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September 11, 2001 Oral History Project, 2001-2004



Sgt. Ron Galey
January 17, 2002

Interview conducted by Mark Schoepfle
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September 11, 2001
Oral History Documentation Project
Northeast Region, National Park Service

INTERVIEWEE: Sgt. Ron Galey
 National Park Police
 (Interview No. Unlisted)

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INTERVIEW DATE: June 11, 2002

PLACE: HQ U.S. Park Police

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START OF TAPE

- Sgt. Ron Galey: We had uniformed health services, doctors, and medics down here. And we were training our people in various methods that were going to be using during that demonstration. And at the same time, I saw — and a couple other people were what we call [inaudible] the hangar. Cleaning the hangar out. We had the hangar door open. It was a nice day. So Suely came out, and said, you've got to come in here and see this. A plane just hit the World Trade Center. And we went inside, and at first all I saw was the smoke coming out of the Trade Center, and we were discussing, you know, that's a strange accident. You know, we were discussing how an accident like that could have occurred, and nobody at that time had thought it was a deliberate act. And while we were watching TV, we saw the second aircraft come in and get the World Trade Center, and then we knew. And we started some further discussion as to what other potential targets might be. And the conversation led itself out into the hangar, and I — the time is a little bit foggy, but ten, fifteen minutes later I heard a tremendous explosion and looked over towards the Pentagon, and saw smoke start to come out. Right at that exact moment the emergency tower line rang, and I answered that. And the air traffic controller said that they had a 757 go into the Pentagon, and they needed us to respond to the incident.
- Sgt. Ron Galey: And I really didn't have to say anything to the crews. Everybody just knew in their hearts what had happened. And they were running, getting their gear, getting the aircraft cranked up. And I would estimate only about three and a half to four minutes passed before we had both aircraft in the air, and on the scene over at the Pentagon from the time the aircraft hit it. So that was pretty much the initial response.
- Sgt. Ron Galey: We decided before we even left the ground that my crew would remain in the air, the second crew would land — the second aircraft would land — their crew would deploy, and assess the need for further medevacs, and that type of thing. And that's what we did.
- Sgt. Ron Galey: I guess on the third or fourth orbit around the Pentagon, as we were getting reports from our ground people initially that there were going to be twenty-two patients to be flown out, and we were going to need more helicopters. We were trying to arrange for that. In the middle of all that, the air traffic controller called me on the radio, and said, we're getting so much smoke in the tower we can't function up here. And they turned the air traffic control space over to us.
- Mark Schoepfle: Wow.

- Sgt. Ron Galey: And I was told to contact NORAD from that point on, which I did. The first crew that had landed had loaded the first two patients on and had departed toward the burn center. And they asked us to come in and land to pick up, possibly, more patients. Three had been flown out by now, and we did. As I was landing, I was being notified by NORAD that they had an unauthorized aircraft inbound from the Pennsylvania area, with the estimated time of arrival approximately twenty minutes into D.C. So, we were having some discussions — crew discussions, you know, what we should do. We decided we'd take our chances, and stay there, and do what we came there to do. We found out that essentially everybody else that was going to be medevacked out died. They weren't viable patients. And —
- Mark Schoepfle: You had these twenty-two that were down there — I think the number you said was — you had been told twenty-two patients?
- Sgt. Ron Galey: Twenty-two patients initially, and then eleven patients once we were landing. And of the eleven, the only three that were actually viable were flown out already, and the other eight were dead.
- Mark Schoepfle: I see.
- Sgt. Ron Galey: So, from that point on, my crew, we assumed the posture of command and control of the air space around there. We lifted and started coordinating other aircraft coming into the area. And in the middle of that — now we're about an hour and a half into the scenario — the chief of the Arlington County Fire Department requested us to land so he could go up in the aircraft, and direct his fire units in fighting the fire, which was out of control, and being very stubborn, very difficult for them to get to. So, we had him in the aircraft for about another hour while he directed his firefighting efforts from the air. And after that we came back, refueled, and actually stayed here, because there was a lot of military aircraft starting to come in. Air space was getting crowded. We got two requests — one from the FBI, one from the Secret Service — to go back up and give them video downlink to the command center of the incident. So, we did that for about an hour. Then we took up some FBI agents, and some Department of Defense people out of the Secretary of Defense's office so they could assess the damage and such.
- Sgt. Ron Galey: And that pretty much wrapped up the immediate response for that. But for the rest of that day, we concerned ourselves with security — further security threats. Tracking down U-Haul vans, Ryder trucks — you can imagine. Just anything capable of carrying a bomb we were locating, identifying, and directing ground units into. So, they were — every truck in the city was stopped and searched.

