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MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

Event: Federal Aviation Administration Headquarters, (FAA HQ)

Type of event: Interview with David Cannoles

Date: Thursday, March 25, 2004

Special Access Issues: None

Prepared by: Geoffrey Brown

Team Number: 8

Location: 10th Floor, FAA HQ, Washington, D.C.

Participants - Non-Commission: David Weeguard, FAA Legal Counsel

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

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

Background:

Cannoles is in his thirty third year with the FAA. He started as an Air Traffic Controller (ATC), and progressed through a management position at an En Route Center to the executive staff offices of the FAA. In November of 2001 he became Director of Emergency Management Operations and Communications, and recently became Director of Air Safety Oversight. The position he is assuming as Director of Air Traffic Safety Oversight was very recently created by the TSA Secretary.

On September 11, 2001 (9/11) he was AAT-20, and was responsible for investigating air traffic incidents and supporting air traffic litigation. They also performed several hundred facility investigations per year from four regional off-site stations. They were briefed by their staff on air traffic incidents, and in turn were responsible for evaluating, briefing and providing recommendations to the air traffic leadership after air incidents. He reported through the Deputy of Air Traffic to the Air Traffic Director. In September of 2001 his reporting structure was to Jeff Griffith through Bill Peacock; but on 9/11 Peacock was out of town. Griffith and Peacock both have access to the Deputy Administrator and Administrator of the FAA.

9/11:

On 9/11 Cannoles arrived between 5:30AM and 6:00AM, and began to review the system anomalies from the previous day. He recalls receiving a text page at a point between 8 and 8:30 AM that informed him there was a "confirmed hijack" out of Boston. This came from a Quality Assurance (QA) specialist at the Eastern Regional Operations Center (Eastern ROC). He turned on a media broadcast, and – due to his time as manager of Newark Tower – immediately realized that it was a large aircraft that hit the tower, not a small aircraft [American Airlines Flight 11 (AAL 11) at 8:46AM (approx.)]. He told Dan Diggins and Tony Mello to come with him to the tenth floor to see Jeff Griffith, and

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on the tenth floor saw the broadcast of the second impact at the World Trade Center (WTC) [United Airlines Flight 175 (UAL 175) at 9:03AM (approx.)]. He saw Griffith in the tenth floor hallway. Cannoles informed him that the hijacked aircraft was the same as the aircraft that struck the World Trade Center, and that it would be handled as an accident instead of a hijacking. He then went to establish a telephone conference with the appropriate parties. This teleconference began in the Director of Air Traffic's (Bill Peacock) conference room. He believes the teleconference began after the second aircraft struck the WTC.

The Regional offices were connected to both the teleconference established by Cannoles, as well as the other conferences (like the Primary Net). For example, Frank Hatfield informed Cannoles' staff of information he was receiving through other communications.

Cannoles had no communications with National Military Command Center (NMCC) or the White House Situation Room (SitRoom).

The size of Cannoles staff on the conference grew quickly. Since there was a dedicated conference line for events that would be handled by his department in the case of aircraft incidents, Tony Mello, per Cannoles instruction, was able to quickly establish connections to Eastern and New England Regions. Cannoles focus was to contact the executives at the Regions, and allow them to contact the appropriate managers of New York En Route Center (ZNY), New York TRACON (N90), Boston En Route Center (ZBW), Washington En Route Center (ZDC), Newark Tower, Boston Tower, Cleveland Center (ZOB), and – by the end of the day according to Cannoles – they had “virtually the entire nation on line.” They dealt with the event as an accident, and searched for that information. “Slowly the picture came together that these were hijackings and eventually that they were intentional crashes”. Cannoles does not recall hearing any of the specifics of the threats that were overheard from ZBW from AAL 11. They collected as much information as possible by that afternoon, and he commented that “it took me two or three iterations to make out what the individuals (hijackers) were saying.” Herndon Command Center was initially on the conference, but he does not recall hearing a specific communication from Terry Biggio, Manager of ZBW, of the overheard communication from the hijacker pilot of AAL 11. The conference was on the speaker phone, and Cannoles was moderating it.

They began initially putting notes on a white board, and then into a laptop. Cannoles recalls Diggins trying to operate it, and they produced a chronology “which is full of errors based on my subsequent review” of the ongoing events. Cannoles recalls hearing many reports of deviating aircraft such as: “a high speed target headed to Boston”, “four aircraft headed towards Norfolk”, “Delta won't take instructions he's over Cleveland”.

Cannoles commented that Herndon Command Center was “doing what they should be doing which was interaction with the facilities.”

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Hatfield made a statement saying "we don't know what's going on here, maybe it would be prudent to stop the traffic". Cannoles agreed and informed Griffith that the traffic had been stopped in the northeast, and Griffith informed him that they had just instituted a National Ground Stop.

At the Eastern Region Hatfield was Cannoles main contact. Cannoles does not recall any difficulty contacting Hatfield. Cannoles spoke with Mike McCormack as well, McCormack was Facility Manager at ZNY.

