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MEMO 04016830  
NORFOLK/NAVY  
(R)

**MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD**

Event: GIANT KILLER visit

Type of event: Recorded Interview

Date: Wednesday, December 03, 2003

Special Access Issues: None

Prepared by: Miles Kara

Team Number: 8

Location: GIANT KILLER

Participants – ATCM Michael John Defeo, the Air Traffic Control Division Officer on 9-11

Participants - Commission: Miles Kara, Kevin Shaeffer

Observer – LT Florencio Yuzon, Counsel, Office of the Chief of Naval Operations

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Note: Please refer to the recorded interview for further details.

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**Background:**

Chief Defeo had just transferred to GIANT KILLER from the USS Roosevelt. He had over 20 years experience in air traffic control, including instructor time. He started as the Air Space Chief and then became the Division Officer. He had no watch standing experience at GIANT KILLER. He was in charge of a 62-person division and was the administrative assistant to the Operations Officer.

GIANT KILLER is responsible for special use air space off the East Coast--90,000 square miles of off-shore space. They are an advisory control for air activity involving ships as well.

Scrambles from Langley. There are at least 43-45 letters-of-agreement with entities up and down the coast. Scramble LOA were designed to facilitate communication between the facilities that are involved. GIANT KILLER does not have too much involvement in the process. The flight strip is generated by the tower—all designed stereo routes. He mentioned 090 for 60, specifically.

He was shown the letter-of-agreement in effect on 9-11 and referred staff to a chart on the wall. They would work to deconflict air space for the scrambled aircraft to ensure safe transit.

NEADS is in overall charge of scrambled aircraft.

9/11:

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Chief Defeo was at the Doctor's that morning. He left the facility at about 0835 hrs and learned at the medical office that a plane had hit the first tower and on the way back learned that the second tower had been hit. He went to the floor and was briefed by the Operations Officer and Petty Office Clipper. He ensured that his positions were manned and then stepped back so as not to interfere with ongoing activities.

Chief Defeo was shown the scramble order broadcast by NEADS. He observed that there was no indication of what the scramble was for. There was not enough information to enter a flight plan in the system. Normally the flight would be vectored to a specific point, VFR.

Chief Defeo was then shown a replication of the flight strip for the Langley scramble on 9-11. He thought the vector and DME were entered to get the flight out there so someone could head them where they needed to go.

Chief Defeo opined that the flight strip data was such because Langley Tower wanted to get the flight out and up quickly so that HUNTRESS could control them. If the lead pilot had asked to turn then GIANT KILLER would have worked to clear the air space for him. GIANT KILLER can tell an aircraft to "proceed direct." If that was done, however, they would still have to work through Washington Center.

Chief Defeo was asked to listen to a portion of the FAA tape to identify the female GIANT KILLER voice. He identified the voice as probably that of Petty Officer Pullen.

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**MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD**

Event: GIANT KILLER visit  
Type of event: Recorded Interview  
Date: Wednesday, December 03, 2003  
Special Access Issues: None  
Prepared by: Miles Kara  
Team Number: 8  
Location: GIANT KILLER

(R)

Participants – Ensign Michael Peck, then Petty Officer Peck, Radar Supervisor on 9-11

Participants - Commission: Miles Kara, Kevin Shaeffer

Observer – LT Florencio Yuzon, Counsel, Office of the Chief of Naval Operations

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Note: Please refer to the recorded interview for further details.

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Ensign Peck was shown a copy of the scramble order for the Langley fighters scrambled on 9-11. To him it was a scramble order to get the fighters airborne so that HUNTRESS could take control. He was then shown a replication of the actual flight strip for that day. He characterized the bearing and range as a standard order to get the fighters out to Whiskey 386. His speculation was that the flight plan entered as a stereo or canned plan.

The flight data system would not handle the scramble order since there was no DME associated with the scramble vector. In his estimation any time a controller entered a radial and a DME the flight data system would accept the input. An experienced controller would know that.

Normally, when a scramble order is received the receiving person would note the information on the back of a flight strip and let the supervisor know. The facility watch supervisor would let the concerned sector, Langley sector know that, in this case, Quit 25 and Quit 26 would be coming his way. If it was coming GIANT KILLER's way it would be coming off of the 090 for 60 plan.

There is no onus on GIANT KILLER to affect events. GIANT KILLER cannot do anything until it gets radar hand off and is in communications with the flight. Their responsibility is to sterilize the air space for the scrambled aircraft.