- Sgt. Ron Galey: Then from that point on we started doing bridge controls. Checking under all the bridges, the approaches to the city.
- Sgt. Ron Galey: And then the Secret Service gave us a request of they wanted an aircraft in the air 24 hours a day; constantly, from that point on, over the top of the White — in the P56, checking on the Memorials, the White House, the Capitol. And that's what we did for two days. We would relieve each other on station up in the air.
- Mark Schoepfle: How was that done? You'd relieve each other on station up in the air?
- Sgt. Ron Galey: Yes. One aircraft relieved the other aircraft, and it would come back.
- Mark Schoepfle: Oh, okay. I thought that somehow, they were switching personnel in the air. But that's in the movies. Okay.
- Sgt. Ron Galey: So that went on for about two days. And then we started backing down slowly but surely. But we had just almost continuous monitoring of all the memorials, all the high — what we consider high park areas.
- Mark Schoepfle: Then what?
- Sgt. Ron Galey: Then boredom.
- Mark Schoepfle: Boredom, meaning?
- Sgt. Ron Galey: Boredom meaning just constant patrols. Once an hour we were going up and checking all the river bridges, all the memorials, all, you know, the Pentagon, Arlington Cemetery, Mount Vernon. Just anything and everything we, or our bosses could think of could be potential targets for someone. And, you know, you just — your imagination, I guess, would control what the end of that might be. But it was — we were doing it 24 hours a day, 7 days a week for about a month. I think in that three-week period we flew 150 hours of flight time, which is a lot of flight time.
- Mark Schoepfle: What's the usual?
- Sgt. Ron Galey: Oh, for three weeks, maybe 50 hours. So, it was three times the amount of flight time.
- Mark Schoepfle: Okay. So, boredom, basically?
- Sgt. Ron Galey: After three days the adrenaline rush left you. Just tedious, repetitious patrols. Kind of boredom and frustration, because we really didn't know what we were looking for, or who we were looking for. The FBI had not come out with the list yet of suspects. Then when they finally did, we had quite a long list of vehicles and such to look for. You know, that helped out.
- Mark Schoepfle: When did that come out? I forgot.

- Sgt. Ron Galey: That came out about two weeks into the scenario.
- Mark Schoepfle: About the time it hit the papers. To keep asking the question, you said, I had this time in which you were just sort of doing these boring, tedious kind of patrols, and you didn't know what you were exactly looking for. Then this list came out that helped you sort of zero in on what to do. What happened then?
- Sgt. Ron Galey: Well, it was — we had these vehicles to look for now. I mean, we were looking for specific things. We didn't — we didn't find any of them. Some of the ground units found two or three up in Maryland, but we didn't locate any of those. But we were getting the Joint Operations Center, that's called the — nicknamed the JOC, which is located downtown, took over the coordination of the whole event, and all the intelligence was being fed to them, and they would feed it out to us. If they wanted — for instance, three days after the Pentagon attack, they called here and said, we have a report. We want you to go up and find three Ryder trucks coming from Richmond, headed towards D.C. They're in a convoy. We want them found and stopped. But that's all the information they would give us. We found them. We found them down in Quantico. They were stopped, identified, and as far as I know, nothing came of that. That's the type of thing we were getting every couple hours or so.
- Sgt. Ron Galey: The Joint Operations Center would call, and say, look, we have an orange and white Ryder truck coming down from Frederick, Maryland, and we think he's using 70. It's got Pennsylvania tags on it. Go up and find it. We need to have that stopped and checked. So, it was numerous examples of that type of thing over the next week or so.
- Mark Schoepfle: Okay. Then after this — I'm sensing this to be kind of a phase in which you were sort of going out, and looking for specific vehicles that you were warned about?
- Sgt. Ron Galey: Right.
- Mark Schoepfle: Was there another phase that came after that? What happened then?
- Sgt. Ron Galey: Well, as we got further and further away from the 11th, things started ratcheting down little by little. We weren't doing the hourly patrols anymore.
- Mark Schoepfle: When did they stop?

