

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

Event: Shawn Kelley, Assistant Chief and Chief Fire Marshall, Arlington County Fire
Department

Type of event: Interview

Date: October 16, 2003

Special Access Issues: None

Prepared by: Mark Bittinger

Team Number: 8

Location: ACFD HQ, Arlington, VA

Participants - Non-Commission: Shawn Kelley

Participants - Commission: Kevin Shaeffer; Mark Bittinger

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1. Shawn Kelley's Background: Shawn Kelley is the Assistant Fire Chief and Chief Fire Marshal for the Arlington County Fire Department. When an airliner crashed into the Pentagon on September 11, the Arlington County Fire Department was first on the scene, and was in charge of the site through the long rescue and recovery process. Assistant Chief Kelley was one of the key commanders on the scene.

A 23-year veteran of the Department, Chief Kelley has been Chief Fire Marshal for five years. He is also a life member of the Ballston Volunteer Fire Department.

Mr. Kelley is a nationally registered EMT paramedic and founder of the Department's Technical Rescue Team. He was the County's first certified fire protection specialist and certified fire and explosives investigator, and commander of the Department's bomb squad. He has received numerous commendations for high quality service to the county and community, as well as several citations for bravery.

In addition to active involvement in civic and community organizations, Mr. Kelley has served as chairman of the Northern Virginia Fire Marshals, and a member of the Executive Board of the National Fire Protection Association Education Section.

2. Pentagon Construction: The Pentagon is the only Type 1 construction building in Arlington County. While steel stretches at 1100 degrees Fahrenheit, the walls and floor of the Pentagon is well protected by solid concrete, so there was no opportunity for steel to fail. In terms of force protection, PenRen's changes were validated, but the changes did not take into account the need for window evacuations which are now being incorporated into the rebuilding of Wedge 1. Other improvements include more hydrants, an updated standpipes system and low-level self-illuminating strips to assist egress of the building. PenRen (Jake Barelle and Diana Pitts) have been consulting with ACFD and seeking their advice.

3. Pentagon Performance: "The Pentagon performed better than anyone could have expected. It performed very, very well, considering the (jet) fuel and (resultant) flash fire." "Lives were saved as a result of this building performance." The fire doors worked as well, creating fire control areas, smoke zones and fire zones. "The Pentagon engineer was invaluable based on his knowledge of the building systems and by providing ACFD the building floor plans." Floor plans that were up-to-date because of the ongoing renovation.

Prior to 9/11, all high-rises in Arlington County were required to have blueprints and floor plans as part of the fire control handbook located in the building's fire control room. 9/11 has now reinforced the need that building managers comply.

4. Firefighting and Rescue: Regarding the roof fire, "the firefighters worked their asses off and saved critical communications." "Tech Rescue team integration was phenomenal!" Which involved the COE, US&R and locals. The amount of work done by military personnel was amazing – cutting and nailing wood for shoring up the building, as well as body recovery.

The Pentagon was opened for business on Sept. 12. Fire was still burning, along with smoke and gases in the air. The ACFD was informed, not consulted regarding the Sept. 12 opening. The ACFD disagreed, but the SECDEF and staff made us jump through hoops to ensure their safety.

"Military counseling effort was top notch!" Military CISM teams did an effective job.

ACFD: 15% attribution (about 12 firefighters) post-9/11 (in addition to Pentagon attack, anthrax, DC area sniper).

5. Joint Operations Center: At 0430-0500 on the morning of Sept. 12 the JOC was stood up at Fort Myer. By 6 a.m. it was fully operational. The first briefing was given at 0800. Many at the JOC knew each other and had confidence in each others' technical and tactical proficiency. Shawn Kelley was at the JOC all day on Sept. 12 and 13 as the Incident Commander, and was the nighttime Incident Commander on Sept. 14. Kelley's first complaint involved the lack of situational awareness. In the early stages at the JOC, the IC could not see the Pentagon and relied on flyover photographs, blueprints and media TV pictures. Later the IC was able to view close-circuit camera pictures of the Pentagon. Without being onsite the Incident Commander lacked the ability to continuously size-up the situation and absorb important visual cues from the on scene firefighters. The Incident Commander stayed at the JOC for approximately 14 to 15 hours. Then Shawn Kelley told the FBI and MDW that the Incident Commander was moving back down to the crash site, but would leave a liaison. All in all, the JOC worked great at providing coordination, specifically logistical, and at disseminating intelligence. DoD liaison to Kelley was Major Hermanski.

6. Joint Information Center: ACFD and MDW wanted a JIC, the FBI said no.

7. ATF and Turf Issues: ATF is not getting a lot of credit. The FBI is not expert on fires and bombings, while the AFT is. The attack on the Pentagon generated a "huge turf battle" between these two agencies. Bottom line: agencies need to work and liaison with each other; build relationships over lunch, then plan and train together.

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Shawn Kelley invited the ATF to the Pentagon crash site on Sept. 12. The AFT brought a sizeable amount of equipment for general use, as needed. The FBI told them to remove all labels from vehicles and to take off their ATF field jackets. The "ATF was wonderful."

8. World Trade Center: As a Certified Fire Protection Specialist, Shawn Kelley was sure the World Trade Center Towers would collapse. WTC had a 7-point protection system requirement. While most building are center-core buildings whose strength is in their center core, the WTC found its strength in its outside skin. Therefore, the WTC's skin integrity was critical.

3 sprinkler system levels: light (such as a hotel room), ordinary (such as the WTC), and heavy (such as a Home Depot or Sam's Club).

There was no way to stop the collapse. There is always the possibility of a secondary collapse 12 days after an impact, even without a fire.

In New York City the only code that matters is the code in effect when it was built, with the exception of remodeling or the application for an exemption such as for a church.

WTC – must look into

New York Center has code enforcement for existing structures.
Arlington County has a system confidence testing program with fire pumps tested every 5 years.

Chief Callon, retired from the FDNY, has a PowerPoint briefing compares the 1993 WTC bombing with the 2001 WTC attack. The tower damaged in 1993 started practicing evacuation drills and on 9/11 every single person below the impact zone got out.

According to Callon, "The FDNY did their job and got people out below the impact zone."