtesy of 552nd Air Control Wing

the 552nd Air Control Wing with its new tasking. The deployment represents the first time NATO invoked Article 5 of its charter, which states a foreign attack on one member is an attack on all.³⁵

"Right now, we are engaged in four theaters of operation," Brig. Gen. Ben Robinson, 552nd Air Control Wing commander at the time, said in November 2001. "Having NATO here ... reduced the risk and reduced the cost of our training."³⁶

America welcomed the troops with open arms, says Col. Jim McNaughton, NATO detachment commander: "It is no longer we, they or a NATO force. We are one group here. ... We've taken these planes to a lot of places, but the reception here has been incredible."³⁷

The NATO aircrews flew more than 360 sorties and logged more than 4,300 flying hours. After more than seven months in the States, they finally got to go home.³⁸

"We are truly honored ... by the appreciation we have been given," says German Maj. Gen. Johann G. Dora, commander of the NATO Airborne Early Warning and Control Force Command. "From a NATO perspective, this 'Operation Eagle Assist' has had a truly historic dimension. After more than 50 years of one-way traffic across the Atlantic, in military support terms, the European NATO member nations were able to return some of the overwhelming support provided by the United States ... to Europe after World War II."³⁹

Above: An F-16 from the 79th Fighter Squadron, 20th Fighter Wing, Shaw Air Force Base, S.C., flies a Combat Air Patrol mission in support of Operation Noble Eagle.

Left: Secretary of the Air Force Dr. James G. Roche thanks NATO crews for their support of Operation Noble Eagle during his visit to Tinker Air Force Base, Okla., Feb. 22, 2002.



Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Eric Wedeking, National Guard Bureau

District of Columbia Air National Guard Maj. Billy Hutchison folds the American flag that he carried with him while flying in the 113th Wing formation over the Pentagon during a Sept. 11 memorial service one year after the attack. Hutchison had flown his F-16 over the Pentagon Sept. 11, 2001.

Eagle still soars

The NATO AWACS had gone home. The constant CAPs were slowing down. Pilots were flying tactical training maneuvers again. But the Noble Eagle was still soaring after logging 22,000 sorties over the United States and Canada between Sept. 11, 2001, and June 28, 2002.⁴⁰ And it may be soaring for awhile.

By early 2003, the Air Force had authorized the extension of more than 14,000 Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve members into a second year, as needed, because of continuing operations Noble Eagle and Enduring Freedom requirements. Of those authorizations, 9,292 were from the Air National Guard.⁴¹

The total Air Force — active, Guard and Reserve — continues to assist federal agencies as needed in protecting the skies of America. “Adjustments in the NORAD air defense posture are driven by the potential threats to North American airspace,” explains Maj. Don Arias, 1st Air Force and CONR spokesman. “The threat assessment takes into account the overall security posture, including the many improvements in airspace security — in the air and on the ground — made since Sept. 11. The best air defense begins on the ground through the efforts of numerous local, state and federal agencies. NORAD and its continental region is integrated with — and will remain available to — civil authorities as a force of last resort.”

If the FAA calls, NORAD and its forces will be there and have responded to hundreds of domestic air security events since Sept. 11. The command still maintains its historic look outward, guarding America’s borders from unknown threats.

Arnold says America expects nothing less. “The public always assumed we could protect this country, and we have,” he says. “The continued vigil over our homeland’s skies is still saving lives and sending a clear message to those who would inflict harm on our citizenry: ‘Never again.’”

1 Bill Kaczor, “Air-Attack Fears Keep General Awake at Night: Officer Believes a Sudden Assault is Bound to Happen,” *Miami Herald*, 31 January 2000, n.p.

2 William A. Scott, 2001. *Operation Noble Eagle: September 11, 2001, Air War Over America*. Panama City, Fla.: Microsoft PowerPoint presentation.

3 Ibid.

4 Ann Scott Tyson, “A New Diligence in the American Blue Yonder,” *The Christian Science Monitor*, 16 April 2002, online edition, n.p.

5 NORAD Public Affairs Office, Operation Noble Eagle public affairs statements, n.p.

6 Sue Cathcart, “Home Air Defense: Guard Air Sovereignty Mission Turned Inside Out Sept. 11 After Terrorists Turn Jetliners Into Missiles,” *National Guard* magazine, December 2001, 19; NORAD Public Affairs Office, public affairs statements, n.p.

7 William B. Scott, “NORAD and FAA Sharpen View Inside Borders,” *Aviation Week & Space Technology*, June 10, 2002, 50.

8 NORAD Public Affairs Office, public affairs statements, n.p.

9 Ibid., n.p.

10 Mary Lou Vocale, “Guard Tempo of Operation Noble Eagle,” *Code One, Lockheed Martin Aeronautics Company*, Fourth Quarter 2002, 11.

11 NORAD Public Affairs Office, public affairs statements, n.p.

12 Emily Bittner, “Pilot ‘Hijack’ Error Scrambles 2 F-16s to Chandler Skies,” *Arizona Republic*, July 26, 2002, p. B1.

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16 Rod Grunwald, Noble Eagle-activated historian, compilation of units under 1st Air Force and CONR command and control after 11 September 2001.

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Florida," *Code One*, Lockheed Martin Aeronautics Company, First Quarter 2002, 8.

21 Elena O'Bryan, "New Aircraft Shelters at Buckley Take Bite Out of Winter," *Skywatch*, October-November 2002, p. 4.

22 Ibid., p. 4.

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24 Scott, "NORAD and FAA Sharpen View Inside Borders," 50.

25 Ibid., 50.

26 Air Force Command, Control, Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance Center and Electronic Systems Center Public Affairs Office, "New Command and Control System Enables NORAD to Look In," n.d., n.p.

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29 Ibid., n.p.

30 Donald Rumsfeld, "Report of the Quadrennial Defense Review" (Washington, D.C., Department of Defense, 2001), Section 18.

31 Larry K. Arnold, telephone interview with author, 11 September 2002.

32 Javier Esparza, "'Hard Rock' Stands Down from Noble Eagle," Air Combat Command News Service, March 18, 2002, n.p.

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34 Steven Rolenc, "History is Made: Tinker, NATO Defend America Hand in Hand," *Eyes of the Eagle*, November 2001, p. 3.

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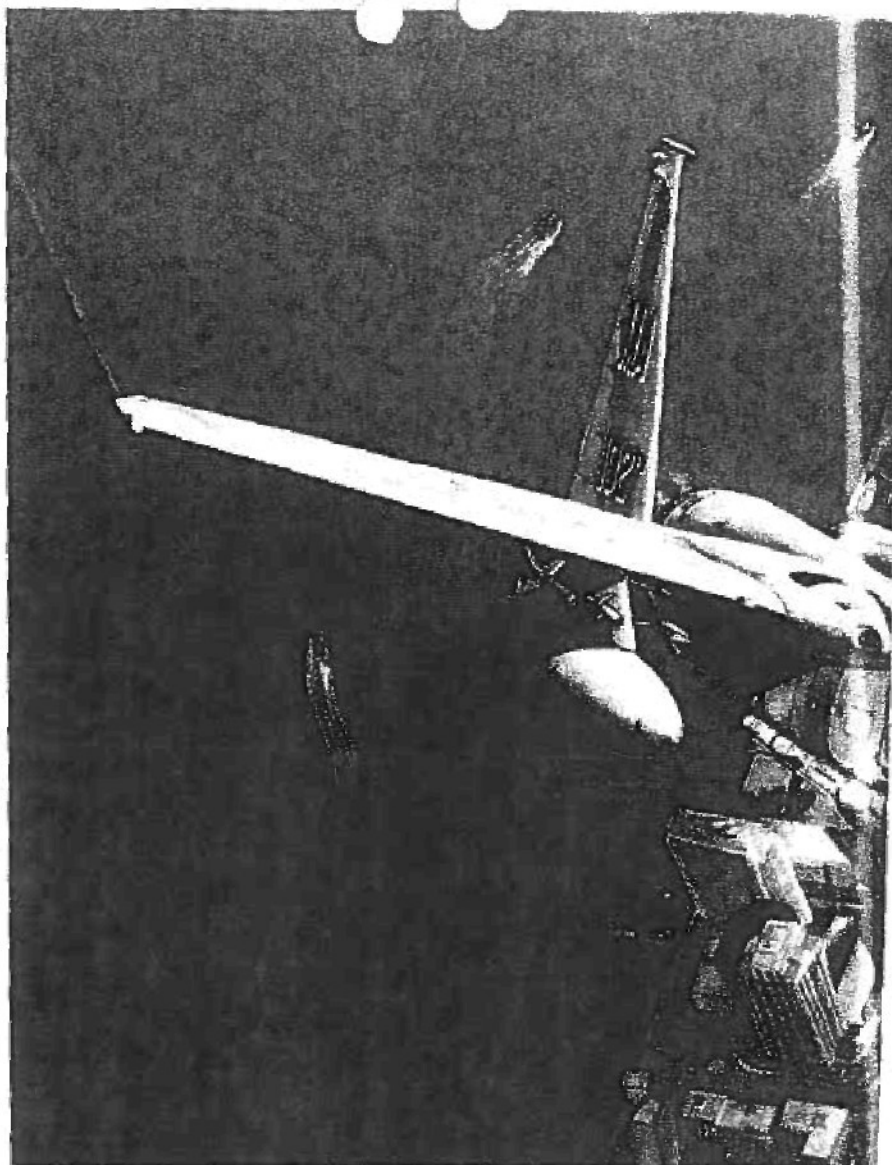
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39 Ibid., n.p.

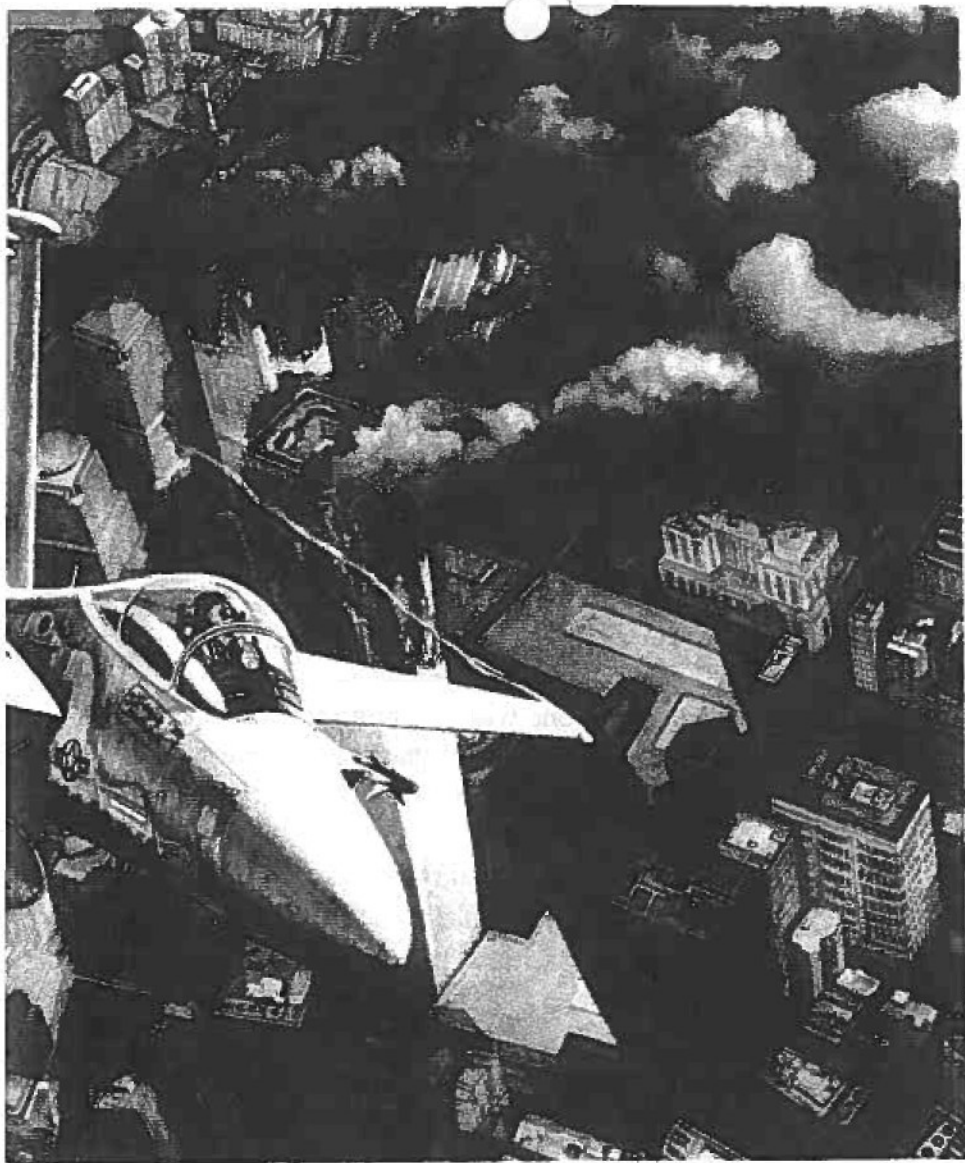
40 NORAD Public Affairs Office, public affairs statements, n.p.

41 Ibid, n.p.

42 More information about the Sept. 11 commemorative artwork is available online at rickherter.com.



As part of its official art program, the Air Force selected artist Rick Herter to paint the arrival of the first fighters in New York and Washington Sept. 11, 2001. "Ground Zero, Eagles on Station," above, depicts the first Combat Air Patrol over Manhattan flown by F-15 pilot and Massachusetts Air National Guardsman Lt. Col. Tim Duffy of the 102nd Fighter Wing. "First Pass, Defenders over Washington," right, depicts the F-16 first flown over the Pentagon Sept. 11 by North Dakota Air National Guardsman Maj. Dean Eckmann of the 119th Fighter Wing. The paintings were unveiled Sept. 4, 2002, at the Pentagon. ⁴²



Artwork courtesy of Rick Herter



CHAPTER 5

AMERICAN STORIES: Sept. 11 brings new resolve

Air defenders steadfast amid terror and tragedy

Five months after America was attacked, armed fighter jets flew through frigid Utah skies to protect the 2002 Winter Olympic Games. By Sept. 11, 2002, live anti-aircraft missile batteries were deployed in the nation's capital. America's air defense mission had changed so much since that day and the change continues. These seven stories provide a glimpse into the mission on Sept. 11 and evolving operations beyond.



Family hoped against hope

Like bad news often does, it began with a phone call. This one was about a hijacking.

It was early in the morning Sept. 11, 2001, and the phone was ringing at the 1st Air Force public affairs office. Maj. Don Arias was preparing for the day when he took the call from the Northeast Air Defense Sector. There had been a hijacking on a flight out of Boston: American Airlines Flight 77 was presumably headed for John F. Kennedy International Airport, N.Y., and the sector might scramble some fighters. It was an odd coincidence:

across the North American Aerospace Defense Command, everyone was preparing for an air defense exercise simulating an attack on the United States. But this hijacking was no exercise — it was “real-world.”