- Sgt. Ron Galey: They stopped about two weeks after the 11th. And we were pretty much responding to incident — or responding to requests from the Joint Operations Center, or the FBI, or Secret Service. I mean, we were assisting so many different agencies during that time. FBI, Secret Service, Department of Defense. Whoever. We're talking about the 81st Airborne, picked up a Green Beret Commander, because they took over some of the security at the Pentagon.
- Sgt. Ron Galey: And the reason they kept using our air assets over here is A) we're the only ones who had permission to fly in the air space, other than a military flight. B) we're the only law enforcement with that kind of authority that they needed. And I guess C) we had an aircraft big enough, and capable enough to do what they wanted to have done. So. Nobody — which is very unusual — no one asked who's going to pay for anything during that time, which was kind of interesting. Usually it's, well, who's going to pay for that? Who's going to pay for this? It was an interesting couple, two, three weeks of nobody cared who was going to pay for what. We just did it. I know now that they're caring who's paying for what, but —
- Mark Schoepfle: They're caring quite a bit?
- Sgt. Ron Galey: They're caring quite a bit. But that's not my problem.
- Mark Schoepfle: Was there a point — okay, you were responding to all these requests — but at the same time gradually ratcheting down. You sort of got to a point where you were just sort of responding to the various requests?
- Sgt. Ron Galey: Right.
- Mark Schoepfle: Was there a point at which you completed ratcheting down?
- Sgt. Ron Galey: Did we ever fall — if you're asking, did we ever fall back into the way we operated prior to the 11th? No. Several things have changed permanently. Prior to the 11th we operated with a two-man crew: a pilot, and a paramedic. Now we operate — the aircraft goes out of here with three people on board the aircraft. We found that to be optimal. Indispensable, actually, for doing what we needed to do. Those are large aircraft, they're very technically complicated, and the third person was proving to be invaluable. And so, we made that a permanent switch.
- Mark Schoepfle: Okay. You said you had a pilot and a paramedic. What was this third person doing?
- Sgt. Ron Galey: The third person, essentially, would be operating radios, and looking in the infrared —
- Mark Schoepfle: Like searching?

- Sgt. Ron Galey: Another pair of eyes.
- Mark Schoepfle: Do you still have that same crew? [Phone rings.]
- Sgt. Ron Galey: Yes Sir [to the phone; hangs up]. Flight profiles have changed. There are things we check more carefully. Like we're still checking the river bridges. [Several phones ringing]. Still checking the river bridges, still checking memorials and parks that we just never checked before. Looking for any kind of — any truck that's parked anywhere near a memorial. We see it, we'll direct ground units in to check them very thoroughly. So that type of thing. Those things we just never did before.
- Mark Schoepfle: When you're saying memorials you had never checked before, what were some of the ones you had done before?
- Sgt. Ron Galey: Well, I mean, Arlington Cemetery has been, for whatever reason, a target for mentally unstable people. They come in there, and try to commit suicide at Kennedy's gravesite, or the Tomb of the Unknown. And we check that with the infrared every now and then at the request of the Fort Myer. We checked that, and we checked a few other things, but we never particularly looked at like the Lincoln Memorial, the Jefferson Memorial, the Roosevelt Memorials for somebody who was purposely trying to blow them up. We never thought about that, you know? The Washington Monument.
- Mark Schoepfle: At the Roosevelt you're just in there to swim —
- Sgt. Ron Galey: Yes, exactly. So, anything of a suspicious nature. If something doesn't look like it's belongs there. It might be — a simple — for instance at the Roosevelt Memorial. Somebody had driven a closed-in golf cart up next to it. And it turned out to be a stolen golf cart that for whatever reason got up there. But those type of things, you know, is what you're looking for.
- Mark Schoepfle: What prompted you to patrol these more? I mean, was it just a greater incidence of things going on or were you just — you said check it out. You were told to —
- Sgt. Ron Galey: First and foremost, we were told to. That came right down from the Secretary's office. She wanted those memorials to be looked at.
- Mark Schoepfle: Has a lot of this paid off in any way, I mean, other than stolen golf carts, and things like that?
- Sgt. Ron Galey: Has any terrorist turned up? No.
- Mark Schoepfle: Generally, then —
- Sgt. Ron Galey: Has crime gone down tremendously since the 11th around here? Oh yeah.

