MFR04021486

Draft

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

Event: Randy Kath, Quality Assurance

Type of event: Interview

Date: Thursday, September 25, 2003

Special Access Issues: none

Prepared by: Cate Taylor

Team Number: 8

Location: Indianapolis Air Traffic Control Center

Participants - Non-Commission: Randy Kath, Quality Assurance; Eileen

Participants - Commission: John Farmer, Dana Hyde, Cate Taylor

---

Background
Kath was hired in 1979 at the Minneapolis Center, laid off in 1989, and rehired in 1992 at the Indi Center and has worked in Area 1 since. Since he started, the volume and complexity of air traffic has escalated exponentially and technology has not kept up with this change.

Protocol for a hijack had not changed prior to 9/11. Once a hijack was confirmed, the controller would clear the airspace in front of the aircraft's path. Kath had to take a refresher course once a year for hijack procedures.

When transponder communication was lost, protocol was to select the primary, look on the scope, and try to talk to the pilot. Kath would only have expected this in the event of an electrical failure.

Kath had dealt with two hijacked planes, one in either 1984 or 1985, and the other in the late 1980's. For both of these instances, the pilot squawked the hijack code and Kath followed protocol. To his knowledge, NORAD was not contacted in either situation.

9/11 Experience
Kath was working the 7:00am-3:00pm shift in the Impel (high altitude) sector of Area 1. He received a call from Jeffery Philips reporting that AA77 had been lost. He immediately told his supervisor, sterilized his airspace and called the sectors in front of AA77's path. Kath then pushed the all primary without an order to do so and saw nothing.

Kath then took about a 7 minute break, did not sign in when he returned to the floor, and began to assist in grounding flights. Kath estimates that he grounded dozens of flights

1

with in about 30 minutes. Some of the pilots were asking what was happening. After all planes were grounded, Kath learned that AA77 had hit the Pentagon.

Since 9/11, NORDO has become a more serious situation. If there is loss of communication with an aircraft, someone is assigned to look for that aircraft.

Quality Assurance and After Action
The duties of quality assurance staff are to conduct accident investigations, write reports based on data, tapes, taps and c-comp generated reports, and do the satori recreations. An accident package is created from this data and the package is kept at the center where the crash occurred.

Other than the accident package, the only other after action report was done by Dave Boone in a power point presentation. There was no write up because the transcripts will tell the story of what happened at Indi on 9/11.

Recommendations
Kath would like to see long-range radar become more reliable but not with GPS; this system would create holes. Kath informed Commission staff that Dick Sitzman, not with the FAA, was able to track AA77 from two different radar systems.

Kath believes that there needs to be more staff on hand during the day for emergencies. On 9/11, Kath believes that Indi was just understaffed for this crisis.