Arias, the 1st Air Force and Continental United States NORAD Region public affairs officer, hung up the phone, grabbed his press kit and began working on a statement. He'd have to get something together before heading over to the CONR Air Operations Center at Tyndall Air Force Base, Fla., where Commander Maj. Gen. Larry K. Arnold and his battle staff were entering an operational war mode.

“Maybe 15 minutes elapsed and I look up and see the tower smoking on CNN,” Arias says. “I had no confirmation, but knew that hijacked plane had hit the tower. That’s when I called my brother.”



Adam P. Arias, a 37-year-old vice president for the trading company Eurobrokers, had been scheduled to attend a meeting uptown that morning. But he'd returned from Jamaica only three days earlier and was just too busy, sending an assistant instead. Now on the phone with his wife, the caller ID screen was displaying his older brother's number. Adam



Artwork by Senior Airman Philip Speck, Kentucky Air National Guard

told Margit he loved her; Margit told Adam to come home. They'd just celebrated their three-year anniversary. They said their goodbyes.

Adam clicked over to his big brother. "Hey everybody, it's the Air Force!" Adam exclaimed to his colleagues in their 84th floor office in the World Trade Center's south tower. "He told me, 'You won't believe what I'm looking at,'" Arias says. "It was some horrendous stuff. He was watching the other tower burn and saw people falling through the air. He saw people jumping. I could hear a lot of commotion in the background and apparently everybody was at the window looking."

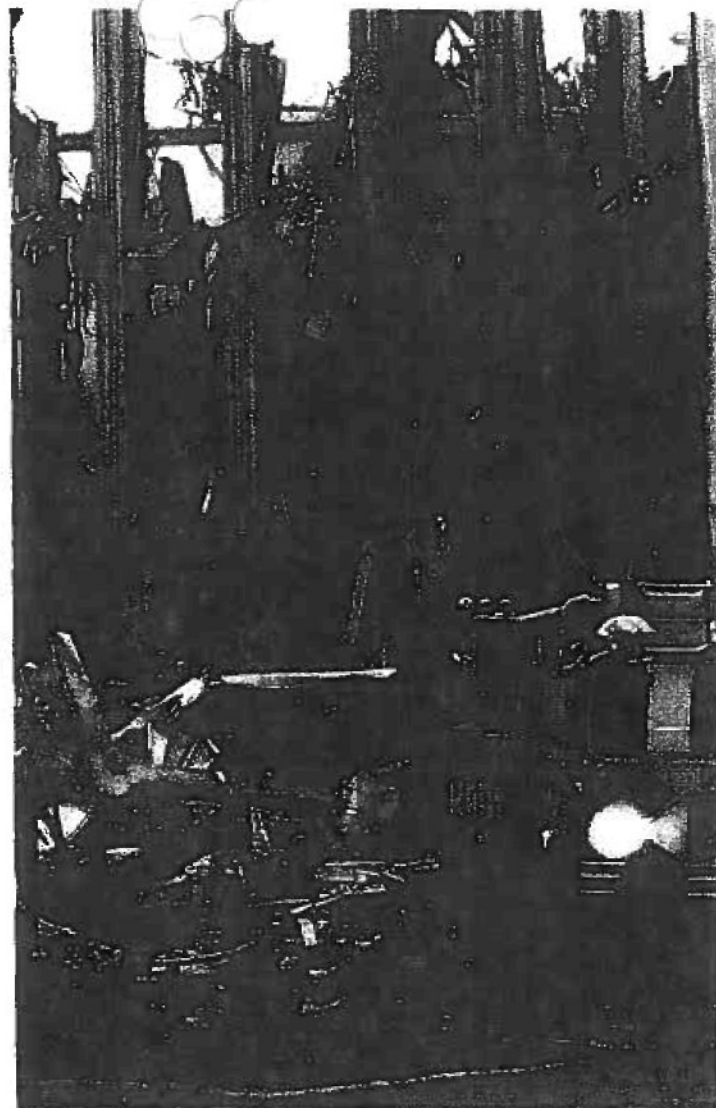
"I told him, 'Hey, we got this call, this could be the hijacked plane,'" Arias says. "He said to me, 'This is prime time. If this is an attack, they're doing it at the right time.'"

"I told him to go home and that's the last words I said to him. I don't even know if he heard me because it was such a quick conversation."

Arias later heard what Adam did next. "He went around and told people that he'd talked to me and knew it was a hijacking, because people were content to sit there at their desks," Arias says. "I met a young woman a year later and she told me that Adam physically picked her up around her waist and threw her out of her office. She had wanted to stay because she had so much to do."

"More than a few people credit Adam with saving their lives by throwing them out of the office that day."

A fire engine is parked amid the crime scene at Ground Zero, Sept. 16, 2001. A lone firefighter can be seen in the distance.



As the horrific events continued to transpire in the northeast, Arias and his staff in Florida were on the phone with NORAD, trying to get statements out to the media. Struggling to maintain his professional composure, Arias was on a roller coaster ride of uncertainty. *Where was his brother?* He kept trying Adam's cell phone, leaving message upon message on his voice mailbox, but had to settle for only bits and pieces of information. "My whole family was on the phone and in the meantime, I'm trying to do my job here and popping off calls to my parents, sisters and brothers," Arias says. "One person said they saw Adam transferring elevators on about the 40th floor."



U.S. Navy photo by Chief Photographer's Mate Eric J. Tillford

Other people said they saw him in the street helping the firemen.

"I had a lump in my throat that whole day."

Finally, some good news: A message from their sister Lauren that Adam was spotted — alive. *"Your brother is OK. Your sister called and talked to someone who saw your brother boarding the ferry."*

"We were totally relieved and I called my brother Tom, who was on his way to Manhattan to go look for Adam and Tom said, 'You know what? I'll believe he's OK when I talk to him,'" Arias says. "Tom knew it was ugly."

Arias, who grew up on Staten Island in the house where his parents still live, knows the city like only a native would. *Where was Adam?* Could he have

gotten out in time? He was picturing the scene in his mind. A proud New York City firefighter for seven years, Arias still wears a miniature of the gold Maltese cross badge of the FDNY around his neck — number 2105. The cross is a popular and time-honored symbol of the fire service, and represents St. Florian, the protector of firefighters. Now many of them were gone.



The day turned to night, and around 8 o'clock, Arias drove home, fearing the worst for Adam, the baby of six children. Mentally, physically and emotionally drained, he sat on the couch with his wife, Karen, also a New Yorker. They couldn't take their eyes off the news.

"I knew that night when I got home and Adam hadn't come home from work, that he was gone," Arias says. "Despite reports that people saw him, we knew. But we were all hoping against hope."

Rumors that emergency rooms were flooded with victims were unfounded. "You were either dead or you got away," Arias says. "There were lots of rumors flying, but I knew in my heart, as only a brother would know, that if he didn't make it home that night and didn't let anyone know where he was, that he couldn't."

Adam's family and friends were canvassing Manhattan, posting fliers and visiting every hospital in town. Arias and Karen, feeling helpless in Florida, stayed up late into the night, crying and watching news reports of people walking home over the familiar Brooklyn and Verrazano bridges, praying one of them was Adam.

Little did they know, Adam's remains were recovered hours earlier but not identified — a sad fact they'd learn days later. Adam P. Arias was the eighth person recovered at Ground Zero. Through peoples' stories and because his body was found near the base of the tower, the Arias family believes he got out alive and was helping firefighters in their rescue attempts.

"I'm not sure what he was doing or feeling or thinking, but I know his last minutes on earth were fulfilling his last act of Christian charity," Arias says. "The very last thing Adam was doing was helping other people. We should all go out that way. He is a true American hero."



On Sept. 13, Arias boarded a military flight to Pennsylvania, where an aunt picked him up and drove him to New York. He spent the day with his family, watching his broken parents cry like never before. The next day, Arias went to his former firehouse, Ladder 36, in the Inwood section of Manhattan, where two old friends just lost their own brothers, among the 343 firefighters killed.

"You got there and you could hear a pin drop," Arias says. "It was very quiet. Usually firehouses are loud, busy places, but this time they were just busy. There were a lot of people working. Even guys who had been retired for years were back to help."

Arias went to the firehouse for a reason — to somehow get closer to Adam, his fun-loving, witty brother, a talented singer who loved singing Frank Sinatra and Tony Bennett classics.

"I went to Ladder 36 to get down to Ground Zero," Arias says. "The truck officer got on the phone and called the police and we got back in the car and got right down to the command center. I hooked up with the New York National Guard once I got there and eventually got on a Humvee right to Ground Zero."

"We had to wear hard hats and breathing apparatus and you could just feel the grit in your teeth. I wanted to see if I could look around and was hoping against hope that I'd maybe find something out about my brother. But it was so immense it would be like looking for a needle in a haystack. People looked like little ants on this huge hill."



Photos courtesy of the Arias family



Top: Adam P. Arias on his wedding day. He and Margit had just celebrated their three-year anniversary when he was killed Sept. 11, 2001.

Above: Adam, left, at his wedding with brother Maj. Don Arias, will be remembered for his great sense of humor.

“Two 110-story buildings had telescoped down to seven stories of twisted steel and concrete. There was not one piece of office furniture, not one personal item you’d see in an office, that had survived. It was just huge pieces of steel, girders, concrete, and paper.”

Amid the six-acre war zone were American flags, stacks of pizza pies and cases of bottled water from all the New Yorkers who came to the rescue workers’ aid.

Arias stayed home with his family for three weeks. It was a tough time. “Staten Island, my home borough, has more cops and firemen than any other borough in New York,” he says.

“We took an extraordinary hit there. It was a depressing place to be. There were funerals and memorial services every single day. It was unbelievable.”



On Sept. 19, detectives knocked on Margit’s door with the official news; Adam’s funeral was Sept. 21 followed by his cremation. The family honored Adam a second time at a memorial service Oct. 13 in Panama City, Fla., where Arias is stationed at Tyndall Air Force Base.

Suddenly Arias found his professional and personal worlds colliding.

“There’s probably no place I’d rather be working right now than in continental air defense,” Arias says. “The first mushroom cloud of World War III will be in New York unless we stop that from happening.”

“I’m a real stakeholder in this mission. I always was, but more so now than ever. It is quite personal for me.”

Indeed, Adam’s death certificate reads: “Cause of Death: Homicide.”

“The very last thing Adam was doing was helping other people.”

— Maj. Don Arias, brother

In the months that followed the attacks, the Arias family found a special way to honor Adam’s memory. His little brother was a “self-starter,” Arias says, who worked his way up the corporate ladder without a college degree. Adam and Margit didn’t have children. They loved their nieces and nephews and had a special place in their heart for Vincent, Arias’ son, who is autistic. “Margit knew Adam was very concerned with Vincent and his situation,” Arias

says. “We’d had a lot of conversations about Vincent, and Margit thought a fitting way to honor Adam was through a scholarship.”

The family founded the Adam P. Arias Applied Behavior Analysis Scholarship for Autism at Florida State University, Panama City campus. The endowed scholarship is awarded to students based on community service, scholastic achievement and financial need.

The Arias family continued to grieve. One year after the attacks, they attended the Sept. 11 memorial service at Ground Zero that honored the approximately 2,800 people killed there. A bell was rung as each victim’s name was read. Margit was one of the readers.

“They started reading the names at the precise minute of the first impact,” Arias says. “As they rang that bell, the wind just started to whip up. It was a huge wind. The southern tip of lower Manhattan is known for being breezy, but this was extraordinary and it seemed like it was changing direction. It wasn’t just blowing in off the water, it was going up, down and in. It was as if the forces of nature were converging on this one spot to make a statement.”

With the graceful music of cellist Yo-Yo Ma filling the blustery air, the winds continued and the names were read, one by one. Including Adam’s.

Sector was 'fighting blind' Sept. 11

Amid missing airliners, bomb threats and a shockingly horrific terrorist attack, radar specialists at the Western Air Defense Sector, McChord Air Force Base, Wash., were "fighting blind" Sept. 11, 2001.

"There was no way we could see the interior of the United States on Sept. 11, 2001," says Maj. Sue Cheney, mission crew commander that day. "That would have required a whole new computer system. ... You know there's a threat coming in, but you can't see it. You're trying to get assets in places you can't see and if you had to scramble them, you'd never be able to talk to those fighters. You'd have to work through the Federal Aviation Administration to get any kind of message to them."

The WADS is responsible for protecting 1.9 million square miles of airspace, from Texas to the West Coast across to North Dakota, but the Q-93 — the huge computer installed in the 1980s with 1970s technology — could not display an interior air picture. With 63 percent of the continental airspace, the radar and radio links at WADS were weaker than those at air defense sectors in New York and Florida. Essentially, the radar scopes at the sector were showing flights inbound from overseas on Sept. 11 and very little over the vast western skies of the interior United States.

"The whole idea of an aircraft being hijacked in the middle of the United States and flown into a big target ... that was one we never really exercised," Cheney says. "It was one we were not really capable of dealing with. If you look at our old Q-93 scope, you've got this enormous hole in the interior of the country. ... We were fighting blind."

As WADS commander Col. John Cromwell

prepared to possibly scramble nearly every fighter west of the Mississippi, communications with the FAA were suddenly more important than ever. "We were told to put Combat Air Patrols up over numerous cities and metropolitan areas and key infrastructure in the western United States," Cromwell says. "Our plate was full in the West and when the FAA asked for assistance, the fighters would talk to FAA controllers. We had no pictures



and no radio. The FAA also did a great job in pointing out where situations were. Between the FAA and the flexibility of the pilots, our intercepts were successful."

In the days before Sept. 11, four fighter jets were on alert out West, ready to respond to unknowns approaching the borders. The F-15s and F-16s are from the 142nd Fighter Wing, Oregon Air National Guard, Portland; and the 144th Fighter Wing, California Air National Guard, Fresno, with an alert station at March Air Reserve Base in Riverside, Calif. But four jets would not be enough that tragic day. In only a few hours, the skies were



Washington Air National Guard photos by Tech. Sgt. Randy LaBrune

teeming with fighters and by the afternoon, more than 100 fighter jets were on alert, Cromwell says.

With initiative from civilian FAA air defense liaison Ed Enkerud, the sector tapped into FAA centers across the West as it guided fighter pilots to targets. Enkerud says an FAA "domestic event network" launched two hours after the initial attack was invaluable. "I got a call from my boss in Washington, D.C., and we all started dialing into one number and started instantaneous communication that is still ongoing," Enkerud says. "Now we don't have to dial different facilities. We can talk right now and the line is always open."

Cromwell says he's proud of the sector's response Sept. 11: "People used their training in a brand new scenario. They were innovative, creative and under control."

Above: Canadian Forces Warrant Officer Scott Budgell and Maj. Cecilia Nackowski monitor the radar scopes at the Western Air Defense Sector.

Left: Staff Sgt. Jill Lathrop on the job in the dim and windowless sector operations center.

