

Maj. Brad "Lou" Derrig, Interview 12/1/03

- ANG e F 19 yrs in Jan
- w/ unit since Oct 93 (10 yrs as Alert Pilot)
- Re 9/11 Scramble prob., usually NAVY A/C
 - ↳ generally over water, prob. never over land.
- Training w/ FAA coord. of intercepts.
 - ↳ on E. Coast here e Langley, some practice scrambles, working w/ FAA + H.
- No tapes turned on 9/11.
- "No AAR done w/ M 119M"
- No, DoD interviews

★

- Did go from Peace time to Transition ROE
↳ communicated by H
Anticipated by A/C

DE "That
does ring a
bell."

↳ want to say before And's 2 F-15
launched.

Andrews on Guard said "Air space closed,
any unid A/C will be shot down"

Thought A/C were taking off to the W
★ ↳ had a delay after GL
to wait for Craig, # to
deconflict west coast

- DE doesn't recall.

3PI's tops - not full
w/ own accounts.

Gen. Arnold Tasker was on 9/11
↳ Borg working on it late afternoon
DE/BD got scrambled out again

"All done"
in house.

"We did not shoot down"
results of

collective letter that
all 3 signed.

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MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

Event: Langley Air Force Base Site Visit

Type of event: Recorded Interview

Date: Monday, December 01, 2003

Special Access Issues: None, some of the discussion was classified and the tape classified accordingly. Those discussions were technical and are available on tape.

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Team Number: 8

Location: 119th Fighter Wing, Detachment One, Headquarters

Participant – Major Brad Derrig, Wingman for the Quit scramble on 9-11

Participants - Commission: Miles Kara, Kevin Shaeffer

Observer – Colonel Pam Jefferson, USAF, Base Legal Office

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

Background:

Major Derrig has been in the Air National Guard 19 years and has been flying with his unit since October 93, almost ten years.

Scramble Experience:

First three years (94-96), alert once a month for a week, scramble maybe once every two months. At Langley beginning four years ago, sat alert maybe once a quarter. Pre 9/11 no real world scrambles, any he participated in were usually against non-squawking Navy aircraft, generally over water. [Note: Staff briefly reviewed the official log book at the Northeast Air Defense Sector in mid-January, 2004. Specifically the months Apr-Jun 2001 were reviewed. Five scrambles were recorded over a 90-day period, Three of the five were against targets that were later determined to be Navy aircraft.] No scrambles over land. No hijacks having to do with a hijack. Procedures when scrambled were to basically vector to the aircraft and then watch where the target went.

Training-wise, probably zero concerning hijacks. Never involved with intercepts dealing with live exercises with FAA.

9/11

Nothing he did in the cockpit that day was recorded, nor did he write a subsequent report or make/retain any notes. No internal 119th hot wash was conducted. [Note: Derrig was formally interviewed as part of the history program by the 119th Public Affairs NCO. Staff has a copy of that interview.]

It was a normal day with a local flight scheduled at 0900; he was on the second day of a Mon-Thurs shift. Cpt Eckmann was scheduled for lead duty that day, even

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though Derrig outranked him, and Eckmann and Borgstrom were scheduled to conduct the local flight working with Langley fighters from the First Fighter Wing.

He first learned of events from the crew who reported that one of the towers had been hit. He was the last into the cockpit because he stopped to put in his contacts. In that process he learned that the second tower was hit. He was the only pilot that knew that information and he does not recall sharing it with his flight mates. He had no sense of where they might be headed when scrambled. He assumed that when scrambled they would be headed to New York.

In the cockpit and during the approach to the CAP over DC he had no situational awareness of developing events on the ground, the Pentagon, an unknown aircraft approaching from the Northwest, a civilian airliner approaching DC from the North, or UA93 turning around over Cleveland and returning to the East.

He isn't sure that he knew what the scramble heading was. The delay from battle stations to scramble and the ultimate scramble heading are up to the Sector on what they determine the threat to be. He recalled the delay to be 20 minutes. To say it was unusual, no. It is not unusual to sit battle stations for an extended period. During the civil aircraft suicide in Tampa, for example, they sat battle stations for almost an hour.

In reference to his previous interview in 2001, he was asked to comment about saying our radios suck and it was usual East Coast procedures, talking to 5 different entities, and that accounted for the delay in scrambling. He didn't answer directly but speculated that they [Sector] was trying to determine the target, the threat.

He was confused on the timeline concerning the call to battle stations [0909] and the sequence of impacts in New York.

In his experience the typical time to get airborne from a scramble was in the 5-15 minute range, depending on circumstances. His personal standard was they should be airborne in 5 minutes. Standard on the books was specified in the ATO. [He said the figure was classified]

Radio Communications

Cpt Eckmann was on frequency with Air Traffic Control. Derrig and Borgstrom were on frequency with Ground Control Intercept at HUNTRESS, with Derrig prime. His recall was that the pilots had to be pretty low not to hear HUNTRESS. He did not recall that they were controlled by GIANT KILLER on 9/11. He then volunteers that "GIANT KILLER was not very good." He never had very good luck with GIANT KILLER, whether it was a radio problem or an infrastructure problem, he didn't know. Sometimes when they reached GIANT KILLER they didn't know who the air defense fighters were.

