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2 UNITED STATES ARMY
3 CENTER OF MILITARY HISTORY
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12 INTERVIEW OF
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14 [REDACTED]
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17 NEIT 428
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22 CONDUCTED BY
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24 [REDACTED]
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28 The Center of Military History
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32 AT
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35 Arlington National Cemetery
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41 April 2002
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45 TAPE TRANSCRIPTION

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P R O C E E D I N G S

[redacted]: [redacted], my name is [redacted].

[redacted]. I'm with the 305th Military History detachment. Today we're here to interview people that saw the plane hit the Pentagon on September 11, 2001.

Let me start off. My name, the spelling, [redacted]. I'm interviewing [redacted], spelling [redacted]. What is your job

here at the National Cemetery?

[redacted]: I'm a wage grade mechanic 10.

[redacted]: A (inaudible) mechanic 10?

[redacted]: Mechanic.

[redacted]: All right. Where do you live, [redacted]?

[redacted]: I live in Mitchellville, Maryland.

[redacted]: That's basically north of here?

[redacted]: It's close to Bowie, Bowie, Maryland.

[redacted]: And are you married?

[redacted]: Yes.

[redacted]: And you have a family?

[redacted]: Yes.

[redacted]: Give us an overview of the time you

68 spent in the military and your career here at the
69 cemetery.

70 [REDACTED]: Well, I have no time in the military but
71 I have going on 35 years of government service.

72 [REDACTED]: At the National Cemetery?

73 [REDACTED]: Well, I would say out of the 35 years,
74 26 years of it has been here.

75 [REDACTED]: Twenty-six years. On the day before
76 September 11th, do you remember anything of what you
77 did as a routine day on your job on September 10th, the
78 day before?

79 [REDACTED]: You know, the regular routine. You
80 know, we come in the morning, we go in the office. We
81 find out what we have to do, starting pulling
82 maintenance on the vehicles that need to be worked on
83 that day.

84 [REDACTED]: Now, on the day of the plane crash
85 can you recount that, please?

86 [REDACTED]: Well, we was all gathered around over in
87 the shop and they was talking about what had happened
88 in New York City.

89 So were watching it on the tube, the television.

90 And we just, you know, we was all in shock. We
91 couldn't really believe what we was looking at.

92 [REDACTED]: Basically you were aware of the
93 attacks on the World Trade Center?

94 [REDACTED]: Right.

95 [REDACTED]: And you had no idea that the
96 Pentagon was scheduled for one of those attacks?

97 [REDACTED]: No.

98 [REDACTED]: What happened next?

99 [REDACTED]: Well, as we was watching the television
100 my supervisor said that if we had any dirty uniforms we
101 could take them up to the warehouse. So I took my
102 dirty uniform down to the warehouse.

103 During the time that I was in there, me and some
104 other employees, we just felt a volume of vibration,
105 you know noise. The building started shaking and
106 things started falling, so we ran out.

107 When we ran out, I mean, it was just something
108 like a missile. You know, it just went into the
109 Pentagon. And we was on the side where we could see
110 where the plane had went in.

111 But I was thinking it was a missile. It just

112 happened so quick, and the heat and the smoke, it was
113 terrible.

114 [REDACTED]: So you were actually at the
115 warehouse, which --

116 [REDACTED]: Building 123.

117 [REDACTED]: Next door to the building where --

118 [REDACTED]: It's right down at the bottom of the
119 hill.

120 [REDACTED]: You were turning in your dirty
121 clothes?

122 [REDACTED]: Right.

123 [REDACTED]: So the plane, after it hit you left
124 the warehouse, walked out of the warehouse?

125 [REDACTED]: Well, when we came out of the warehouse
126 we heard this boom, you know, this big explosion. And
127 we, all we could see was the smoke and the heat. We
128 could feel the heat. And it was so intense that after
129 that happened, we looked up in the sky and there was
130 another plane.

131 So, you know, so we panicked. So we started
132 running, you know. So I just dropped on the ground.
133 The plane was so low we were thinking it was going to

134 do the same thing, but the plane made a turn and went
135 in the opposite direction.

136 [REDACTED]: How high was the plane,
137 approximately?

138 [REDACTED]: It was low enough that it could touch
139 the building, the warehouse. It was close.

140 [REDACTED]: Telephone pole height, maybe?

141 [REDACTED]: Yeah, I'd probably say about telephone
142 pole height. Because I was really thinking it was a
143 separate plane coming in. To this day I don't know,
144 because nobody never said anything about that plane.

145 [REDACTED]: Can you describe the plane?

146 [REDACTED]: All I know is it was a big plane. It
147 was a big plane and I could see the pilot. It was just
148 so quick. So I'm assuming that it was one of our
149 planes because it didn't go into the building. It just
150 made a turn, you know.

151 [REDACTED]: Was it a fighter plane or a
152 passenger plane?

153 [REDACTED]: To tell you the truth, I don't know,
154 because I don't know that much about planes. All I
155 know is that the plane was close behind the other plane

156 and it was flying low.

157 And I was thinking that the plane was going to do
158 the same thing because, you know, didn't nobody know
159 what was going on.

