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Captain Sal Lauro
March 28, 2002

Interview conducted by Janet McDonnell
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NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
SEPTEMBER 11TH ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Interview with

CAPTAIN SAL LAURO

U. S. Park Police

Conducted by

JANET A. MCDONNELL, Ph.D.

March 28, 2002

Washington, D.C.

START OF TAPE

Janet McDonnell: It is March 28th, 2002. I'm Janet McDonnell and I am here at U.S. Park Police headquarters with Captain Sal Lauro. Your official title this point in time is?

Sal Lauro: Currently I'm the commander of our planning and development unit.

Janet McDonnell: But at the time of the September 11th attack?

Sal Lauro: I was assistant commander of our Special Forces Branch, acting as the commander of the Special Forces Branch.

Janet McDonnell: Then maybe just to start if you would tell me how you first became aware of the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and what your first actions were.

Sal Lauro: Okay. I was in my office in Building 136 in the Washington Navy Yard, where we have temporary offices. Actually, I was working on plans for the upcoming World Bank/International Monetary Fund demonstrations which were to occur the end of September. We'd been working on that for several months. We expected major problems with these groups. Some of these demonstrations have turned violent in other countries and we were planning for violence here.

Sal Lauro: As I was working on some of our plans one of my, one of the officers who works for me came in and said, "Just heard over the radio that there'd been an explosion in one of the towers of the World Trade Center near the top." So, we went into another office where there's a television and a group of officials ended up congregating in there looking at, I don't remember if it was CNN or one of the local channels had the shot of one tower burning. And they were coming up with all sorts of theories as to what it was. And I remember we were sitting there trying to, discussing probably coming down here to headquarters to coordinate. If it did turn out to be terrorism, we need to get down here and coordinate our response, because obviously DC is a target just as New York is.

Sal Lauro: And while we were discussing that is when we saw the second plane hit the second tower, which was, I mean everybody has seen it now, but at the time it was just a shocking thing to see. And that's when we knew it hadn't been accidental, the first one. That we were under some sort of attack. We immediately - Major Pelling, who was my immediate boss at that time, but who was acting as the commander of the Operations Division, he called here and spoke to Deputy Chief [Edward] Winkel, who was acting as the Chief of Police since we, our chief had retired, and we hadn't replaced him yet. And Deputy Chief Winkel asked us all to come down

here to headquarters exit to meet in the conference room to determine what steps we were going to take to secure the monuments and memorials.

Sal Lauro: I was driving from the Navy Yard across the Southeast Freeway towards the headquarters right here and speaking on the phone to my mom back in New York, because I have a nephew who works on Wall Street. And I called to - I wasn't sure where exactly he worked. I was pretty certain he didn't work in either of the Twin Towers, but I called to see if she knew for sure, if she had spoken to him. And as we're speaking and I'm coming across the freeway, I saw an explosion in front of me. I knew it was in the vicinity of the Pentagon. I didn't actually see the Pentagon, but I could see the flames and smoke coming up. I said, "Mom, I have to go. I think there's an explosion near the Pentagon. It might have been another plane." I came off of the exit and as I was driving down here you could see across the river, flames and smoke going up. And then we got a report from a couple of our officers who were right near there that it had been a plane that had crashed in.

Sal Lauro: We responded in here. The chiefs, Deputy Chief Winkel, Deputy Chief Holmes, and Deputy Chief Schamp, myself, Major Pelling, several captains, Captain Walters, Captain Berberich, I believe, all met in there, started discussing what we were going to do. We immediately realized that we had to secure the area around the White House, since all of jurisdiction around the White House is our property and our responsibility. We needed to secure the monuments and memorials, make sure that all of the people were evacuated to safety. And Major Pelling set up in the command post and he was running the operation from there. I went out onto the street and I took command of our operations out on the street.

Janet McDonnell: Where on the street?

Sal Lauro: Just out on, making sure everything was done. I was physically out there. What we did was we called, we have a mobile command post and I had that brought out to 12th Street and Jefferson Drive on the Mall. The Mall Metro? We set that up there and that was our, basically our mobile command where we had officers reporting to.

Sal Lauro: I responded up to the White House area. And our officers, Metropolitan Police, and Secret Service had the entire area around the White House secured. Several blocks they had closed off to vehicles and pedestrians. Went up to the Washington Monument and we had Captain Berberich, who's the commander of Central District, who was there with one of his lieutenants and a number of officers and they had the area around the Washington Monument secured. They were making sure no vehicles came up the service roadway and they were keeping pedestrians outside of the ring of Jersey barricades that are up there. Lieutenant [Pete] Markland I

believe was at the Lincoln Memorial. I'm sorry, Lieutenant Markland was at the Ellipse. He was securing the Ellipse. Captain Walters I believe went up to the Lincoln Memorial and coordinated the closure up there. And we had personnel at the Jefferson Memorial. I'm not sure exactly who was up there, but we had, we knew that all of the areas were secure, and everything was closed.

Sal Lauro: And that's about the time when we heard that the government was shutting down and they were evacuating all of the government offices, which meant that all of the non-government offices were going to be evacuated also. We had massive crowds down there. Someone suggested that we close the Mall, which we did not do. I recommended against that because basically it was being used as a shortcut by people getting back and forth to Metro, trying to get across one of the bridges, trying to get to their vehicles, wherever they were going. So, we left the Mall itself open. The Mall became pretty crowded, people just wandering around kind of like shocked, what's going on and all.

Sal Lauro: One of the problems we had was we had a lot of officers respond in. And communications, we use the Nextels a lot and our radios a lot. Because of the number of transmissions, we were having problems with people getting on the radio. The Nextels, for a while the system completely went down. It just was overloaded and shut down. So, we had officers responding in, and a lot of them just responded to locations where they thought they would be needed. So, it took us awhile to get a handle. We knew we had everything covered, but we weren't, for a while we weren't sure who was at which location. We knew what officials were there. It just took a while for everything to shake out and for the officials there to keep track of who they had.

Sal Lauro: We were getting constant reports, you know, a bomb at the State Department. Another plane heading inbound from Pennsylvania. A truck coming across one of the bridges. A suspicious package on the Memorial Bridge. It was just constant for probably 2 or 3 hours. Fortunately, all of these reports turned out to be false reports and just kind of hysteria. But we had to try to keep our officers focused on making sure they were doing what they had to do to protect their areas.

Sal Lauro: Lieutenant [George] Wallace, who's in charge of our motorcycle unit, and who was one of the first officers at the Pentagon, he came up to me and we discussed, we had a massive traffic jam trying to get out of the city. And we have in the morning and in the evening during rush hour we change some of the roadways, mainly Rock Creek Parkway. In the morning, it's all lanes inbound, in the evening, it's all lanes outbound. And he recommended that we do that. I believe it was about shortly after 11:00,

maybe even before that, when we decided that we would put the P.M. rush hour traffic pattern into effect.

Janet McDonnell: Were there any particular challenges in doing that?