Ensign Peck was shown the letter of agreement in effect on 9-11. It is not a complete handoff, he said, until they have both radar contact and a communications handoff. HUNTRESS has tactical control, he said. The old LOA implied that GIANT KILLER had radar control. That language is out of the Nov 02 version.

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**MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD**

Event: GIANT KILLER visit

Type of event: Recorded Interview

Date: Wednesday, December 03, 2003

Special Access Issues: None

Prepared by: Miles Kara

Team Number: 8

Location: GIANT KILLER

Participants – Senior Chief Petty Officer Darren Clipper, Air Traffic Control leading Chief Petty Officer

Participants - Commission: Miles Kara, Kevin Shaeffer

Observer – LT Florencio Yuzon, Counsel, Office of the Chief of Naval Operations

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Note: Please refer to the recorded interview for further details.

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**Background:**

Chief Clipper started at VACAPES in 1997 as Radar Chief and moved up to the Air Traffic Control leading Petty Officer position over the next two years. Chief Clipper was qualified on all floor positions and had performed duty as a controller. GIANT KILLER controls the air space out to about 120 nautical miles and from 6-12 miles off shore depending on the area.

He recalled the occasional scramble prior to 9/11 usually on routine “stereo” or preprogrammed routes. They would not intercede or direct the scrambles. NEADS would be the controllers. NEADS would have taken an active air scramble from Norfolk. GIANT KILLER would have kept aircraft away from the active air scramble.

There is a scramble circuit on the floor and GIANT KILLER would have been aware of the scramble. The Facility Watch Supervisor would have picked up the phone on 9-11 for the Langley scramble. The scramble would have been logged on the facility log for that day.

Flight plans for scrambles are received over the FIDO (Flight Data Input/Output terminal) system, which means there would have been a flight strip generated by Langley Tower. The flight strip would have been walked from the FIDO position to the Langley Sector controller.

**9/11:**

Chief Clipper was off the floor on 9/11 when events began to unfold and came the floor later.

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He was shown the actual order for the Langley scramble on 9-11 and did not recall who acknowledged for GIANT KILLER. Washington Center and Norfolk Approach should have made sure there was a clear path for the fighters to go direct to HUNTRESS control, based on the scramble order. GIANT KILLER should not have been talking to the fighters that day.

The actual flight plan, 090 for 60, however, put the flight in GIANT KILLER airspace. To him, the flight strip should have noted that the flight was an active air scramble. If HUNTRESS activates a scramble it is GIANT KILLER's responsibility to stay out of the way. The onus is on the fighters and NEADS to go where they want to go. It is not a GIANT KILLER responsibility to monitor the HUNTRESS frequency specified in the scramble order.

Chief Clipper was provided an opportunity to listen to the FAA tape of the ATC conversation with GIANT KILLER concerning the requirement to go to Baltimore. He listened to the tape twice and ultimately thought that the male GIANT KILLER voice was Petty Officer Barcas. His impression was that Washington Center was not aware of the active air scramble, but should have been. His answer defended the actions of GIANT KILLER and held NEADS responsible for the control of the flight. He again stated that GIANT KILLER should not have been talking to the flight.

Norfolk Approach should not have switched the flight to GIANT KILLER frequency, plain and simple. We are not expected to be participants in active air scrambles, he said. The radial/DME FIDO input is standard, but he could not account for the specific 090 for 60 input except to say that there was a route off of Langley that took aircraft to GIANT KILLER airspace. The 090 for 60 may make sense, he said, if people involved didn't take seriously the ongoing events.

Chief Clipper was asked if GIANT KILLER would have just allowed the flight to keep going if NEADS hadn't gotten GIANT KILLER involved with Washington Center. Even though there was a scramble order over the circuit, sometimes circumstances change. GIANT KILLER will not interfere, he said, and would not divert a scrambled aircraft from holding at 090 for 60 even though the scramble order called for something different.

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MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

Event: GIANT KILLER visit  
Type of event: Recorded Interview  
Date: Wednesday, December 03, 2003  
Special Access Issues: None  
Prepared by: Miles Kara  
Team Number: 8  
Location: GIANT KILLER  
Participants – AC1 A. W. Barcas, Langley Sector Air Traffic Controller  
Participants - Commission: Miles Kara, Kevin Shaeffer  
Observer – LT Florencio Yuzon, Counsel, Office of the Chief of Naval Operations

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Note: Please refer to the recorded interview for further details.