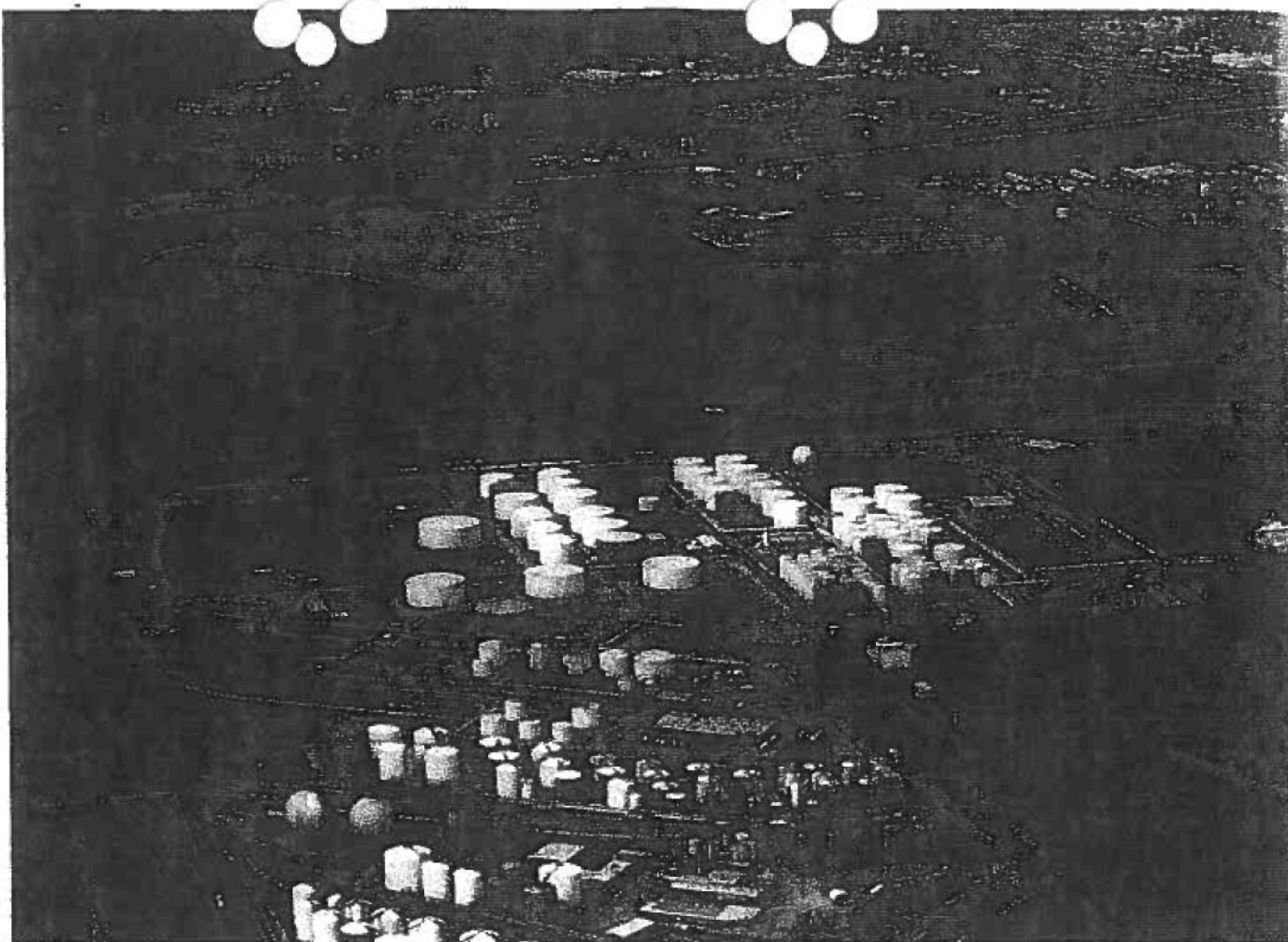


Photo by Lar

A calm surrealism Sept. 11 at SEADS

Absolutely “unbelievable.” That’s how Lt. Col. Clark “Buck” Rogers describes Sept. 11, 2001.

The director of operations at the Southeast Air Defense Sector, Tyndall Air Force Base, Fla., says it all happened very fast. “I remember, vividly, turning to our commander (Col. Larry Kemp) and saying: ‘This is a coordinated attack. And it may not stop in the Northeast. We need to get our airplanes up because we don’t know what’s coming next.’”

“And that’s exactly what we did.”

The sector put pilots from its three area air defense alert facilities on battle stations — in the cockpit ready to start at a moment’s notice. At Ellington Field, Texas; Homestead Air Reserve Base, Fla.; and Tyndall Air Force Base; fliers were

suiting up and waiting for the Klaxon alarm to sound. The shrill tone would echo in Texas, as pilots were scrambled to escort Air Force One.

Help was coming from across the Southeast. “Fighter wings from across the Air Force — both active duty and Air National Guard — called to assist,” Rogers says. “We told them the country was under attack and the best they could do was load ammo on live airplanes. And that’s what they did. We asked units that already had airplanes on alert to bring up additional airplanes, bring up the spares and get four airplanes loaded and four guys in crew rest.

“There wasn’t a base out there that wasn’t on alert.”

They had to get in the minds of the terrorists. What would they hit? The SEADS area of

responsibility includes Atlanta, Dallas, Miami, nuclear sites, and military bases. "We immediately said, 'Our responsibility is not to protect New York City, but to protect the Southeast. What should we be concentrating on?'" Rogers says.

Rogers was scrambling fighters as the skies of America were being cleared of all civilian traffic. "All flights had to be approved by the appropriate air defense sector, even if it was a military flight," Rogers says. "We disapproved almost everything, but Life Flights got permission to fly."

Extra measures were taken to ensure the flights were legitimate. "We had to call a hospital and ask if they were really expecting a plane with a sick child from Mexico," Rogers says. "Just because it was painted like Life Flight doesn't mean it was Life Flight. Just because it was painted like American Airlines, doesn't mean it was."

Kemp was responsible for final approval of Southeast-area flights in the immediate post-attack

and even approved flights of the Federal Reserve to help get the economy moving again.

The commander says the day's events were surreal. But there was method to what should have been madness. "It was very methodical and structured," Kemp explains. "The training and proficiency kicked in. Everybody had a clear picture of what the big picture was and what they had to accomplish."

Rogers has one positive memory of the day: "I walked out of here at maybe 9:30 or 10 that night. I was pretty dismayed and could not believe what had happened. It was like the end of innocence. But the first thing I saw as I drove out the gate was all the houses on the base with American flags. There were flags in every neighborhood, on businesses, on car dealerships ... everything said 'God Bless America,' 'We Love Our Country,' and 'United We Stand.' It was an amazing outpouring of support."

Left: The Southeast Air Defense Sector area of responsibility includes the Gulf Coast, where F-16 fighter jets of the Texas Air National Guard fly Combat Air Patrol missions in support of Operation Noble Eagle.

Below: In a late 2001 visit to SEADS, Air National Guard Command Chief Master Sgt. Valerie D. Benton, top adviser for enlisted affairs, receives an update on the Straits of Florida from Tech. Sgt. Gerry Myers, a SEADS air surveillance technician.

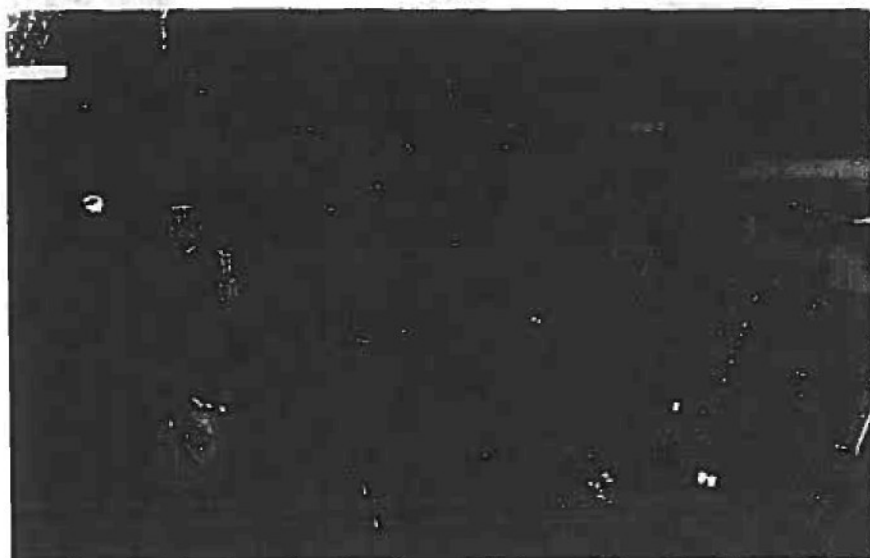
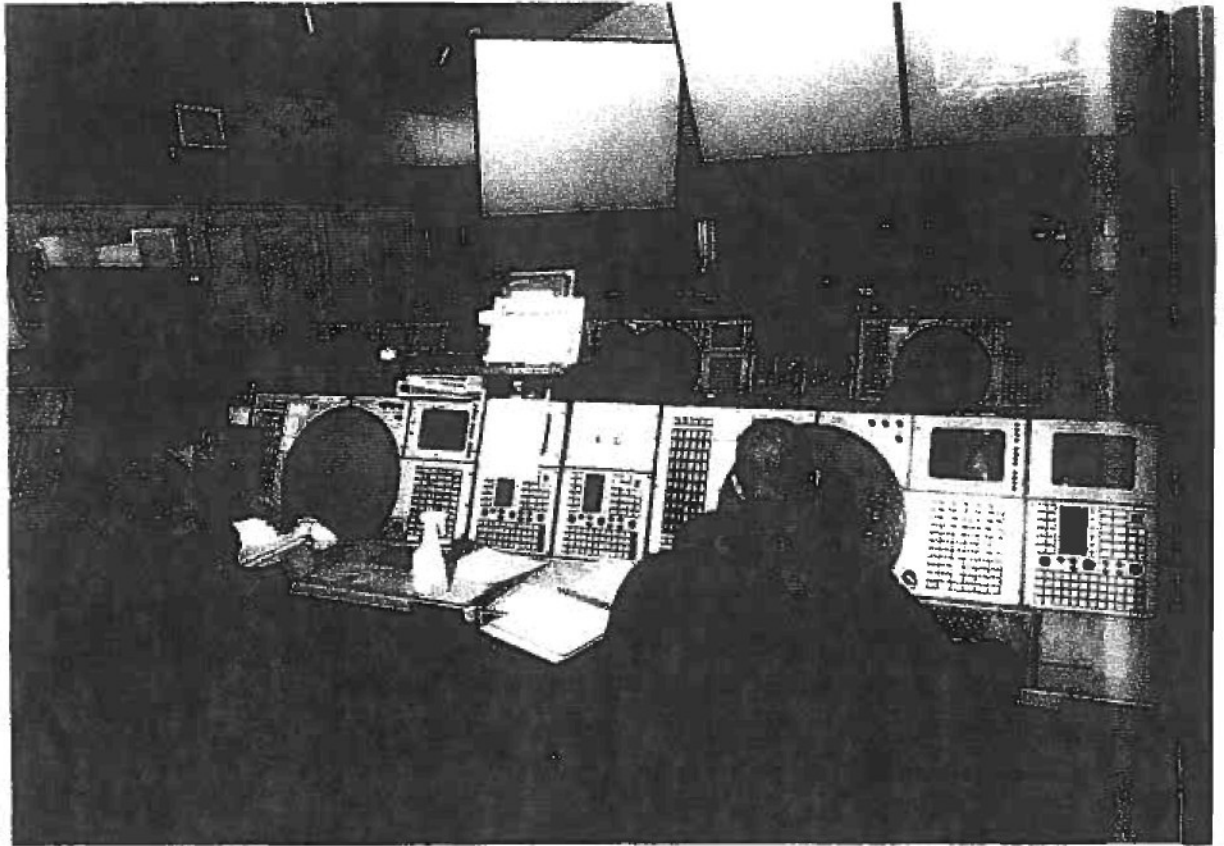


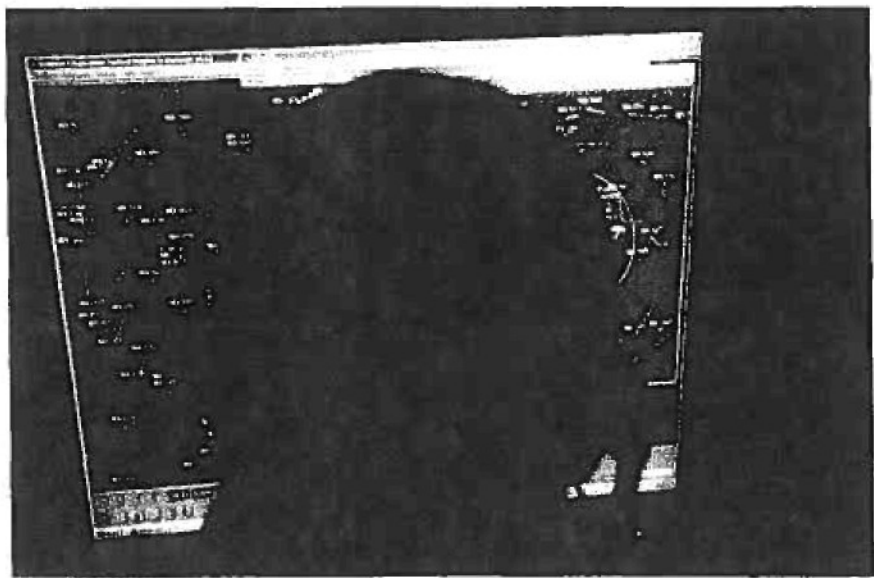
Photo by Master Sgt. Roger Tibbells, 1st Air Force Public Affairs Office

An overall view of the Northeast Air Defense Sector operations center, a cool, dimly lighted room with no windows.



Photos by Scott A. Gwalt, Daily Sentinel, F

A NEADS technician peers into a colorful map of the regional air picture. The imagery is part of a computer software program NORAD installed after Sept. 11, 2001, that gives controllers the capability to view more than 15,000 tracks at any moment per air defense sector instead of the 300 tracks before Sept. 11.



Fear strikes NEADS Sept. 12; 'mole people' never rest

After Sept. 11, crews at the Northeast Air Defense Sector in Rome, N.Y., didn't think things could get much worse. Helping secure America's skies amid a horrifying terrorist attack, they'd worked late into the evening, got minimal sleep and were back at it the next morning. Certainly Sept. 12 would be calmer — the attacks were over and the North American Aerospace Defense Command was guarding the skies like never before.

But as Tech. Sgt. Ronald G. Belluscio, a senior weapons director technician, peered into his radar scope, he knew something was wrong. "There was a plane, flying low and slow, headed right toward this building," he says. "My first thought was, 'Who is this?' Then it clicked. 'This isn't normal. Who is this guy and why is he headed toward us?'"