Sal Lauro: Well, the concern was people aren't used to that. They know in the morning, between 4:00 and 6:00 at night, they can't come southbound on Rock Creek Parkway, because it's all northbound. The problem is if we do it at 11:00, there's a chance somebody is going to get on. We have barricades that block them, but we were concerned that somebody is going to drive around.

Janet McDonnell: Sure.

Sal Lauro: So some of the main areas, like Rock Creek Parkway and Beach Drive, the exit from Teddy Roosevelt, not Teddy Roosevelt, yes, TR Bridge where it comes on to it, we made sure those barricades were there and we kept officers there for a while just until the traffic really started flowing, to make sure nobody came around the barricades. We didn't need to have a head on collision in the middle of all of this.

Sal Lauro: At one point there was a suspicious package on Memorial Bridge and until we were able to determine that it was nothing dangerous, we shut Memorial Bridge. So that compounded the problem. Now one of the major arteries out of the city is blocked.

Sal Lauro: So, we were trying to do that. We've got this P.M. rush hour traffic into effect and started getting traffic out of D.C. One of the lessons we learned is there wasn't a lot of coordination between, we work really closely with Metropolitan Police and some of the other jurisdictions. But everybody was kind of focused on their own problems and there wasn't a lot of coordination between agencies immediately. Later on, it got better.

Sal Lauro: But one of the issues was we can feed all of this traffic out, but at some point, it's going to hit a roadblock, which it did. Going up Beach Drive to Rock Creek Park, the traffic signal at Beach Drive and Park Road was on its normal cycle. It's not on the P.M. rush hour cycle. So that traffic backed up there. When it got out into Maryland, those lights aren't set. So there have been a lot of meetings. The Council of Governments has had meetings with the transportation people from all of the jurisdictions to come up with a plan so that we not only can get them out of the city, but we can get them beyond that and out to the outer suburbs. So that was one of the lessons that we learned.

Janet McDonnell: So, the metropolitan evacuation plan that the District has been working on, the Park Police have been involved in that?

Sal Lauro: Yes, we're involved in that.

Janet McDonnell: Great.

Sal Lauro: Yes, we're involved in that and the Council of Governments' plans. What I did in my role, I supervised the motorcycle unit. I was involved with the lieutenant who's in charge of that unit. So shortly after the 11th, I asked he and his personnel to come up with one plan which could then, we knew we were going to be asked this, a plan to evacuate large numbers of people on our roadways. What roads would we make one way outbound? What roads could we shut completely? And that's being used, and it's being tied in with the entire Council of Governments' plan for the whole area.

Sal Lauro: And the other plan that I had them work up was the plan if we, sort of like the Capital where they don't allow any trucks down there, if we decided for whatever reason because of the threat level or something, we didn't want any trucks down around the monuments or the memorials or on the Mall, where would be the best places to shut it down and post officers to make sure? So, we had that plan in place, too. If we needed to, we can quickly decide where to assign officers.

Sal Lauro: One of the challenges we faced that day, not only were we worried about the monuments and memorials downtown, but because of the Pentagon, we have an MOU with Arlington Cemetery. We provide assistance in Arlington Cemetery. We handle law enforcement in there under this memorandum of understanding. And Arlington County and Arlington Cemetery requested our assistance in this cemetery to prevent people from going from there into the Pentagon area. And also, on the roadways leading up to the Pentagon, some of which are ours. We had to shut some roadways so traffic couldn't go, like on route 110 and some of the other roadways.

Sal Lauro: At one point that afternoon, I'm not sure exactly when, they found, at about 3:30 that afternoon they found a piece of the airplane in Arlington Cemetery. So, we had to send officers out there to secure it as evidence. Eventually, the FBI came and took custody of it. So, we had that going on at the same time.

Sal Lauro: We were also heavily involved with evacuating the Secretary of Interior. She has a security detail which is made up of Park Police sergeants. And they evacuated her out to a secondary site, through a continuity of operations.

Janet McDonnell: How smoothly did that work?

Sal Lauro: That went pretty smoothly because they just took her out of town. There is a plan, the Federal Government has a plan to, which I won't go into great detail because some of it is classified, to get Cabinet officials out of D.C. It goes back to the '60's and '70's when we were worried about the Soviet Union attacking us with nuclear weapons. And it's a plan to quickly evacuate all of these Cabinet members out of D.C. And we play an integral part, because we have to secure the area and make sure they get out of there. We practice that probably every couple of weeks. We get a practice call on it. We have to go and do our role. I've been on the Park Police now for almost 24 years and never once has it actually been called until September 11th. In the middle of all of this, probably around 11:00 - actually, I'll check these notes.

Janet McDonnell: Is this part of that Continuity of Operations Plan?

Sal Lauro: Yes. But this has been in place for probably 30 years. It was before they even started thinking about continuity of operations. I mean it basically is, but it wasn't called that.

Janet McDonnell: For that long it's been clear that the Park Service would be responsible for that, have a role in that?

Sal Lauro: Right. The Park Police would be responsible to get these government officials out of - we were not specifically taking them out. We were securing the area where they were going to move with Secret Service and other agencies. At 12:30 on the 11th, we were notified that this plan was being put into place. And that didn't work very smoothly because some of the Cabinet members - basically what happened when this occurred, when the attacks occurred. Each Cabinet member has their own security detail. And a lot of it, the security details just took their Cabinet members and evacuated them on their own. And there wasn't a lot of coordination between the different details, so we ended up, I believe eventually three of these Cabinet members arrived at the site.

Sal Lauro: The method of the way they were supposed to be evacuated wasn't available, so we ended up motorcading them. We had motorcycles, and police cars, and worked with Secret Service to motorcade them out of D.C. So eventually we did get them out. We did our part. It was the rest of the system that seemed to break down. But it was pretty interesting because we got the call to put this plan into effect. We practiced it for years. And, you know, we always thought it would never happen. When it did happen, when I was notified because I was on the scene operational commander out on the street, when communications notified me the plan was being implemented, there was a momentary kind of disbelief on my part that we had so much else going on we didn't really have the personnel to do this. But I snapped out of that pretty quickly and started directing

units and we were able to get the area secured and get everything in place pretty quickly, so I guess practice does work.

Janet McDonnell: I think I remember reading in the after action report the suggestion that one of the lessons learned might be that because the Park Police were so busy with other responsibilities, that maybe that mission, that task could have fallen to other than Park Police. Do you have any sense of that?

Sal Lauro: I don't think that was the issue. I mean we were able to do what we needed to do. It was these other teams, the security details that didn't get the people here.

Janet McDonnell: It was the coordination that broke down.

Sal Lauro: Right. And we had nothing to do with that. Our sole role is securing the area. And the area is in the parks, so really nobody else can do it. And everybody else was so busy. Metropolitan Police had their hands full. Everybody was busy.

Janet McDonnell: So, you weren't saying that the Park Police were stretched too thin at that point?

Sal Lauro: No, we were able to do it. I was concerned, but we had sufficient people and we were able to get it done.