- Mark Schoepfle: Has it really?
- Sgt. Ron Galey: You've got cops everywhere. There's park policemen all over the grounds of the Lincoln, and the Washington Monument, and the White House area. And, you know, most of those are nuisance crimes. Car bustings, strongarm robberies, sexual assaults have gone way down since then. Are the criminals being polite about it because of the 11th? No. It's because we have such a vastly increased police presence around those areas now. And we can't keep it up. In fact, those are being scaled back now because moneywise it's just drained the department. So that's being cut back now. We couldn't keep up the flight time because it was draining our budget. So, all those things are starting to be cut back because there's no funding for them. There's no money. You can't do it forever. We don't have enough people.
- Mark Schoepfle: So, am I sensing correctly a lot of sort of the return to normalcy simply includes the fact that you can't keep this heightened state up for very long?
- Sgt. Ron Galey: Exactly right. Exactly right.
- Mark Schoepfle: What about other aspects of law enforcement? I mean, the reason I'm mentioning this is I've been getting some information from the people that are patrolling outside the parks and monuments that crime has actually been going up, because people are manning these station positions, and can't be out patrolling. Are you getting that impression as well?
- Sgt. Ron Galey: Well, that's an absolute fact. You rob from Peter to pay Paul.
- Mark Schoepfle: That's just what I was driving at, yeah.
- Sgt. Ron Galey: And that's exactly what's happening. We're taking officers from, say, up on the Washington Parkway, we're sticking them downtown on overtime beats. That's exactly — exactly right.
- Sgt. Ron Galey: But again, all that's starting to go back to some sort of normalcy, because they can't afford to do it anymore. The money is — I don't know. I've heard various figures bandied about. \$90,000 a day with all the overtime. Whether those are accurate or not, I'm not sure. I know it's got to be hugely expensive for the department to be doing what they were doing.
- Mark Schoepfle: I would imagine. Well, beyond these immediate times, now that things are ratcheted down, they are actually getting back to normal, simply because nobody has got the funding to keep them going any further than that.
- Sgt. Ron Galey: Nothing else has happened.
- Mark Schoepfle: Okay.

- Sgt. Ron Galey: When the first car bomb goes off in the city — God forbid — it will be ratcheted back up. That's just the way D.C. is. It's human nature. If it goes off, if an incident occurs again that hurts or kills somebody, it will go — it will be ratcheted back up, and we'll just have to see what happens from there.
- Mark Schoepfle: Looking back on this situation, are there any kinds of lessons, or — I guess if this were to happen, heaven forbid, again, would things be done differently this time? Are there any ways in which that might be?
- Sgt. Ron Galey: Not from an aviation standpoint. We were well-prepared. For the role that we played, we were very well-prepared for it. And I would have to cite the Air Florida incident back in 1982 that we were instrumental in, for preparing us for what we did on the 11th. I can assure you there's very few places in this country where you're going to get that kind of aircraft response with that amount of crew, with that amount of capability that quickly.
- Mark Schoepfle: Within less than five minutes.
- Sgt. Ron Galey: That's right.
- Mark Schoepfle: From what you're saying.
- Sgt. Ron Galey: We learned from Air Florida. We counted on the expertise, on two guys in an aircraft that weren't trained, weren't — the aircraft wasn't made for that type of thing. They pulled off, and saved five people, just because they were that good, and they were willing to put themselves at risk that much. And we just swore from that point on we would never get caught short again. So, if that happened today, we're ready. We're ready.
- Mark Schoepfle: You're saying that at that time you had two pilots who were particularly — I mean, two people, apparently, who had the nerve to get out there and do this kind of thing. Was that the change you're talking about?
- Sgt. Ron Galey: Yes. Well, let's get the equipment that we need to do this. Let's get the helicopter that we need. And we went from an aircraft that cost \$500,000 to one that cost 6 million dollars.
- Mark Schoepfle: Okay.
- Sgt. Ron Galey: Okay? We went from a rope that you threw out of the helicopter to a \$250,000 state-of-the-art voice system. We went from not training our paramedics to even get out of the aircraft to do that thing, to mandatory swift water rescue classes. Where they're in the water — they're coming down on the cable, they get in the water, and they're learning how to rescue people, and getting certified in that.

Sgt. Ron Galey: Our pilots, part of the training now is special use training where they're doing hoisting, and rappelling, and long line work, and that type of thing. So yeah. Since Air Florida — Air Florida was a pivotal point that prepared us for the 11th. Are we prepared for anything that they can throw at us? I wouldn't want to be stupid enough to say that. But are we well-prepared for a terrorist incident from the Park Service aviation assets in Washington, D.C.? I would have to say absolutely we are. You know, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week you've got a three-man crew with this kind of aviation asset, with these aircraft. And as long as the financial commitment's being made by the Park Service and Park Police to keep that asset up and running, it will be there. And it's proven. We were there for Air Florida. We were there for the Washington Monument takeover. We were there for the — when the Metropolitan Police Headquarters was taken over, and all those people were shot. We did all the medivacs out of that. We did the medivacs from the Capitol when Capitol policemen were shot over there. We've always been there. And one of the reasons — you know, they say location, location, location. You know, we've got a great location right here.