The Federal Aviation Administration had surrendered America's airspace to NORAD, all civilian aviation was grounded and the skies were free of anything other than military or emergency aircraft. But the unidentified airplane, headed toward Rome from the south-southeast, kept on coming.

"We thought anyone in the air was either a terrorist or a criminal and this aircraft was beelining straight at us," says Col. Bob Marr, NEADS commander. "We had some F-16s that had been flying Combat Air Patrol over New York City and were headed back to Burlington, (Vt.). We vectored them toward the plane."

Master Sgt. Joe McCain, mission crew commander technician, says Marr was very direct:

"He told the weapons section to get a hold of those aircraft to see if they had enough fuel to get to Rome. He said, 'I want those birds here and now. Light afterburner if you have to!'"

With the Vermont Air National Guard jets diverted their way, Marr ordered the evacuation of the building, leaving himself and a small crew in the operations center. "If we were attacked, the others would be able to come in and finish the mission," Marr says.

Meanwhile, Senior Master Sgt. Thomas Hayes, chief of NEADS Security Forces, directed his staff to hide the evacuees in the trees surrounding the

building. From outside, Hayes stayed in radio contact with security forces member Staff Sgt. Mike Bates, the desk sergeant inside the building. Bates relayed the airplane's position to Hayes as security forces

Security forces members lined up on a hill with guns aimed at the sky, hoping they could down the plane if it came to that.

members lined up on a hill with guns aimed at the sky, hoping they could down the plane if it came to that.

Bates, a Syracuse, N.Y., police officer in his civilian life, admits he was scared. "It was nerve-racking," he says. "I'm not going to lie. I was nervous and thinking about my family. It still wasn't reality that Sept. 11 had happened. We thought we were under attack and when Col. Marr yelled for people to get out of the building, you could feel the sense of urgency. We knew airplanes weren't supposed to be in the air, yet this guy was coming at us and I was waiting inside the building expecting to hear the guns start firing."

Inside the operations center, Marr says people were shaking at the scopes as they watched on

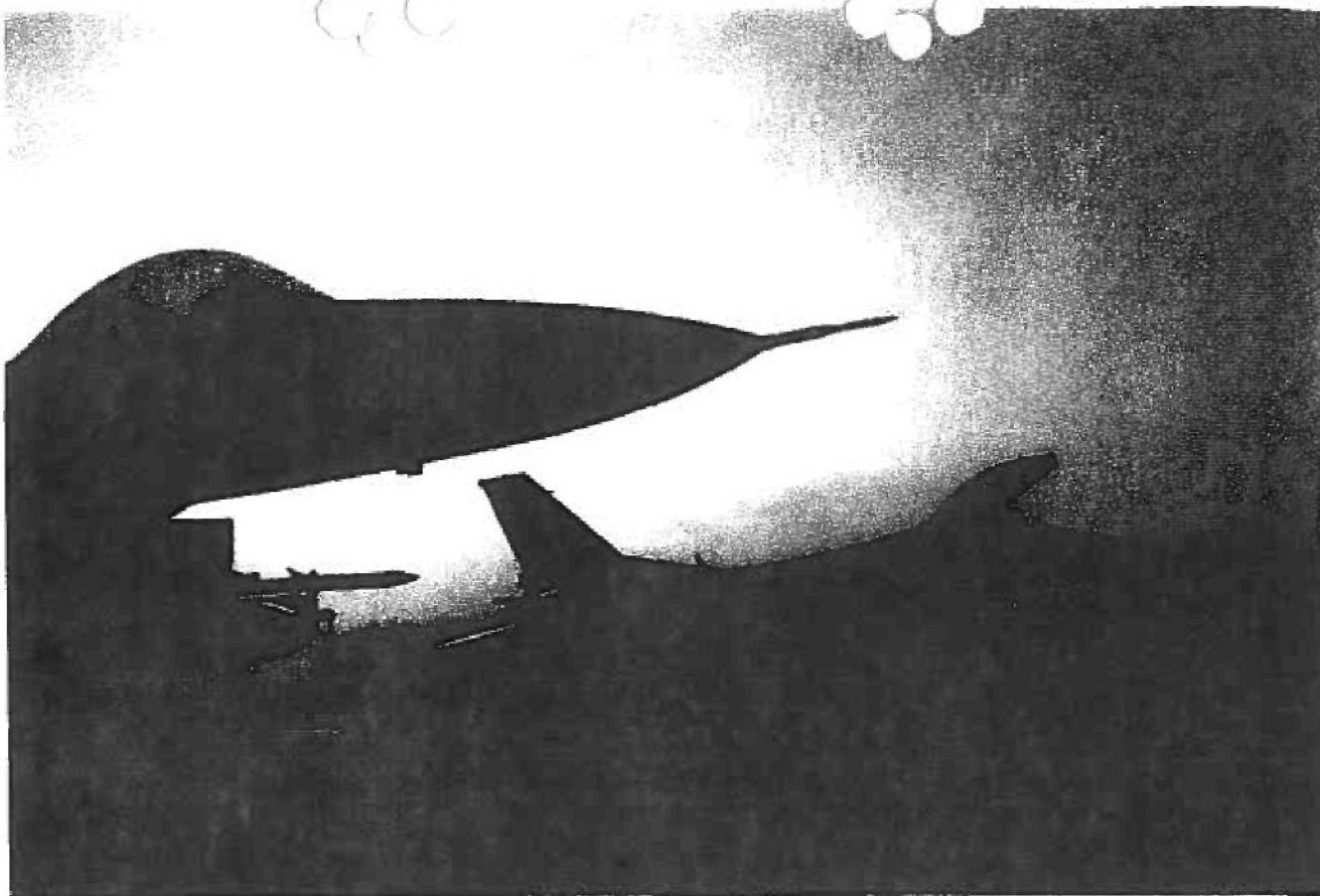


Photo courtesy of 127th Wing, Michigan Air National Guard

Above: Two F-16s sit armed and ready outside their new alert shelters at Selfridge Air National Guard Base, Mich. Air controllers at the Northeast Air Defense Sector, Rome, N.Y., have found themselves working with units like Michigan's 127th Wing more than ever since Sept. 11, 2001.

Right: Col. Bob Marr, commander of NEADS, evacuated the sector operations center on Sept. 12, 2001, when an unidentified airplane was heading straight for the building.

radar as the plane got closer and closer. McCain says he was more afraid on Sept. 12 than he was Sept. 11. "The 11th was horrible," he says. "But we had to do our jobs. The 12th was personal."

Adds Belluscio: "It was like slow motion. You could see the distance between the target and the fighters and we didn't think the fighters would make it. I was on the edge of my seat, rocking back and forth thinking it would make the fighters go faster."

But suddenly, the calmer day came when the airplane changed course only miles from the sector operations center. The F-16s were in close pursuit and forced the plane to land at nearby Hinckley Reservoir, Marr says.

From here, the story of that unknown plane becomes NEADS legend. "The word is, the police cut the wings off the plane and put it on a flatbed truck," says Belluscio.

Marr says he never found out who the culprit was, but heard he was a local pilot with a seaplane. Whoever he was, he was flying against all federal regulations in the early days after Sept. 11.

For months, the crews at NEADS worked 12-hour days, six days on, three days off. Days like Sept. 12 were especially difficult, says sector chaplain Maj. Timothy Bejian.

"The stress was enormous," Bejian says. "After Sept. 11, that's what it was like for days on end. As the days went by, I was watching the folks and seeing how they were dealing with the stress.

"People would go out at night and watch the flying squirrels jump from tree to tree. We called them the 'mole people.' It was September and people would arrive in the dark and leave in the dark and didn't see their families. As chaplain, you have to try to bring people back to a point where they can cope. The problem wasn't going to go away and some had a very difficult time."

Bejian puts things into perspective with "The Mole People and the Flying Squirrels," a story he wrote for those guarding the Northeastern skies.

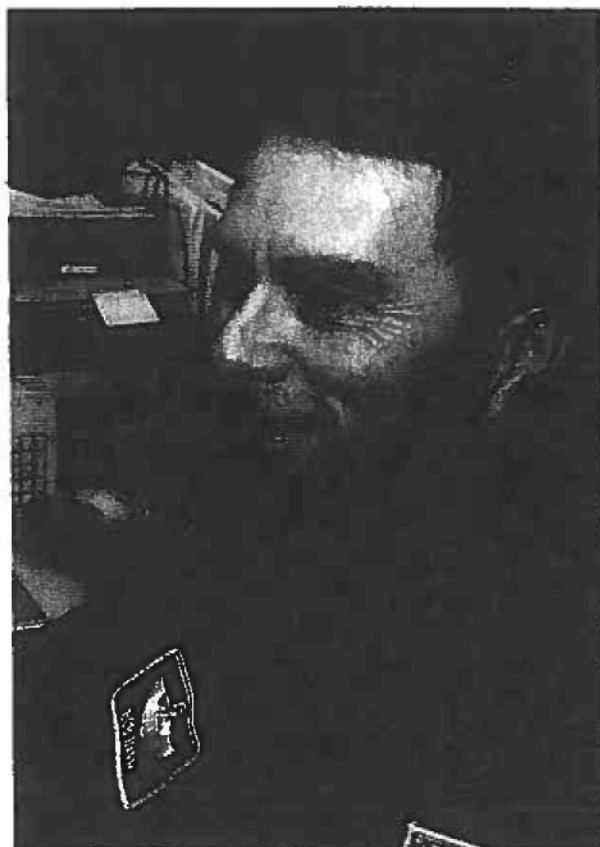


Photo by Scott A. Gwilt, Daily Sentinel, Rome, N.Y.

'The Mole People and the Flying Squirrels'

"... If it weren't for the 'mole people,' the regular people of the world wouldn't be able to walk outside their homes in safety. The world is full of monsters and beasts and all kinds of nasty creatures that would freeze their blood and hurt their children. But the mole people are always watching. They watch by day while the regular people work and their children play. They watch at night while the regular people sleep in their cozy beds or read fairy tales to their children. Why, you ask, are these watchers called the mole people? Well, the answer is quite simple. They gather together in groups, in windowless places, usually arriving while it's dark and staying long hours only to leave while it's dark. Many times they can't tuck their own children into bed and read them fairy tales because they are watching. This bothers the mole people, but they know that it needs to be done. And if ever they see something or someone bad who wants to hurt the regular people, they send a message to their friends the Eagles who outrace the wind to pursue and drive off the beasts and monsters."

**— Maj. Timothy Bejian,
NEADS chaplain**

Air refuelers fly in face of terror

Only weeks after flying Combat Air Patrols over Washington, D.C., on Sept. 11, 2001, F-16 pilot Maj. Dan Caine was soaring high above the rugged terrain of Afghanistan.

It was the early days of Operation Enduring Freedom and an early winter evening when Caine, a member of the 113th Wing, District of Columbia Air National Guard, heard familiar voices over his radio frequency. Turns out the same crew pumping 6,000 pounds of JP-8 into his F-16 was the very crew that refueled his fighter low over Washington, D.C., the day terrorists attacked America. It's a small Air Force, Caine reasons, and an even smaller Air National Guard.

America's refueling tanker crews are crucial to the fight against terrorism. From the 117th Air Refueling Wing in Birmingham, Ala., to the 161st Air Refueling Wing in Phoenix, Ariz., the tanker crews keep America's fighters airborne.

Scores of wings across the country have come under 1st Air Force and Continental United States North American Aerospace Defense Command Region command and control at various points since Sept. 11 — all in support of Operation Noble Eagle. The 101st Air Refueling Wing, Maine Air National Guard, is one. The "MAINEiacs" are proud to have refueled fighters over Manhattan the morning of Sept. 11. That day is a vivid memory for KC-135E boom operator Senior Master Sgt. Robert Phair, a 20-year Maine Air National Guard veteran.

"We were out on a local training mission when

all hell broke loose," Phair recalls. "We heard through the Federal Aviation Administration Boston Center that an aircraft had impacted one of the towers and we were completely amazed that something so horrific could happen."

Like many that morning, the crew assumed the crash was accidental. "When we heard that a second

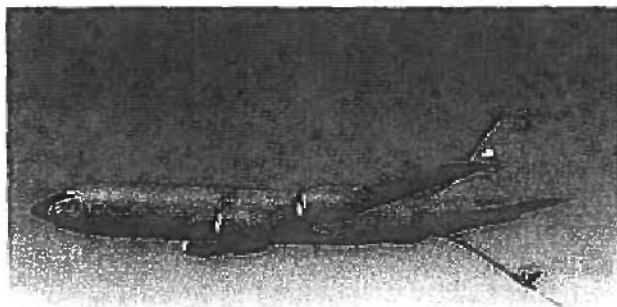
plane had hit, we could detect in the voices of the controllers that it was more than coincidence. We got passed off to New York Center and the controllers' voices were elevated. They were very concerned and asked us to provide emergency air refueling coverage for fighters and we said, 'Absolutely.'"

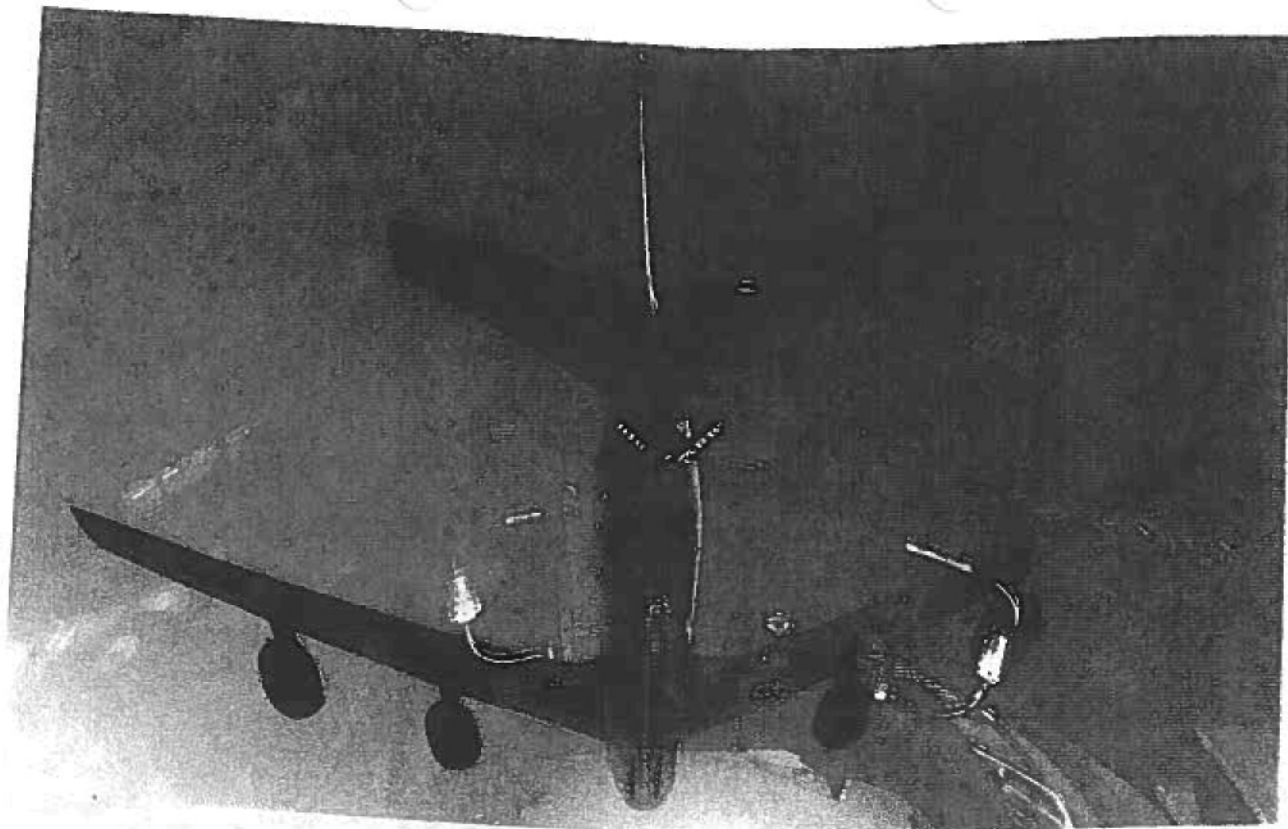
The civilian FAA controllers requested the tanker's presence about 10 miles off New York City's coastline, Phair says. "We said, 'We can do better than that, we can fly right over Manhattan.'"

