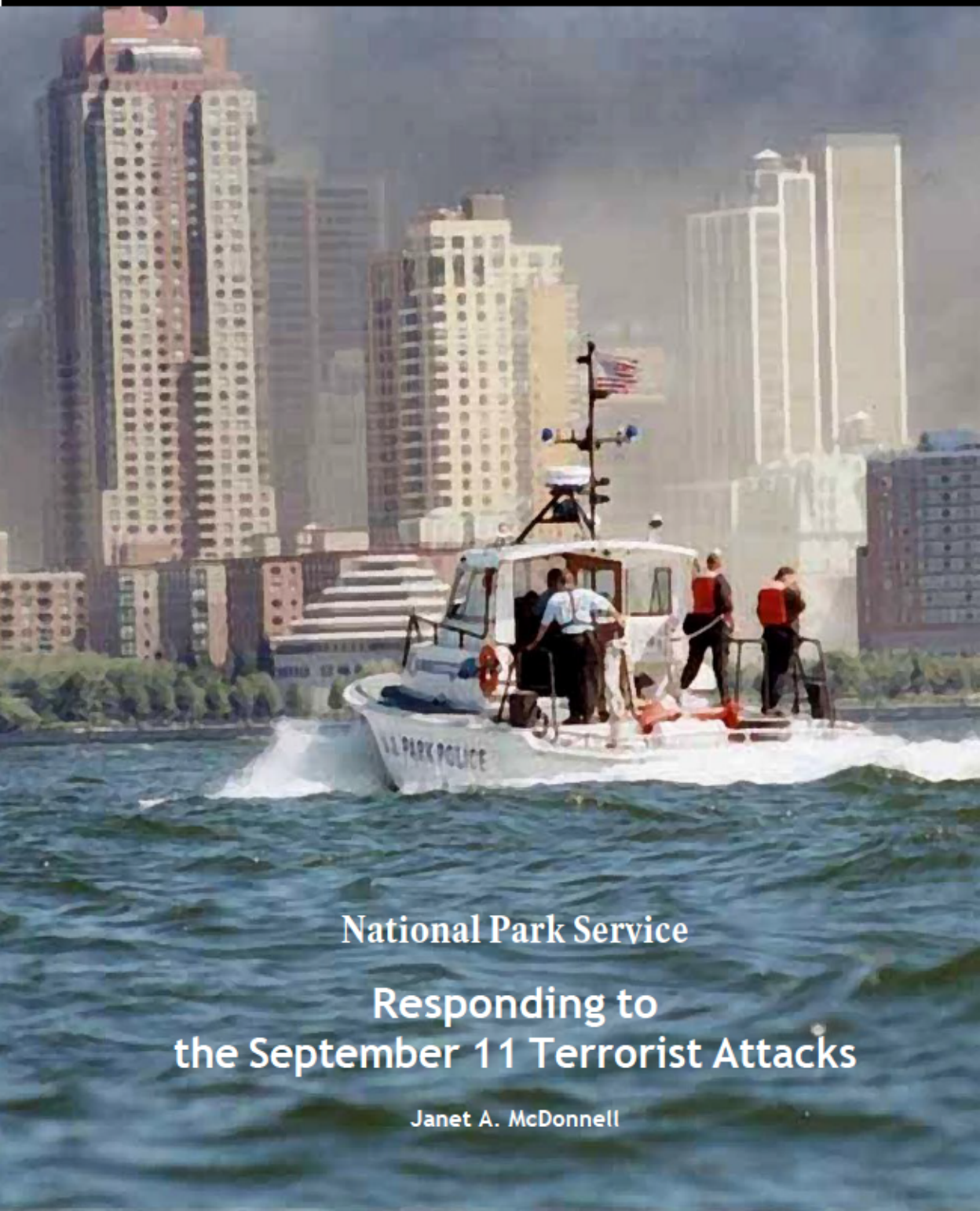


National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

National Center for Cultural Resources



National Park Service
Responding to
the September 11 Terrorist Attacks

Janet A. McDonnell



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The National Park Service:
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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

McDonnell, Janet A., 1952-

The National Park Service : responding to the September 11 terrorist attacks /
by Janet A. McDonnell.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

1. United States. National Park Service. 2. September 11 Terrorist Attacks, 2001.

I. Title.

SB482.A4M338 2004

973.931--dc22

2004026454

Cover: U. S. Park Police patrol New York Harbor after the attacks.

Inside cover, Maj. Tom Wilkins, U.S. Park Police, holds the American flag during rescue operations at Ground Zero.

The National Park Service:

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the September 11 Terrorist Attacks**



Janet A. McDonnell
National Park Service
Department of the Interior

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Preface

The terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, and their aftermath left few Americans unaffected. As the federal agency with primary responsibility for protecting and preserving many of the nation's most significant cultural and historic sites, the National Park Service had a unique perspective and role in responding to this tragedy. The most profound personal impact within the Service was no doubt on those employees who either witnessed the attacks firsthand or were directly involved in the immediate response, but every national park was affected to one degree or another.

Park Service historians and ethnographers quickly recognized the need to record and preserve the experiences and perspectives of those who had witnessed or responded to the attacks. They conducted more than a hundred oral history interviews with Service employees throughout the country, in parks, regional offices, and the Washington headquarters. These unique interviews reveal the memories and interpretation of the event and aftermath in the words of those directly affected. In addition to conducting interviews, there was also a need to document and evaluate the official response of the National Park Service. With that in mind, I began to research the following questions: How did Service managers and staff respond at the national level and in the regional and park offices? What actions did they take and why? How did the attacks and their aftermath affect the way the Service and the parks operated? How did they affect park resources and the allocation of those resources? What impact did the attacks have on the way park staffs viewed their jobs and the way Americans viewed their parks? And finally, what lessons could the Service learn from this experience? What did the Service's response say about its values and responsibilities?

Simply put, my goal was to foster a deeper appreciation and understanding for the way the Service and its employees responded to the attacks and to create a detailed historical record of this unique and significant period in the Service's history. This history is also designed to provide

View of the Statue of Liberty overlooking New York Harbor.

Service managers and policymakers with information they might find useful in responding to future emergencies.

Writing this history presented some unique challenges. Many of the major decisions about the response operations were made in phone conversations or in meetings with little or no written record. A scarcity of written records meant a greater reliance on the oral history interviews that National Park Service historians and ethnographers conducted. This approach involved a certain amount of risk: memories can be faulty especially after experiencing such a traumatic event; oral accounts can sometimes be confusing or lack specific details.

The September 11 event was truly unique in nature and scope. For the first time in our history, American commercial airplanes were used as terrorist weapons. Never before had a terrorist attack within the United States resulted in so many casualties. The resulting story is complex, involving a broad range of perspectives, activities, and locations. When dealing with such a traumatic and chaotic event, even determining an accurate sequence of events can be difficult. Memories are powerful. Witnesses were often more likely to recall vividly their sense of shock and fear, the acrid smell of burning debris, or their images of wounded victims than to recall factual details. Yet both types of information are important for the historical record. “The lived experience is more complex than subsequent interpretations reveal,” explains Mary Marshall Clark, the director of the Oral History Research Office at Columbia University.¹ The personal stories conveyed in the interviews reflect the horror of what witnesses experienced before these stories were turned into a more acceptable narrative.

This history reveals how the event strained Park Service resources, highlighted vulnerabilities in security, and brought into sharp relief the emotional and symbolic power of National Park Service sites, such as Independence Hall, the Statue of Liberty, and Manzanar. It also addresses deeply embedded cultural values. Weaving these threads together proved challenging: there were no historical prototypes or prior research upon which to draw.

Finally, without the perspective of time, it is difficult to interpret the full meaning and impact of the event. Yet it is important to capture personal

stories and operational decisions while memories are fresh. This report provides a snapshot of a moment in time, a preliminary assessment, and it highlights the challenges of balancing security with the Service's statutory obligation to protect resources and provide for public enjoyment of those resources. It reveals the difficulty of making critical decisions in an uncertain and rapidly changing environment and the difficulty of responding to an emergency with a decentralized organizational structure. The goal was not to produce a definitive history of the response but to provide managers with a useful tool and future historians with a foundation upon which they can build.