Mark Schoepfle: For all these things to be happening.

Sgt. Ron Galey: Well, to respond to them in a very timely manner; within less than five minutes. You know, we're designated as the medivac aircraft for the President, if something happened at the White House. Secret Service needs him medevacked to Walter Reed, or Navy, or whatever, this is where they call. So that type of thing, it never hurts you.

Mark Schoepfle: Did you have anything to do communication-wise, with some of the, for example, the communications center at Shenandoah? Did you communicate with any of the other parks, or any of the other regions?

Sgt. Ron Galey: No.

Mark Schoepfle: Okay. This was all local.

Sgt. Ron Galey: All local. All of our concerns were local. You know, we had to take in — we would talk directly to the FBI, directly to the Secret Service, directly to the military. We had all the immediate concerns here, and we were being directed by our communications center, who was the command center for us, and by the Joint Operations Center. When I say Joint, Joint Operations Center has US Park Police representation, Metropolitan. All the local jurisdictions are in that command center. When something happens like that, that's where they go.

Mark Schoepfle: But it's being nicknamed JOC.

Sgt. Ron Galey: JOC.

- Mark Schoepfle: So, it has actually police — just all of the police systems throughout this region.
- Sgt. Ron Galey: Right. FBI, Secret Service, DEA, ATF, Park Police Metropolitan Police, Arlington, US Capitol Police, Metro Police. There's a representative from all of those major departments. And what they'll do is if the incident happened, like it did in Virginia, then they'll have Arlington police come in, and probably Virginia state police. And these are all appointed representatives. So, if something happens, they get a phone call, or a page, and they know where to respond to it. And JOC was up and running probably 20 minutes after the first — after the plane hit. That's when we first heard from them. We started getting directions from them immediately. They have a big huge screen TV that they get downlink from our aircraft on — shooting on. First thing we heard within 20 minutes of being there was, turn on your downlink. We want to see what's going on.
- Mark Schoepfle: Yes. I was gathering that one of the things that was very important was you had — other than the commercial news people, you were one of the people with a readily available ground link.
- Sgt. Ron Galey: Mm-hmm, right. And the news people weren't allowed into the air, so we were it.
- Mark Schoepfle: Right. So, what kinds of things do you figure we need to do in the future?
- Sgt. Ron Galey: Well, as any incident of this size and this scope that I've been involved in, whether the Air Florida, or a train crash, or that type of thing — bus accidents that we've been involved in — the one thing that seemingly always is troublesome is communication between the various entities that are involved. Getting common frequencies, getting common terms, those type of things being worked out. Now that day, we ended up being a clearing center for a lot of the ground units that couldn't talk to each other —
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- START OF SIDE 2
- Mark Schoepfle: So, you have that capability now and you'd like to get it better?
- Sgt. Ron Galey: There's always a problem. It could always be better.
- Mark Schoepfle: Just give me an example how it might be better.
- Sgt. Ron Galey: Well, by having a regional meeting, or going through a regional source such as the Council of Governments and establishing common radio frequencies for — like — fire, ground operations, police operations. Particularly police department.

- Sgt. Ron Galeley: Fire departments work well with each other. Police departments typically don't work well with each other. They typically don't share frequencies, and they don't share common languages, they don't even share common codes. So, a 1020 code for our department is: what's your location? But a 1020 in Arlington County means a disabled vehicle on the roadway. So those type of things; commonality of language and a radio frequency to communicate a little bit better would be a good thing to do.
- Mark Schoepfle: What else? Communication's one of the things.
- Sgt. Ron Galeley: Well, and again one of the things for us is we're trying to get this three-man crew that I was speaking of earlier as a permanent fixture here. And that always means that the Chief has to make a decision to give us more manpower to do that. We're working hard on that. We think we've proven the worth of that, so we're trying to get that changed. Believe it or not, there was so much that went right that day. It's a little difficult to really think about some of the things that went wrong. I mean, I saw so many things working out well. And the only thing that stands out in my mind is communications problems. Not being able to talk — one entity not being able to talk to another.
- Mark Schoepfle: Well, backtracking on that a little bit too. You mentioned some of these major events. We talked about the Air Florida incident.
- Sgt. Ron Galeley: That was before e-mail. Those were back in the days nobody could talk to anybody else. Literally if you wanted to — if a command structure up on the 14th Street Bridge wanted to talk to the people down on the river side, they'd have to send a runner down there to do it.
- Mark Schoepfle: A runner?
- Sgt. Ron Galeley: Yeah. They didn't have any kind of radio communications between each other. D.C. Fire couldn't talk to Arlington. Arlington couldn't talk to the Park Police. Park Police couldn't talk to Arlington County Police. And it was just a fiasco.
- Mark Schoepfle: That's astounding. What about some of the other incidents? You mentioned the Washington Monument demonstration.
- Sgt. Ron Galeley: No, no, no. Washington Monument when [Norman] Mayer drove his panel truck, it was full of explosives, going to blow it up.
- Mark Schoepfle: Oh yeah.
- Sgt. Ron Galeley: Unfortunately, our SWAT teams ended up killing him because he — you know, we couldn't prove or disprove the fact that he had explosives in that van. And he said he was going to drive it off. And we had already made a decision, our command staff made the decision he's not moving.