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**Background:**

AT1 Barcas entered the Navy in 1989 and was trained as an air traffic controller. He was stationed at GIANT KILLER from 1993-1996 and again from 1999 to date. He was an air traffic controller at GIANT KILLER on both tours. He was qualified on all positions on the floor and was assigned as Langley Sector controller on 9-11.

GIANT KILLER controls the warning areas over the water for military training and to facilitate aircraft return to FAA air space. When aircraft come out to the warning area they are usually VFR under their own control.

Scramble experience. If air warning space is inactive they activate the air space and don't usually talk to the aircraft. If space is active they move active aircraft aside and allow the scrambled flight to do what they need to do.

The floor-ceiling for GIANT KILLER is surface to unlimited and they do have some capability to pick up primary targets

**9/11:**

Langley Sector was active at GIANT KILLER on 9-11 and AT1 Barcas was the controller of record. Traffic was light in the warning areas that day. He verified that recall by looking at screen prints from the day. He came on duty at 0700 that day and was on position when they heard about World Trade Center events. He learned about events from Lt Cdr Kluge who came to the floor to inform the watch.

The Facility Watch Supervisor was Petty Officer First Class Bates. The scramble order would have been received by the Radar Supervisor, Petty Officer Katrina Pullen. He could not recall or distinguish the battle stations order from the scramble order.

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He thought that the scramble order was conveyed orally by PO Bates. He was shown a replication of the air scramble order. His observation was that the order was roughly a normal command, although prior to 9/11 he would not have been the one receiving scramble orders at GIANT KILLER. He thought that 010 was not a normal heading. Given that heading they would not have entered GIANT KILLER airspace. He did not recognize, without prompting, that the scramble order did not include the range necessary to enter a flight plan in the FIDO (Flight input/output Data system).

He finally recognized that the scramble order had no destination. He was then shown a replication of the flight strip that was issued by Langley Tower. He knew that the strip would come in through the FIDO position and then to him. He did not specifically recall receiving the flight strip. He did not recall recognizing that there was a disconnect between the scramble order and the flight plan.

Most of the time, GIANT KILLER does not talk to the scrambled aircraft. A flight is usually handed off to HUNTRESS by Norfolk [or center]. He was shown a copy of the transcript of the Peninsula and East Feeder positions at Norfolk TRACON concerning the scramble. He doesn't recall anything remarkable about the conversations.

His comment was that the whole scramble system was based on unknowns coming in from out over the water. That comment was in regard to the 090 for 60 directions contained in the flight strip.

He did not recall controlling the Quit flight or actually talking to it. There job was to clear airspace for HUNTRESS control.

He listened to the tape of the GIANT KILLER conversation with Cape Charles sector, Washington Center and verified that it was his voice on the tape. HUNTRESS would have called him on the 924 line and he then coordinated with Washington Center.

He consulted a map to indicate where the Dart VOR was located and to show where the Quit flight would have entered GIANT KILLER air space. He was then shown a transcript of NEADS WD1-3 position to shown when NEADS initiated action to get the Quit flight turned around. He did not recall the conversation. There was an extended convoluted discussion about frequency 234.6, which Barcas thought was a GIANT KILLER frequency. He later amended the record to show that the frequency was a HUNTRESS frequency, which cleared up Staff confusion as to who was supposed to control the scrambled flight.

PO1 Barcas was consistent in his position that GIANT KILLER would not have worked the tactical communications with the Langley fighters. He was not able to satisfactorily work out, based on his recall, the controlling sequence for the flight. He does not remember who was actually talking to Quit 25.

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Staff believes, based on the sequence of events and the discussion with Barcas, that Barcas turned to his supervisor, PO Pullen, and that it was she who sorted out the transfer of the Quit flight to HUNTRESS. Barcas was of little help in understanding the tactical relationship, in any, between HUNTRESS and GIANT KILLER.

He had a trainee on position on 9-11 [redacted] who was medically discharged with psychological problems. Barcas was at the console at all times, but was to the side of [redacted] who was actually working the scope. Barcas was "95% sure" that it was his voice, not [redacted] on the tapes.

There are four sectors on the GIANT KILLER floor. The two relevant to the events of 9-11 are Yankee Sector and Langley Sector. The dividing line is south of Whiskey 107 warning area. ATC3 Benson was training on Yankee Sector that day. He does not recall who was the primary controller that day.