Janet McDonnell: What about providing protection for the Main Interior Building? Did you send people over there right away?

Sal Lauro: Well, see, that building is a GSA [General Services Administration] building, so the Federal Protective Service is responsible for it. We did send a couple of, we sent two marked police cars with police officers to assist in evacuating some of the senior staff, other than the Secretary. I believe it was Director Mainella and some of the undersecretaries, evacuated them out for the continuity of operations. We didn't, I don't believe, I'm trying to remember. I'm pretty certain we didn't send anybody over to, specifically for the Main Interior Building. That was, the Secretary's detail was up there, and they assisted in evacuating the people out of the building.

[tape off]

Janet McDonnell: Okay.

Sal Lauro: Also, we provide protection up at Camp David when the President's up there. It's a national park and there are Rangers up there, but we also send

officers up there to assist. We were requested to send some officers up there that day, which we did.

Janet McDonnell: I'd like to go back to those first hours a little bit, and maybe even back to that initial meeting at the command post. I'd be interested, because as we discussed before we turned on the tape recorder, there's a real lack of sort of written records, because you were all so busy in part, and because we rely so much on electronic communication and phones. So I wondered if there's anything more that you could tell me about the kinds of issues that were discussed in that first hour about what needed to be done and whether there was any, apparently there was a plan for the evacuation of Cabinet members. But was there any other kind of plan that helped you shape, a plan that would determine, certainly maybe not to the level of which officers would go to which monument or memorial, but any kind of plan that you could fall back on?

Sal Lauro: We have a plan for various threat levels which we've had in place for several years now. I believe we may have done it right after the Oklahoma City bombing. And that, depending upon the threat level that we get through intelligence from the FBI or the Secret Service we, and it's progressive where normally we have a couple of officers maybe patrolling the monument or memorial. It goes up in stages to the point where the monument or memorial is closed. Everyone is evacuated. No vehicles are allowed anywhere near it.

Sal Lauro: And we understand that you can go from the lowest level to the highest level immediately. And this was a case where we went from the lowest level. Everything was operating normally immediately to full closure; no vehicles were allowed in the parking lot at the Jefferson Memorial. No vehicles allowed in the circle at Lincoln Memorial. We had vehicles blocking that so no vehicles could get in. And that was all done almost immediately after the plane hit the Pentagon and we all met up here. Mr. Carlstrom and I believe Gentry Davis and Joe Waller both were here. I'm certain Mr. Carlstrom was. I don't recall if both deputies were here. But they came in, they talked with the chiefs and we discussed the fact that we were closing the monuments and memorials with them. He had to give the final approval. Actually, it's the superintendent.

Janet McDonnell: So, it was the regional director's determination?

Sal Lauro: No, the superintendent. From a safety standpoint we had done it. Technically it's the superintendent who can close the park. But it's always been understood, I believe, the superintendent, we work closely with the superintendent, Superintendent [Arnold] Goldstein, and he understands that in an emergency situation we may take action prior to him being

notified. And that's what we did. We immediately closed the areas, and as soon as we could we made contact with him and discussed it with him.

Sal Lauro: Because of the significance nationally of what was going on, the attacks in New York and reports of possible attacks everywhere else, the regional director got involved very quickly, and I believe the director was involved pretty quickly. There was a point where there were some conversations that I was not involved in, but I think there were some conversations with Director Mainella about closures and stuff. We did not know—

Janet McDonnell: I'm sorry to interrupt. I just wondered, was your liaison with the director Major Van Horn?

Sal Lauro: I believe it was, yes. And I believe members of her staff were also contacting our command post. We thought that we would probably have the monuments and memorials closed for a significant period of time. However, the next morning President Bush wanted to show as much of a return to normal as possible and we were ordered to open up the monuments and the memorials, which we did. Once maintenance went through and made sure they were clean and secure. We always go through and check for any possible explosives, and they were all clear. We opened all of the monuments and memorials. Obviously, the Washington Monument remained closed, because it had been closed for construction, so that stayed closed.

Janet McDonnell: Could you tell me a little bit about coordination with Park Rangers, Protection Rangers, and maybe address the kinds of support that Park Police received from Park Rangers?

Sal Lauro: I have no idea who contacted them. I know somebody did, I don't believe we contacted the Rangers. I believe possibly Einar Olsen, the Chief Ranger, may have contacted our headquarters here, our command post, to advise that he had some, if we needed to, he had some Rangers. We had plenty of people downtown, but we really didn't know what was going to happen next. Everybody in law enforcement wasn't certain what other attacks were going to occur. So, I guess we asked, he offered some personnel. We accepted the offer. And I believe it might have been 10 or 12 Rangers from the region came down to assist us. They ended up coming down on the Mall and we assigned them to some of the traffic posts, just patrolling in the Mall with some of our officers. And then at some point, in the early evening I guess it was when things kind of settled down and we had our schedule straightened out with our personnel, we had enough people assigned to various areas, we released them, and they went back to their own parks.

Janet McDonnell: In your experience had that ever happened before, that Rangers had provided that kind of support to the Park Police?

Sal Lauro: In an emergency situation?

Janet McDonnell: Yes.

Sal Lauro: We've worked with Rangers. They've assisted us in some demonstrations, special events. We went to Philadelphia the summer of 2000, I guess it was, for the Republican National Convention. We worked with a lot of Rangers at Independence. We've had Rangers come here and work with us at various demonstrations. In the past, up until 2-3 years ago, that didn't happen very often. I think because of changes in the administration within the Park Police and within the National Park Service Ranger ranks there was a lot more openness where we all realized we are one agency and we need to work together. We're always available to assist the Rangers and it's comforting to know that if we need the assistance, they're there to help us. Normally, there aren't that many Rangers in this region. We have so many officers here that it really has to be something extraordinary where we would need that help. And obviously, this was. So, it was nice having them here to assist us.

Janet McDonnell: I think the term Einar Olsen used was unprecedented, the support measures.

Sal Lauro: That many and the fact that they got there that quickly.

Janet McDonnell: And I'd like to just continue on this theme of coordination a little bit. It sounds like that was certainly one area where the coordination worked very well.

Sal Lauro: Yes.

Janet McDonnell: You just touched on this a little bit earlier, coordination maybe with local officials like Arlington County Police Department. Can you talk about that a little bit?

Sal Lauro: Sure. What we did, we normally work pretty closely with all of the local jurisdictions. And in the past 2 or 3 years, there have been a number of major, really major events, the millennium celebration, various demonstrations, and the NATO 50th celebration. So, we, in special events, and in the Special Forces Branch where I did work at the time, we had developed strong relationships with Secret Service, Metropolitan Police, Metro Transit Police, Capital Police, Arlington County, Fairfax County.

Sal Lauro: When this occurred, we had some conversations with the officials from like Metropolitan Police, our counterparts. What they did pretty quickly, Metropolitan Police has a command post. I'm trying to find in these notes when they activated it. They activated that command post, give me a second. I'll find it in these notes.