"They said, 'You guys are cleared Manhattan right now.'"

Back on the ground at Bangor International Airport, the MAINEiacs' home base, the scene was one of "mass controlled confusion," says Tech. Sgt. Philip Henderson, a KC-135E crew chief. Watching TV one moment in the break room, crews suddenly found themselves on the ramp preflighting and gassing up the tankers. Soon they'd find themselves airborne, witness to terror below.

"As we approached Long Island Sound, I could see Ground Zero and the smoke drifting eastward," Henderson says. "I went into the boom operator's compartment and went to the window. We were looking out and everybody was pretty silent looking





Photos by Master Sgt. Don Taggart, 177th Fighter Wing, New Jersey Air National Guard

The 916th Air Refueling Wing, flying the KC-135R, supports a Combat Air Patrol mission over the Northeast United States on Oct. 7, 2001. The 916th, an Air Force Reserve unit, is based at Seymour Johnson Air Force Base, N.C.



"At any one time, a third of military aircraft protecting the United States are tankers."

— Maj. Ian Gillis,
101st Air Refueling Wing,
Maine Air National Guard

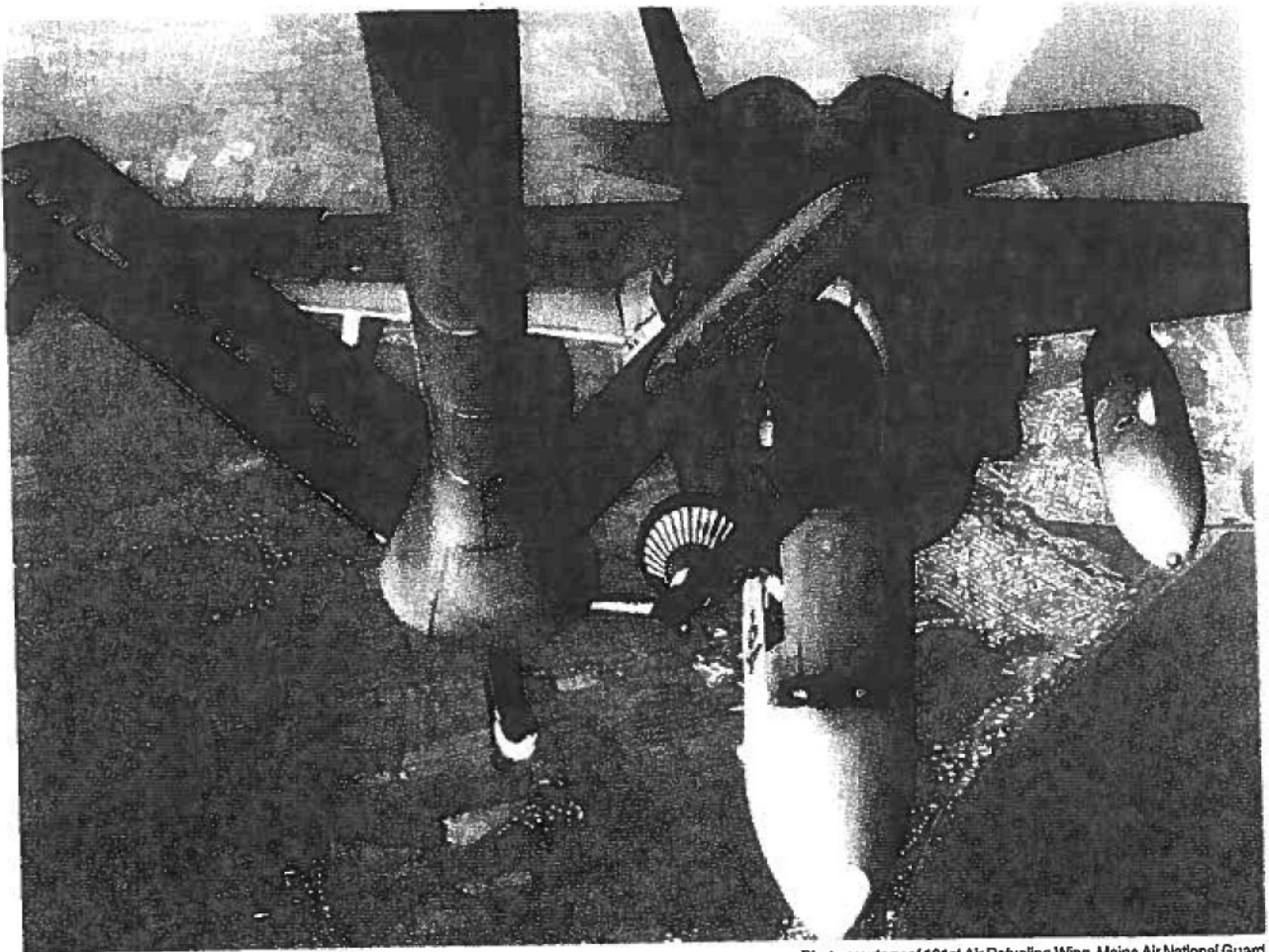


Photo courtesy of 101st Air Refueling Wing, Maine Air National Guard

Above: A 101st Air Refueling Wing KC-135, Maine Air National Guard, provides in-flight refueling for a Canadian Forces F-18. The 101st regularly supports the Canadian Forces during Operation Noble Eagle Combat Air Patrol missions.

Right: Pilots from the 157th Air Refueling Wing, New Hampshire Air National Guard, fly their KC-135 during an Operation Noble Eagle mission over New York in November 2001.

at the smoke coming up but we couldn't get definite information on what was going on. It's burned into your memory, being up there and seeing the smoke from Ground Zero and seeing the live fighters coming up to you with missiles on them. It was unreal."



At the end of the day, the 101st had diverted two of its airborne aircraft to support East Coast fighters and brought three other KC-135s to cockpit alert within minutes, launching them all.

"It normally takes two hours to generate a sortie up until takeoff," says Maj. Ian Gillis, 101st Air Refueling Wing chief of aircrew scheduling. "That day, we briefed in about 10 minutes and had aircraft ready to launch in just about an hour."

Not one year had passed since that terror-filled

morning, and the wing had already flown more than 508 sorties in support of Operation Noble Eagle, for more than 2,800 hours of flying time. The Maine tankers had pumped more than 11.8 million pounds of fuel into nearly 1,500 fighter jets flying CAPs over the United States.

"At any one time, a third of military aircraft protecting the United States are tankers," Gillis explains. "When you see two fighters on a Noble Eagle CAP, there's always a tanker somewhere above them."



According to Air Force statistics, across America, more than 15,000 airmen from the Air National Guard, Air Force Reserve and regular Air Force flew more than 26,400 fighter, tanker and airborne early warning sorties in the 13 months after the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks.



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Alan Beaulieu, 157th Air Refueling Wing, New Hampshire Air National Guard



Photo courtesy of 388th Fighter Wing Public Affairs Office

Olympics protection golden example of interagency cooperation

As international athletes were gliding down the powdery slopes below, armed jet fighters were soaring above Utah keeping the skies of the 2002 Winter Olympics safe.

Only weeks after the Sept. 11 attacks, already tight security grew to include protection of Olympics airspace. As part of Joint Task Force-Olympics, soldiers and airmen supported federal, state and local agencies at the Hill Air Force Base, Utah, Air Security Operations Center. The ASOC, actually the corner of a hangar, brought civilian agencies

and military members together like never before, says Col. John E. Bonner, Western Air Defense Sector director of support. The sector, at McChord Air Force Base, Wash., is one of three continental air defense sectors in the North American Aerospace Defense Command and served as a lead air control agency for the Olympics.

"Before Sept. 11, a large national event was not a concern for NORAD," says Bonner, who led a WADS contingency to Utah that February. "Never before Sept. 11 did we see internal matters as



Photo courtesy of Western Air Defense Sector

posing a threat. But the president declared the Olympics a 'National Special Security Event,' and we needed a significant presence to protect that airspace.

"The big story is the interagency cooperation and how everyone worked together to make it happen. The Secret Service was in charge of all security, both in the air and on the ground; U.S. Customs was the lead for air security; and the FBI was involved in ground security. The Army played a huge role and flew over 400 missions to support law enforcement and emergency services. ... Our piece was things in the air moving faster than helicopters."

Using an intricate network of radars, radios and sensors employed especially for the Olympics, NORAD, WADS and the Federal Aviation Administration could maintain constant contact and provide constant air coverage of the Games. "We grabbed data feeds from all the low-altitude and short-range radars and brought them back to WADS for display in the NORAD Contingency

Suite, our newest computer system," says Chief Master Sgt. James Hunter, WADS support superintendent. "We needed redundancy in our radar data and high-resolution in our radar picture."

Hunter and 25 other WADS members worked especially closely with the FAA as it imposed temporary flight restrictions around Olympics airspace. The FAA authenticated 6,630 different flights entering restricted areas during the Olympics, Bonner says. There were more than 20 violators, but armed F-16s from Hill's 388th Fighter Wing, on alert and flying random Combat Air Patrol missions over Salt Lake, were ready to intercept when necessary. They were supported by more than 100 NORAD fighters on alert at 30 bases across the country.

The military and other agencies involved logged 3,300 flying hours in support of Olympics air protection, Bonner says. "Those hours were accident-free," Bonner adds, "in some pretty lousy flying weather."

Above: Western Air Defense Sector personnel Col. John E. Bonner and Maj. Roger Hurd, foreground, monitor command and control data at the Air Security Operations Center during the 2002 Winter Olympic Games in Salt Lake City.

Left: Four 388th Fighter Wing F-16s from Hill Air Force Base, Utah, fly over the Olympics.

Multilayered air defenses protect nation's capital

Heat-seeking "Stinger" missiles mounted on Humvees ... jet fighters on constant prowl over the city ... airborne warning and control platforms eyeing the skies up high as sensors scan for threats down low. It may sound like a combat zone in a distant land, but this multilayered air defense system has become a familiar sight right in the nation's capital.

Throughout Operation Noble Eagle, a theme has emerged from the North American Aerospace Defense Command: the best air defense starts on the ground. Nowhere has this been more apparent than Washington, D.C., where live anti-aircraft missile batteries have been deployed during high-profile events like the Sept. 11 anniversary and January 2003 State of the Union address.

The joint efforts have brought together hundreds of people from NORAD and throughout the armed services, the U.S. Customs Service, Federal Aviation Administration, and Secret Service. The air defense arsenal has included Air Force F-16s and Airborne Warning and Control System aircraft; ground-based Army "Sentinel" radars and "Avenger" missile batteries; and U.S. Customs Service UH-60A "Black Hawk" helicopters.

"We employ air defense artillery for high-value assets, people, infrastructure, and national government," says Maj. Gen. Craig R. McKinley, commander of 1st Air Force and the Continental

United States NORAD Region and the Joint Air and Space Component Commander. "We provide a third layer of defense for targets that would possibly slip through the fighter Combat Air Patrols and the U.S. Customs and Secret Service barriers that are put in place.

"Air defense artillery is like a goalie in a hockey game. It is the last line of defense before a track of interest would actually make an impact with a

building, and in the national capital region, everyone knows where those buildings are. That is why we heavily defend our nation's capital and seat of government."

The command and control architecture of that robust air defense artillery includes a mobile system called the "Joint Based Expeditionary Connectivity Center," the "center of the wheel for command and control," on such operations, McKinley says.

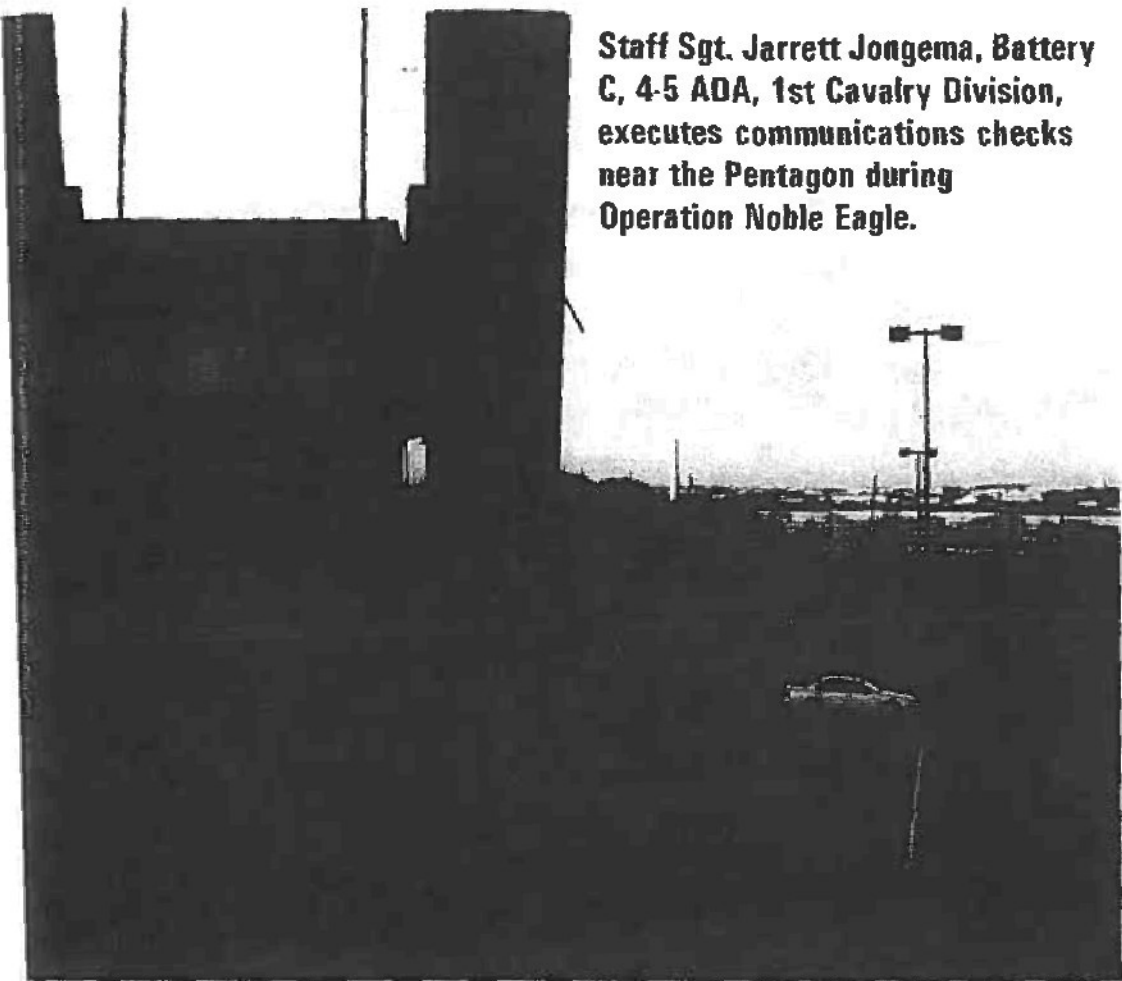
"The JBECC is the fusion hub where all the data is

correlated and presented to me, the Joint Air and Space Component Commander, so I can present it to the decision-makers," he says. "It is extremely effective and we've had great success with it."