This history would not have been possible without the tremendous support and cooperation from managers and staff throughout the Service. Early on, the Park Service's Northeast Region recognized the need to record the experiences and perspectives of employees affected by the attacks and launched a systematic effort to do this. Ethnographers Chuck Smythe and Mark Schoepfle conducted dozens of oral history interviews, which became valuable sources for this history. Doris Fanelli, Louis Hutchins, and George Tselos also conducted interviews.

Above all, I am indebted to the dozens of Park Service members who graciously shared their time, experiences, perspectives, and in a few instances, their frustrations and anguish, in oral history interviews with me and other Service historians and ethnographers. Many of their names are listed at the end. Rick Gale, Einar Olsen, Dennis McGinnis, Dennis Burnett, and others not only participated in interviews but also reviewed the draft manuscript and provided comments. Historians Ed Linenthal and Dwight Pitcaithley also reviewed the manuscript and provided thoughtful comments. I am grateful to Lise Sajewski who, using her love of language and considerable editorial skills, did much to improve the manuscript. My sincere thanks to Marcia Axtmann Smith for designing and producing this book with so much skill, creativity, professionalism, and patience. Working and consulting with the individuals mentioned above proved to be a truly rewarding experience.

Introduction

On the morning of September 11, 2001, a group of foreign terrorists launched an unprecedented, well-coordinated attack on the United States using as their weapons four California-bound commercial airliners, each loaded with the maximum amount of jet fuel for its long trip across the country. The first two hijacked planes slammed into the two tallest towers of the World Trade Center in New York City. These stunning 110-story glass-and-steel towers, which soared above the skyline in Lower Manhattan, had served as a major American business and commercial center. The third plane struck the Pentagon, and a fourth crashed in a field eighty miles southeast of Pittsburgh.

At 8:45 a.m. (EST) American Airlines Flight 11 carrying ninety-two people from Boston to Los Angeles crashed into the North Tower of the World Trade Center. Twenty minutes later, United Airlines Flight 175 with sixty-five passengers and crew also heading toward California ripped through the South Tower. At 9:40 a.m. (EST) American Airlines Flight 77, a Boeing 757 commercial airliner carrying sixty-four people and 30,000 pounds of fuel for its long flight from Dulles to Los Angeles, smashed into the west façade of the Pentagon with such force that it penetrated four of the building's five interior rings. The Federal Aviation Administration promptly banned takeoffs nationwide and ordered all flights that were in the air to land at the nearest airport. Then came the alarming news that United Airlines Flight 93 with forty passengers and crew en route to San Francisco had crashed in Shanksville, Pennsylvania. Not long after, reports circulated that this plane had been headed toward Washington, D.C., and heroic passengers had intervened to thwart this plan. Back in New York, shortly before 10:00 a.m. (EST) the South Tower of the World Trade Center crumbled to the ground killing most of those trapped inside and blanketing Lower Manhattan with a thick coat of debris and dust. Approximately a half hour later, the North Tower tumbled down as well. None of the passengers and crews on the planes survived. Thousands of people were injured or killed at the World Trade Center and Pentagon.

In its long history the National Park Service has rarely had to worry about war threatening the safety of its visitors or the integrity of the natural and cultural resources that are under its protection. The terrorist attacks and their aftermath had a profound impact on the national parks—and on the National Park Service and its employees. The attacks reaffirmed the importance of parks as venerated symbols American values and culture. The events, traditions, and values represented at the parks, particularly at the historic sites, took on new resonance for the American public and for employees struggling to come to grips with the nature and scope of the tragedy. The Statue of Liberty, St. Louis Gateway Arch, Liberty Bell, Washington Monument, and the other landmarks that the Service is charged with protecting help define Americans as a people. Yet, at the same time, the attacks exposed these venerated sites as potential targets.

The attacks and the response highlighted the critical role that the Park Service plays in the life of the nation and challenged the agency to reassess and reaffirm its missions, priorities, and resources. A careful study of the way leaders, managers, and staff responded reveals much about Service's culture, values, and responsibilities.

Though it is far too soon to identify and evaluate the long-term impact of the attacks, in some ways September 11 has been a transforming event for the National Park Service. The event prompted changes in the way the Service operates and is organized, and for many, gave the parks new meaning and significance.





Much like the rest of the country, in those first hours Service leaders were stunned by the attacks and struggled to understand the full scope and implications of what had happened.

I. National Park Service's Initial Response

Main Interior Building, Tuesday, September 11, 2001

Rick Gale, chief of the National Park Service's fire aviation emergency response and head of its incident management program, was sitting in Associate Director Richard (Dick) Ring's third floor office in the Department of the Interior's Washington, D.C. headquarters, when a call came in advising Ring to turn on the television. It would prove fortuitous that Gale who normally worked at the National Interagency Fire Center in Boise, Idaho, happened to be in Washington that day. Ring turned on the television just in time to see the second plane strike the World Trade Center in New York City. Gale headed back to his temporary office in the ranger activities division. Not long after, Ring received word that the Pentagon had been struck. He stepped outside onto his small balcony and glancing south saw an ominous cloud of smoke rising in the distance.¹

Meanwhile, a few floors above, the acting chief of the Park Service ranger activities division, Dennis Burnett, was working at his computer when an employee ran down the hallway announcing that a plane had hit one of the World Trade Center towers. Burnett walked down to the vacant office of chief of ranger activities at end of the corridor, where he knew there was a television. After checking the news, he returned to his office. Moments later, he learned of the second plane attack. At that point, Burnett gathered his small staff, which included national law enforcement specialist Maj. Gary Van Horn, U.S. Park Police, and Search and Rescue Emergency Medical Services Coordinator Randall

American flag framed by the rubble at the World Trade Center after the attacks. Above, Pentagon damage.

Around 10:00 a.m. federal authorities ordered government offices closed and approximately 260,000 federal workers in Washington began pouring out into the streets.

Coffman. They headed to the department's law enforcement security office, where they continued to monitor the television news coverage.²

Major Van Horn, an experienced career law enforcement officer, quickly recognized the need to immediately locate the Service's decision-makers and get them to a secure location in case there were incidents in the Washington area. He hurried back to his office and got on his police radio. After learning of the Pentagon attack, Van Horn became concerned about potential threats to the monuments and memorials on the National Mall. He climbed into his police cruiser and quickly drove to each of these monuments and memorials to conduct quick inspections and to make sure that Park Police officers were in position in the event of another attack. He spotted a suspicious package on the Memorial Bridge, a major route in and out of downtown Washington, and waited there until more officers arrived. After assuring himself that the bridge was secured, he returned to the Main Interior Building.³

Meanwhile, Burnett and other employees in Main Interior discovered that they could no longer make outgoing phone calls on either landlines or their cellular phones. Wireless networks had collapsed under the

barrage of calls. When Burnett's daughter called to check on him a half hour after the Pentagon attack, he used this opportunity to establish what would become an important phone link. He asked his daughter to have the Eastern Interagency Coordination Center (EICC), a dispatch center located in Shenandoah National Park, call him. When the center contacted him, he asked the staff to continue calling every twenty minutes so that they could maintain a landline connection. Although phone service was severely restricted, Burnett was able to send an e-mail message to the regional chief rangers and to the dispatch center, informing them that the Washington headquarters had no communications capability.⁴

In his message, Burnett asked the dispatch center to become the agency's "eyes and ears." He directed parks and regions to channel all their messages for the Washington office through the center. Finally, he reported that the department had activated its continuity of operations plan and was relocating people in accordance with that plan. In another message he encouraged regional chief rangers to step up security at Park Service facilities and sites.⁵

The EICC had been established at Shenandoah National Park in Virginia in

1980 and had grown from a small center that coordinated responses to fires and local emergencies into a national coordination center. Combined with the coordination center was a communications center that provided emergency notifications of crisis situations and mobilizations for the Park Service, other federal agencies such as the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), and for senior department officials. While the communications center did the notifications, the coordination center directed the actual mobilization and demobilization of resources within the Service.