Command and Control

On scramble the fighters should be getting amplification from HUNTRESS, that is how it should work. He was shown the radar reduction of the track of the QUIT flight and the scramble order that was broadcast. Only thing he could think of was that in order to have an IFR flight plan in the system they had to have a clearance limit. HUNTRESS makes the hot line call. Norfolk/Langley puts them on the "legal" route to get them clear

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of air traffic. He does not recall if he was still trying to communicate with HUNTRESS during the initial flight to the East or had contact with them. Legally, they have to do what ATC tells them to do. When they do get a hold of NEADS they are given CAP coordinate procedures to the CAP. He was told that that transmission came later. Obviously, he said, based on the data shown, he could not get a hold of HUNTRESS during the initial minutes of the scramble.

AFIO. He did not recall the AFIO order from HUNTRESS. The order would have come through him, he acknowledged. Nor did he remember the Baltimore instructions.

GIANT KILLER. Derrig was informed that GIANT KILLER was involved and the GIANT KILLER was acting as a relay. He does not recall the direction to CAP near BWI. He reiterated again, in reference to the 360 heading, that he thought they were going to New York.

He never went supersonic. If Eckmann did so, it was only for a short period of time.

[Note: when Derrig says "here" on the tape he is referring to a print of the 84th radar data depicting the Langley scramble and the incorrect heading to a CAP southwest of Washington]

The Pentagon. When he flew over the Pentagon he first thought it was a truck bomb, didn't think it was an airplane. In the back of his head he remembered they loaded airplanes because the Russians were conducting their exercise and may have thought of a Cruise Missile as a possibility.

The CAP. They had a block of altitude within which to work. He recalled that early in the CAP Eckmann got direction to identify an unknown. Primarily they were waiting, in the CAP, for NEADS to tell them what to do.

ROE. At that point they were in peacetime ROE and he recalled at one point authenticating an order for transition ROE. They carried alert packs with them that contained the ROE and the authentication tables. He thought at the time of transition Eckmann was chasing a target, a Doctor. He thought the order for transition ROE came before the Andrews airplanes got into the CAP. He recalled IDing the two Andrews fighters that came up because NEADS was nervous about them. He also recalled the one fighter that came up briefly before that and then landed. He thought he would have told Eckmann and Borgstrom, ROE changed, next level. That did nothing for them, however. They still would have needed an authenticated order. The only options they had were for self defense or a cruise missile. He does not recall "weapons free" until that night, but recalls Andrews fighters declare on guard that their Class B airspace was closed and that any intruders would be shot down. [Note: At one point, Washington Center, put out a periodic announcement on Guard frequency to all aircraft similar to the one Derrig ascribes to the Andrews fighters.]

Vectoring to Unknowns. That was primarily accomplished by NEADS, NEADS took control. [Note: early in the scramble vectoring was accomplished by Washington Center.] Command and Control was confusing when the Andrews fighters became airborne. They did not have alert packs, for example. He recalled second hand the

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“guarding the house” direction that Eckmann got from Secret Service. He thought at one time NEADS came up and said “we own the airspace.”

Attorney General. NEADS directed the vector to escort the Attorney General’s aircraft, Derrig was the pilot who executed the order. He was given a VHF frequency to talk to the AG’s plane.

He was never given any order or authority to engage a commercial aircraft. Confusion arose because Borgstrom had no missiles when he took off and that was noticed when he landed. Derrig recalled that Borgstrom talked to General Arnold and that all three pilots signed a letter to First Air Force certifying that they had not shot down an aircraft. Borgy said, “I just got off the phone with him [Arnold] and that we all have to write a letter.”

Authentication to shoot down. Derrig said that had any of the three received that order they would have asked for re-authentication several times. The authentication process would not take long.

Time-distance to DC. Given: take off to the East, two minutes for runway heading, max subsonic, eighteen miles over water, climbing at 350 nm. How long would it take. He figured, total, no more than fifteen minutes from the start. [He used 9 nm per minute as a rule of thumb, Staff has been told by others to use 10 nm per minute.] He has done the mental math, there was not enough time, given a 0930 takeoff, to get to DC, let alone get an order. He was walked through the effects of an earlier scramble, close to 0910 vice 0925. During that conversation Staff learned that it takes time, also, to actually find the target at low altitude and make positive identification. Not only does he have to find the target, but so does the GCI. The air defense fighters have to be vectored to a target positively designated as hostile. The “hostile” has to come from somebody higher than NEADS.

Payne Stewart. A lot of the response was simply timing. They had aircraft airborne, the plane was squawking and was flying straight and level.

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