Cannoles recalls that the teleconference was established before the Pentagon was struck by American Airlines Flight 77 (AA 77). They were looking for at least two other aircraft before the Pentagon was struck. Dulles TRACON was on line and informed that there was a "fast moving target moving towards Washington". One of his staff members, Jeffrey Lode, went to the window to look for the aircraft. Lode told Cannoles that he had seen smoke from the Pentagon.

Cannoles also noted that they received a report from Great Lakes that there was a missing aircraft from Minneapolis.

Flights:

Cannoles commented that he recalls attempts to locate both AAL 11 and United Airlines Flight 93 (UAL 93) at the same time. Cannoles recalls receiving preliminary information that they had lost radar capability with UAL 93 somewhere in "Indianapolis" airspace.

Cannoles has no knowledge of AAL 11 being reported headed south after 8:46AM. Cannoles noted that if there was something of serious importance he would send a runner to Jeff Griffith. He does not recall specifically when he did so.

Cannoles did recall information regarding searches for the status of AAL 77, a suspect Delta flight, and a Korean airlines flight. Cannoles stated that they were "polling different facilities" for information on the missing aircraft, but the first reports that they equated with UAL 93 was an erroneous report from a police officer that an aircraft had crashed. They initially associated this report with UAL 93. Cannoles does not recall information on a flight with a "bomb on board" being passed over the teleconference from Cleveland that can be equated with UAL 93. He does recall an aircraft believed headed towards Pittsburg. He does not recall any information on UAL 93 – or a target associated with UAL 93 – inbound to Washington DC at approximately sixty miles distance.

Cannoles ran the telecom until mid-late afternoon. They briefed the Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI) immediately. Cannoles staff created a report on the events. He did not personally communicate with North American Aerospace Defense (NORAD), but believes Jeff Griffith did. He recalls that Griffith showed him a copy of NORAD's logs.

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Military notification in the event of a hijack was one of the first priorities for Air Traffic, and Cannoles recalls that for this reason the military liaison was needed to assist in communication. Cannoles also knew that the primary interface with NORAD (North American Aerospace Defense) was at the facilities, and he was quite confident that communication was ongoing and timely at that level. Cannoles did not know the precise procedures for the FAA and military to contact one another. Cannoles believes Canahan was the hijack coordinator for the FAA. Jeff Griffith had formally headed the office, but Mike Sorrelo was "probably in charge of it" on 9/11.

He recalls that information on the fighter scrambled in response to the hijack reports was passed by participants on the conference call. Cannoles believes he was aware of the scramble before the Pentagon was struck by AAL 77. He commented that between the second attack and the third he realized the hijackings were part of a coordinated event.

Cannoles commented that there was a "debate" over the timeliness of FAA notification to the military of the flights involved in the attacks as being either confirmed and/or suspected as being hijacked. He had always assumed that after the first two aircraft crashed the military was highly plugged into the FAA. Cannoles came to the conclusion that there did not have to be multiple notifications from the FAA to the military after the first notification is made, and the entities, both operationally and administratively, are connected.

Cannoles commented that since the third aircraft was assumed to have crashed based on simultaneous loss of communications and radar. Thus, as an event, it was treated as an accident. As an accident, there was no need to notify the military. He mentioned that since the military and FAA began speaking after the initial two attacks, he always assumed that someone was informing the military of what was ongoing.

Cannoles noted that during the course of the investigation he reached the conclusion that appropriate notifications were being made regarding the second two hijacked flights between the FAA and the military. Cannoles commented that not based on the product they prepared, but based on the conversations he had with members of his staff he reached the "comfortable" conclusion that the military and FAA were communicating, and he applied that thought to the second two flights.

Cannoles commented that based on AAL 77 as a presumed crash, he is not surprised if there was little to no notification; with UAL 93, he is surprised that there was no communication of its status to the military. Cannoles recalls efforts made through and with Herndon Command Center to discover definitively what happened to UAL 93.

Cannoles recalls seeing the log from NORAD that was reviewed by Jeff Griffith; he recalls discussing the log with Griffith; and he recalls that he and Griffith noticed that there were some ambiguities between the timing of events understood at the FAA and the reflection of events displayed in the log.

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Cannoles staff performed the accident packages for the four flights involved in the attacks.

Changes since 9/11:

In November 2001 Belger called Hatfield to look at the communications from 9/11. Hatfield contacted Cannoles, and then Cannoles was asked to head the emergency communications group. They looked at Command Center personnel and their responsibilities. Cannoles noted that the teleconference that he began on 9/11 became institutionalized as the Domestic Events Network (DEN). This network links FAA, military, and other agencies on a twenty-four seven basis. It has consistently between forty and fifty participants. He brought in individuals with specific crisis management capabilities, as well as a liaison from TSA. Griffith, and later Linda Shusler, both were involved with communicating with NORAD. In total, there were physical changes to the WOC with equipment upgrades, staffing changes, and the creation of the DEN network. Cannoles noted that Air Traffic continues to liaise with NORAD due to security requirements. Cannoles noted that there was a massive effort to bring FAA radar capabilities to NORAD, but he does not know where this effort stands.

Recommendations:

Cannoles emphasized the importance of the ability to communicate rapidly with NORAD and others (DEN) as well as the ability to anticipate threats.

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