

Dan Noel, 4/28/04, Manager, Emergency Operations Staff

### Background

Noel came to HQ, FAA, in 1988 as an Air Force liaison. He converted to civilian position in 1994 working in emergency procedures. In March 2000 assumed current position as Manager, Emergency Operations Staff. He is a rated commercial airline pilot.

### Normal day prior to 9/11

He had a relatively small staff, plus Washington Operations Center. Mae Avery was manager of the Emergency Operations Staff. Mae Avery reported to him. Also responsible for Continuity of Operations (COOP) and national disaster exercises.

### 9/11

He was seated in his office and got a call from one of the watch officers, probably Jessie McKie, and was told there were background possible threatening conversations heard on a flight deck. He doesn't recall that work hijack was used. He went to WOC and saw the hole in the side of WTC One. He didn't connect the events together at that point. He saw the other airplane hit the second tower. He was standing behind the Operations officers looking at the TV.

WOC had a notification check list; Noel was on that list. His job, then, was to gather more information. Initially they didn't know what they had. The second impact confirmed that they had a problem. However, he didn't equate the two incidents; perhaps thought they were two separate events. He didn't know that there were two hijacks, only that there were threatening communications in the cockpit.

On 9/11 security was responsible for air piracy, so once the ACO watch is notified the WOC assumes a supporting role for the ACC. The ACC calls the shots, for what ever purpose the WOC activates that room.

John Azzarello went over the notification list with him for air piracy events and then discussed the two nets, primary and tactical.

The tactical net was often brought up first; that was an internal security net to bring them up to speed before they went out to external agencies. Whoever the ACO requested that is what the WOC watch officers would do.

The primary net brought in the NMCC and other interdepartmental entities. The primary net could be brought up first, but that was typically not the case. A primary net, if established, would run separately from the tactical net and the tactical net would continue to operate

He recalled that both nets were unclassified. They had maybe three STU IIIs, perhaps two in the ACC. He couldn't recall if the STU's were S or TS; they were not SCI-capable. He did not recall that the NMCC called to establish a net on that day.

On that day the WOC/ACC seemed to be working well; it was challenging trying to sort out what was real and what was not. At one point, Monty Belger decided to initiate COOP activities. So he was involved in establishing that capability. Mae worked the Ops Center piece and he worked the COOP piece.

He recalled that Mike Weikert ran the ACC that day for Security. Mike ran exercises for Security. He did not recall specifically any of the following in the ACC: Longmire, Morse, Doug Davis, Griffith. He thought both nets were run from the dais and he thought that Mike Weikert operated from the dais.

He recalled learning in the aftermath that both the primary and tactical nets were established. He recalled that someone said that NORAD was trying to place the blame. There was a question as to when FAA notified NORAD. There was an ATC in Boston who called NORAD SOCC very early on. He recalled from the information that his people provided to Darlene Freeman's group that the tactical net was established at 0850 and the primary net at 0920 and that the notifications were made to outside agencies at that time.

He was surprised to learn that military was not on the primary net around 1000.

I took over questioning. Need to listen to tape to complete this portion of the MFR.

He recalled a Sunday meeting (16<sup>th</sup>) involving Belger and other senior officials. He does not recall any specific tasking except at one time Belger reviewed the COOP list with him and shuffled it around.

He does not recall seeing the NORAD press release or the list of military notifications prepared by Darlene Freeman. He was shown and had never before seen the extract from the NEADS log.

He had no perspective on notifications other than the fact that the primary net was established, according to the log, at 0920 EDT.

**MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD**

Event: Dan Noel, Manager, Emergency Operations Staff

Type: Interview

Date: 4/28/04

Prepared by: Miles Kara

Special Access Issues: None

Team: 8

Participants (Commission):

Participants (non-Commission):

Location: FAA HQ

**Background**

Noel came to HQ, FAA, in 1988 as an Air Force liaison. He converted to civilian position in 1994 working in emergency procedures. In March 2000 assumed current position as Manager, Emergency Operations Staff. He is a rated commercial airline pilot.

Normal day prior to 9/11

He had a relatively small staff, plus Washington Operations Center. Mae Avery was manager of the Emergency Operations Staff. Mae Avery reported to him. Also, he was responsible for Continuity of Operations (COOP) and national disaster exercises.

**9/11**

He was seated in his office and got a call from one of the watch officers, probably Jessie McKie, and was told there were background possible threatening conversations heard on a flight deck. He doesn't recall that work hijack was used. He went to WOC and saw the hole in the side of WTC One. He didn't connect the events together at that point. He saw the other airplane hit the second tower. He was standing behind the Operations officers looking at the TV.

WOC had a notification check list; Noel was on that list. His job, then, was to gather more information. Initially they didn't know what they had. The second impact confirmed that they had a problem. However, he didn't equate the two incidents; perhaps thought they were two separate events. He didn't know that there were two hijacks, only that there were threatening communications in the cockpit.

On 9/11 security was responsible for air piracy, so once the ACO watch is notified the WOC assumes a supporting role for the ACC. The ACC calls the shots, for what ever purpose the WOC activates that room.

John Azzarello went over the notification list with him for air piracy events and then discussed the two nets, primary and tactical.

The tactical net was often brought up first; that was an internal security net to bring them up to speed before they went out to external agencies. Whoever the ACO requested that is what the WOC watch officers would do.

The primary net brought in the NMCC and other interdepartmental entities. The primary net could be brought up first, but that was typically not the case. A primary net, if established, would run separately from the tactical net and the tactical net would continue to operate

He recalled that both nets were unclassified. They had maybe three STU III's, perhaps two in the ACC. He couldn't recall if the STU's were S or TS; they were not SCI-capable. He did not recall that the NMCC called to establish a net on that day.

On that day the WOC/ACC seemed to be working well; it was challenging trying to sort out what was real and what was not. At one point, Monty Belger decided to initiate COOP activities. So he was involved in establishing that capability. Mae worked the Ops Center piece and he worked the COOP piece.

He recalled that Mike Weikert ran the ACC that day for Security. Mike ran exercises for Security. He did not recall specifically any of the following in the ACC: Longmire, Morse, Doug Davis, Griffith. He thought both nets were run from the dais and he thought that Mike Weikert operated from the dais.

He recalled learning in the aftermath that both the primary and tactical nets were established. He recalled that someone said that NORAD was trying to place the blame. There was a question as to when FAA notified NORAD. There was an ATC in Boston who called NORAD SOCC very early on. He recalled from the information that his people provided to Darlene Freeman's group that the tactical net was established at 0850 and the primary net at 0920 and that the notifications were made to outside agencies at that time.

He was surprised to learn that military was not on the primary net around 1000.

I took over questioning. Need to listen to tape to complete this portion of the MFR.

He recalled a Sunday meeting (16<sup>th</sup>) involving Belger and other senior officials. He does not recall any specific tasking except at one time Belger reviewed the COOP list with him and shuffled it around.

COMMISSION SENSITIVE

He does not recall seeing the NORAD press release or the list of military notifications prepared by Darlene Freeman. He was shown and had never before seen the extract from the NEADS log.

He had no perspective on notifications other than the fact that the primary net was established, according to the log, at 0920 EDT.