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It was a gorgeous day in Washington-Northern Virginia after an unusually humid day, yesterday that ended in early evening with a pelting rain. Afterwards, people shut down their air conditioners and opened their windows. The temperature, today, was about 70 degrees with a light breeze.

I spent last week preparing to do strategic planning for the Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Manpower and Reserve Affairs, The Honorable Bill Navas. Although my office is in the Navy Annex, I spent the better part of every day in the Pentagon interviewing such Navy and Marine Corps VIPs as ADM Fallon, VADM Pat Tracey, LtGen Parks, Under Secretary of the Navy Susan Livingstone, and Assistant Secretaries Young and Johnson. I finished my interviews in the Pentagon, yesterday, and looked forward to compiling my report today.

At 9:00, Dr. Linda Doherty and I had a meeting with Dr. Stu Rackoff, a staff member of the Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Manpower and Reserve Affairs. Stu came to our office in the Navy Annex to discuss how we might collaborate on work he is doing for the Secretary of the Navy and similar work we are doing for the Assistant Secretary. We sat in our conference room on the fourth floor of the Navy Annex. As the meeting progressed, I noticed that Dr. Doherty's staff was scurrying around in the various cubicles and at one point, I called out to the secretary, Ms. Aline McDavid, to inquire whether or not she needed to speak with me. She responded that she did not. A few minutes later, we heard a loud thud, but since we reside in a construction zone of the Navy Annex, we had gotten somewhat used to unusual, loud noises. Still, Linda, Stu and I looked at each other questioningly and commented that this was a "new" noise.

A few minutes later, the fire alarm went off. This was not an unusual occurrence and we routinely ignore it. But this time, a colleague, Dr. Archester Houston came into the conference room and said simply, "This is not a drill. Get out of the building." I had the presence of mind to pick up my purse before leaving. On the way out, Aline explained that both towers of the World Trade Center had been hit by an airplane and that CAPT Harry McDavid, our Naval reservist, had gone down stairs to glean further information. He had just called her back to say that the Pentagon had also been hit.

We exited the building as quickly as possible. When we got to the parking lot outside, CAPT Doug Keith from the office next door, was heading to his car, with the objective of getting it out of the compound. Linda Doherty and I, realizing that this was a good strategy, immediately headed to our cars. Linda, whose car is closest to our office, said, "I'm heading home to watch this on TV. I'd invite you to come along, but my house is a mess." I told her to get out and headed to my own car which was at the other end of the

compound. Unfortunately, before I could get there, the security folks turned us around and herded us out the main gate.

Knowing that all the people in my office got out of the building, I positioned myself next to a man with white hair and a white beard wearing a light blue denim shirt because he had a portable radio. From this source, I learned the initial details of the attack on the World Trade Center. About 20 minutes later, a security person came through and told us to move off the street to make way for the emergency vehicles and to move into Arlington Cemetery. I tried repeatedly to call my mom from my cell phone, but was unable to get through to her in Georgia.

At this point, I saw Al Rouse, one of our contractors and asked him if he'd seen any of my office colleagues. Al said that he'd seen Archester walking down the hill, but had not seen the others. He kindly offered to give me a ride if I needed to go anywhere, but I opted to wait until I could get my car out of the compound.

The Marines opened the gates to Henderson Hall across the street from the Navy Annex and let us in. The border between Henderson Hall and Arlington Cemetery is a stone wall about three feet tall on the Henderson Hall side, and five feet tall on the cemetery side. The Marines scaled the wall and handed the civilians over into the cemetery. We were told to walk into the cemetery far away from the Navy Annex.

In the cemetery, we watched the news helicopters circling overhead. I think we all felt some silent relief when we saw that our F-16s had been launched. I positioned myself next to a black lady wearing a blue shirt and a large straw hat. She, too, had a portable radio and we learned from NPR that both towers of the World Trade Center had collapsed. About this same time, the "word" passed that there was a fourth hijacked plane in the air headed toward Washington. We could do nothing but wait. I'm sure I was in shock as I asked myself more than once what day it was.

We also learned that a triage center for the injured was set up in the gymnasium at Henderson Hall. Surprisingly, we saw only two ambulances come up the hill from the Pentagon and unload injured people.

I moved toward another group of folks who were making telephone calls on their cell phones. I was still trying to get in touch with my mother without success. One the men completed a call to Georgia and offered to try again to get through to my mother. After a few tries, he was successful. I spoke with her, letting her know that I was safe and asked her to call my brother to let him know that his daughter-in-law, [REDACTED], who was on a business trip in Crystal City, was not close enough to the Pentagon to be in danger. It never occurred to me until after I'd hung up to ask her to call my own children and let them know that I was safe. Fortunately, my Mom had better sense than I did and called [REDACTED] to let her know that I was safe.

Eventually, we walked through the cemetery, up the hill where we watched in shock the chaos at the Pentagon. We had an excellent view of the gaping hole, the black smoke

billowing out of the Pentagon, the emergency vehicles, the water streaming from the firetrucks and the flames that soared higher each time the breeze picked up. Strangers united by common disaster, we speculated on exactly where the damage was. By now, I was trying to call my daughter, [REDACTED], without success. A naval officer came to tell us that the security folks were letting people back into the compound and into the building two by two in order to retrieve their belongings and leave.

I made my way back to the stone wall. The Marines gave me a glass of water and once again, hoisted me over the wall. At this point, I went into the Mutual Aid Society building, used the bathroom, found a pay phone, and called [REDACTED]. She and [REDACTED] were at home as [REDACTED] had been sick the night before and had to go to the doctor. Fortunately, my mother had already telephoned her and [REDACTED] knew that I was safe. We talked several minutes and I asked [REDACTED] to call [REDACTED], her brother and let him know that I was safe. She gave me the news about casualty reports from the television she'd been watching.

It's funny how you think of mundane things at a time like this. I'd filled my car up with gas on the way to work this morning, but had only \$9 in my wallet. I kept thinking that in a time of emergency, which surely this was, I needed more money. I couldn't get into the Navy Annex to the Navy Federal ATM. Instead, I walked to the Base Exchange at Henderson Hall and tried to use the ATM there. It was temporarily out of service leaving me to wonder if the banks had also been targeted.

Returning to the Navy Annex, I joined a crowd of folks outside the gate who were quietly and patiently waiting to get back inside to pick up their belongings and go home. It became obvious that the Marines were taking over the building completely suited out in their cammies and combat gear. Some time around noon, the Commandant of the Marine Corps drove through the gate in his burgundy car with the distinctive 1775 license plate. Shortly thereafter, he was followed by Intel people and various security squads.

At 1:00, those of us who had our keys and didn't actually need to enter the building, were allowed back in the compound to get in our cars and leave. This I did, and arrived home about twenty minutes later. Driving home was very strange as traffic was very light, but on highway 27, there were many people who appeared to be walking out of the city to the western suburbs. Several traffic lights were not working on Arlington Blvd and I wondered, if this were a result of the terrorist attack.

I arrived home about 1:20 to numerous telephone calls and emails. I appreciate all the family and friends who called to be sure I am safe. It was reassuring to know that while there is so much evil in the world, there are also so many people who care. I do think that the next several days will be very sad as the dead are identified. I note that while the country's airports are all closed, they have been several helicopters flying overhead this evening.