- Sgt. Ron Galey: He's as safe as he could be in this city next to that monument. If he moves it out into the populated city, then we've got a real problem. So, they're going to take him out. And that's what they did. We were up flying for that whole thing. And in fact, we were flying in ordinance people from — we went down to, I always forget, AP Hill. Fort AP Hill. Got some ordinance, Army ordinance experts to come up and try — we took some visual readings of the van, then imagined if it was filled with certain types of explosives that he said he had. Remember, this guy had a background in ordinance. So, he could very well do — he had the capability of doing what he said he could do. We just didn't know if he had it, had the explosives in that truck. But they said he could — he wouldn't have taken down the monument, but he'd have blown a big chunk out of it. That's not what they were worried about. The monument could be repaired and replaced.
- Mark Schoepfle: It was blowing it up elsewhere downtown that was going to be the problem.
- Sgt. Ron Galey: Right. Killing people was going to be the problem.
- Mark Schoepfle: When did this occur? This was before I moved up here.
- Sgt. Ron Galey: This was in 19 — you know what? I don't know if that was before or after Air Florida. I think it was in — it was in the eighties.
- Mark Schoepfle: Okay. I wasn't around here then.
- Sgt. Ron Galey: Just as a police point of history, it's not something we're particularly proud of, but it's the longest sniper shot in the history of — actually of any police department in the world. It's the longest sniper shot to take an individual out. That shot was taken from the edge on top of the roof of the Commerce Building.
- Mark Schoepfle: Wow. How many yards was that?
- Sgt. Ron Galey: It was 300 and some yards, 308.
- Mark Schoepfle: No kidding.
- Sgt. Ron Galey: Yep. Hit him twice in the head.
- Mark Schoepfle: Okay. And you benefited from this by — it caused you to coordinate with the other police departments? Or how?
- Sgt. Ron Galey: You know, well, you develop an incident command system. Okay? And unfortunately, just like anything else, you have to go through numerous incidents that involve debacles of some sort before your incident command system finally starts to develop, and you adjust it to each incident.

Sgt. Ron Galey: And hopefully you'll come up with something that you can generally, in a short order, custom fit to whatever's going to go on. And I saw the incident command system for the Arlington Fire Department working very well that day at the Pentagon. And that's what I'm saying. I saw so many things going right. Much more so than things that stick in my mind that went wrong.

Mark Schoepfle: Well, that's what I'm really trying to bring out here because what you're describing here, to me at least, is that things went right precisely because you were prepared. You were prepared because you learned from these other incidents. And that's not obvious to people, you know, outside of the service, or really, not to mention, outside of government. So that's why I'm trying to sort of stress on some of these things, because they're not immediately, you know, World Trade Center type incidents [phones ring]. They are, you know — they fed up to it. That's why things went right as well as why they went wrong. Are there other incidences like these that sort of, you know, events that helped build up toward this day?

Sgt. Ron Galey: Well, other than Air Florida, and some of the big violent demonstrations that we've been involved in over the years, nothing quite like this particular incident. And we're just now starting to attend meetings that are after action, and after incident type things. Let's get together and see what we can do differently, and such. And communications always seems to be the —

Mark Schoepfle: The major one.

Sgt. Ron Galey: The major one.

Mark Schoepfle: I gather that's particularly the way it was with these demonstrations. I mean, that's certainly what I was reading in the Post.

Sgt. Ron Galey: Mm-hmm.

Mark Schoepfle: Could you go into some detail — I know this may be a bit of a drag, but could you go into detail on how some of the demonstrations contributed?