The JBECC was developed in the mid-1990s under the "Advanced Concept Technology Demonstration" program of the Office of Undersecretary of Defense, which explores opportunities to quickly get emerging technology into the hands of the warfighters. It was born as a "Cruise Missile Defense Initiative" and evolved into

"Air defense artillery is like a goalie in a hockey game. It is the last line of defense before a track of interest would actually make an impact with a building, and in the national capital region, everyone knows where those buildings are."

*— Maj. Gen. Craig R. McKinley,
1st Air Force commander*



Staff Sgt. Jarrett Jongema, Battery C, 4-5 ADA, 1st Cavalry Division, executes communications checks near the Pentagon during Operation Noble Eagle.

U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Erick Henson

the "Area Cruise Missile Defense."

The advanced programs branch of 1st Air Force began with a Humvee and added different types of radios and communications devices that would give NORAD the clear low-altitude air picture it had been missing.

"JBECC allows us to link into other sensors like Army Sentinel radars, Navy Aegis cruisers and Avenger missile systems," explains Lt. Col. Hutch Davis, 1st Air Force chief of operations integration for advanced programs. "It then correlates these radar inputs into one consolidated air picture."

The JBECC then sends the picture to one of three sector operations centers within CONR, allowing controllers to potentially deploy weapons against cruise missiles, Unmanned Aerial Vehicles and other low-altitude threats.

The concept went "real-world" after the terrorist

attacks on Sept. 11, 2001, says Maj. John Ackermann, 1st Air Force chief of advanced programs demonstrations. On Sept. 12, a JBECC prototype being used by the Army was deployed to Naval Air Station Oceana, Va., and linked the CONR Air Operations Center into AWACS and other East Coast radars. "JBECC tied into the existing sensors that were there but not in the NORAD system," Ackermann explains. "NORAD now had an East Coast air picture it could utilize."

Since then, JBECC has been deployed in several operations, including airspace protection of the 2002 Winter Olympics Games. "The success of this experiment is a big step forward in the development of a single integrated air picture," Ackermann says. "The single picture will give all commanders a common view of the aerial battlefield."



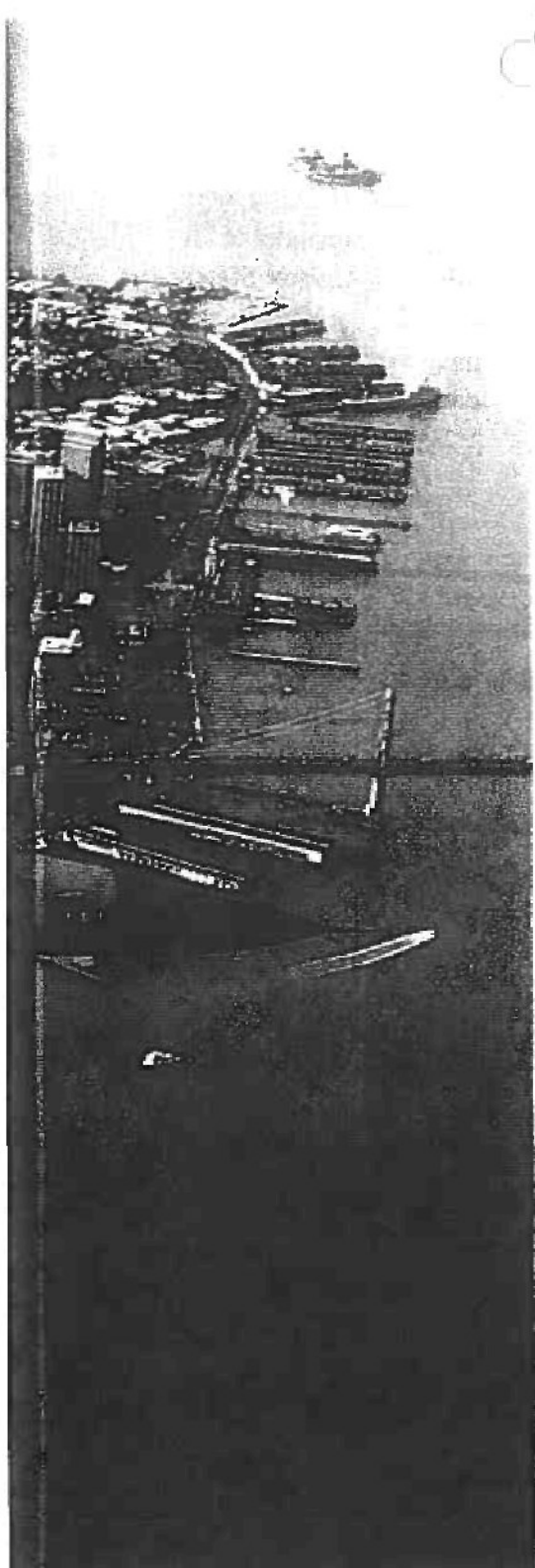


Photo courtesy of 144th Fighter Wing, California Air National Guard

CHAPTER 6

HOME THEATER: NORTHCOM guards air, land and sea

**1st Air Force modernizing
to defend skies of a new era**

The world is a battleground. That post-Sept. 11 realization led to the most sweeping set of changes to U.S. military structure seen since 1946.¹

Only eight months after the twin towers fell, Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld and Air Force Gen. Richard Myers, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, announced changes to the Unified Command Plan — the framework for military missions and geographic responsibilities for combatant commanders.

“The new commander will be responsible for land, aerospace and sea defense of the United States,” Rumsfeld explained at the April 17, 2002, announcement. “He will command U.S. forces that operate within the United States in support of civil authorities.”²

Northern Command, with Gen. Ralph E. Eberhart at the controls, was established Oct. 1, 2002, at Peterson Air Force Base, Colo. The NORTHCOM commander is responsible for homeland defense and still wears the blue Air Force uniform as commander of the North American Aerospace Defense Command, the organization charged with aerospace warning and control for the United States and Canada.

**An F-16 assigned to the California Air National Guard
144th Fighter Wing flies a Combat Air Patrol over San
Francisco in support of Operation Noble Eagle.**

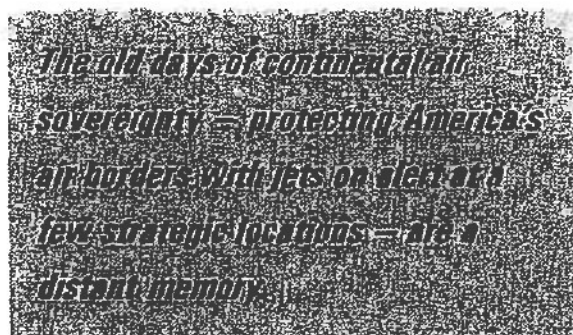
"Military forces will be used when and where needed to augment and assist first responders," Eberhart explains. "The goal is to be proactive, not just reactive. Nothing is more important for a government to do than provide safety and security and improve the quality of life for its citizens."³

"We are just like the other regional combatant commanders, with one important difference — the United States homeland is in our area of responsibility," the general says.⁴

The reorganization shifts the U.S. Joint Forces Command geographic area of responsibility to NORTHCOM and U.S. European Command, enabling U.S. Joint Forces Command to focus on transforming U.S. military forces — another post-Sept. 11 theme of changing the way the military does business.⁵

The NORTHCOM area of operations is vast, and includes the United States, Canada, Mexico, parts of the Caribbean, and the contiguous waters

Airman 1st Class Brian Isaacson, munitions maintenance specialist, 148th Fighter Wing, Minnesota Air National Guard, checks a gantry support leg on a munitions assembly conveyer on Jan. 23, 2002. Isaacson was one of hundreds of traditional Guardsmen activated to maintain the unit's increased operations tempo while supporting Operation Noble Eagle. The 148th is one of 10 Air National Guard fighter wings assigned to 1st Air Force and the Continental United States NORAD Region. Several other air wings are attached to the command for Operation Noble Eagle.



in the Atlantic and Pacific oceans.⁶

The creation of NORTHCOM is historic, says Maj. Gen. Craig R. McKinley, commander of 1st Air Force and the Continental United States NORAD Region. "Not since George Washington have we had a military commander in charge of U.S. forces in garrison at home to defend American citizens. It was a swift action by our government and president to guard our country from further terrorist attack."

McKinley, who assumed command from Maj. Gen. Larry K. Arnold in August 2002, says 1st Air Force and CONR are working closely with NORTHCOM to counter air threats as his Army and Navy counterparts protect land and sea.

Eberhart calls NORTHCOM a true joint venture. "Our command is built upon a Total Force and total national team concept that includes members from all five services; the National Guard; the Reserves; Department of Defense civilians; and numerous federal, state and local agencies," he says. "We believe we are redefining 'jointness' by forming new partnerships within the DOD and with numerous civilian agencies, as well as strengthening existing ones. Developing these strong relationships is key to our success."⁷

Eberhart says NORTHCOM is committed to improving "situational awareness by developing a common operating picture for the air, land and maritime domains."⁸ McKinley and his team at 1st Air Force and CONR share that commitment and are working toward better command and control, a bigger radar picture and enhanced sensor capabilities to counter airborne threats. The 21st century is here and McKinley is leading the charge to catapult the air defense mission out of the Cold War into a new era, where the war seems to be everywhere.



Air National Guard photo by Master Sgt. Daniel J. Schiles

Right: A New York National Guardsman patrols the devastation in New York City Sept. 14, 2001. Operation Noble Eagle has been characterized by a strong military presence in the United States since the earliest days of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks.

Below: An F-15 pilot assigned to the Florida Air National Guard 125th Fighter Wing flies a Combat Air Patrol mission.

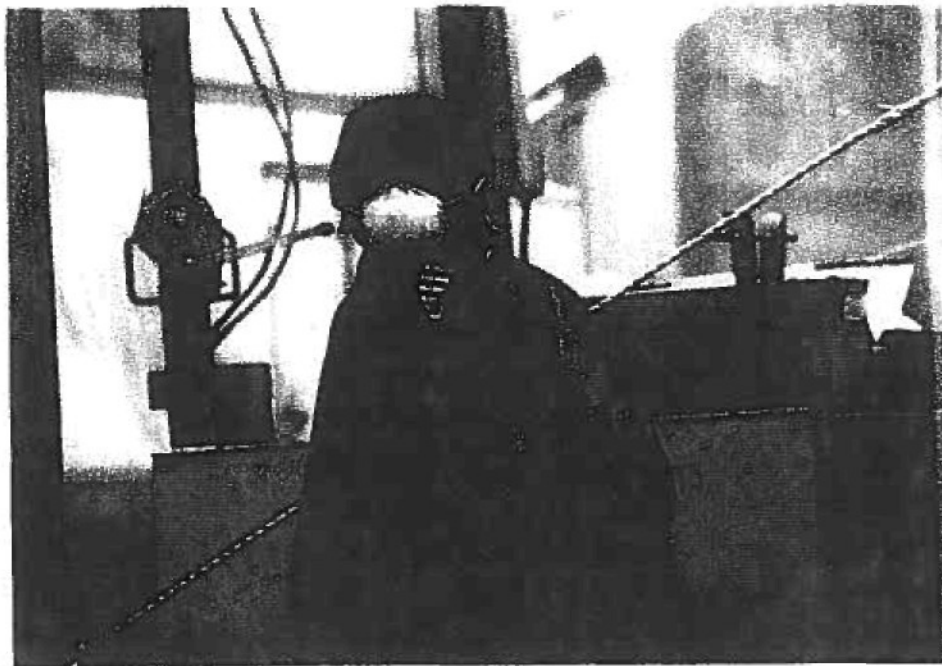


Photo by Tech. Sgt. Mark Olsen, New Jersey Department of Military and Veterans Affairs Public Affairs Office

