



MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

Event: Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Boston Center Field Site Interview 1 with Daniel D. Bueno, Traffic Management Supervisor, Boston Center.

Type of event: Interview

Date: Monday, September 22, 2003

Special Access Issues: None

Prepared by: Geoffrey Brown

Team Number: 8

Location: FAA Boston Center, Nashua, New Hampshire

Participants - Non-Commission: Chris Perito, FAA General Consul

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

NOTE: Please refer to the recorded interview for a complete account.

Daniel D. Bueno began with the FAA in March of 1982, and began his career at Boston Center. He spent 6 to 7 years as an ATC (air traffic controller), then worked as a traffic management specialist in the Traffic Management Unit (TMU), then as both an Area D and Area C Supervisor, and finally in his current position, as Traffic Management Supervisor. The TMU "umbrella" includes Eastern Region and Boston Center, Carmine Gallo is its overall head.

Bueno first became aware of a possible hijacking from Area C Operation Supervisor (OSIC), John Schippani. Area C covers airspace of Flight Level 240 (24,000 feet) to FL600 at and to the west of Boston, Massachusetts. Bueno paged Terry Biggio, who has Operations Manager in Charge (OMIC) at the time. The possible hijack was identified to Bueno and Biggio as American Airlines 11 by Schippani, who was informed from the air traffic controller (ATC) covering Sector 46 (R46), Peter A. Zalewski. Biggio brought AA11 up on his display module (MDM), and Bueno called the FAA's Herndon, Virginia air traffic control headquarters to inform them that AA11 was "no radio communication" (NORAC), more commonly referred to as NORDO (no radio), and had turned off its transponder, which transferred its radio signature to a primary target, which consisted of

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no altitude information. Bueno stated that Terry Biggio asked Robert Jones to pull the "tape" from the recorder. Bueno identified the speaker at Herndon as "Tony". AA11 took a sharp right turn at 1227 UTC, and headed south. When AA11 started to slow down, Bueno called New York TRACON to advise them of the situation. Bueno's experience as an ATC led him to believe that AA11's slow down was indicative of a drop in altitude, and thus NY Center would need to clear all air traffic at all altitudes along the possible path of AA11. Based on Bueno's memory of a previous hijack, Bueno called Cape TRACON for an immediate fighter escort out of OTIS Air Force Base. He knew that the call should have gone to North East Air Defense (NEADS), but due to the urgency of the circumstance called directly to the FAA contact point for Otis .

Bueno explained that he understood normal procedure for a NORAC airplane was to check the NAV 80, try to raise the aircraft by various means (check previous transponder frequency, use AIR Inc., notify the aircraft's company, ask other aircrafts to try and raise the NORDO airplane), but noted that although prior to 9/11 it was usual for pilots to be inattentive to ATCs at times, and that often there were 5 to 20 minute lapses in communication, the combination of circumstance (NORAC, no transponder, serious deviation off course) was infrequent. Despite this it was still unusual to call this to the attention of the "aisle supervisor" (area supervisor).

Bueno stated that prior to 9/11, a hijack would be predicted as a flight to Cuba or a ransom demand, but not as an act of terrorism. He also noted that with AA11, until the threatening cockpit communication was confirmed, predominately the Boston Center staff was concerned the plane had experienced serious mechanical or electrical failure. He noted that there was an occurrence of this sort involving a generator malfunction post-9/11, and it was addressed immediately.

According to Bueno, the key that alarmed Boston Center over AA11 before the threatening communication was the hard southern turn. The southbound course combined with a dropping altitude had already been reason enough for Terry Biggio to call for an immediate "ground stop" in the Sparta/Carmella traffic corridor. Once Bob Jones communicated the tape's content to the TMU, Biggio informed ROC, WOC and New York Center of the necessity of an immediate ground stop at Logan. Bueno believes New York Center was working UAL175 at this point.

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When asked about a timetable for military involvement, Buneo stated he took an initial role calling the hijacking to Collin Scoggins attention, who immediately called NEADS. Buneo noted that Collin Scoggins was a military operations specialist (MOS) at Boston Center, and is usually not on the ATC floor. The MOS is now part of the TMU. It became Cape TRACON's responsibility to coordinate the fighter scramble, and Boston Center took responsibility for clearing the skies, and that Huntress took did not take control of high altitude along the coast until later in the day.

The procedure for active fighter scrambles was coordinated in the "Otis Cape TRACON Letter Agreement", and Bueno had experience in the early 1980s with a scramble to escort an airplane out of Kennedy Airport. Bueno has not participated in any tabletop scramble exercises. Regarding Operation Vigilant Guardian, a command post exercise that was scheduled to take place on September 11th, Bueno believes the military operation specialists may have been briefed, but that Boston Center was not involved beyond a NOPAR (no pass through air defense) order for the airspace involved in the exercise.

Bueno stated that the system "worked absolutely" on 9/11. Boston Center was able to shut down the airspace on the east coast in a relatively timely manner, and were able to reroute and land planes successfully. Bueno stated that the Dynamic Simulation Training (DynSim) that ATCs are required to perform yearly serve their purpose, even though they are only simulation. He noted that in the past one of his DynSims might have involved vectoring an aircraft toward a hijack, but if so it is only a loose memory, but that he definitely has not exercised a NORAC hijack with no transponder. Nor had their been a hijack simulation or exercise that included FAA and NORAD co-participation.

North Atlantic inbound flights on 9/11 were passed through to Canada.

Prior to 9/11, Bueno remembers numerous localized ground stops, but never a national one.

After Cape TRACON was contacted by FAA personnel, Cape TRACON called Otis .

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Bueno mentioned the possibility of scrambling fighters from Atlantic City to Collin Scoggins. Bueno never thought that the scrambled fighters would receive an order to shout down a commercial airliner.

Bueno recommended to heighten airline security passengers should no longer be allowed carry-on luggage, and all cargo should be thoroughly screened. Bueno commented that Boston Center staff now have a security and national defense role that has been added to their primary purpose of keeping aircraft separate from each other and from weather threats. Bueno is concerned that just as hijacks in the past created a conceptual box from which all planning and practice will be based on, the event of 9/11 was created another conceptual box, and unless planning and practice is exercised beyond this box, the country is still vulnerable.

Bueno stated that a benefit of the improved relationship between FAA and military entities is that they now communicate daily over airspace caps and are linked through the Defense Event Network (DEN).

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