160 [REDACTED]: This is [REDACTED] (phonetic).

161 Could you tell if the landing gear were down, did you
162 notice that at all?

163 [REDACTED]: No, the landing gear wasn't down.

164 [REDACTED]: On both planes?

165 [REDACTED]: On the last plane. Because all I could
166 see, really, of the last plane was like the tail end
167 when it, you know, went into the building. It happened
168 so quick. After that all you could see was the
169 explosion and the smoke and heat from that.

170 [REDACTED]: I'm going to stop this for a second.

171 (A brief recess was taken.)

172 [REDACTED]: I heard this boom, this big explosion.

173 And the smoke and the heat. You could see little parts
174 of the plane after, you know, it had fell. Because
175 right after that there was a second plane that was
176 flying low.

177 [REDACTED]: And where did it go?

178 [REDACTED]: It just went back thataway. You know,
179 it was like on the left side of the building and the
180 plane just, it was just like coming like coming toward
181 the Pentagon but it made a turn.

182 [REDACTED]: Okay, so let's say we're standing,
183 we're going to go over to that next building. So you
184 were standing facing the Pentagon when you saw the
185 first plane hit?

186 [REDACTED]: We was, yeah, facing the Pentagon.
187 Yeah.

188 [REDACTED]: Okay, so the left would be towards,
189 to the left side of the Pentagon, or the Pentagon
190 itself would be your left side?

191 [REDACTED]: The left side of the Pentagon.

192 [REDACTED]: Okay, so you did see the first plane
193 hit or you just saw the aftermath?

194 [REDACTED]: The aftermath.

195 [REDACTED]: You heard a noise and quickly
196 turned?

197 [REDACTED]: Right.

198 [REDACTED]: Okay, you saw the explosion and then
199 you saw another plane in relation, if you're facing the

200 Pentagon where was that plane? Was it coming from the
201 right to the left?

202 [REDACTED]: It was on the left.

203 [REDACTED]: It was already on the left?

204 [REDACTED]: On the left.

205 [REDACTED]: And you said it circled around. It
206 circled around which way, continuing to the left or
207 circled around --

208 [REDACTED]: It was coming like it was coming towards
209 the Pentagon.

210 [REDACTED]: From the left?

211 [REDACTED]: Yes, from the left. But it just, it was
212 low. And we thought that the plane was going to, you
213 know.

214 [REDACTED]: And it wasn't heading towards Reagan
215 National?

216 [REDACTED]: No. No, it was headed toward the
217 Pentagon and for some reason it just made a turn.

218 [REDACTED]: And it veered off away from the
219 Pentagon back towards D.C.?

220 [REDACTED]: It just went to the left. It just went
221 to the left.

222 [REDACTED]: Was it low also?

223 [REDACTED]: Like I said, it was the height of the
224 telephone poles. But I don't know why nobody never
225 said anything about the second plane.

226 [REDACTED]: So it looked like it was headed for
227 the Pentagon and veered away?

228 [REDACTED]: It veered away.

229 [REDACTED]: Now, let's go back. You see
230 flyovers all the time here at the Pentagon.

231 [REDACTED]: Right.

232 [REDACTED]: I mean, excuse me, at Arlington.

233 [REDACTED]: Right.

234 [REDACTED]: And do you like to go out and watch
235 them fly over?

236 [REDACTED]: Yeah, we watch them.

237 [REDACTED]: Okay, so you're familiar with what,
238 usually a flyover is a fighter or a helicopter. Do
239 they have cargo planes fly over sometimes or is it
240 usually just fighters and helicopters?

241 [REDACTED]: Well, it's, I guess you would say they
242 were fighter planes. You know, they are, the fighter
243 plane that fly over, they are higher than this plane

244 was.

245 [REDACTED]: Okay, so you know what a fighter
246 plane looks like? Usually they're smaller. Usually --

247 [REDACTED]: Well, I would say it would be smaller
248 than an airplane, in my opinion.

249 [REDACTED]: Than a commercial aircraft?

250 [REDACTED]: Yeah, than a commercial aircraft.

251 [REDACTED]: So when you saw the second plane,
252 based on what you've seen fly over Arlington what do
253 you think it was? Do you think it was a commercial
254 aircraft or do you think it was a military fighter
255 based on what you've seen fly over?

256 [REDACTED]: Well, I was hoping that it was a military
257 plane.

258 [REDACTED]: You were hoping it was.

259 [REDACTED]: That's what I was hoping.

260 [REDACTED]: But what do you think you saw?

261 [REDACTED]: Well, if that plane was intending to go
262 into the Pentagon, it had the opportunity to do it.

263 But for some reason it didn't, it just --

264 [REDACTED]: Veered off?

265 [REDACTED]: It veered off.

266 [REDACTED]: Did it look like a commercial
267 aircraft or did it look like --

268 [REDACTED]: I would say a commercial aircraft.

269 [REDACTED]: Now, was it further away than, I
270 mean, how far away was it when it veered off? Was it
271 like between us and the Pentagon or was it back behind
272 the Pentagon like over the Potomac type of thing?

