

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

Event: Arthur R. Eberhart, former SAC, FBI (now Security Manager, Strategic Security, The Coca-Cola Company)

Type of event: Interview

Date: December 15, 2003

Special Access Issues: None

Prepared by: Mark Bittinger

Team Number: 8

Location: GSA NCR Office, Washington, DC

Participants - Non-Commission: Arthur Eberhart

Participants - Commission: Mark Bittinger

U N C L A S

1. Art Eberhart's Background: He joined the FBI on July 20, 1970 as a support employee. On October 20, 1975 he became a special agent assigned to the WFO upon graduating Quantico. His last assignment post-9/11 was investigating the anthrax mailings from October 2001 to August 2002. He retired from the FBI on August 31, 2002.

As the SAC of the Admin and Tech Division Eberhart is responsible for hiring and training personnel and overseeing the WFO budget. He has a support staff of 650 persons. The Tech Division supports the field office through wiretaps, foreign counterintelligence and aviation.

2. Aviation: The Hostage Rescue Team has helicopter assets and the WFO has been trying to get a helicopter for years. It boiled down to a budget battle between HRT and WFO. Though Eberhart acknowledged that a helicopter at WFO was much needed.

3. Organization of WFO:

- ADIC – Van Harp. He was on summer vacation in South Carolina on 9/11.
- Criminal Investigative SAC – Ellen Knowlton. Her position was vacant on 9/11. She had been promoted and assigned to FBI HQ with no replacement named.
- Foreign CI SAC (National Security SAC) – James “Tim” Carruso. His position was vacant on 9/11, he had been transferred to FBI HQ. Tim Berezny was his replacement. Post-9/11 the Foreign CI was split into 2 separate divisions. Terrorism Division SAC was Mike Rollins.
- Admin and Tech Division SAC – Art Eberhart.

4. Events on 9/11: Eberhart activated and paged the Rapid Response Team ostensibly for New York City. The Rapid Response Team grew out of the East African embassy bombings. After receiving a report that the Pentagon was hit he activated the WFO Command Center. Then activated the NCRS.

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Eberhart was at the WFO Command Center from 9/11 to 9/14. The first eight hours was a whirlwind of activity. The hijacking of Flight 77 led to a full investigation. Identifying the hijackers, obtaining a passenger manifest, luggage, photographs, and ongoing surveillance. Ellen Knowlton later ran these airport duties, including security at the local airports.

The Pentagon was a crime scene. A terrorism investigation ensued.

Meanwhile, Eberhart was juggling conference calls with FBI HQ and handling from U.S. senators and other VIPs. Flight 93 was inbound to Washington, DC. Attorney General Ashcroft was in the air and almost got shot down.

One chaotic day, with support staff in need of CISM.

5. Events on 9/12: Van Harp arrived back on 9/12 or late 9/11. More of the investigation. Tim Berezney set up a JOC. Blecksmith on-scene at the Pentagon. On 9/12 or 9/13, Eberhart went to both Dulles and National airports. Provided support with dedicated computers and phone lines.

6. Events on 9/14: Eberhart assumed command at the Pentagon. Berezney still in charge of the JOC. Eberhart met with Bob Blecksmith for a handoff of incident command. It was textbook case due to "years of preparation." Including both table top exercises and field exercises.

There is a closer working relationship in Washington, DC among Federal agencies because DC is a Federal city.

7. Events on 9/21 to 9/26: FBI assumed control of the Pentagon crash site. ACFD and ACPD still there in a support role. Fire lieutenant and police lieutenant were with Eberhart.

Priorities:

- Safety
- Crime scene security (integrity of the crime scene was the FBI's responsibility)
- Recovery of human remains (DoD Military Mortuary Group, Dr. Marzook had a different protocol than did the FBI or the AFIP. This involved several days of discussion. Also there was tension with the Virginia State Coroner which was finally resolved with a letter from Attorney General Ashcroft.)
- Recovery of evidence
- Recovery of classified materials (done in conjunction with Army CID)

DPS – guarded the Pentagon entrances

Virginia State Police – manned checkpoints along interstate exits

Hostage Rescue Team – placed a counter-sniper team in position

USSS – established a badging system

8. JOC / JIC: The JOC is not part of the command structure. It is staffed with decision makers to support a logistics and an administration function. The FBI was under strict protocol from the Attorney General, that all press conferences would be held by the AG at the Department of Justice. A JIC has always been a part of FBI table top exercises. In hindsight, according to

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Eberhart, joint briefings with Arlington County and FBI officials in attendance addressing the status of the *recovery effort* at the Pentagon would have been beneficial. Joint briefings did not need to get into commenting on the ongoing investigation.

A wonderful case study of a successful JIC and a great example of a joint press briefing was after the crash of TWA Flight 800 on July 18, 1996. When Jim Kalstrom of the FBI and officials from the NTSB and New York State Police commented on recovery efforts to date.

According to Eberhart, the absence of a JIC at the Pentagon crash site was "a lost opportunity."

9. Events after 9/26: FBI remained there for 5 to 7 days after the handoff to MDW. Continued working evidence recovery and collection of human remains.

10. ATF: "Everyone needs to understand what your mission is!" The Pentagon was a "working crime scene" with 4/5 of the Pentagon personnel still coming to work. Security was a logistical nightmare. FBI's position: "Get the job done as rapidly as possible, without cutting corners." The USSS came and asked what they could do to help. The average ATF agent worked tremendously hard. They were invited just like numerous other agencies.

See FBI response to ATF AAR.

Eberhart wanted agencies to know their mission and accept their mission. He did not want self-dispatching.

11. Lessons Learned:

- (1) More preparation of the first responders is needed. More and consistent training. Too much of the training in the absence of standards is vendor-driven. It needs to be global, standards-based and consistent. And the need to consistent protocols and equipment.
- (2) Importance of the role of hospitals. 9/11 should be a "wake-up call." Hospitals are now included in table top and field exercises.
- (3) The Pentagon response worked because of advanced training and knowledge of ICS.
 - a. SAC not in charge when it's a fire and rescue mission; the FBI's focus is on crime scene security