Sal Lauro: Okay. At 10:35, Metropolitan Police, which was less than an hour after the plane hit the Pentagon. They have a command post that's normally staffed, but it's just their officers and they handle citywide problems. When special events or other things occur, they activate it and they bring a lot of the other jurisdictions in. They notified us at 10:35 that they were opening their command post. We immediately assigned a lieutenant, and he was up there, probably within 10 minutes. So, we had a representative right there with Metropolitan Police.

Sal Lauro: Arlington County and the Pentagon set up a command post. And I'm not sure exactly when that was set up, but that was pretty quickly also, and we sent an officer to that command post. Secret Service set up a command post up in the old executive -

END OF SIDE A

START OF SIDE B

Sal Lauro: The Arlington County one was dealing with the Pentagon. Arlington County Police was the police department and overall command working with the Defense Protection Service police.

Janet McDonnell: And no direct representative with the military?

Sal Lauro: The military was there.

Janet McDonnell: Okay.

Sal Lauro: So, it was the local police, fire, EMS, and the military were all co-located in that one command post.

Janet McDonnell: Did you feel like you were getting all of the information you needed?

Sal Lauro: I did. Whenever they got any information about a threat or something that was happening, they would pass it on to all of the people in the command post and then those people would pass it back to their agencies. So, we were getting pretty quick access to whatever came into that command post. I didn't actually go there so I don't know how it's set up, but the Metropolitan Police command post has a screen where any incidents that occur, any information gets posted up on the screen that everybody can

see. So, our representative up there, anytime something came up that we felt would be of interest to us, he would call the chief's command post and then it would get disseminated. So, it worked pretty well.

Janet McDonnell: I read somewhere though that there was a bit of a difficulty in having to notify at least three different emergency operations centers as well as individuals in the Interior Department and Park Service headquarters.

Sal Lauro: I think the problem, that was an internal issue that we had, because we had a number, and I wasn't up here all of the time. I was in and out, but from talking to people that were in the command post, we had a number of, the feeling that I think they got in the command post was, we're in the middle of this. We're trying to deal with this major incident here. We don't have time to be calling command posts which are 100 miles or more away to notify them of every little thing we do. And every 15 minutes it seemed like they were getting a call from somebody else who needed to know what was going on. I think eventually in a day or so it kind of got worked out where they didn't have to contact all of these different people. They were just making one or two notifications. And we didn't mind doing it for something significant. But it was like every little thing had to be reported. And it was just taking away from the other things they needed to do.

Janet McDonnell: There's always a great demand for information during an event like this, any kind of emergency event.

Sal Lauro: Sure.

Janet McDonnell: Were there any dealings, any communications with the Type One Incident Team that was in the Main Interior Building?

Sal Lauro: I think that was one of the issues with notifications and all, letting them know what was going on.

Janet McDonnell: Because they put together the briefings for the director?

Sal Lauro: Right.

Janet McDonnell: Yes, okay. And you showed me the timelines that.

Sal Lauro: Yes, I think that was sent to them each day. I don't know if it was right from the start, but pretty quickly after the start.

Janet McDonnell: Were there any other missions? You went through them pretty systematically, the different missions. You mentioned Camp David. Is there any more you want to say about Camp David?

- Sal Lauro: Just that we pretty much for a couple of weeks after that had an almost constant presence up there because of the high-level officials that were going up there which—We also had our SWAT teams out in the downtown area. We weren't sure what types of attacks might occur. I believe it was, and I don't mean to jump around, but I believe it was on the 3rd day, maybe it was September 13th, where there was a threat that came into Secret Service. Initially, the White House area had been closed and then the following day on the 12th, the White House itself was closed, but the roadways around it were reopened again. They got a threat and they went to, again, this was another, this was a plan for closures around the White House that had been in effect.
- Sal Lauro: I remember I was a lieutenant at the time in 1990 when this plan was first developed. And since then it has never gone into effect, the closures around the White House at that level. And on the 13th, they went up to that highest level that had ever been because of these threats, the information they had received. And that really took a lot of our personnel to secure that. We still had the security around the Lincoln, Jefferson, and Washington Monument. We had officers assisting at the Pentagon, Arlington Cemetery with those closures. And now we had to commit a significant number of officers around the White House. And that was us, Metropolitan Police, and Secret Service. And that lasted for I guess a day or so and then we went down to a lower level. And it has fluctuated, how many officers we have to assign up there.
- Janet McDonnell: So, I read about support to the President and the Vice President. Is there anything you can tell me about that?
- Sal Lauro: Well, we normally, whenever the President moves anywhere in the D.C. area, he goes by motorcade, obviously, we have motorcycles assigned. Our motorcycles, Metropolitan Police motorcycles lead the motorcade. If he's going outside of D.C., we put a police car either in the front of the group of vehicles or in the back and MPD puts a car also. So, one of us takes the front and one of us takes the back. And going out, Metropolitan is in front and we're in back. Coming back, we're in front and they're in the back. So that continued. You really can't, there was no way to make it any more secure than it is with the closures and everything. But the security for the Vice President had increased where we were assigning motorcycles to his motorcades also. And a number of heads of state, who are high threat levels, sometimes we provide motorcade escort for them. That went up a notch also for certain individuals.
- Janet McDonnell: How were priorities established for these various missions?
- Sal Lauro: Well, basically the number one priority, if it comes down to it, is going to be protection of the President. But that didn't take a great deal of personnel

other than road closures in our jurisdiction. Unless he's going up somewhere up Rock Creek Parkway, if he does that, we have to man a lot of posts. Most of his travels, he's on our jurisdiction, initially, but he pretty much gets off it quickly. He's on city streets, so we don't have to commit a significant number of personnel. We provide personnel around the gates at the White House when he's either leaving or coming back or coming back in. We secure those, and keep people back, and keep vehicles out. And then we'll provide security at any of the intersections, until he gets off of our jurisdiction. So that pretty much is our top priority, but we're able to do that without really stripping the other areas.

Sal Lauro: Then our next concern is just manning the posts around the White House and the three memorials. It's actually easier, when we close down the Washington Monument and the Lincoln and Jefferson, it's easier than when we have a partial closure, takes less officers. When you have a partial closure, you need to have enough officers there to deal with the crowds and to deal with any possible problems. So initially, once we got it shut down, we weren't in bad shape personnel wise.

Sal Lauro: Your question, which I don't think I answered, if it comes down to when we don't have enough people, who's making that call? That would be whoever the senior official was who was working. At the time it was Major Pellingier who was the acting operations chief.

Janet McDonnell: In the command post?

Sal Lauro: Right.

Janet McDonnell: So that's where it would be done?

Sal Lauro: Yes.

Janet McDonnell: But for the most part, would it be just responding to the requirements as they came in?

Sal Lauro: Well, what would happen, the Special Forces Branch pretty much deals with Secret Service as far as the President's protection and that stuff. A lot of that doesn't even come up here. That's how it's handled at that level.

Janet McDonnell: Oh, I see. I see.

