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MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

Event: Northeast Air Defense Sector (NEADS) field site visit

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Team Number: 8

Location: Commander's Conference Room, Building 102, NEADS/CC, 387 Hanger Road, Rome, New York 13441-4507

Participants - Non-Commission: Commander Colonel Marr, Vice Commander Clark Speicher, Davies, Esq. (National Guard, former JAG attorney)

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

This MFR covers Commander Colonel Marr's initial briefing to Commission Staff which was then followed by a tour of the NEADS facility. This MFR does not cover the facility tour. Marr informed Commission staff that the PowerPoint presentation he gave to Commission staff was initially created in the Fall of 2001, and has been updated fairly regularly. It can be described as a compilation of information, but is not a comprehensive and sourced research project.

Intercept Mission at NEADS:

1) Hijack:

Prior to September 11, 2001 (9/11) the hijack response mission at NEADS directed a fighter trail be established to ensure the air route safety of the hijacked flight. According to Marr, in the September 14th, 1993 Lufthansa Airbus A320-111 crash it took a number of hours for the "channels" to conduct the proper requests from both the NEADS and civilian agencies. It took over six hours to gain an initial tail on this occasion. Marr further commented that initially the White House did not want NEADS to interfere with the event, but then decided that there could be a role.

Marr noted he participated once with a live exercise for a hijack headed north from St. Louis in the south. They attempted to scramble aircraft internally in this exercise, and Marr commented that it did not work very well. The lesson from this scramble exercise was that it is easier to turn a fighter around immediately after take off than have to take the time to position a fighter for takeoff in the direction of its target.

2) Counter-drug and Air Sovereignty

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NEADS conducts counter-drug and air sovereignty missions, but Marr commented that the majority of the counter-drug operations take place at SEADS (Southeast Air Defense Sector).

3) Search and Rescue

Most of the intercept operations at NEADS involve Search and Rescue operations. For instance, it is NEADS responsibility to launch fighters at night to check on lost civilians. Marr noted two instances recently during which NEADS played a crucial Search and Rescue role: Beaver Island and New Hampshire. In both these instances NEADS was able to use its recorded radar data to pinpoint the most likely last contact point with aircraft: "One of our guys found a 'last skin paint'", and NEADS was able to direct search and rescue mountain personnel to the appropriate site. NEADS has an "autobon line" to the Langley Air Force Base's Search and Rescue (S&R) capability. S&R relies on NEADS for reliable radar data when the FAA (Federal Aviation Administration) system has less robust capabilities.

Radar:

NEADS does receive some radar data through the FAA and feeds it to the US Customs Agency. Originally NEADS was just "pushing" (transferring information) from the Joint Surveillance System radar, but Marr told Commission staff he was not sure if this same capability existed on 9/11. Marr believes NEADS had fourteen operating radar.

NEADS is the only sector that can take on the responsibility of other Air Defense radar sectors. They shut down the information feed from some of their radar (usually the ones covering areas least at risk, for instance, those covering Canadian airspace), and then NEADS takes on the coverage of as much of the other sectors responsibilities as possible. By January of 2005 they will be able to cover theoretically 200 radars, which would entail all positions in the United States.

Pre-9/11 the radars were ARSA 1s and 2s, which were mostly antique. Most of the ARSA 4s that cover the coastal regions have loose altitude reading capability. It is not very accurate, but can give basic low, medium or high altitude estimates on a target.

To operate and decipher the radar data and to communicate the information each consul has nine power supplies and circuit boards. According to Marr, this equipment is outdated, cannot be replaced, and is not currently produced. Internally NEADS technicians make this equipment themselves. NEADS is moving towards modern technological systems that are not this antiquated. Furthermore, the newer radar that Marr expects to receive should have improved range. He also noted that the new system at NEADS can overlay a satellite picture on the radar data. It allows for a quicker response, and also allows NEADS to communicate with law enforcement much more effectively.

Marr explained to Commission staff that on the morning of 9/11 the North Turo radar was scheduled for routine maintenance. He noted that the Riverhead radar is close

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enough to North Turo to cover the airspace, and the lack of North Turo did not affect NEADS response to the hijacked aircraft. These NEADS radar sites both operate at twelve second sweeps, and are located near Cape Cod, MA.

Marr noted that on 9/11 NEADS was not directly connected to national interior radar systems. Those radar systems were and are monitored by the FAA. Now NEADS as well as the rest of the air defense centers have extensive interior radar feeds. Marr noted that after 8:00AM daily there are roughly 4000 aircraft in the air at a time; roughly two thirds of that number passes through the NEADS sector.