Upon learning of the attacks, the center's manager, Brenda Ritchie, an experienced emergency operations manager, immediately called in additional dispatchers to staff the communications center. Her first task was to contact senior department officials to find out where they were and verify that they were safe and to determine the status of all the parks and employees in the Park Service's Northeast Region. As already noted, initially officials in the Main Interior Building were unable to make outgoing calls, so the center called them every fifteen to twenty minutes. Faced with major communications problems, Ritchie quickly arranged to bring in a mobile satellite truck, a so-called cellular on wheels. The satellite truck and 150 cellular phones arrived within the first eight hours, and the center distributed the phones to key managers and operational staff. Bringing in the satellite dish on such short notice was no small feat and required unprecedented cooperation between two major telecommunications companies—Verizon and Sprint. As a result, phone service was

restored to most sections of the Main Interior Building.⁶

The center performed the communications role for both the Service and the Department of the Interior. It provided direct support to the parks and also to FEMA in New York and New Jersey. When the staff for the intelligence, coordination, and communications functions grew to more than twenty people, it became clear that the modest 1950s-era building that had housed the communications center in the past could not hold them all. Ritchie got approval to bring in a trailer to house the coordination center.⁷

Meanwhile, back in Washington, director of the National Park Service Fran Mainella; Pacific West Regional Director John Reynolds (who was acting as deputy director at the time); Associate Director for Administration Sue Masica; Associate Director for Cultural Resources and Partnerships Kate Stevenson; Dick Ring; Dennis Burnett; and others gathered in the deputy director's third floor office to plan a course of action. They quickly recognized the need to get to a safe environment where they would have effective communications.⁸

When Rick Gale joined the group, Reynolds introduced him to the director and recommended him to Mainella as someone with extensive experience in emergency response. Dick Ring suggested that Gale stay close to the director to enhance communication and coordination with the department. He also wanted Gale to coordinate the director's activities, communications, and directions regarding the emergency operations within the Service. The director quickly tapped Gale to go with her to meet with department leaders on the

sixth floor. Gale would remain close to the director throughout the day and in the days that followed. He offered her advice on how best to organize the Service's response and laid out possible missions. In effect, Gale became a self-described sounding board for the director.⁹

Much like the rest of the country, in those first hours Service leaders were stunned by the attacks and struggled to understand the full scope and implications of what had happened. They were just beginning to receive some reports from the Park Police about its security-related activities and about the worsening traffic situation around the city. The leaders were not aware of any specific immediate threats to or attacks on any National Park Service areas, so they were not yet focused on planning a Service-wide response. They knew that Federal Hall and Castle Clinton National Monuments were located near the World Trade Center, but they did not yet know the status of those parks. Little information came out of New York in those first hours. Service leaders had concerns, but with landlines down and cellular phone system overloaded, they had little solid information and chose to proceed cautiously. Years earlier, as superintendent of Everglades National Park when Hurricane Andrew struck, Ring had learned that the best approach was to proceed slowly and to gather solid information before taking action. Since there were no reports of a park being struck, he believed the immediate task was simply to gather more information.¹⁰

The director issued "Emergency Operations Instructions," authorizing all regional directors, at their discretion, to reduce their

staffs to essential personnel only. She specified that, if possible, parks should continue minimum operations with basic visitor contact services, provide updates on the incidents, and monitor television and radio reports. She directed that campgrounds remain open as appropriate. Finally, the director encouraged superintendents to advise their employees to become more security conscious.¹¹

As the morning progressed, Service leaders learned that the federal government in Washington was shutting down its operations. Around 10:00 a.m. federal authorities ordered government offices closed and approximately 260,000 federal workers in Washington began pouring out into the streets.¹² Secretary of the Interior Gale Norton ordered the evacuation of the Main Interior Building and released a memo dismissing all nonessential employees for the remainder of the day. Her memo indicated that the dismissal would remain in effect the next day September 12, unless employees were informed otherwise.¹³

Continuity of Operations

When officials gathered in the deputy director's office, one of the first topics under discussion was the need to implement the Service's continuity of operations plan. The National Park Service headquarters, each regional and support office, and some individual parks had what is called a continuity of operations plan, which outlines specific measures to ensure that operations continue as smoothly as possible during an emergency. Park Service continuity of operations plans were designed to correspond to the department's continuity of operations

The National Park Service headquarters, each regional and support office, and some individual parks had what is called a continuity of operations plan, which outlines specific measures to ensure that operations continue as smoothly as possible during an emergency.

plan. The department's plan spelled out the succession of authority and provided for the removal of the secretary, deputy secretary, and each bureau head to a remote location well outside the Washington area. The plan specified that the National Park Service director would go to the same location as the secretary or to another location specified by the secretary.¹⁴

Initially the secretary wanted department and bureau leaders to go to what the plan designated as Site B—an office about ten miles away in Northern Virginia. Leaders considered Site B to be a safe location where they could organize the department's operations. The director and Rick Gale got in a car to drive to the site, but with the horrendous traffic congestion in downtown Washington it took them twenty minutes just to get out of the Main Interior Building's underground parking garage. As the minutes passed, Gale observed that with cellular phone systems overloaded, the director would be without any communications link for hours while she sat in traffic. The director agreed with his assessment. They got out of the car and went back up to the sixth floor. Soon after, the department set up operations in the department's National Business Center conference room in the basement, presumably the safest part

of the building. The large conference room became the department's coordination center. The director joined Deputy Secretary of Interior J. Steven Griles and other key department leaders there.¹⁵

Later in the day, the secretary decided to relocate to what the department's continuity of operations plan designated as Site C, an hour's drive outside Washington. As noted, the plan provided that the director and other bureau heads would join department leaders at this alternate site. The Service's own continuity of operations plan provided that its deputy director and other senior leaders would go to the Service's designated site in West Virginia. This facility had a conference room outfitted with extra phone lines and all the other equipment these leaders would need to continue their management functions. Staffs at both alternate sites quickly and efficiently organized to receive the senior managers.¹⁶ At the request of department officials, a U.S. Park Police SWAT team came to the Main Interior Building and escorted senior department officials to Site C.¹⁷

Major Van Horn offered to escort the director to the alternate site, and being fairly new to the Service and unfamiliar with the site, she gratefully accepted. He led the way in his police cruiser, while the

Reflecting the White House’s desire for the federal government to resume normal operations as quickly as possible, Secretary Norton made it clear that she expected as many parks as possible to be open on September 12.

director followed close behind in her own vehicle. They stopped at her home first so she could pack some extra clothing. While she did this, Major Van Horn went to his home where he quickly grabbed extra clothes and a couple sandwiches that his wife had prepared for him and the director. He went back to pick up the director and the two headed for Site C.¹⁸ Meanwhile, Gale returned to his hotel room and, at the director’s request, began contacting all the Service’s senior managers to arrange for them to go to the designated West Virginia site the next morning.¹⁹

Once at the alternate site, department officials and bureau heads discussed the immediate challenges and made decisions about how to proceed. Their task was made more difficult because they had no clear sense of what sites were potential terrorist targets. They knew that economic centers, such as the World Trade Center, and military facilities, such as the Pentagon, were targets but did not know if any of what they considered to be the department’s national “icons” were at risk. Since they did not know which sites, which national icons, were potential terrorist targets, initially they decided to increase security at all areas and to close some parks and facilities.²⁰ Service leaders immediately

initiated twenty-four-hour security coverage at Boston Navy Yard where the USS *Constitution* was berthed, Independence Hall in Philadelphia, the Gateway Arch at the Jefferson National Expansion Memorial in St. Louis, Mount Rushmore, and at the major monuments and memorials in Washington, D.C.

The senior leaders at Site C also dealt with the question of whether employees should come to work the next day and, once the decision was made, how to get the word out to them. They tried to gather accurate intelligence information about potential threats in order to make informed decisions. They were prepared to stay at the alternate site as long as necessary. Later that evening when the initial frenzy had subsided, Van Horn quietly offered to escort the director back to the Washington area. Both agreed that returning to work in the Main Interior Building the next morning would send a strong message about the resilience of the federal government. After some discussion with department officials, the director decided to return. Meanwhile, in a televised address that evening, President Bush had announced that federal offices in Washington would be open for business the next day, September 12, so many other officials returned to Washington

late that night as well.²¹ In line with the president's address, the Office of Personnel Management announced that all federal agencies in the Washington area would reopen on September 12, though employees would be allowed to take unscheduled leave.²²

Before leaving the alternate site, Major Van Horn asked the dispatch center to send a message from the director to all regional directors directing that the parks "as much as reasonable" assume normal operations on September 12. However, through delegation from the regional directors, park superintendents would have the discretion to limit or augment personnel and operations at sites where they deemed such measures appropriate. They were to grant nonessential personnel unscheduled leave. The memo went out to the field offices by e-mail.²³