Sal Lauro: They contact either our lieutenants or sergeants or if necessary myself or the major. But usually, it's the lieutenants or sergeants who coordinate with them. If it gets to the point where the request is something out of the ordinary or something that we don't have enough personnel, then it would get bumped up to whatever level it needed to. Sometimes State

Department will ask for assistance and I think at one-point State Department did ask for assistance at one of their facilities.

Janet McDonnell: I think I remember reading that.

Sal Lauro: Yes, they asked for us to provide security checks around one of their facilities outside of D.C. and we told them we would make checks, we would make routine checks. We'd increase the number of checks we made routinely, but we couldn't assign somebody there. We just didn't have the personnel to commit them to that site.

Janet McDonnell: Okay. So not all of the requests were funneled through that command post? There were some separate connections.

Sal Lauro: Well what happened, we have, there are procedures and policies, because we deal with the President every day. We work with the Secret Service on getting him, and the Vice President, and anybody else around on a daily basis. So, there's procedures that work that everyone is familiar with. Unless it becomes an issue that we don't have enough resources, it would get handled the exact same way. And that wasn't an issue. We had the resources to handle that. We had a total force commitment. Every officer, we had one officer, at least one officer I know of who was on annual leave, came in off of annual leave because he figured we'd need him, and he came into work. So, when we got everybody in, we had plenty of people here. But we didn't change the normal routine procedures that we have, because that's when you start having problems. It works on a daily basis dealing with the Secret Service with the Presidential protection. And we didn't change anything.

Janet McDonnell: I also came across the expression "high alert status." Can you tell me what that means exactly?

Sal Lauro: What was that?

Janet McDonnell: High alert status.

Sal Lauro: I don't know. Where did that come from?

Janet McDonnell: One of the documents.

Sal Lauro: Well, we were at a pretty high alert, just having everybody be aware of what's going on.

Janet McDonnell: Maybe that's what you were describing before with the monuments. I bet that's what it's referring to, the different levels.

- Sal Lauro: That's probably what it was. And now with the new levels that Homeland Security came out with we're adjusting our levels to coincide with that, depending on what level we're at.
- Janet McDonnell: I guess you sort of touched this briefly, but I wondered if you had any more thoughts on what the impact of the closures of the monuments and memorials was on the Park Police. It sounds like your telling me that you were fully staffed, and the impact might not have been that great.
- Sal Lauro: In the short term it was not that great, but it's continued since then. What we had to do, we put our street patrol, because we also have to continue doing the regular routine patrols in the parks throughout the area, we put those officers on 12-hour shifts. Basically, everybody was on 12-hours or more shifts. And that gets really draining after a couple of weeks, working 12-hour shifts. We tried to give, initially, have the officers work five 12-hour shifts. In some cases, they needed to work six or seven days. So, officers were getting pretty tired. We've cut back some, you know, some things have been cut back. But we're still, we're stretched pretty thin. We have a lot of officers working a lot of overtime just to make the coverages that we need to.
- Janet McDonnell: Were there any truly unique missions? I mean is there anything that surprised you personally? You mentioned being sort of surprised when you first got word about certain response levels?
- Sal Lauro: Yes, the evacuation plan and then the closure of the White House. We've never had to do either of those, other than in practice. We've always, I personally, I was a lieutenant the night that the Persian Gulf War started. I was working as the overall shift commander that night. And the next day, we got these new closure procedures around the White House. And I remember putting them in, I made up a binder and it showed all of the posts that we had to man, and what each post was supposed to do as far as pedestrian closures, vehicular closures, and stuff like that. And the coordination we were supposed to have with the Secret Service and Metropolitan Police. And I put a binder together because I was concerned that at some point during this war, we were going to have to implement this and I want to be ready. And obviously, the war ended a number of years ago. I have that folder in my briefcase from 1990. I guess it was 1990.
- Janet McDonnell: '90, '91, right.
- Sal Lauro: It's been in my briefcase and when I got into Special Forces Branch, since we did a lot of work around the White House, there was always the possibility that that plan is going to be implemented. So, when they called and said, "We're implementing this plan," I was able to just reach into my

briefcase, pull it out, show it to everyone and say, "This is what they're talking about." So, I kind of felt vindicated. All of these years I've been planning for this and it finally happened.

Janet McDonnell: That's right. You were ready.

Sal Lauro: Right.

Janet McDonnell: Well, I'd like to turn to funding just for a few minutes and ask you whether there was emergency funding authorization that the Park Police could tap into to fund the additional hours and that kind of thing?

Sal Lauro: We, there's no, it's not like there's a pot of money set aside. This was right at the end of the fiscal year. So, we didn't have any leftover money. And there's not a pot of money that is used for emergencies. There's a procedure where you request funding for an emergency. It's called Emergency Law and Order Funding. There's a cap on how much you can ask for. That gets approved out of the Washington Office. And then I believe the money is taken out of maintenance funds and other places where an assessment is taken to fund this. So, we've used this in the past for major demonstrations and major events.

Sal Lauro: When this happened, in an emergency situation we're going to do what we need to do. Somebody is going to worry about how they're going to pay for it, but whoever is out on the street, which I was that day, that was the furthest thing from my mind. I just wanted to make sure we had the people we needed. However, it was the furthest thing from my mind, but either that day or the next day, I was doing a lot of figuring because we had one of our majors, Major Mike Fogarty, he's our finance, he's in charge of Administrative Branch, deals with finance and stuff, and he was working closely with the Park Service and the Interior as far as how much money, because the President was saying there was going to be money available for this and we knew somebody would have to come up with money. Not only our agency, but every agency was spending a lot of money to protect the country.

Sal Lauro: So, we had to come up with budget projections. If we stay at this heightened level, how much are we going to spend by the end of the fiscal year? If we go down to this level, how much is it going to be? So, we had to come up with all of these different projections; what types of equipment we need, and all of that stuff was given to Major Fogarty and he worked with, I'm trying to think who the budget guy at Interior is. I can't remember his name. Major Fogarty would know. But they coordinated all of that and sent, our requests and our needs got included with the Park Service's needs which got included with Interior's and went up through the budget process. So, we, I believe we got the funding that we needed. I

think it was pretty significant. We had every officer on 12-hour shifts at least five days a week, sometimes six days or seven days a week. So that adds up pretty quickly.

Janet McDonnell: So how long did it take to get back to business as usual or are you back to that yet?

Sal Lauro: We're still not back to business as usual. I guess it was about a month ago, we put the patrol units, the regular street units, back on 8-hours shifts. We've pulled together, we've gotten volunteers, officers who wanted to work extra overtime to get extra money that were willing to do it. We asked for volunteers. We got enough volunteers to staff the downtown area around the White House and around the monuments and memorials. So that's being staffed by these volunteer officers. They're working, I believe they're working five 12-hour shifts. And we have that taken care of. The rest of our operation here in D.C. went back to 8-hour shifts, five days a week.