Marr commended the efforts of the 103rd Air Control Squadron, which assisted NEADS on and after 9/11.

The 84th Radar Squadron has the ability to ascertain speed information on a fighter based on radar records. Commission staff requested to speak with some of their staff for technical consulting.

Operations Floor:

According to Marr, the operations floor at NEADS has changed significantly since 9/11. They have cells that link the data links (EWACS – Early Warning and Control Systems) together and that are responsible for air space surveillance and traffic monitoring. That capability includes a portion of scope operators that are directed by a technician where the MCC (Mission Crew Commander) sits. Next to the MCC is the ID (identification) desk. In the front row of the operations floor is the Weapons desk.

When an air event may necessitate an intercept, Marr noted that an order will originate from the MCC and be given to the ID. The ID then informs the Weapons staff. If the ID cannot identify the aircraft, they tell the MCC, and the MCC will tell Weapons to scramble an asset. At that point the MCC notifies the Commander.

Marr's presentation on the events of 9/11:

Marr explained to Commission staff that his briefing was originally designed to show the public that NEADS did not shoot down Flight 93. He acknowledged that some of the times are not exact in the briefing.

The slide presentation is geared to show that the closest fighters to United Airlines 93, which crashed in Somerset, PA at roughly 10:47am, were over Washington, DC; also the in air were training flights out of Selfridge Air Force Base (Selfridge AFB) that were not armed. Marr noted his perspective that on 9/11 he only had four fighter assets (from Otis AFB and Langely AFB) to draw upon to contend with an uncertain emerging air threat.

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Marr noted that he was first informed of events at approximately 8:20am. At the time NEADS was preparing for the day's NORAD exercise. Marr conducted a "change over" briefing at 8AM.

By 8:20AM American Airlines 11 (AA 11) had turned off its transponder, and at NEADS the Battle Cab was ready to begin the NORAD exercise. The fighters at Otis and Langley had more fuel and more weapons than they normally would. This was due to the Russian Bear flights at that time (NOTE: Commission staff learned more of this exercise in the interview with NEADS' intelligence officer - marked SECRET). Marr spoke to General Arnold to start the exercise, but shortly thereafter Marr saw personnel huddled around a weapons scope, and directed Lt Col Dawn Deskins to go to the Weapons desk to ascertain what they were discussing. Deskins relayed that there was a possible ongoing hijack to Marr.

Marr confirmed that it was a "real world" event and relayed the information to Arnold. He asked Arnold to authorize fighters to intercept, but took the initial step, within his authority, to scramble fighters from Otis AFB to Warning Area 105 (Whisky 105) at approximately 8:36AM.

Marr commented that putting pilots at Battle Stations saves about three minutes from the scramble time. He also commented that at this point in the events of the day Marr and his staff responded to AA 11 as a standard single hijack and NEADS had not yet heard any information regarding United Airlines 175 (UAL 175). Also at this point American Airlines 77 (AA 77) was in the air from Dulles Airport.

At 8:40AM the scramble lines were activated.

The first indication to the Battle Cab of the strike on the World Trade Center was from a CNN report. Marr's explained that his initial thought was that there had been a terrible accident involving the aircraft. He noted that the perception on the operations floor at his point was not accurate, that New York Air Route Center (ZNY) had little situational awareness, and that Boston Air Route Center (ZBW) was attempting to give the best information it could to NEADS. Marr thought that the plane that had hit the WTC was probably AA 11, but commented to Commission staff that he had no definitive information with which to confirm this.

The NEADS IT staff brought in a small TV to the Battle Cab, and Marr saw the second plane hit the World Trade Center. NEADS had received their last radar data on UAL 175 at 9:02AM (the approximate time of its crash into the WTC south tower); but it is not until 9:05AM that NEADS hears of UAL 175's hijack from the FAA.

It was at this point that the NEADS Battle Cab (lead by Marr) started to address the attacks as an attack on New York City. Langley was put on Battle Stations. The PANTA F-15 pilots from Otis AFB were cleared for supersonic speed, and since then have told Marr they were "burning gas" (flying at supersonic). Marr believed that the Otis fighters would need to return to Otis AFB, or be supplied with in-air refueling when

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the Langley fighters arrived to assist in the cover of New York City airspace. He decided that this arrangement would allow the Langley fighters to refuel when the Otis fighters returned. This arrangement could cover the need to secure the New York City airspace as the day continued.

Marr noted that the Otis AFB fighters performed a "spin" in the Warning Area 105 (Whiskey 105) while waiting for orders to enter New York City airspace. But at this point both the towers had already been hit. According to Marr, after the flights struck the WTC there was a huge mindset shift at NEADS from concentrating on the proper hijack response to preparing assets for the intensity of an attack and possible combat.