9/11 Personal Privacy

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**MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD**

Event: GIANT KILLER visit

Type of event: Recorded Interview

Date: Wednesday, December 03, 2003

Special Access Issues: None

Prepared by: Miles Kara

Team Number: 8

Location: GIANT KILLER

Participants – Lt Cdr M. J. Klug, Operations Officer on 9/11

Participants - Commission: Miles Kara, Kevin Shaeffer

Observer – LT Florencio Yuzon, Counsel, Office of the Chief of Naval Operations

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Note: Please refer to the recorded interview for further details.

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**Background:**

LCDR Klug had the opportunity to review a list of questions that Staff previously provided to assist the Navy in focusing on items of Commission interest.

She has been in the Navy as an Air Traffic Controller for 24 years. She was order in to GIANT KILLER as the Air Traffic Controller billet but became the Operations Officer instead. Of her 24 years experience 3 years were at GIANT KILLER from 1999 to 2002. She did not perform duty on the operations center floor during her tour of duty.

GIANT KILLER provides surveillance of the air and sea space delegated to that facility for control, up and down the east coast. They are the controllers for aircraft in the warning areas under their control. GIANT KILLER accepts a radar handoff on aircraft from various aircraft in the National Airspace System and then monitors/manages the activities of those aircraft, especially as they approach boundaries of other controlling entities. They do not normally control scrambled aircraft. That control rests with either the Northern Air Defense Sector or the Southern Air Defense Sector.

In her opinion, practice scrambles occurred quarterly. She recalled two such scrambles that involved GIANT KILLER as a “trusted agent.” She did recall “a few” real world scrambles, but did not know what the mission was for those scrambles. She did not recall that GIANT KILLER was ever the requestor for a scramble.

**9/11**

LCDR Klug was given an opportunity to read the scramble order and to listen to tapes of GIANT KILLER personnel involved in the scramble.

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Her recall was that the Radar Supervisor would have been the person that answered the scramble order call from HUNTRESS. The Supervisor might have written specific information on plexiglass and probably logged the call.

In her professional judgment the failure was one of communication. The 090 for 60 is a canned stereo, easy to type in. The scramble order is non-standard, a new flight plan. The FIDO operator does not have enough information in the scramble order to make a FIDO entry. Therefore, the most expeditious way to get the plane off the deck is to call up the 090 for 60 to get the pilot off the deck and into the air immediately. The scramble order has no clearance limit which is required for a valid flight plan to be entered. If she were the FIDO operator she would have picked a point in space off of the 010 heading.

In answer to the question, why didn't GIANT KILLER get the aircraft back on course, Klug responded that they were not the originator of the flight plan and would work the aircraft off of what they have unless the pilot requests otherwise. Norfolk or Langley should have corrected the clearance limit. A pilot also can make the change. If the pilot had said that he was turning, GIANT KILLER would have, depending on traffic, issued an initial vector to get him headed in the right direction and then the flight plan would have been changed in the system.

After listening to the voices she thought that the male voice was PO Barcas, she did not know who the female GIANT KILLER voice was. She thought the conversations she heard were "standard," and represented the handoff from one controlling entity to another. Had she gotten the HUNTRESS call she would have directed Langley Sector to turn the flight and hand it over to Washington Center, Cape Charles.

AFIO. She had never heard of  before Staff mentioned it.

When shown the radar printout of the Quit flight she commented that it was obvious that the pilot was never given the 010 heading. In her opinion the correct heading should have been provided by Langley because the aircraft is coming from that facility. GIANT KILLER was the third ATC facility who talked to the aircraft and his heading was not changed. Klug was asked how that could be explained to the American people. She fell back on the lack of communications, in her words, "keeping secrets." Information was not shared effectively. When asked to define "keeping secrets: she said it was information held by one element of the ATC system was not shared with others in the system that needed to know. She elaborated that we know something but don't pass it on, or nobody questioned why this guy was going eastbound.

In their informal review of procedures they found that they really weren't getting to the right person in HUNTRESS, she recalled. They did not do a formal review. She confirmed that ATC transmissions are always taped and in GIANT KILLER were retained for 15 days. No one from the CO on down felt compelled to save the tapes and no one from a higher headquarters directed that they do so. There was nothing out of the

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ordinary that occurred in GIANT KILLER that day that would have caused them to save the tapes.

AC1 Bates would have picked up the scramble phone that day. He was the Facility Watch Supervisor, FWS. [Note: Bates is now stationed in Diego Garcia. Staff may contact him, if determined necessary, via video-teleconference.]

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