Sal Lauro: But right now, we're faced with a problem. The sky marshal program, it's trying to hire a lot of people. We're losing, we've probably lost 10-15 officers in the last month alone to that program. We're losing a lot of officers. We're coming up with a lot of holes in our detail where we have to have officers work overtime just to cover beats, routine beats. So, we're still not back to normal. And who knows? Maybe this is normal from now on. I don't think we'll ever go back to the coverages that we had around the monuments and memorials. I think we'll always be at a heightened state, at least for the foreseeable future.

Janet McDonnell: Before we get to some of the final questions I just want to go back for a minute and ask you to explain to me a little bit more about the mobile command center.

Sal Lauro: Yes.

Janet McDonnell: Could you explain to me what that is and how it functions?

Sal Lauro: Yes, it's kind of like a large mobile home. It has a radio, a couple of TVs, a table so that you can have officials, we can meet in there. That's what I did. I set that up.

Janet McDonnell: And I forgot where exactly you set it up?

Sal Lauro: I set that up on the Mall at 12th and Jefferson Drive, right by the Mall Metro. And what we did there, we got a big map and we had officers, as we were able to determine where the officers were, that's where we started keeping track of who was where, making sure we had everything covered.

Making sure we knew where all of our officers were. And we had additional officers report there and then we would dispatch them from there to wherever we needed them.

Sal Lauro: It also has video downloading capabilities. Our helicopter has a downlink, and we can downlink feed directly into mobile so you can see what's going, whatever the helicopter is showing, pointing the camera at. We use it routinely on major demonstrations or special events, and it allows us to have a place for our operational commanders to meet amongst themselves and meet with officials from other agencies to plan out whatever.

Janet McDonnell: It sounded like that's, although you were running around a bit, that's where you were primarily that first day?

Sal Lauro: Initially, I was just going around to different areas to make sure everything was set. We got that vehicle out there pretty quickly. I'll check and see when it was activated. Almost immediately, I think, like 10:12 that morning so a little over a half hour after the plane hit the Pentagon, we had it out there and it was operational.

Janet McDonnell: It's pretty fast.

END OF TAPE ONE

START OF TAPE TWO

Janet McDonnell: I'd be interested in hearing; I mean you saw a lot from the beginning when you were driving across the bridge right as the plane was hitting the Pentagon through the rest of that day. Just interested in knowing how it affected you personally.

Sal Lauro: Well, I grew up in New York City, in Brooklyn. So, from when I was a lot younger the Twin Towers have always been, they were always there. I mean no matter where you are, from my parents' home in Brooklyn, you could see them. My father owns a marina in Brooklyn, and we'd go out fishing a lot. And even if you were miles offshore, that's how you would, one of the ways you'd get back, you'd look for the Twin Towers and you would head back towards there. So, seeing them attacked like that really hit home.

Sal Lauro: I have two brothers who work for the Park Police in New York, and they were both at the, they were at Fort Wadsworth. One was at Fort Wadsworth and one was at Bennett when these attacks occurred. They both went to the Statue and I knew that they were right in the middle of it, so it was really, it was upsetting to see the actual attack, knowing that two of my brothers were there. I have a third brother, who's an electrician, who works in Manhattan. And his wife, my parents spoke to his wife and she

had spoken to him, so we knew he was safe, but he was having trouble getting out of Manhattan.

Sal Lauro: So that was, there was a personal side of seeing the attack and I didn't know the towers had collapsed until several hours after the collapse. I happened to stop in here at the chief's command center and I'm looking at the TV. They had six TVs going, one on each channel, constantly. And it showed a replay of the towers collapsing. I said, "What the heck was that?" "That was when the first tower collapsed." That was the first I knew of it. That really got to me thinking how many people probably lost their lives, and the firemen, the policemen who were probably in that building. I remember at one point going into the bathroom to use the facilities and throw some water on my face and just thinking to myself, it's never going to be the same. Life here is never going to be the same as it was before this happened.

Sal Lauro: But I think in a way I was fortunate because I had a lot to do. So, there was an immediate feeling of revulsion when you saw this happen. And then when I saw the plane hit the Pentagon, that momentary fear oh my god, we're under attack. It was kind of like, and I don't know if it's because of our jobs and the training we get, the way we're taught what we have to do. As a police officer you face a lot of things throughout your career and you know that if you don't act quickly and properly, you may get hurt or lose your life or somebody else will. And I think that's basically what we all did. We all just kicked into that. Okay, we're being attacked. Now let's do what we have to do.

Sal Lauro: So, I was - I worked until late that night. All of us did. And I remember at times when I was, a few minutes sitting down and having a cup of coffee, just relaxing, thinking how terrible this whole thing was. Most of the time it was just dealing with issues as they came up and doing what needed to be done. So, I think in a way we were lucky, because we didn't have the time like a lot of other people to sit there and just watch this happen on TV.

Sal Lauro: When I got home, when I did get home, I remember my kids were still up, my wife and kids were all up. They were all just pretty happy to see me. One of my kids, I have three sons. My two oldest are in high school. The 14 - I'll probably start crying just thinking about it, but my 14-year-old son called me from school just to check and see if I was okay. So that was pretty emotional.

Janet McDonnell: It was the kind of day where you just wanted to be around loved ones.

Sal Lauro: Right.

Janet McDonnell: And it does sound like what you're saying is that to a great extent the Park Police, they fall back on their training.

Sal Lauro: And I talked to my brothers. I don't think I spoke to them that day. I think it was the next day when I called them and just was asking how, I was amazed at the entire city how, and I know the people of New York. People joke about how they are, but they're pretty tough. I guess any city would be like that when they're faced with something like this, but it was just, it really made me feel proud. But I kind of felt, in a way I felt like I was, I felt like I should have been there, because here's the city where I was born and spent most of my life and it's being attacked and I'm not there helping.

Janet McDonnell: And you're a police officer.

Sal Lauro: Right. But I had enough to do here, so it wasn't too bad. But I spoke to my brothers the next day, I think it was the next day, and just talked to them about what they saw and what they did. And it was good to hear and basically, they fell into the same thing we did. They were worried about what was going on in other parts of the country. My brother, Neal, who's a captain up there, said they were getting reports throughout the day that the Capital, the White House - they knew the Pentagon had been hit, but they also got reports that the Capital, the White House, and the State Department had been bombed. And they had no way of checking on any of this, because they were so busy with everything else. So, I guess they were glad to hear that it was just the Pentagon. As bad as that was, it had to be frightening to them to think that basically the entire city is wiped out. We knew because we could see what was going on at the World Trade Center. We knew what was happening in New York, but they really didn't know what was going on here.

Janet McDonnell: Were you involved at all in, I'm not sure if coordination is the right word. But I'm interested in the link between the Park Police headquarters here and the field offices both in San Francisco and New York. Were you involved in that at all? Is there anything you can tell me about how that worked?