As soon as Gale received word that the director was returning to Washington, he began calling the associate directors back to advise them to cancel their plans to go to West Virginia. Around 10:00 p.m. Burnett sent word through the dispatch center in Shenandoah National Park that the secretary had canceled all activities at Site C. He advised Gale, Ring, and other Service managers to report for work in the headquarters building the next morning.²⁴

Reflecting the White House's desire for the federal government to resume normal operations as quickly as possible, Secretary Norton made it clear that she expected as many parks as possible to be open on September 12. In a memo to department employees the morning of the 12th, she reiterated, "by providing uninterrupted service, we reaffirm that we will

not be intimidated by acts of terrorism."²⁵ She announced that the monuments and memorials in Washington (except for the Washington Monument) had reopened at 11:30 a.m. and that the National Park Service sites were open, except for those in the New York City area. In a press release, she said, "Our focus remains on the safety of our visitors and our employees. We must remain vigilant as we provide the American people access to our nation's monuments, memorials, and parks for the solace and inspiration they provide." The secretary added that operations at the New York sites were more limited and Manhattan Sites remained closed. In closing, she wrote, "We encourage everyone to draw inspiration from our greatest national treasures and let them serve as reminders that this nation will endure and prosper."²⁶

Bureau and department leaders, including Director Mainella, were back in their offices on the morning of the 12th. In an effort to reassure employees, Deputy Secretary Griles personally greeted them as they returned to work. All too soon, however, it became clear that this workday would be far from routine. Griles was in a meeting with the secretary when she received a call advising her that an unidentified and unaccounted for commercial airliner was heading from Canada toward Washington. Griles immediately directed that all employees move to the basement. Unfortunately, the department had no good mechanism for communicating with employees throughout the building. There was no public address system. No individual or office had specific responsibility for informing employees that they needed to evacuate to the basement cafeteria. Confused and anxious employees did not



As news of the tragedy spread, virtually every unit of the National Park System grappled with the impact to one degree or another.

understand why they were suddenly being sent there. When they arrived in the cafeteria, the scene was chaotic and reliable information was scarce. Officials tried to organize employees by bureau, but were unsuccessful.²⁷

In the midst of the confusion, Griles and Mainella did what they could to calm employees and keep them informed. Griles explained the situation and offered employees the option of leaving. Meanwhile, Major Van Horn contacted the Park Police and determined that the information about an unidentified plane heading toward Washington was inaccurate. He also learned that the U.S. Air Force had sent up fighter pilots as an added precaution. Van Horn climbed up on a chair in the midst of the crowded cafeteria and used a hurriedly borrowed megaphone to convey this information.²⁸

Notification of employees throughout the building was haphazard. There was an existing plan for evacuating the Main Interior Building in the event of a fire or bomb threat, but the plan did not provide for an alternate site for employees. There was no operations center identified for bureau heads that could provide employees

with information and instructions. No group or function had been identified as having primary responsibility for this task. The Service's head of risk management and employee safety, Richard (Dick) Powell, later emphasized that employees need to know where to go in an emergency. In the months after the attack, the department would develop a more detailed evacuation plan for Main Interior.²⁹

Park Closures

Repercussions from the attacks were felt well beyond the Main Interior Building that first day. As news of the tragedy spread, virtually every unit of the National Park System grappled with the impact to one degree or another. At Independence National Historical Park, for example, park staff had the emotionally difficult task of explaining to visitors why the park was closing and giving them their first information about the terrorist attacks. Across the country, at Yosemite National Park, the superintendent decided to keep the park open. He immediately increased the ranger presence and the staff at the visitor center and the public information office. He also quickly dispatched rangers out to

Park rangers at Independence National Historical Park increase security after the attacks.

Hetch-Hetchy Dam, a major water supply source for the city of San Francisco. As at Independence, Yosemite staff had to perform the delicate task of informing visitors about the attacks.³⁰ Comforting distraught visitors in the midst of a national tragedy was a new and unfamiliar role for many park employees.

Superintendents had to carefully weigh a number of factors in deciding how to respond to the attacks. At Delaware Gap National Recreation Area, Deputy Superintendent Doyle Nelson closed the park and began implementing the park's continuity of operations plan even before receiving official word that government facilities would be closing. Nelson was not overly concerned that Delaware Gap might be a terrorist target, but he and his staff began shutting down operations in order to free up rangers for duty in other areas that had been more directly affected. That morning Nelson received calls from the Sandy Hook unit of Gateway National Recreation Area in New York requesting ranger assistance.³¹

Initially department leaders considered closing all 385 units in the National Park System. However, Rick Gale pointed out to the director that closing parks could sometimes require more resources than leaving them open. Full closure often required sweeping the backcountry areas and in some instances could be difficult to enforce. The director thus recommended to the secretary that they reduce services in the parks rather than implement a total closure. The secretary and director decided to keep the parks open, though there were exceptions. For example, all the units in the New York City area and all the national

monuments and memorials in Washington were immediately closed.³²

Other parks were closed temporarily as well, either because they were considered to be potential terrorist targets or because of their proximity to military or other sensitive installations.

At Golden Gate National Recreation Area in San Francisco, the Park Police instituted additional security measures within an hour of the attacks. The Park Police San Francisco field office, which operated on a twenty-four-hour basis, was in the midst of a shift change when the attacks occurred. Officers on the first shift were sent home but warned that they might be called back in to duty. There was immediate concern that the Golden Gate Bridge might be another terrorist target. California State operated the bridge, but since the footings stood on Park Service property, the Service was responsible for protecting the bridge's foundations. Park Police officials decided to secure the north and south Bay coastlines where the Golden Gate Bridge was anchored. Officers maintained seven fixed posts. Members of the criminal investigations section manned several of the posts along with horse mounted patrol officers. Implementing the closure took approximately one hour. Officers and supervisors cleared away the construction crews working on one side of the bridge and cut off all pedestrian access.³³

The field office coordinated closely with the California Highway Patrol, Golden Gate Bridge District Police, San Francisco Police Department, Marin County Sheriff's Office, CALTRANS, and the San Francisco and Presidio Fire Departments. The field office doubled its patrols by using off-duty

officers and extended tours of duty. The next day, the field office reported that things were “safe and running smoothly.” They had closed Alcatraz, all visitor centers, and Fort Point under the Golden Gate Bridge and had halted pedestrian and bike traffic on the bridge.³⁴

The day after the attacks, parks in New York City remained closed. Minute Man National Historical Park, which shared a boundary with Hanscom Air Force Base, and Boston Navy Yard in Boston National Historical Park remained closed. The U.S. Navy had immediately assumed the highest security level at the naval yard, and in response the park stepped up its security staffing and patrols.³⁵ Independence National Historical Park, Independence Hall, and the Liberty Bell were open, but all other visitor areas remained closed to the public. In the National Capital Region, officials suspended public tours at the White House indefinitely and closed the Ellipse area. Catocin Mountain Park, site of the presidential retreat, Camp David, remained closed. Elsewhere, visitor centers at the Oklahoma City Memorial and at Organ Pipe Cactus National Park remained closed. At the request of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, Canaveral National Seashore, a beach near the Kennedy Space Center, remained closed. At Dayton Aviation Heritage National Historical Park, a field located on Patterson Air Force Base was closed. Officials closed a short spur road to the observatory complex at Haleakala National Park in Hawaii at the request of the U.S. Air Force. Cabrillo National Monument in San Diego was closed because of naval base closures. At Golden Gate, both Fort

Point and San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park remained closed.³⁶

At the Navy’s insistence, USS *Arizona* National Memorial remained closed to the public for six days following the attack, and the Navy set the security conditions for reopening. New security checkpoints were established and staffed by the Park Service and the Navy. The Navy required that the Service provide law enforcement officers to enforce security measures. This task was first accomplished by using law enforcement rangers detailed from other parks for twenty-one-day tours. Because of the high cost of using detailed rangers, the park hired three seasonal law enforcement rangers to meet the Navy’s requirements.³⁷

Parks in the Alaska Region, though open, faced special problems. Immediately after the attacks, the Federal Aviation Administration had grounded all commercial flights. Officials became increasingly concerned that the employees and visitors (particularly hunters) awaiting pick up by plane would run out of food or that their game would spoil. Also, since access to many of the parks in Alaska was by air only, some employees were stranded away from their permanent duty stations. Rangers stuck in the backcountry were running out of food.³⁸

Two weeks after the attack, in New York City, Federal Hall National Monument, Castle Clinton National Monument, the Statue of Liberty, and Ellis Island remained closed, but Theodore Roosevelt Birthplace, St. Paul’s Church, Hamilton Grange, and General Grant were open. Also still closed, in other parts of the country, were parts of the George Washington Memorial Parkway near the Pentagon, the Boston Navy Yard, a

beach at Canaveral National Seashore, Fort Point, and the spur road at Haleakala.³⁹

Support to the Department of the Interior

On the morning of September 11, department officials quickly identified high priority sites that they believed were potential terrorist targets to include some major Bureau of Reclamation projects in the West. They called upon the Park Service and other bureaus to provide security at the Main Interior Building and asked the Service to help protect some of the department's other high priority sites. The department's list of national icons included several Bureau of Reclamation dams. The bureau had no law enforcement or security personnel of its own except at Hoover Dam, so department officials asked the Park Service to provide law enforcement personnel to protect these dams. Meeting the Bureau of Reclamation's long-term security needs was a challenge. Service leaders found themselves in the difficult position of having to pull law enforcement rangers from their own key sites to provide the security the department requested.