Sgt. Ron Galey: Well — and again, I'm looking at it from an aerial observation aspect, okay? Some of the earlier IMF demonstrations we found the capability of downlinking the group locations to the JOC was invaluable. I mean, the demonstrators — our intelligence coming back from the demonstrators is they were aghast at how every time that they would take a turn down an alley, or down a street that there would be a bunch of officers there to meet them. They couldn't figure out how they knew that. How they knew to move around. Well, it's because the police professionals were seeing every move, they made from a thousand feet up in the air. And so how does that relate to the Pentagon?

- Sgt. Ron Galeley: Well, we did the same thing for the fire departments. We were downlinking all that information. We gave them a photo receiver down on the ground, and they could see everything that they were doing.
- Mark Schoepfle: While they were doing it.
- Sgt. Ron Galeley: While they were doing it. Commonality of frequencies. During the demonstration everybody's — the Park Police, Metropolitan Police, Secret Service, everybody's talking — has the capability of talking on a similar channel. So, it's invaluable.
- Mark Schoepfle: Well, we've gone over, you know, what happened immediately after — at the incident. We went over the next several days when your patrols were increased. We talked about the ratcheting down. We talked about when you were sort of going out and hitting these areas as they were needed. Going out on these assignments. We've been talking about sort of the post-ratcheting down where there have been some of the permanent changes, such as the heightened awareness, the three people on the flight, any of these things. These pretty much cover the questions I had about the incidences, and what happened connected with this. I think the information you've given me here about how all this kind of contributed, how these things built up is very interesting. Is there anything else that I should consider that I've forgotten to bring up, or forgotten to ask questions about?
- Sgt. Ron Galeley: Well, one question that you haven't asked that your protégé asked was: what recognition, if any, have you gotten for your participation that day? And actually, we got recognition from the news media. We got recognition from the Arlington County Fire Department. A lot from the Department of Defense. A lot of accolades from them. A lot of thank yous, and such.
- Sgt. Ron Galeley: Not one from our own department. Nothing. Nothing from the Park Service at all, which is kind of interesting. Now, what we consider to be the greatest thank you, I think, occurred from the Secretary herself. She insisted on thanking everybody from the group. So as far as I'm concerned personally, just speaking for me, I don't really care if the Park Police or Park Service ever did anything, said anything about it. I mean, having your top boss recognize you was a nice thing. And the Director did too, actually. So that meant a lot to the crews here. But we think a lot of the Secretary. We like her a lot. So that helps too. Not that we didn't like Babbitt, or any of the others, but she's just a down to earth person to us. We've taken her on some flights before.

- Mark Schoepfle: Good. That's good to know. And I hope that what we can do with this is to get the document out too. Get more of the word out on this, get more of the detail out.
- Sgt. Ron Galey: Well, yeah, you know, it's — there's probably aren't a lot of people in the Park Service right now that know that, you know, you had park policemen doing this at the Pentagon. You also had them up there at the World Trade Center. You know, you had other Park Service people involved up in New York also. I mean, we had two motormen, which you already have, run into the Pentagon, and effect some rescues. So — and I'm sure there aren't too many people, say, out in the Grand Canyon, that knows that.
- Mark Schoepfle: Right.
- Sgt. Ron Galey: It might be some source of pride for them. I mean, who knows? I don't know. I can't look into their heads and see what they're doing. They probably had their own concerns at that time too.
- Mark Schoepfle: Well, there are a lot of staff that are volunteering back and forth for firefighting, and that's one of the big issues. And people volunteering back and forth to help out on the World Trade Center as well. And it's an issue of recognition. People wanted to get out and do these things from what I've been hearing.
- Sgt. Ron Galey: Right. Wanted to do something.
- Mark Schoepfle: To do something, yeah.
- Sgt. Ron Galey: Hopefully — and surprisingly to me, we all would have bet a large amount of money that that was not — that something else would have occurred within a few weeks of all those incidents, and it has not. So to me it's real encouraging that the terrorists perhaps don't have as many assets as they claim to have, or as much power as they claim to be able to wield; or I think we would have heard from them by now. I definitely think we'll hear from them again in some way. Something eventually is going to slip through the security net. It just has to, just the odds are. But hopefully we'll be ready for it.
- Mark Schoepfle: What else have I forgotten? I'm glad you brought that one up.
- Sgt. Ron Galey: I can't think of anything else.
- Mark Schoepfle: Well, very good. Any questions about what we're doing that I haven't answered?