Sal Lauro: Not really. We have a deputy chief who is in charge, Jack Schamp. He is in charge of the field offices. And I believe they were in contact with the two commanders. There's a major in each field office. I believe they were in contact with the two of them. And it's really nothing, fortunately, nothing happened in San Francisco. But they did have heightened security around the Golden Gate Bridge and all. I wasn't involved in any of those discussions, but from hearing other people. I know in New York they were very involved in everything. They had people down at Ground Zero helping with the initial searches. They had, our boats, and hopefully you'll interview the people up in New York, but our marine unit evacuated

hundreds of people from Manhattan over to Ellis Island and set up a triage area on Ellis Island. They evacuated the entire field office for the Secret Service. They were in, I believe it's 7 World Trade Center, one of the buildings that eventually collapsed, and they made their way down to the water and they couldn't get out of Manhattan. Our boats took all of those personnel and brought them over.

Sal Lauro: So, I know that the New York field office was even more involved than we were. They did a lot with this. But I wasn't involved with any of that.

Janet McDonnell: And actually, I've been given Neal's name. He's on the list to be interviewed. What do you think the Park Police headquarters or you as a career Park Policeman, what did you learn from this experience, this response? I mean what have we learned about what works really well, or what maybe needs to be improved?

Sal Lauro: Obviously, it can always improve. But I was, and when I transferred from the job, I had in the Special Forces Branch over to my current position, they had a little party for me. And I remember getting up there at one point - they gave me a gift and asked if I wanted to say anything. And what I said to them was I was never so proud to be a Park Police officer as I was on September 11th. We know that we're an excellent agency. We handle a lot of major events, demonstrations, and special events. We do it usually with not enough personnel, not enough money, and a lot of times without enough support. And we always get it done.

Sal Lauro: And this was another example where we just pulled together. Our offices did what needed to be done. There were no questions about, "oh, that not really my job," or "why am I stuck standing out on this post for 10 hours and somebody else is sitting in a car somewhere?" Everybody just did what they had to do because of the pride they have as a Park Police officer, and as law enforcement officer in general. And then because they're Americans. They wanted to help their country. Our country is being attacked. So, most of the things worked well.

Sal Lauro: But there were little things like coordination with getting our people in and getting them assigned. There was initially that confusion as to where people were assigned. We're working on plans where.

Janet McDonnell: Were there problems because of the traffic congestion, too, in getting people back in?

Sal Lauro: Yes, what happened, a lot of people, it took a long time for them to get in. One of the things we did on September 11th, that afternoon, we realized that we could end up where we need to bring people in in a hurry. And there aren't that many of our officers who have taken home vehicles. A lot

of our officers and officials have vehicles assigned to them, but they don't get to take them home. We came up with a list of probably 40 or 50 officials and officers, who had vehicles assigned to them, and they were given permission to take those vehicles home. So, we were trying to prevent a similar problem. If this happened at 6:00 at night when most of our people are off, other than the regular people that are working patrol and everything, and we needed to get a bunch of people in, if they're in their regular personal car, they get stuck in traffic like everybody else. If they're in a police car, at least they have lights and siren, they have the radio, they can communicate. So, we figured we could get them in. So that's one of the things we did. And we're looking at, our chiefs are looking at continuing that program, possibly expanding it.

Sal Lauro: We're working with the Council of Governments and the other jurisdictions on the evacuation plan. I know you've interviewed our aviation section. Our aviation section did a remarkable job. I mean they were at the Pentagon within minutes. They were the first ones there. They evacuated people. At one point they were the control tower for National Airport. It was amazing. In my former job, they worked for me also. So, I had them, the SWAT team, and the motorcycles all reported to me. So it was, I mean everybody, I told our guys they all, guys and girls, I use that term. But they, it was just remarkable the way everybody just pulled together. They did their jobs. They did jobs that weren't even their jobs occasionally and just got it done because of the magnitude of the incident.

Janet McDonnell: Is communications something, just even the technical aspect of communications something they're looking at? I read somewhere that the Park Rangers and Park Police had difficulty communicating with each other because their radios were on different frequencies or something like that?

Sal Lauro: That's a problem we have with Metropolitan Police also. They've been looking, there have been studies done and I don't know if it's every going to get resolved. There's a couple of programs for, it's called interoperability with the radios, where they can patch, even though they're totally different frequencies they can patch us in together, so we'll be able to communicate directly. That's all being looked at. And I don't know what stage it's at. But those are some of the issues that are being worked on.

Sal Lauro: The problem with the Nextels, I think the system just got overloaded. We rely on them a lot. It almost got to the point where we would, when we could get an open line we wouldn't hang up. But you'd end up getting cut off at some point. But other than that, we were really pleased at how things went.

Janet McDonnell: I interviewed a couple regional chief rangers in the Park Service. And they've indicated that one of the difficulties and I guess I heard this elsewhere too, that one of the difficulties they had is in the area of intelligence because the Park Service isn't typically linked - now the U.S. Park Police might be the exception to this, and this is why I'm raising the question. But typically, the Park Service isn't tied into sort of the intelligence community to the level that they would get the kind of top-secret information and be able to get that down to individual parks where a threat might exist. And for example, parks don't have secure phone lines, that kind of thing.

Sal Lauro: Right.

Janet McDonnell: And I guess my question is did the Park Police during this event have access to the kind of information, good intelligence information, that it really needed to be able to respond to threats? And please respond in a general way.

Sal Lauro: I'll respond some specific and some general. We have a detective who's assigned to the FBI Joint Terrorism Task Force. She's since retired and gone to another agency. We're replacing her with a male detective now. I believe they have SCI clearance, which is above top secret. There are some things, all of our captains and above on the Park Police have top secret clearance. She reported directly, we have a lieutenant who works - I had a lieutenant that worked for me who was our intelligence counter-terrorism lieutenant. His name is John Harasek. You may want to interview him also. He probably has some good stuff. But this female detective worked directly for him. But she would contact either myself or Major Pelling directly with any information.

Sal Lauro: There were times where she got information through the terrorism task force that she could not share with us, because it was above a top-secret level. So, there were things that she couldn't even tell us. And there were things that she told us that were at the top secret level that we could use in planning some of our strategies, but we could not put the information out to our personnel, because they don't have top secret clearance.

Sal Lauro: And I know there were problems, because people from the Park Service and from Interior were calling trying to get some of this information and I think there were some heated conversations when they were told, "Sorry, you can't have this information." Number one, some of them didn't have the necessary clearances. And the other issue is, even if you have the clearance, if you don't have a need to know, there's no reason for you to get it. I think that's being worked out. Walt Johnson, who's the head of BLM, I think he's now assigned up at an FBI command post. And I think

through Steve Calvary's office they're working to tie into that intelligence system. But I don't know where specifically it is.

Sal Lauro: That's always going to be a problem. That's not just Interior. The chiefs of the local police, all the local jurisdictions, have this conference call. They would do it on a daily basis. Now it's cutback to a couple of times a week. And the FBI would do briefings. There were some things the FBI couldn't even say over that phone, because a lot of those chiefs didn't have top secret clearance. So, it's not just Interior and the Rangers who were having a problem. It's law enforcement in general. We only started this position with the terrorism task force about three years ago. Prior to that, we had the same problem.