Protecting Bureau of Reclamation sites presented two major problems for the Park Service: the first related to legal authority, and the second related to resources. The Service had no statutory authority on land outside park boundaries. It had no jurisdiction on many of the Bureau of Reclamation dam sites. Hoover and Davis Dams were located within the boundaries of Lake Mead National Recreation Area, but the legislation establishing the recreation area specifically excised the dams and related facilities. As a result, park rangers could

only provide law enforcement support under authority as deputy U.S. marshals. Each ranger had to be deputized as a special deputy U.S. marshal, a process requiring considerable time and effort. The Service had difficulty responding because only a small number of its rangers had been deputized.

Traditionally, the U.S. Marshals Service deputized the rangers for a single designated site for a specific period of time. Officials quickly discovered this practice was too restrictive because they needed the ability to transfer rangers from site to site. They began deputizing rangers for multiple sites for thirty days. Later, rangers were deputized for all department facilities, including the Main Interior Building, through December 31, 2003. Yet, even with the new, streamlined process, months later there remained a backlog of 500 to 800 applications for rangers waiting to be deputized.⁴⁰

The Service sent several of its "special event teams" to secure the departmental icons, each with ten to twelve trained law enforcement rangers. Because of disruptions to commercial air travel, the Service tried to assign teams to nearby installations. These teams were fully equipped and ready to deploy on short notice. However, there was growing concern that the Service could not continue to rely on the relatively small number of rangers on special event teams who had been deputized. Four months after the attacks, park rangers remained on duty protecting these sites, and these special event teams, Burnett observed, had been "used to exhaustion."⁴¹ By that time, some teams had been on three or four rotations at various dam sites in the West, and the Service had begun deploying individual

rangers instead of teams. If there were not enough individual replacements, the teams had to extend their duty.⁴²

Filling requests for law enforcement rangers at the Lake Roosevelt, Whiskeytown, and Lake Mead National Recreation Areas became increasingly difficult. On September 20, Pacific West Region Chief Ranger Jay Wells reported that he had no indication that additional rangers would be arriving soon and his rangers were “pretty well tapped out” with the coverage at the three recreation areas and their traditional firefighting assignments. Wells asked for assistance from other regions and warned that it was “getting to be a safety issue,” particularly at Lake Mead National Recreation Area. If no relief came the following day, he added, the region planned to send a special event team to Lake Mead National Recreation Area that it had been holding in reserve in case it was needed in Washington, D.C., or New York City. Six rangers were providing twenty-four-hour security at Lake Mead, and the park was clamoring for more rangers. Ten rangers were stationed at the Bureau of Reclamation’s Grand Coulee Dam at Lake Roosevelt National Recreation Area and four were assigned to the bureau’s Shasta Dam project.⁴³

Months later, the Lake Mead National Recreation Area superintendent reported that the post-September 11 security requirements had “heavily tasked” the park’s protection division. At one point, the special event teams and park staff were providing maritime security above and below Hoover Dam and also staffing highway checkpoints east and west of the dam. In addition to securing the dams, the rangers still had

their ongoing mission of protecting visitors. Providing around-the-clock coverage at Hoover and Davis Dams had taken “a tremendous amount of manpower, time, and resources,” he noted.⁴⁴

Whiskeytown National Recreation Area faced similar challenges. On September 11, park rangers joined with local and state law enforcement agencies and the Bureau of Reclamation to enhance security at the bureau’s critical Central Valley Project facilities located in or near Whiskeytown. This massive project supplied water for irrigation and provided flood control for the Sacramento River basin. It also generated and supplied a significant portion of the electrical power on the West Coast. The secretary had identified the Bureau of Reclamation’s Shasta Dam as “a critical national asset.” Whiskeytown staff provided continuous support to the Shasta Dam security personnel and helped them close off the dam and the surrounding area to public access. On several occasions the park’s entire law enforcement staff participated in this operation. Park rangers managed security at the dam and supervised the twelve-member special event teams that rotated through every twenty-one days. As a result, the superintendent reported, “there has been a major reduction in proactive ranger patrol and resource protection/education as a result of Whiskeytown’s commitment to dam security.”⁴⁵

By mid-October, the visitor center at Lake Mead National Recreation Area had reopened, but tours of Hoover and Davis Dams remained suspended. The same was true at Shasta Dam at Whiskeytown National Recreation Area and Grand Coulee Dam at Lake Roosevelt National

Recreation Area.⁴⁶ The Service's support at Bureau of Reclamation projects and other department sites continued to have a great impact on its law enforcement resources and capabilities.

Conclusion

Much like every other federal agency, the National Park Service found itself ill prepared to respond to an emergency of the type and magnitude of September 11. The Service implemented its continuity of operations plan quickly, and for the most part, effectively that first day, but the implementation was not as smooth as officials would have preferred. Some officials evacuated reasonably quickly to designated alternate sites, but traffic congestion hampered the evacuation of others. With phone service disrupted throughout the city, contacting some officials was difficult.

The response also revealed some flaws in the Service's continuity of operations plan. The plan was somewhat dated and designed more for responding to a fire or bomb threat than a terrorist attack. Officials discovered that in some instances, particularly with the confusion and traffic gridlock they encountered, it might be more effective to shelter employees on-site than to evacuate them. Some leaders concluded that the Service needed a more flexible plan. At the same time, the response demonstrated that Department of the Interior and Park Service leaders understood their roles under the plan and were willing to pitch in and do whatever was required. "It was," Major Gary Van Horn said, "a combined effort of a lot of well-meaning, well-intentioned individuals." Decisions were made in a timely fashion and information

flowed smoothly between department officials and Service representatives.⁴⁷

As a result of the September 11 experience, Service leaders later brought in a group to revise and update the continuity of operations plan. Over a ten-day period, the consultants revised the plan to address the new security concerns and risk management concerns and added an even more remote alternate work site so that leadership could continue operations should another event occur in the Washington, D.C., area.⁴⁸

While Service officials in the Washington headquarters grappled with the immediate issues of maintaining basic operations, enhancing security, and supporting the department, park superintendents throughout the country also faced the challenge of maintaining operations and keeping park employees, visitors, and resources safe. This challenge was particularly great in the Washington area and in New York City.





U. S. Park Police and park rangers in the Washington area responded immediately at the Pentagon and at treasured historic and cultural sites.

II. National Capital Region

While officials in the Main Interior Building struggled with the initial response, a few miles away at the U.S. Park Police and National Capital Region headquarters buildings in Washington’s East Potomac Park, managers were already mobilizing. Together the region’s Park Police and park rangers assisted in protecting the nation’s leaders, Washington residents, and visitors; helped evacuate the city; cared for young children from the Pentagon day-care center; and secured some of the nation’s most treasured historic and cultural sites.

U.S. Park Police Headquarters

On the morning of September 11, Deputy Chief John (Jack) Schamp was at his desk in Park Police headquarters pouring over reports related to an upcoming World Bank/International Monetary Fund meeting in Washington. An officer interrupted to inform him that a plane had struck the World Trade Center. Not long after, deputy chiefs Schamp, Benjamin J. Holmes, and Edward Winkel activated the chief’s command post, a modest-size meeting room in the headquarters building outfitted with telecommunications equipment. Winkel was acting chief at the time. The Park Police chief’s position had been vacant for some months and each of the three deputy chiefs alternated as acting chief for a three-month period. Park Police officials began discussing the immediate measures that should be taken to secure the monuments and memorials. About fifteen minutes later, the Park Police counterterrorism unit arrived at the center and would play a key role in disseminating

Securing the capital’s memorials—including the Jefferson Memorial and Washington Monument— was an immediate priority for the Park Police of the National Capital Region. A Park Police helicopter, above, circles above the stricken Pentagon.

information and coordinating the Park Police response.

