Commission Sensitive

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

Event: Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) New York Air Route Center interview with Lorraine Barrett

Type of event: Recorded Interview

Date: Tuesday, October 1, 2003

Special Access Issues: None

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Team Number: 8

Location: FAA New York Air Route Center, Rokonkomo, New York

Participants - Non-Commission: Sandy Lane, FAA General Consul and Julio Enriquez, NACTA representative

Participants - Commission: John Azzarello, Miles Kara, Geoffrey Brown

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NOTE: Please refer to the interview transcript for a complete account.

Background

Barrett began here career in April 1982 at ZNY. In 1985 she moved to the flight service station as a flight service specialist (deal with general aviation population) for four years. She came back in 1989 and has been an air controller at ZNY since then. She was originally assigned to Area C, but since 1992 has worked in Area B.

Barrett was assigned on 9-11 to Area B, Yardley Sector, Postion RA55 (H) handoff. [The handoff position is the same as what Boston Center calls the Radar Associate position. It is an "assistant" position used to take some of the duties away from the controller so he/she can concentrate on managing traffic. The "handoff" or "associate" position assignment does not mean that the controller is less qualified. Often, managers sit those positions to fill their monthly requirement for 8 hours on the scope. In this case, an experienced controller, Barrett, happened to be assigned to a "handoff" position.]

Events of 9-11

Yardley Sector handled en route airspace Philadelphia to New York. The R55 controller was Chris Tucker. Barrett was handling the transfer of aircraft from sector to sector. Aircraft cannot enter a controller's space without a handoff or a point out. A point out, itself, is not a transfer of control, just a notification that an aircraft is passing through another sector's space.

She was working a 7-3 shift and she was involved with UAL 175. She called over to Sector 42 to climb some planes to higher altitude. Dave Battiglia, the Sector 42 controller

said he couldn't give higher authority because, Barrett assumed of the AA11 flight. She started looking at her scope to find any target she could and saw one quick primary; then it disappeared. Until Battiglia's communication of difficulty she had no awareness of a hijack or a problem with AA11. Battiglia said that Boston Center was looking for a hijack that it had lost.

Somewhere around 1247z UAL175 changed transponder code. She heard McCormick in the background speaking on the telephone. At this point or a little later, UAL175 turned off course, and descended towards her sector. Chris Tucker started "turning" planes. When he turned to the transponder for UA175 it was on at a different code. You could see exact track and altitude. He was squawking 3321 but that code was assigned to a Delta plane. UA 175 now became an unknown target. She told a different Delta plane to take any actions possible to evade the plane squawking 3321. Dave Battiglia told people about no communications with the UAL175. See didn't see UAL175, but would have recognized the coast track.

Going Thru the Transcript

Tucker was very busy watching airplanes and separating them. At some point UA175 turned off transponder code and started turning towards Tucker's air space. When he saw 3321 beacon code at approximately 0853 EDT Tucker told Sector 09 to watch for target because it was headed their way. Tucker ID'd the aircraft as an unidentified flight, 3321 on the computer associated to a delta flight.

The sector had two planes vectoring towards the same space as 3321. They did not connect 3321 as being UAL175 and didn't have real awareness of what was happening at the WTC. They Just had heard a plane from Boston was lost, then began to wonder what the result for the 3321 code would be. They were aware that the second plane that was missing was a United plane. Three planes that crossed the 3321 code path didn't accurate information so the target could be definitively identified. [Staff Note: Keep in mind, the Controller pair Tucker/Barrett had made the association of the 3321 code to a Delta flight.

After watching the SATORI replay [SATORI is an automated means of depicting historical flight data to replicate the picture seen by the controller.] she did notice the 3321 code pull away from the UAL175 coast track. She also noticed they hadn't flashed the coast target to Sector 10, a normal procedure.

The continued to direct planes away from the 3321 beacon code. It is fair to refer to as a hijack, in retrospect. She doesn't even know at what point they confirmed the hit on the WTC.

During their vectoring activities is when the hijack plane made a notable turn into the city--short left, rapid descent. Tracon handles 17K feet and below and they called west and south Tracon, Tucker and Barrett lost the aircraft at 2,000 feet and Tucker knew the loss location was where the WTC was. At that point she switched over and took the controller position.

Tucker knows some general aviation, a private pilot. Eight minutes after the target made the Yardley turn to the north it was recognizable that it was UAL175.

First she heard it was a private aircraft out of Stewart, by Poughkeepsie. When that

information came to the room someone, possible Jimmy Bouliber, R68 controller had said that it had struck WTC. She remembers people coming into the room from the cafeteria with the information that the WTC had been hit for the second time. She remembers that she heard that roughly five or ten minutes later and assumed it was the target they had tracked; a commercial aircraft had hit WTC.

The 3321 track was moving very quickly, and the decent was so rapid. She remembers hearing someone say a United hit the towers.

Regarding AA11, she only recalls someone saying it was a small pane. After the Pentagon crash SHE assumed it was AA11 that had hit the pentagon.

After second aircraft hit the WTC, even the news broadcast was saying it was a small plane that hit the first one. That view prevailed until it was confirmed. That AA11 was the first plane.

Area B meeting

She remembers that Marty Fournier and Bob Ott were to keep them concerned controllers informed. They thought AA11 had hit the trade center, and that a different American Airlines flight hit the Pentagon.

The meeting was convened about 0916 EDT (check time on tape); she was told to go to the briefing. She was on the H position until 0916, and then the R position until 0930, then went upstairs for conference. Written statements came thereafter. She doesn't remember if a verbal statement was taken. She remembers Fournier and Ott were pushing for a statement. She has no problem with Commission Staff reviewing any taped verbal statement she made.

Training

Pre 9-11 there was hijacking content in exercises in the Dynamic Simulation lab, but they were not extensive exercises. Training was vastly different than the actual hijacking of airplanes on 9-11. In training scenarios the pilot was still in control of the airplane. All exercises were based on that given. There were also scenarios when the pilot would use a code word or the pilot would verbally explain if the situation allowed..

She has participated as a controller with military aircraft out of McGuire Air Force Base and Warren Grove (military airspace just above Atlantic City). She wouldn't have known how to contact NEADS then, but they now have a direct line to Huntress Controll (NEADS).

Pre 9-11 she had never heard of anything like what happened that day. Planes out of communication, NORDO, happened all the time and still happens but a little less. In the past two years the pilots have gotten better.

Loss of transponder would happen relatively often. Sometimes planes switch codes relatively regularly. The procedure is to ask the pilot to recycle. This is a non-urgent procedure if the controller is talking to airplane. Never in her career had both loss of communications and loss of transponder happened at the same time. She had also experienced course deviations, but never all three factors together

Recommendations

There weren't any air traffic problems on 9-11. Events of the day were a security issue.