273 [REDACTED]: It was like this area here. Say we're
274 right on the outside. It was like on the opposite side
275 of this building, but you could see the plane. The
276 plane was flying low.

277 [REDACTED]: It was flying low. So it wasn't
278 that far away?

279 [REDACTED]: No, it wasn't that far away.

280 [REDACTED]: Why don't we stop this and go over
281 and you show us, okay. And then we can give a frame of
282 reference.

283 (A brief recess was taken.)

284 [REDACTED]: The people that work there, where is
285 their office at?

286 [REDACTED]: (Inaudible) 123.

287 [REDACTED]: So maybe you can point out the

288 building.

289 [REDACTED]: You need to talk to (inaudible) the
290 plane (inaudible) that's one person right there. He
291 seen the plane.

292 [REDACTED]: Right there?

293 [REDACTED]: Yes, [REDACTED] (phonetic). Did you
294 hear that?

295 [REDACTED].

296 [REDACTED]: See, those guys (inaudible) over there.

297 [REDACTED]: (Inaudible) the plane?

298 [REDACTED]: (Inaudible) right now probably somewhere
299 this way (inaudible).

300 [REDACTED]: So you hit the ground here, right?

301 [REDACTED]: Yes. So I was on this side when I seen
302 the second plane. I was on this side. I had a friend
303 that was over there.

304 The plane come in on this side right here. So we
305 was really, I ran up immediately over there and I ran
306 back here and that's where I hit the ground.

307 [REDACTED]: Right up about here you hit the
308 ground?

309 [REDACTED]: Right up here (inaudible) running out to

310 the street (inaudible).

311 [REDACTED]: Right here. Okay, now, where did
312 you see, you saw, okay, so you hit the ground after the
313 first plane hit or when you saw the second one?

314 [REDACTED]: No, when I seen the second plane.

315 [REDACTED]: And where was the second plane at?

316 [REDACTED]: It was like in between those trees.

317 [REDACTED]: And it was low?

318 [REDACTED]: It was low.

319 [REDACTED]: And where did it veer off, toward
320 that way?

321 [REDACTED]: It veered over there.

322 [REDACTED]: Which way again?

323 [REDACTED]: Over (inaudible) but it was (inaudible).

324 [REDACTED]: Now, did you watch where he went or
325 did you just ignore him and go back to the (inaudible)?

326 [REDACTED]: Well, we just, once it went away we just
327 got up. And one guy said it was probably one of our
328 planes, you know. But there wasn't never nothing said
329 about the plane, so I don't know.

330 But he was close enough if he wanted to go into
331 that building, he could have went into it.

332 [REDACTED]: And who said that he thought it was
333 another one of airplanes, or --

334 [REDACTED]: Well, one of the guys. I don't know. I
335 can't say, but one guy said it was probably one of our
336 planes.

337 [REDACTED]: How many people were with you?

338 [REDACTED]: There was about, I think three guys.

339 Three guys.

340 [REDACTED]: So they both hit, all three of them
341 it the ground, too?

342 [REDACTED]: One of them was holding onto the pole
343 and one was, you know, he was laying down right here
344 and I was right there.

345 [REDACTED]: So the three of them basically in
346 this loading dock area. Do you recall seeing anybody
347 up here?

348 [REDACTED]: Oh, there was guys all out here, you
349 know. You know, the explosion had happened. But we
350 were talking about the second plane.

351 I know this other guy right here seen it, but you
352 need to talk to some of the guys in the interment
353 (inaudible).

354 [REDACTED]: We need to do that very thing.

355 Maybe you can give us a name of somebody that we can
356 talk to.

357 [REDACTED]: Like I said, this one guy's name is
358 Stepiron.

359 [REDACTED]: All right.

360 [REDACTED]: He said he seen the plane when it went
361 into the building out here, one of these sections.

362 This is called the (inaudible) but it's a whole lot of
363 people out here seen what I seen, but you all just
364 haven't talked about it.

365 [REDACTED]: Well, yeah, we're going to talk to
366 people.

367 [REDACTED]: Try to talk with the people that's in
368 the interment section. They be the ones that will tell
369 you. Right there, you know, in the explosion, you
370 know, it's just so close.

371 If the plane had just went off course, you know,
372 he could come right here and (inaudible) this. [REDACTED].

373 [REDACTED], another guy here [REDACTED]

374 (phonetic).

375 [REDACTED]: [REDACTED]?

376 [REDACTED]: Yeah.

377 [REDACTED]: You were standing right here
378 watching it?

379 [Tape stops briefly.]

380 [REDACTED]: Is that their office over there?

381 [REDACTED]: Right here.

382 [REDACTED]: Landscape shop?

383 [REDACTED]: (Inaudible.)

384 [REDACTED]: Operations general --

385 [REDACTED]: Right here.

386 [REDACTED]: Okay, field operations.

387 [REDACTED]: Field operations, okay.

388 [REDACTED]: Could I get your picture? Okay, I
389 got your picture. I got tons of your picture. I'm
390 going to get one a little closer, okay.

391 (The interview was concluded.)

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