Acting Chief Winkel asked the acting operations division commander, Maj. Thomas Pellinger, and the acting commander for the special forces branch, Capt. Sal Lauro, to join the other officials in the command center. As Captain Lauro quickly drove from his office in the Navy Yard in southeast Washington toward Park Police headquarters and came over the Southeast Expressway, he saw an explosion in the vicinity of the Pentagon. When he pulled off the ramp to East Potomac Park, he saw smoke and flames rising from the direction of the Pentagon and heard a report that a plane had struck that building.¹ The acting chief and two deputy chiefs; Major Pellinger; captains Henry Berberich, Dan Walters, and Sal Lauro; and others who gathered in the command post discussed what needed to be done. Their most immediate concern was the security of the White House, as well as the need to evacuate and secure the national monuments and memorials. They alerted all units of the attack and contacted the Park Police New York field office where officers were already responding to the attacks at the World Trade Center.²

At the time of the attacks, organizationally, the U.S. Park Police came under the National Capital Region and its regional director, Terry Carlstrom. The two headquarters buildings were just a few yards apart. At one point early on, Regional Director Carlstrom strode over to the chief's command post where the Park Police officials were assembled. When he saw the command post operating smoothly, he indicated that he was satisfied with

their operations and would not interfere. He told the officers simply, "You've got it." One Park Police official later observed that he appreciated such a strong expression of confidence and support.³

The chief's command post had direct communication links to the FBI, White House Emergency Operations Center, District of Columbia Emergency Operations Center, and the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) Operations Center. It also provided "real-time" information to its officers on the front lines and to the Interior department's law enforcement notification center, the dispatch center in Shenandoah National Park, U.S. Secret Service, Department of Defense, and metropolitan police department. Park Police officials had representatives on duty around the clock in the Secret Service, metropolitan police department, and the Arlington County/Pentagon command posts, who provided ready access to the information coming through those centers. Park Police detectives worked with the FBI, particularly on cases involving suspicious packages and people, contaminated mail, and bomb threats. The command post coordinated safe evacuation of cabinet members, park visitors, and commuters.⁴

Public information officers stationed in the command post responded to a steady stream of media inquiries and kept the public informed of increased security measures, road closures, and other issues. In the days following the attacks, the command post prepared a daily time line of events that was included in the daily briefing for Director Mainella. The post would remain in operation until Monday, September 17.⁵

The Park Police force mobilized fully. Managers initiated an emergency action plan calling in off-duty personnel, instituting twelve-hour shifts, bringing in extra personnel from outlying districts, and purchasing food and water. Many off-duty officers had already come in to work voluntarily. Some officers called in to see if they were needed or find out where to report, but the Nextel cellular communications system that Park Police managers used was overloaded. Some officers simply drove to locations where they thought they would be needed rather than wait for assignments. As a result, it took some time to determine where each officer was and which locations were covered.

The massive traffic congestion made it difficult for some officers to drive into work, particularly when they were in their private vehicles. The Park Police home-to-work vehicle program, which allowed officers to drive their service vehicle home at the end of their shift, proved to be extremely valuable both in Washington, D.C., and New York City. Officers who had their police vehicles at home were able to report in relatively quickly. Rather than respond to their normal duty station, these officers could be dispatched directly to critical areas. Driving police cars allowed officers to navigate through the traffic gridlock with greater ease. Their service vehicles had lights and sirens, and radios that allowed them to communicate. The home-to-work vehicle program greatly enhanced the park police's ability to deploy personnel rapidly. The percentage of officers participating in the program was relatively small at the time, but after September 11 officials expanded the program as more vehicles became available.⁶

Securing the White House, Monuments, and Memorials

Understandably, protection of the president was the highest and most immediate priority for the Park Police. They immediately deployed various units around the White House and the national monuments and memorials and began evacuation procedures. Minutes after the Pentagon was hit, Major Pellingier deployed the Park Police's mobile command post at Twelfth Street and Jefferson Drive on the National Mall. This mobile headquarters, a thirty-foot long recreational vehicle that contained a television, communications equipment, and meeting space, served as a key operations center. Pellingier began directing operations from the chief's command post, while Captain Lauro oversaw operations on the street.⁷

Park Police officers worked with the Secret Service and the metropolitan police to secure an area of several blocks around the White House. They implemented a full-scale closure of the roads around the White House. This task, which required a lot of manpower, had rarely, if ever, been done before. Captain Lauro had first received the new procedures for closures around the White House at the beginning of the Persian Gulf War in 1991 when he was a lieutenant working as shift commander. He had stuck the document into a binder and placed the binder in his briefcase, where it remained for ten years. When word came on September 11 that they were finally implementing the plan, he was able to quickly pull the plan out of his briefcase and begin executing the procedures.⁸

While one group secured the area around the White House, commander of the

Two Park Police motorcycle officers rushed to the Pentagon and arrived on the scene within minutes of the attack.



central district Capt. Henry Berberich and his officers secured the area around the Washington Monument. Lt. Pete Markland and several officers secured the Ellipse, and Capt. Dan Walters coordinated the closure of the Lincoln Memorial. Officers immediately closed not only the Jefferson and Lincoln Memorials and Washington Monument but also the Ellipse, White House sidewalks, and Lafayette Park. Fortunately, in addition to their own force, Park Police commanders were able to deploy forty officers who had been in the midst of riot training at a Park Police facility in southeast Washington when the attacks occurred. Officers initiated temporary road and pedestrian closures and increased patrols throughout the day in response to potential threats.⁹

Motorcycle Unit

The Park Police motorcycle unit typically had responsibility for providing security for the president, escorting dignitaries, and enforcing traffic regulations. Two members of the motorcycle unit, Lt. George Wallace and Sgt. Daniel Beck, were among the first uniformed law enforcement officers to arrive at the scene of the airline crash at

the Pentagon. These two officers assisted with search and rescue of survivors, helped coordinate with Pentagon security, and performed other missions.¹⁰

Lieutenant Wallace was on the National Mall writing tickets when Sergeant Beck called his cell phone to tell him that a plane had hit one of the World Trade Center towers. Sergeant Beck called back a few minutes later to tell him that the second tower had been struck. At that point, Wallace climbed on his motorcycle and hurried back to Park Police headquarters. He knew some additional security measures would be put in place and that his unit might be called upon to assist with evacuations, road closures, and other missions.

Wallace was on the phone with another officer, when the officer informed him that there had been an explosion at the Pentagon. Beck and Wallace hurried outside, saw the thick smoke, and got on their motorcycles and rushed to the Pentagon. They arrived at the scene within minutes. Wallace later observed that President Bush had been scheduled to land at the Pentagon helipad later that morning, near the site where the plane slammed into the building. Wallace and other officers had been

Aerial photo of the Pentagon taken after the attack revealing some of the damage.



Some of the crew grabbed their emergency medical equipment and ran toward the Pentagon building.

assigned to escort the president from the helipad to the White House.

Lieutenant Wallace found what he described as “unimaginable” destruction at the Pentagon. He had witnessed catastrophic events before, but nothing had prepared him for the gruesome scene he encountered. At first, he saw no readily apparent signs of the plane except its outline in the side of the building. No airline parts stuck out of the building, and the surrounding debris field was small. Some of the injured were lying in the field near the helipad and people were running toward them to assist. Wallace tried to help the injured, but there seemed to be enough military personnel performing that task. So he ran up closer to the building where the fire department was starting to operate their hoses. Wallace and Beck, both volunteer firemen at one time and no strangers to firefighting operations, began pulling fire hoses. They moved near the entrance of the burning building and were preparing to enter to help rescue victims when one of the fire chiefs came out and announced that no one could go in because the structure was unsafe. A couple minutes later, as they were pulling back the hoses, the façade

of the building started to crumble and collapse. Wallace and Beck then helped evacuate people from the site because of concerns about another inbound plane. After about forty-five minutes of assisting at the Pentagon, Wallace and Beck got back on their motorcycles and began directing traffic away from the site.¹¹

Aviation Unit

Lieutenant Wallace and Sergeant Beck were not the only Park Police officers to respond at the Pentagon in those first devastating minutes. Officers in the aviation section also played an important role at the scene. At the aviation hangar in southeast Washington along the Anacostia River, some of the crew were taking advantage of the warm weather and bright sunshine by washing the floor out in the aviation hangar with the door open. Meanwhile, in an open field next to the hangar, one of the helicopter pilots, Sgt. Kenneth Burchell, was conducting riot training for the Defense department’s uniformed health services unit in preparation for the upcoming World Bank/International Monetary Fund protest demonstrations.