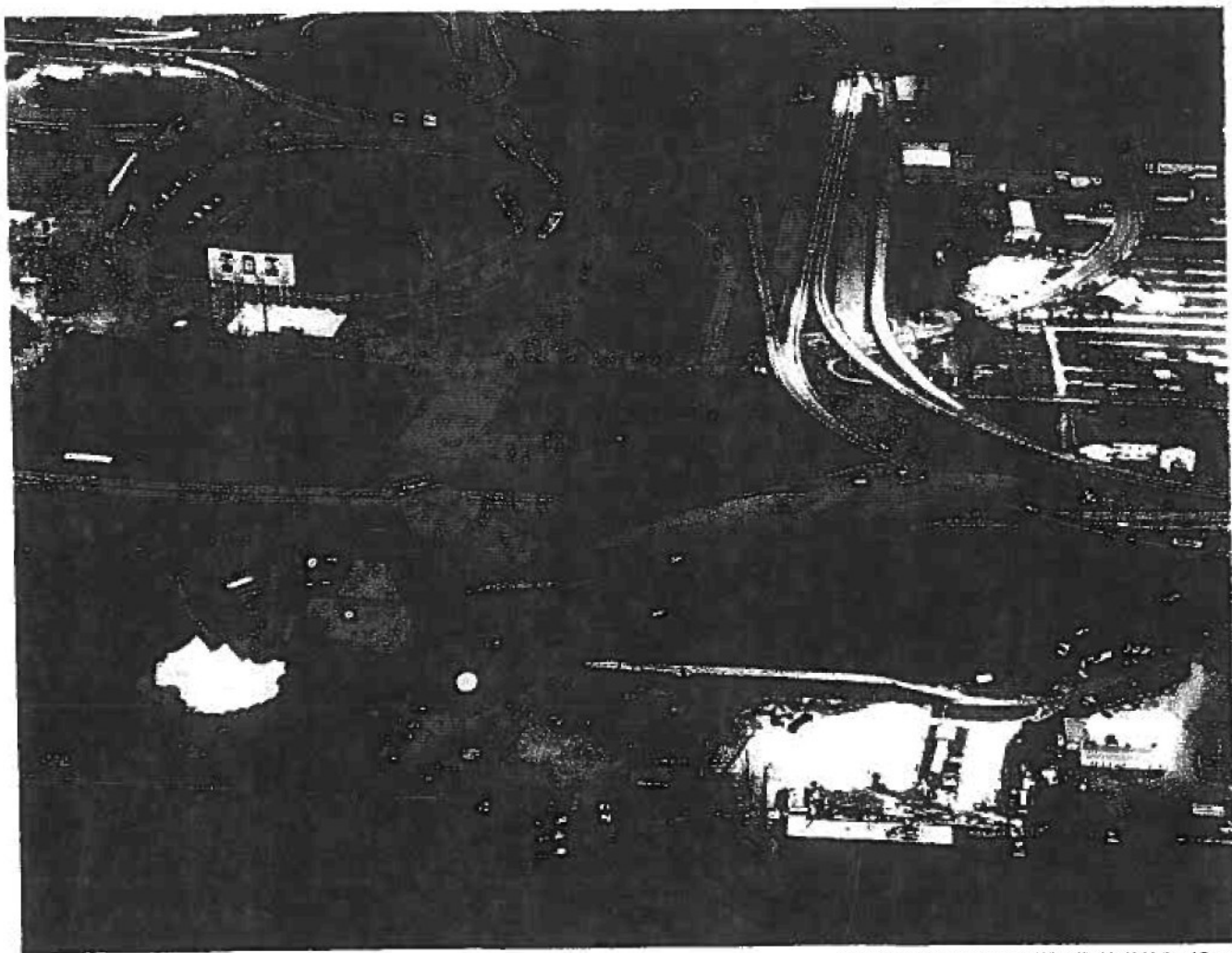


Photo courtesy of 125th Fighter Wing, Florida Air National Guard

Charting the future

A few days before Sept. 11, 2001, the future of continental air sovereignty was in serious doubt. As late as Sept. 8, discussions at the Air Force's highest levels called for dismantling NORAD's seven alert sites and command and control structure — the heart of the air sovereignty mission.⁹

"Our leaders were seeking to optimize our force posture, and there was no perceived threat," McKinley says. "That rationale was changed dramatically by the events of Sept. 11, when the terrorists sent a message that we are no longer safe in our homes."

The air war over America has been fought ever since.¹⁰ The old days of continental air sovereignty — protecting America's air borders with jets on alert at a few strategic locations — are a distant memory. Operation Noble Eagle requires scores of military fighters on alert at several bases around the country. Radar and command and control capabilities have had to keep up with looking both inside and outside the United States as fighter jets patrol America's cities, key infrastructure and special security events. The mission has changed, and it appears the changes will continue indefinitely.

"We will take 1st Air Force from a 20th century organization designed to defend against a Cold War construct, to a 21st century organization that protects Americans, Canadians and possibly anybody in the Western Hemisphere," McKinley says. "We are charting what this organization is going to look like in 2008 while we continue to fight the air war over America."

"This vision began in late 2002 ... over the next five years we plan to implement change, develop doctrine

and concepts of operations and actually see those things come to fruition. We hope to put in place the means to fund the equipment and facilities that would enable us to carry out this strategy."

McKinley envisions an organization that blends seamlessly into the rest of the Air Force and falls strictly in line with Air Force doctrine, the book on how the "Air Force organizes and employs aerospace power throughout the spectrum of conflict at the operational level."¹¹ He sees the Northeast and Southeast air defense sectors consolidating into one. The Western Air Defense Sector at McChord Air Force Base, Wash., and new Eastern Air Defense Sector, probably in Rome, N.Y., would employ the latest technology to view airspace over the contiguous 48 states and territories like the U.S. Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico.

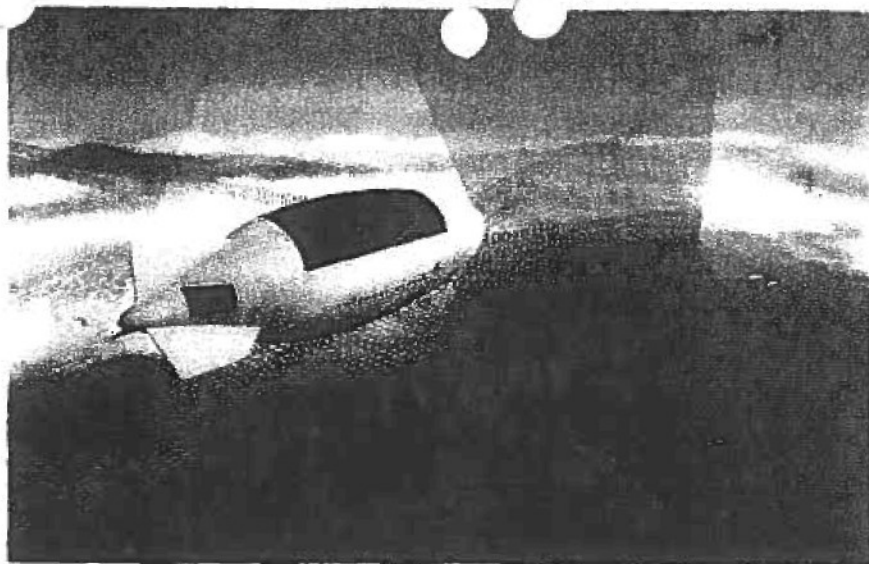
"Technology will allow us to radically transform the way we see the air traffic over North America," McKinley says. "After Sept. 11, we received a new system that enables us to do a far more efficient



Photo courtesy of 144th Fighter Wing, California Air National Guard

A fighter pilot from the California Air National Guard 144th Fighter Wing is caught on camera. Air defense leaders are working to gain more jobs in America's fighter wings for those fighting the war on terror.

**High-Altitude
Airships are the
wave of the future.
The lighter-than-air
surveillance
platforms are in
production at
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Courtesy of Lockheed Martin

job controlling, monitoring and identifying traffic, not only outside our borders, but inside. Once that system is purchased en masse, we have the ability to reform, reengineer and reshape ourselves into a doctrinally correct numbered air force."

"Our goal is to mirror our air forces in Europe and the Pacific," McKinley says. "We will employ military members from the active duty Air Force, Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve, and will present our forces the way the Air Force presents its forces everywhere."

A crucial part of the strategy is a bigger and stronger Air Operations Center, McKinley says. The AOC is where war plans for Operation Noble Eagle are written. Planning for the war on terror would continue at this super AOC of the future slated for Tyndall

Air Force Base, Fla., operated by the 601st Air Operations Group. In the world of warfighting, Air Force doctrine calls for one AOC per theater, and since the first moments of Operation Noble Eagle, the United States has become its own theater of

war, McKinley says.

"The war on terror is a long haul," he says. "It's nothing short term. We'll be facing this terrorist threat for our lives and the lives of our children. We'll have to remain vigilant around the clock for many years and never get complacent and never believe we aren't vulnerable."

"This reorganization allows us to be a numbered

air force, air operations group and an Air Force forces staff," McKinley says. "It means we can take good care of our people and design strategy and concepts of operation so we can prevent acts of terrorism rather than just respond to them. This vision allows us to present our force structure to the commander of Northern Air Forces the way combatant commanders present their forces

*"The war on terror is a long haul.
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believe we aren't vulnerable."*

*— Maj. Gen. Craig R. McKinley,
1st Air Force commander*

throughout the Air Force.

"This is a vectored evolution vision, it isn't total transformation. We haven't created anything new. It's a more modern and efficient way of presenting forces to best meet the needs of the new century."

Retired Col. William A. Scott, 1st Air Force director of plans, programs and requirements, says the mission is simply evolving with the changing times. "Now that NORTHCOM has stood up, our mission has been enlarged to include possible offensive operations and civil support missions," Scott says. "The 1st Air Force and CONR transformation is a continued evolution from our doctrinally correct organization today to a doctrinally correct organization of the future."

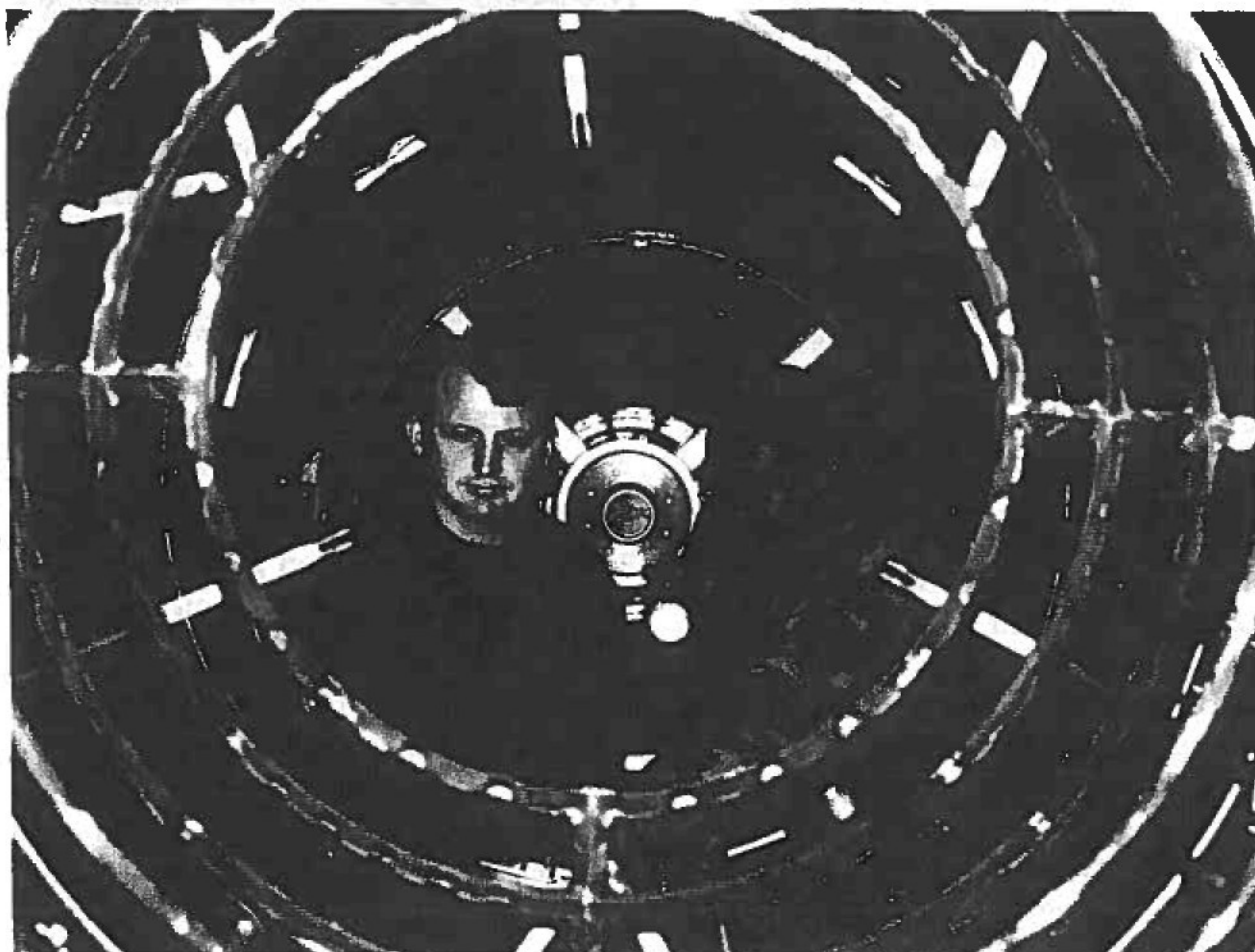
McKinley, meanwhile, wears more hats than ever. He serves as the Commander of Air Force Forces for the continental United States; the Area Air Defense Commander; and Joint Air and Space Component Commander, a title that captures the Air Force position that air and space power together create effects that cannot be achieved through either power alone.

Technical edge

Building a modern, futuristic air defense mission means taking full advantage of the latest technology, from "High-Altitude Airships" to ground-based interceptors capable of destroying Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles mid-flight.

"Everything we see today is based on radars

From left, Tech. Sgts. Clayton Lemons and Leonard Mosley of the 147th Fighter Wing engine shop, Texas Air National Guard, make repairs while deployed to Egg Harbor Township, N.J., in support of Operation Noble Eagle.



U.S. Air Force photo by Master Sgt. Tom Louis

and those radars are mounted on the ground," says Col. Mike Corbett, 1st Air Force and CONR vice commander. "But we can only see line of sight. The curvature of the earth keeps controllers from seeing low altitudes. So low-altitude threats like cruise missiles are not well detected by ground-based radars."

The mission should someday employ High-Altitude Airships, solar-powered blimps cruising around the atmosphere and feeding air pictures back to earth. The airships, already being studied by the U.S. Army, are bigger than a football field and would stay airborne for up to a year at a time, Corbett says.

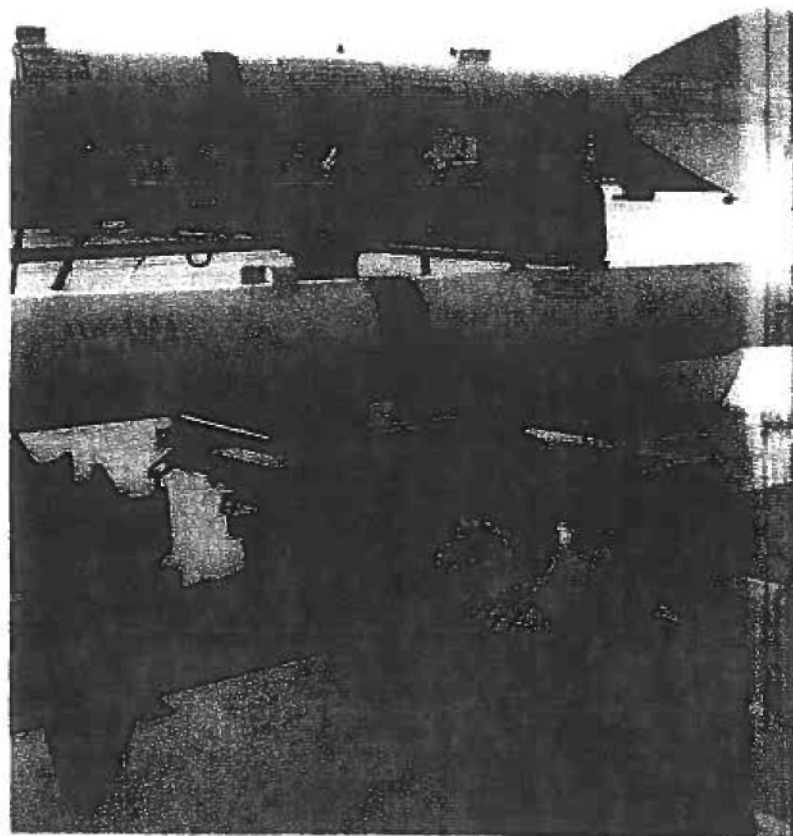
Eberhart spoke before the House Armed Services Committee about this exciting technology and what it means for homeland security.