Marr commented that NEADS was aware that AA 77 had entered Indianapolis Center airspace. Marr noted to Commission staff that it is not unusual to have a time lapse when radar frequencies and squawks are transferred between centers.

Marr's slide stated that at approximately 9:16AM the FAA reported a possible hijack of UAL 93. Marr noted that there was a good deal of conflicting information running through the air traffic system that included information on Delta 1989, which landed safely. The MCC was concerned for flights headed to DC, and Marr was concerned that AA 77 was going to crash in Cleveland. He noted that all the staff in the Battle Cab was concerned with separate flights.

Marr directed the staff to find "somebody" airborne in the area near Cleveland space to intercept AA 77. The flights from Selfridge Air Force Base (Selfridge AFB) were told to head in the direction to intercept AA 77. Marr did not believe those flights had live weapons. "Someone" in Marr's staff was concerned AA 77 might have turned towards Washington, DC, and Marr asked for Langley coverage of DC. It was at this point that Langley's mission in Marr's mind changed from flying the cap in NYC to protecting DC.

Marr did not think it very likely that AA11 was still airborne and headed to DC. Marr was concerned that NYC was still under attack, and thus left the Otis fighters there.

Marr noted to Commission staff that at one point on 9/11 there were up to 11 unaccounted for aircraft in NEADS airspace. General Arnold told Marr later that there was a point with up to twenty unaccounted for aircraft in national airspace on 9/11.

The Langley fighter scramble heading out over the Atlantic is accounted for by their standard scramble procedures. The standard scramble directs the fighters from Langley to the Warning Area 306 (Whiskey 306) airspace. Marr noted that there are different scramble routes out of the different bases; fighters scramble in a route best suited to avoid air traffic.

Marr told Commission staff that his focus was on UAL 93, which was circling over Chicago. Marr thought UAL 93 was waiting for word over what had been happening across the country to begin its attack. Marr started to attempt to find pilots and fighters

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that could respond immediately to missions. He noted that the only active fighter wing is the 1st Fighter Wing out of Langley. All the other fighter capability is accounted for by the National Guard.

NEADS had an interface with Andrews Air Force Base in the late afternoon of 9.11. Marr was not aware at the time of any flights in or out of Andrews.

Marr's staff focused on AA 77. Marr saw that after the Pentagon strike military bases postured for assets to combat ready. He heard shortly thereafter that authority existed to shoot down a civilian aircraft over national airspace; Marr understood that if they had to they could fire upon UAL 93.

There were a "number of tracks" in the DC area. A "free fire zone" was declared over DC airspace, and, again, Marr was convinced he could shoot down UAL 93 if he had to. The F-16s from Langley AFB were over 96 miles away from DC, but would have gotten to DC in time to engage UAL 93. Marr also knew that there were F-15s over New York City, and thus he was comfortable that both cities' airspace would be secured by fighters in short time.

At 10:29AM the Selfridge fighters that had been operating on a training mission landed. There was some confusion at this time over Delta 1989's report of a bomb on board after it landed.

According to Marr, Toledo fighters were launched since there was a possibility that Cleveland was at risk; but these fighters were not in the air until after UAL 93 had crashed. Syracuse also scrambled fighters. According to Marr, by about ten thirty the morning of 9/11 most aircraft in the air were either fighters or fuel tankers. By 2:30PM on the 11th the airspace was pretty well controlled; but there were some flights that did not obey the cap and were told by fighter escorts to land. This persisted on the 12th.

Military / FAA relationship:

Marr related to Commission staff how frustrating it was for the NEADS controllers and the FAA controllers to communicate since the data off their scopes were incompatible. Marr believes this is caused by their "completely different" jobs. NEADS is legally not allowed to track American citizens in the air. His controllers do not understand what is indicated by "a redial DMV" out of certain radar. But the military does share commonalities in their reference language. Steve Culbertson has helped facilitate this. He is the NEADS FAA liaison. Commission staff has the intention of coordinating with the FAA to speak with Culbertson.

Other:

The National Capital Region Coordination Center (NCRCC) at Herndon, VA is manned full time by NEADS representatives with the Transportation Safety

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Administration (TSA). NEADS' purpose at the NCRCC is coordinate and to feed information; but there is no aircraft scramble responsibility at Herndon.

When AA 587 crashed in Queens, New York on Nov 12, 2001 NEADS scrambled F-15s above the crash. Within seconds the fighters went from runway alert to full scramble and were patrolling over major US cities. This is the new approach. NEADS has flown 32,000 sorties since 9/11.

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