Two casualties are loaded on Eagle II.

One crew member saw the news account of the first plane hitting the World Trade Center and called in the others. Sergeant Burchell, his fellow pilot Sgt. Ron Galey, and a few others went inside to watch the television coverage. After seeing the second plane strike and noting the clear blue sky, they quickly concluded that the crash was not an accident. Burchell and Galey headed back out to the hangar. They heard a loud thud and looked up to see a column of smoke rising from the vicinity of the Pentagon. Burchell immediately ran back inside, yelling for his crew. Minutes later, the “aircraft crash phone” rang, setting off a distinctive horn alarm. The crash phone was a direct communications line from the control tower at Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport to the hangar so that the aviation unit can respond quickly to incidents at the airport. Sergeant Galey took the call. On the other end of the line, the air traffic controller indicated that a 757 commercial airplane had crashed in the vicinity of the Pentagon. Meanwhile, a call had also come in on the police radio indicating that the Pentagon had been attacked.

The helicopter crews scrambled to gather their equipment, get to the helicopters, and launch. The duty crew that day, which included Sergeant Galey, rescue technician Sgt. John Marsh, and Officer John Dillon, ran out to *Eagle I*, a Bell 412 helicopter, and took off within two or three minutes. Sergeant Burchell grabbed Sgt. Keith Bohn and two Defense department medics with Uniformed Services University and Health Sciences who were there for the training. They began installing a mass casualty kit on *Eagle II*, another Bell 412 helicopter, which

allowed them to carry four patients instead of two. The installation took a few minutes. Then *Eagle II* took off with pilots Burchell and Bohn, the two medics, aviation unit commander Lt. Philip Cholak, and assistant commander Sgt. Bernie Stasulli.¹²

Shortly after launching, *Eagle II* received its first report that there was an unauthorized aircraft inbound. *Eagle I* directed *Eagle II* to land at the Pentagon to conduct medical evacuations. *Eagle II* quickly landed on a paved roadway 150 to 200 yards from the area of impact. Some of the crew grabbed their emergency medical equipment and ran toward the Pentagon building. At this point, with the reports of an unauthorized inbound plane, Sergeant Burchell realized they needed not only to evacuate the casualties but also to be ready to get as many people as possible away from the site before there was another attack. Sergeant Bohn kept the helicopter engine running and Sergeant Stasulli stood outside to secure the landing zone. Stasulli was particularly concerned that people moving away from the building, particularly those who seemed somewhat dazed, would inadvertently step too close to the aircraft’s tail rotor blades and be seriously injured. Meanwhile, Lieutenant Cholak, Sergeant Burchell, and the two medics moved closer to assess the situation. They initially anticipated ferrying hundreds of patients to hospitals all day long so they wanted to set up an orderly process for this first. They checked in with the triage officer who indicated that there were only eleven casualties in need of medical evacuation. Cholak and one of the medics went to the triage area to assist. Burchell headed back to get Sergeant Bohn to move the aircraft closer, which he did.

Eagle II landed near the area of impact and transported several seriously injured victims to the hospital.



Although both crews saw many frightened and injured Pentagon employees fleeing the building, they saw others actually moving toward the burning building to help with the rescue operations. In contrast to other response operations in which they had participated, the crews were struck by the calm, orderly nature of the scene. They attributed this in part to the military training and discipline of many Pentagon employees. Sergeant Burchell found the response to be better organized than most. To illustrate this, he later recounted an incident soon after they landed where military personnel quietly spread out around the helicopter. When Lieutenant Cholak saw a number of military officers quietly encircle the aircraft, he became concerned that they might be injured by the tail rotor blade and directed them to move back. The officers immediately stepped back but calmly explained that they were simply securing the landing zone for him.

While the *Eagle II* crew stood by to transport the injured victims, *Eagle I* circled overhead. From the air initially the damage did not look extensive. The crew saw the fire and a great deal of smoke pouring from the building, but like Lieutenant Wallace,

they had difficulty identifying what was left of the hijacked airplane. The hole where the plane pierced the building appeared relatively small and there seemed to be little debris. The plane seemed at first to have simply disappeared into the building. On *Eagle I's* third pass over the building, however, Officer Dillon saw that the plane had penetrated from one ringed corridor of the building to the next, nearly reaching the center courtyard. Soon after, he and the others watched as the side of the building crumbled and collapsed.¹³

Eagle I was still circling overhead when the control tower at the airport warned of another unauthorized aircraft about twenty minutes out. Then just as *Eagle I* prepared to land, the air traffic controller radioed the crew that the smoke from the Pentagon had overtaken them and they were abandoning the airport control tower. In an unprecedented move, at the controller's request, *Eagle I* assumed control of the airspace for the entire Washington area. The task was simplified somewhat by the fact that the airspace had been closed down. The controller gave Sergeant Galey the radio frequency for the North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD), which had

Park Police and others prepare to transport injured victims at the Pentagon.

taken over control of the national airspace. Since NORAD typically only performs this function during wartime, the crews interpreted this shift as a strong indicator of the severe nature of the threat. No civilian plane would be allowed to fly in or out of the airspace without authorization from NORAD.¹⁴

Meanwhile, Burchell had asked Bohn to move the aircraft in closer, and they boarded two patients who were suffering from severe burns. As noted, *Eagle II* was prepared to carry four patients, but the triage officer did not have any other patients for transport at the time. The crew carried the patients to the MedStar unit of Washington Hospital Center, the region's only advanced burn center.

While *Eagle II* was at the hospital, *Eagle I* landed in the same area that *Eagle II* had vacated. Sergeant Galey was preparing to land when two F-16 fighter jets screamed past without warning. As soon as Galey landed, the two paramedics left the aircraft. The crew waited another ten minutes or so for additional patients. Sergeant Marsh came back and reported that there were no patients ready for transport but the helicopter should stand by. Then *Eagle I* received an update that the unauthorized inbound plane was now only a few miles out. They decided to move to a safer area a quarter mile from the Pentagon. The crew realized it could not conduct medical evacuations and provide command and control of the airspace at the same time, so they requested assistance from other departments that had helicopters which were equipped to transport injured patients, such as the Maryland State Police and Fairfax County Police Department.

They also asked that a metropolitan police helicopter be put in the air to provide command and control, and stood by for medical evacuations. The metropolitan police helicopter arrived and relieved *Eagle I* of its command and control function.

Sergeant Burchell had received the same reports of an inbound plane and knew there was an effort to disburse the aircraft at the scene. When it returned from the hospital, *Eagle II* set down at the western end of Memorial Bridge where it was somewhat sheltered by some trees and waited. The reported inbound plane never materialized. Not long after, both helicopters learned that there were no more patients to evacuate. Presumably some of the eleven had been taken away by ambulance.

After learning that there were no more patients to transport, *Eagle II* returned to the aviation hangar to pick up a Secret Service agent to patrol the airspace around the White House. As the helicopter climbed out of the Pentagon grounds, Sergeant Burchell spotted an F-16 fighter jet coming in from the opposite direction. He later recalled a particularly tense moment when the fighter jet flew by so low and close that he could see the brand name on the fighter pilot's sunglasses.¹⁵

The helicopters had microwave "downlink" capability that proved to be extremely valuable. With this technology, the crews could fly over a crime scene, demonstration, or other event and transmit instantaneous video images back to the chief's command post and other locations. Soon after *Eagle I* arrived on-site, the FBI asked the crew to turn on its microwave downlink. Dillon, who operated the downlink, found that in

his first few passes over the Pentagon, the terrible images on the monitor looked so surreal that he occasionally had to take his eyes off the monitor and look down to confirm what he was seeing. The crew was able to transmit real-time images and information to people who needed them to make decisions.¹⁶

In addition to the downlink capability, the cameras on the helicopters could be switched to a forward-looking, infrared heat detection device known as FLIR. This technology proved to be extremely valuable. The fire department was having some difficulty getting its equipment to the proper locations to fight the fire. The crew took up the chief of the Arlington County Fire Department several times and flew low over the Pentagon so that he could locate the hot spots. The infrared imagery helped him locate the fire under the roof and enabled him to better position his firefighting crews and equipment. Flying in this environment was challenging because of the thick smoke, poor visibility, and the risk of inhaling hazardous materials, but *Eagle I* spent the next four or five hours flying overhead and transmitting video images to the FBI.