"The Office of the Secretary of Defense, the Missile Defense Agency, the United States Army, and NORAD are spearheading the effort to demonstrate the technical feasibility of an unmanned, untethered, long-duration HAA (High-Altitude Airship)," the general said in March 2003.

"The prototype airship will stay airborne for one month and carry a 4,000-pound payload. We expect the objective HAA to have the capability to stay airborne for up to a year and carry a payload greater than 4,000 pounds. A robust HAA capability would give warfighters persistent wide-area surveillance of the battle space against a full spectrum of air, land and sea threats."

First Air Force and CONR hope to combine airship technology with enhanced command and control capabilities by 2004, Corbett says. That's the same year the United States Missile Defense Agency and its counterparts hope to have a ballistic missile defense in place.¹²

Ground-based interceptors; sea-based interceptors; airborne laser aircraft; and land, sea and space-based sensors; are just part of the technology that will protect against ballistic missiles of all ranges, according to the Department of Defense.¹³



Above: Master Sgt. Jim Rice, 147th Fighter Wing, Texas Air National Guard, signals that an AIM-120 missile is ready for the rack on Dec. 19, 2001. Rice and more than 60 other Texas Air Guard members were deployed to the 177th Fighter Wing, New Jersey Air National Guard, Egg Harbor Township, in the early days of Operation Noble Eagle.

Right: Tech. Sgt. Wendell Hunte, 177th Fighter Wing, New Jersey Air National Guard aircraft generation squadron, performs a function check after installing an AIM-9 adapter and rail on an F-16 on Oct. 9, 2001. The aircraft was de-armed for maintenance after many Operation Noble Eagle flying hours.



U.S. Air Force photos by Master Sgt. Tom Louis



People first

Modern equipment may be critical in the war on terror, but it's the people performing the air defense mission who are most invaluable.

"The dedication, skill and patriotism of our people and the fact we've done this without a single mishap to date, is a remarkable testament to the great skill and loyalty of everyone out there doing this job," McKinley said in February 2003. "Since Sept. 11, they have done a remarkable job of securing our airspace against further attack."

By April 2003, American and Canadian military forces had flown more than 29,000 Operation Noble Eagle sorties in defense of critical infrastructure and population centers throughout North America.¹⁴

Many Operation Noble Eagle veterans are Air National Guardsmen who were recalled to active duty. "Operation Noble Eagle missions and aerospace warning and control takes people," Corbett said in March 2003. "To date those people have been mobilized and can only be mobilized for a two-year period."

"When it comes to command and control functions, through modernization, we think we can do it with the resources we had prior to Sept. 11," Corbett says. "But for the fighter wings out there doing the alert mission, that isn't the case. There is a real need for a significant number of additional people."

The command is working closely with the Air Staff and National Guard Bureau to create 900 more jobs in America's alert fighter wings, Corbett says.

But it isn't just the military fighting the war, McKinley says. "How we prosecute tracks of interest with our interagency partners is forever changed," the commander says. "We have become America's NATO. We are the centerpiece of that partnership and are working with agencies like the FBI and U.S. Customs just as our partners in

Europe work with various countries to defend NATO.”

“We can’t rest on our laurels,” he adds. “We’ll continue to be challenged. We haven’t suffered a reattack, but that doesn’t mean people aren’t out there planning, plotting and strategizing against us. We must stay vigilant and focused and support the president of the United States and secretary of defense in the war on terrorism.”

“Air sovereignty has changed forever,” McKinley concludes. “Not in my lifetime will we ever see an opportunity to turn the wick down a bit. This will be a very, very lengthy process.”

□□□

1 Jim Garamone, “Northern Command to Debut in October,” *American Forces Information Service*, 17 April 2002, n.p.

2 Ibid., n.p.

3 Ralph E. Eberhart, press conference at Tyndall Air Force Base, Fla., 1 August 2002.

4 Eberhart, speech before House Armed Services Committee, United States House of Representatives, 13 March 2003.

5 Garamone, “Northern Command to Debut in October,” n.p.

6 Ibid., n.p.

7 Eberhart, before House Armed Services Committee, 13 March 2003.

8 Ibid.

9 Dan Navin and William A. Scott, conversation with author, 16 April 2002.

10 As of press time in late-2003.

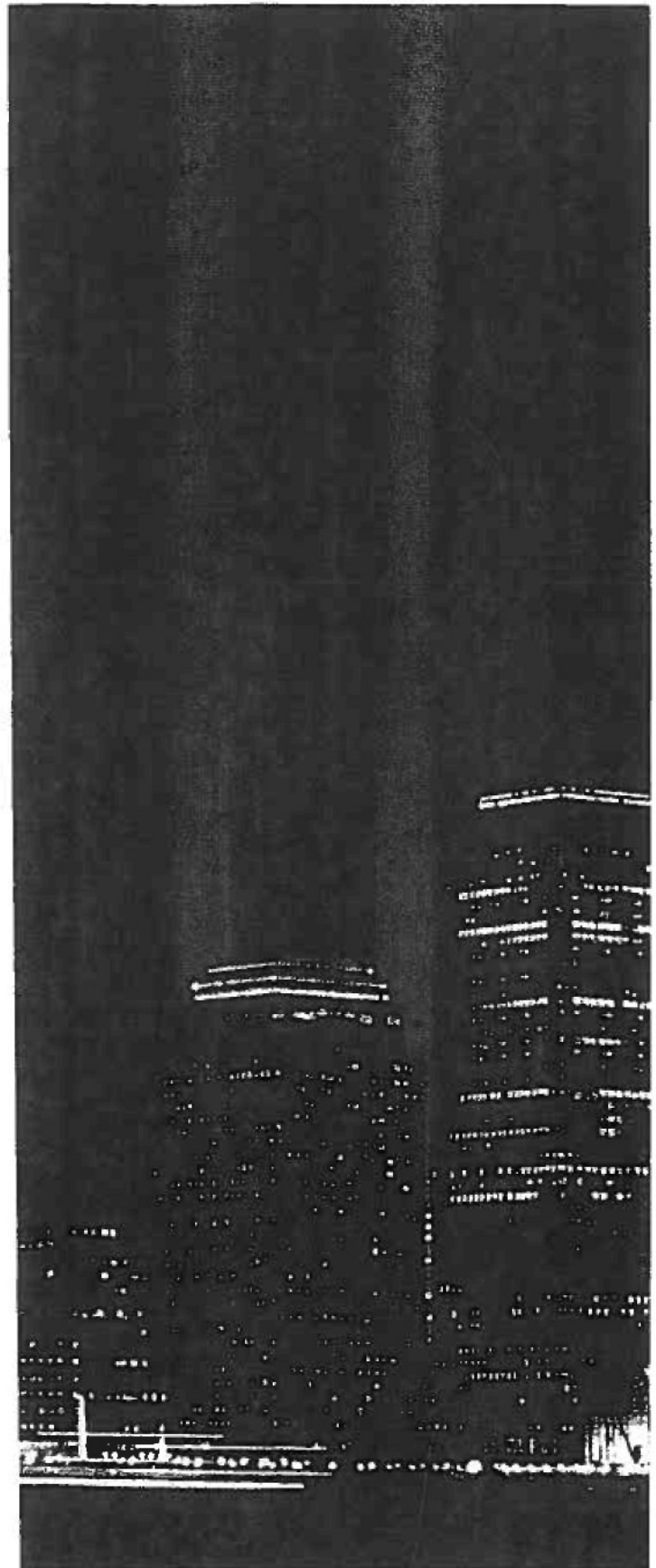
11 United States Air Force, *Organization and Employment of Aerospace Power* (Headquarters Air Force Doctrine Center, Maxwell Air Force Base, Ala., 2000), foreword.

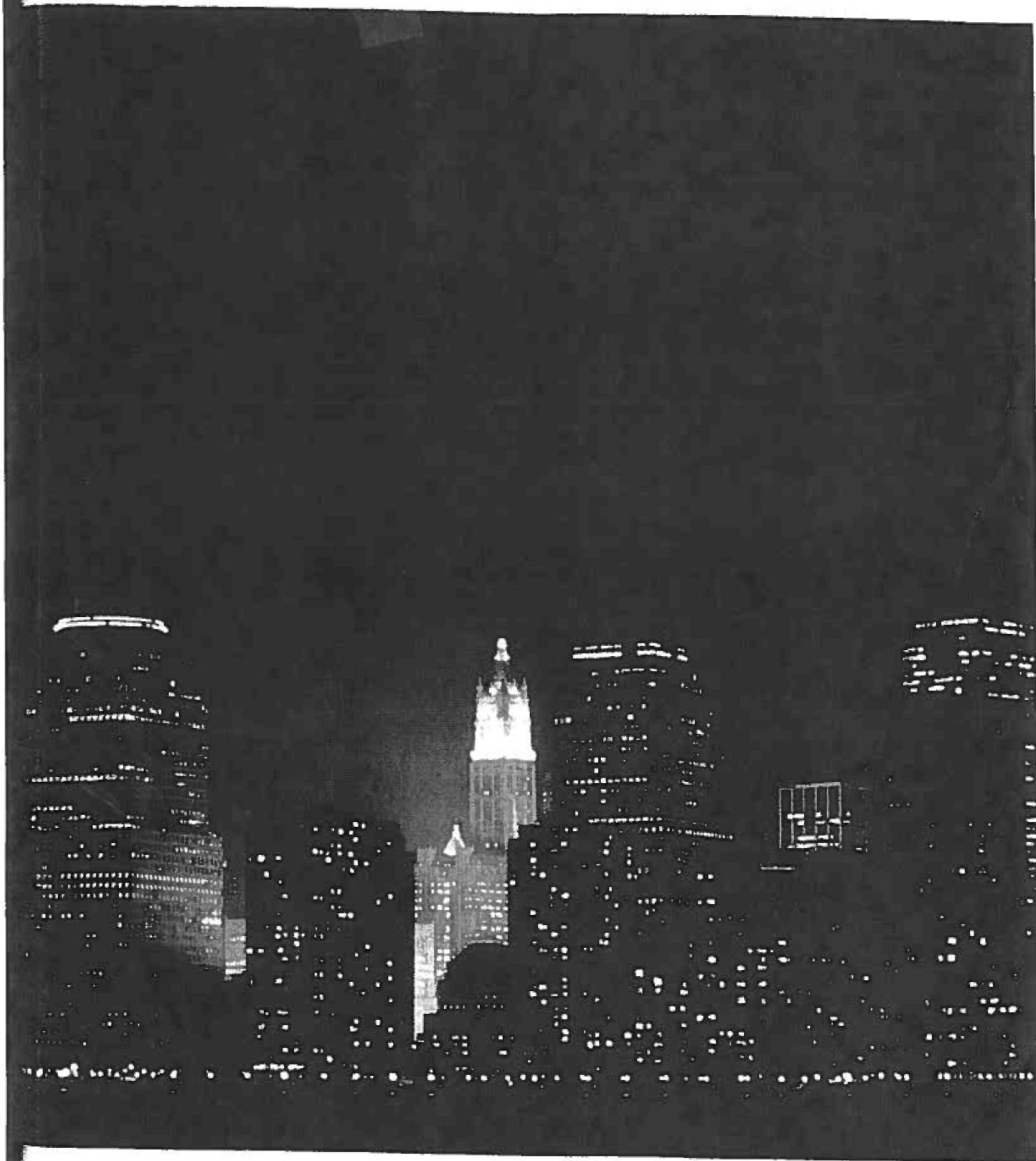
12 Missile Defense Operations Announcement, *DOD News*, 17 December 2002, n.p.

13 Ibid., n.p.

14 NORAD statistics.

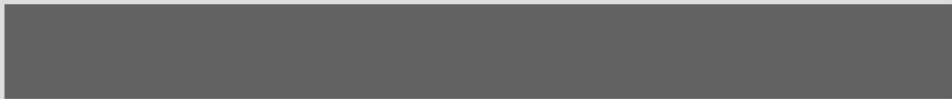
The “Tribute of Light” represents the fallen twin towers of the World Trade Center. The photograph was taken from Liberty State Park, N.J., March 14, 2002.





U.S. Air Force photo by Gary E

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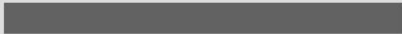
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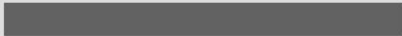
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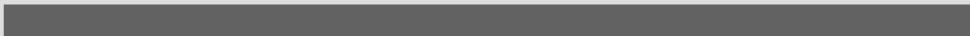
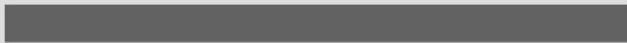
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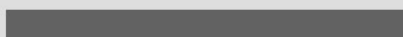
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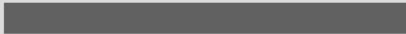
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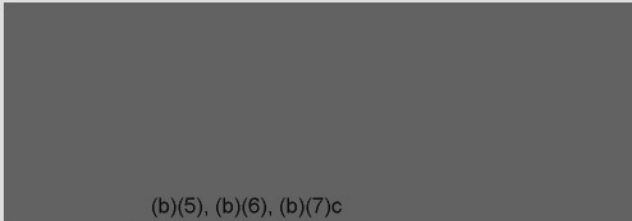
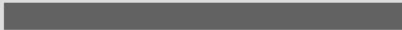
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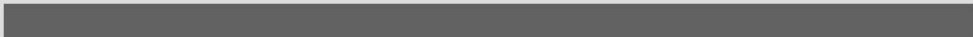
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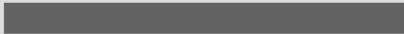
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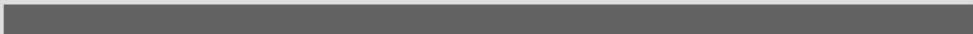
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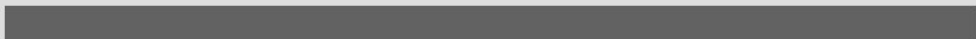
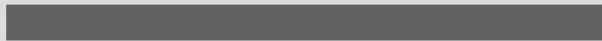
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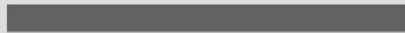


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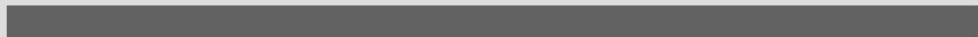
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