- Sgt. Ron Gale: No. I think it's a good thing. I mean, if nothing else, people in the Park Service will know what their own kind have been doing or did on that day. That's really important. Like I said, I don't think there's a lot of people within the Park Service community that realize just how much and how varied the support was within the Park Service.
- Mark Schoepfle: Yeah. You mean all the different things that you were doing?
- Sgt. Ron Gale: Not only us, but rangers coming from Grand Canyon up — you rotated around. I don't think that word has really gotten out real well.
- Mark Schoepfle: Yeah. As I've been getting around to talking to people in Manassas, or out in Catocin, and Antietam, I mean, people were pouring in to lend a hand on this thing. It's very impressive.
- Sgt. Ron Gale: Right.
- Mark Schoepfle: Are there other people, particularly with this issue of recognition in mind, are there other people I should be talking to?
- Sgt. Ron Gale: Not that I know of. I mean, we are such a focused little group here, I wouldn't be a great source to tell you who else was involved within the Park Service that day.
- Mark Schoepfle: Well, I mean, if there are people from within your group that had experiences like that, or from others that you happen to meet while you're out there you might run into, I'd be grateful to find out about it.
- Sgt. Ron Gale: Okay, I'll do that.
- Mark Schoepfle: We have not been given a strict deadline.
- Sgt. Ron Gale: You should talk to Major Wilkins up in New York. He would be a valuable asset for you to talk to. He's in charge of the field office up there. I can tell you, because he is a personal friend of mine, that's a man, even though he is the head honcho, he gets down in the trenches with his troops. So, he would be — and he coordinated all the incoming Park Service help up there. So, he might be interesting to talk to.
- Mark Schoepfle: Definitely, definitely. So, if the people in New York don't catch him, I'll be up there to do it.
- Sgt. Ron Gale: He's a pretty interesting guy. He's an attorney. That's about it.
- Mark Schoepfle: Sure, great. How long — I think you had mentioned you've been with the Park Service for quite a while?
- Sgt. Ron Gale: I've been with the Federal government for 36 years.
- Mark Schoepfle: Wow. How long with the Park Service?

Sgt. Ron Galey: 30 — April 15th, this coming April.

Mark Schoepfle: All around this area? Or have you been —

Sgt. Ron Galey: Right here in D.C. my entire life. I was one of those few people that you'll meet that was born and raised in the district.

Mark Schoepfle: No kidding.

Sgt. Ron Galey: Yeah. Born in G.W. Hospital and raised over in Northeast. Lived in Northeast.

Mark Schoepfle: Good. Well, for the Park Service that is unusual, considering that I've seen people getting rotated all over the place.

Sgt. Ron Galey: Right. But this is the only aviation asset we have in the Park Police is right here in D.C. So that accounts for where I stay right now. I would love to go out and start an aviation unit out in San Francisco, which is in dire need of one. But money, you know, these things are expensive, very expensive to operate. They just haven't come up with the money yet. But they will. They will. I think you'll see a Park Service aircraft out there.

Mark Schoepfle: You said you were with the government before?

Sgt. Ron Galey: I was — prior to coming on this job I was with Health, Education, and Welfare for three years, and the Navy a few years before that. I had a pretty interesting job at HEW. I worked at National Institutes of Health. Do you know what an extra-corporeal circulation technician is?

Mark Schoepfle: I can put the pieces together, but it would be better if you told me.

Sgt. Ron Galey: Essentially, I ran the heart-lung machine. I was one of the first five heart-lung technicians in the country. So that was what I did before I came on the job. The reason I — I discovered that I cannot stand to be in an office. And I think the one thing I — talking to Park Service people, just about anywhere I've ever gone, they all share that same thing. They can't stand not being outside at some point in time. I just found I've got to be outside. I've got to out, you know, out and about. We were in the OR from 4 in the morning until 8, 9 at night sometimes. That drove me nuts. I just couldn't. [Inaudible], the money was good. See ya later.

Mark Schoepfle: Yeah. That's great. So, you're going to be sticking around here?

Sgt. Ron Galey: I'm retiring.

Mark Schoepfle: I was going to say, that's coming up in April.

Sgt. Ron Galey: Yeah. I'm out of here. See ya.

Mark Schoepfle: Are you going to go someplace, or just stick around here?

Sgt. Ron Galey: I don't know. My wife is a network administrator at Walter Reed, and she likes her job a lot. So, a lot of it depends on how she feels about it. And if we go anywhere, we'll probably stay around here.

Mark Schoepfle: Yes, we are too.

Sgt. Ron Galey: We really like South Bethany a lot, so we'll probably end up settling around here somewhere.

Mark Schoepfle: Great, great. Well, thanks a lot.

Sgt. Ron Galey: Sure.

END OF TAPE