Sal Lauro: Part of it is they're getting stuff from sources that if the information gets out, people can figure out who the source is and then that source dries up. And so, they're very cautious about what they give out. I know it's an issue and I think Steve Calvary and some of his people are working on that, trying to resolve these problems.

Janet McDonnell: I can see where it would create some difficulties in truly developing a unified response at the local, state, federal, and all of those levels.

Sal Lauro: We went into briefings, and this isn't just for September 11th. This was dealing with these World Bank and IMF meetings where we were asking for additional equipment and additional funding and stuff, because of threats that we couldn't share with the people we were asking for the money. We told them. "You just have to believe us the threat is so high for specific reasons. We have specific information that we can't share with you." And that would really piss them off. You know, we're trying to get them to give us money, but we can't tell them why. So, it's not just this. It's an ongoing problem.

Janet McDonnell: It sounds that the Park Police is in a bit of a unique position within the Park Service and even within Interior in some ways.

Sal Lauro: I think we are and, unfortunately, I think it created some hard feelings because some officials felt, I think, that we were trying to hold back information. And we were because we had to. It wasn't that we, we just didn't want to tell them what was going on. We, some things we didn't even know and other things we couldn't share.

Janet McDonnell: Sure. Just to finish up. Is there anything you would have done differently?

Sal Lauro: I'm trying to think. Nothing really major. You know, once everything kind of settled in. The first couple of hours were very hectic. We realized we were going to have our officers working extended hours. We got, we have

a property office, and we do this routinely on major demonstrations and special events where we are going to be working extended hours. We can't have everybody just saying, "Okay, it's lunch time. I'm leaving for an hour." We provide food, and water, and stuff, and that kicked in pretty quickly, we started doing that.

Sal Lauro: The thing we need to work on, and we are working on, is better coordination with where our people report to. We had officers who reported to different districts and there were no vehicles left, because everybody else had taken the vehicles. So, we had officers sitting around. We had to send other people back to get them. So, we're working on plans and these plans are ongoing, where they report to, how we get them where they need to be, that type of stuff. In general, I think our officers and our officials responded pretty well. They knew what they needed to do and got it done. We have a good command group who, at the captains and majors levels who, a lot of us are very good friends. We came up in the ranks together. And we're all, we're just there to support each other and get the mission accomplished.

Janet McDonnell: And just to leave this whole issue of resources, I mean personnel resources aside, it sounds like you were fine that day. Over the long haul, maybe it stressed your personnel. But what about other resources, too, like cars, radios? Is that something that you felt was a little short?

Sal Lauro: Personnel resources we were find because we brought everybody in. But we're, I'm not sure. I think we're about 180 positions down from authorized ranks, so that's one of the things we need to get back up.

Sal Lauro: Vehicles, we had enough vehicles, but we've had, of course, the budget concerns. We haven't bought new vehicles in several years. So, we had a lot of vehicles that have high mileage and a number of them broke down. Using vehicles like it's blocking vehicles at the entrance to the Ellipse or around the Lincoln Memorial circle. We have a car sitting there. You're constantly putting it in reverse to let a maintenance truck through or something. The transmissions were burning out. Cars were just overheating. So, we're in the process now of buying a number of new vehicles to replace a lot of these older ones. But that's been an ongoing problem.

Sal Lauro: What has occurred is we've gotten a lot more, I just think it brought the Park Police not only into the public's eye a lot more, but into Interior and the Park Service's eye a lot more. They always knew who we were, but they didn't realize some of the difficulties we were facing with staffing and equipment. And then when this happened and we had to go to them and say, "This is how much money we're going to need in overtime to cover this." They said, "How come?" "Well, this is how many positions

short we are. If we were at full staffing, we wouldn't need any of this overtime." And it really drove it home for them. So, we're getting a lot of support from Interior and Park Service right now to get the funding we need to get us back up.

Janet McDonnell: Did you get a sense that, and you just sort of briefly grazed on that. Do you think the way the public views Park Police has changed at all, the public perception of Park Police?

Sal Lauro: I think it has. I think prior to this a lot of people didn't know who we were as an agency. And I don't think it's just us. I think the Capital Police have the same problem. The Secret Service Uniform Division has the same problem. There are so many agencies in D.C. people just assume we're all one big agency. But I think after this, we were pretty prominent in security around D.C. but also up in New York. Our offices were in the middle of it.

Janet McDonnell: How about just even on an individual basis that Park Police officer out there standing in the front of a monument or memorial? Is the public regarding them more as allies?

Sal Lauro: I think so. I mean you hear about it and it's really—

Janet McDonnell: It's anecdotal.

Sal Lauro: But it's also nice to go to some of these award ceremonies or even just meetings with the - I think with the Park Service here in D.C., some of them work with us on a regular basis. So, they know, I think they consider us allies. We were here, they know what our mission is to protect the resources and protect the people. I think it sent it home to a lot of other people. Park Service and private citizens that, the people in New York, the firemen and police officers who died in New York are doing the same job as the police officers here in D.C. and it could, if the plane had crashed into the White House or one of the, Washington Monument or something, it could have been our officers who ended up getting killed. So, I think people respect that now. There is a little more, not a little, a lot more respect towards the police where people realize how important the job - it's not just the police. It's fire fighters, it's EMS, it's the military. I mean the military, their popularity, the regard that people have for them has skyrocketed. So, it's a little easier.

Janet McDonnell: Seeing that police officer there might inspire a sense of security.

Sal Lauro: I think it does. I think just knowing that there's—In the past we've had a tendency where and I've had a few superintendents at various areas say that, not so much here because they're used to us, but when we've gone out to other parks to assist, they don't want it to look like a police state. They

want it as low key as we can do it. I think that's changed a lot. Obviously, we don't want it to look like a police state. We don't want it to be overbearing, but I think the citizens want to see a lot of police officers. They want to see sufficient numbers of police officers. There were a lot of vigils, candlelight vigils, and prayer vigils in the days after the 11th. And a lot of people came up to the officers and they'd say how happy they were to see us here, and what a great job, and that makes you feel good.

Sal Lauro: In fact, it was an anti-war demonstration. The groups that were supposed to demonstrate against the World Bank and IMF turned it into an anti-war demonstration. And they were marching, and we were concerned that we were going to have problems between them and the citizens who felt that it was unpatriotic to be protesting the war after we had been attacked. So, we had a large number of officers out there. And we had people from both groups, from the anti-war demonstrators and from the citizens who were demonstrating against them. Throughout the day, I had people from both groups come up to me and to the officers and thank us for being there and thank us for the job we do. And that very rarely happens when you have demonstrators coming up to you and thanking you for the job. It was kind of interesting.

Janet McDonnell: Well, is there anything we haven't touched on that you think we should before we close here?

Sal Lauro: I think we've touched on just about everything.

Janet McDonnell: All right.

END OF TAPE