As the only aircraft on-site initially, the Park Police helicopters performed missions in support of the military. *Eagle I* also took up the commander of the 82nd Airborne Division so that he could get an aerial view that would assist him in deploying his troops around the building. By late afternoon, a number of military aircraft had arrived and the crews decided to complete their missions, leave the area, and go back to the hangar to refuel and prepare for whatever missions were ahead.¹⁷

During the recovery of victims from the Pentagon and collection of evidence, the unit supported the FBI with photo missions, crime scene search, and the use of the FLIR system in recovery of potential survivors. On September 11 and in the days following, the unit performed a number of missions in support of and in coordination with the FBI and Secret Service. The crews later described a new spirit of cooperation. *Eagle II* supported the Secret Service in protection of the president and White House and conducted additional flights in support of FBI. By the time *Eagle I* returned to the hangar, the *Eagle II* crew was already arranging to perform patrols for the Secret Service and to fly FBI agents out to Dulles International Airport, where the hijacked plane that flew into the Pentagon had originated. They were also developing their own plan for patrolling the metropolitan area.¹⁸

The crews spent the next few days patrolling along the Potomac River and checking bridges and overpasses in the city for potential threats. Major Pellingier deployed the aircraft around the White House. The areas around the White House and the U.S. Capitol were restricted airspace, and for several days the Park Police, in conjunction with the Secret Service, flew hourly around-the-clock security patrols around the White House and other restricted zones in the Washington area. Pellingier arranged for twenty-four-hour coverage for the monuments and memorials. Four months later, these patrols had ended, but crews continued to work twelve-hour shifts. As a result of the September 11 attacks, the unit's priorities changed. Security became "paramount," Ron Galey explained. As noted, the crews began to routinely conduct aerial checks of the monuments and memorials,

something they had not done in the past in part because of concern that the noise would disturb tourists.¹⁹

The aviation unit's response activities involved a great deal of coordination with other departments and agencies. Fortunately, the crews had all the radio frequencies they needed to communicate effectively with the Arlington County Fire and Police Departments and the other agencies. They were also in frequent contact with Alexandria City and some of the other fire departments on the scene. They relayed information between fire departments on the ground that could not communicate directly with each other. The fact that the unit had experience dealing with the Arlington agencies, as well as Fairfax and Montgomery Counties, and had a good working relationship with those agencies made coordination easier.²⁰

After September 11, the Park Police continued to use three-person crews for most missions. Although this approach added to their costs, they had found the three-person crews to be "invaluable." Crews could operate more efficiently and effectively with a third person. The helicopters were packed with sophisticated equipment such as the microwave downlink, FLIRs, video cameras, moving display maps, and radio communication equipment. The pilot had to devote all his attention to flying, and the second person had difficulty operating all this sophisticated equipment effectively. Three-person crews were ideal: one person flies the helicopter, the second operates the radios, and the third handles all the other equipment. The management sought to maintain the expanded crews for as long as possible. The Park Police also learned that

it was better to use 120- rather than 30-minute videotape because the tape compartment is mounted on the outside of the aircraft and changing tapes during an ongoing operation could be difficult.²¹

The contributions of the aviation unit were great both in the immediate aftermath and in the weeks that followed. As Sergeant Burchell observed, although the military had tremendous assets, "when you have an emergency in downtown Washington, D.C., ...you don't get Air Force Special Operations. You get two park policemen in a blue-and-white helicopter." The unit responded at the Pentagon within minutes of the attack and provided considerable support to the victims; to the military; and to various federal, state, and local agencies. "We did our part the best that we could," Burchell concluded.²²

Evacuation of Cabinet Officials

Along with the response at the Pentagon, one of the earliest Park Police missions was to help evacuate and provide escorts for cabinet officials and other senior leaders. The Secret Service and the military had responsibility for evacuating cabinet members, but a decades-old plan stipulated that the Park Police would support the evacuation of these officials and secure the aircraft landing zones used in the evacuation. Officers had routinely practiced securing the staging area where cabinet officials were scheduled to gather so that they could be evacuated.

Shortly after 11:00 a.m. on September 11, Park Police officials learned that the White House had activated the evacuation plan. This was the first time in his twenty-four years as a Park Police officer that

Captain Lauro could recall the plan being activated. Park Police officers performed their assigned role and effectively cleared the designated staging area. Soon after the activation was canceled, but Park Police officers did escort a few officials and their staffs in a motorcade to a secure location. Later, Park Police officials conceded that providing escorts created some strain at a time when their officers were busy with other missions. As noted earlier, a Park Police special weapons and tactics (SWAT) team escorted the secretary of the interior and her senior staff to a secure location. They provided motorcycle officers and an escort vehicle to get them out of the city.²³

Police cars and emergency vehicles were able to move through the thick traffic much faster than private vehicles, and as a result, throughout the day, the Park Police received numerous requests for escorts. Officers also escorted President Bush, Vice President Richard Cheney, and Secretary of State Colin Powell. Traditionally, only the president and visiting dignitaries receive Park Police motorcycle escorts, not the vice president. However, after the attacks, officers began escorting the vice president to and from his office on a regular basis, which involved a significant commitment of resources. Motorcycle officers escorted the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Gen. Henry H. Shelton, from Andrews Air Force Base to the Pentagon. One of the officers recalled the stunned expression on the general's face as they came up over a rise in the highway and he got his first view of the damage. The motorcycle unit also escorted the Montgomery County hazardous material unit down to the Pentagon.²⁴

Traffic Management

In addition to their other missions, the Park Police are responsible for managing traffic on a number of bridges and roadways in Washington that are part of the National Park System, such as Memorial Bridge, George Washington Memorial Parkway, Rock Creek Parkway, and the Baltimore-Washington Parkway. All serve as major routes in and out of the city. Park Police officers took a number of measures to improve the flow of traffic and move people away from the downtown area more quickly. When the federal government released its employees that morning, many other downtown businesses and agencies did the same. With rumors about major disruption in the subway operations, the streets were jammed with several hundred thousand confused and alarmed commuters who were all trying to get out of the city as quickly as possible, creating what Deputy Chief Jack Schamp called "a monster traffic problem."²⁵ As traffic backed up around the city, workers trying to make their way home became increasingly anxious.

To help move traffic out of the downtown area faster and more efficiently, around 11:00 a.m. the Park Police decided to initiate the afternoon/evening commuting traffic patterns on all the major routes for which it had responsibility. This would direct traffic out of the city. Officers quickly reversed traffic lanes on Rock Creek Parkway making it one way outbound. They placed barricades across the entrances to the parkway but remained concerned that an inattentive or reckless driver might go around a barricade and enter traffic going the wrong direction. Lt. George Wallace could not recall any other instance where Park

With the phone systems overwhelmed, the chief ranger for the National Capital Region, Einar Olsen, was forced to rely on a radio system based out of a vehicle to communicate.

Police had changed the traffic direction on Rock Creek Parkway outside of rush hour. Memorial Bridge and Clara Barton Parkway were restricted to outbound traffic only, and the southbound lanes of the George Washington Memorial Parkway were closed at Interstate 495. In some instances these historic parkways fed traffic onto city streets or state highways, where it jammed up. Park Police officials discovered that in the future they needed to coordinate more closely with the metropolitan police to improve the flow of traffic. Park Police representatives later worked with the metropolitan police and FEMA in developing detailed plans for the evacuation of the city.²⁶

Additional Park Police Missions

In the days and weeks after the attacks, officers responded to reports of suspicious packages and vehicles, assisted the FBI with crime scene support, and cleared the core monument area of pedestrians and vehicles. They closed roads and increased patrols in response to potential threats. Whenever possible they responded to requests for uniformed patrols from agencies such as the Department of State, National Imagery and Mapping Agency, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, CIA, and National Security

Agency. When a piece of the airplane that had struck the Pentagon was discovered some distance away at Arlington Cemetery, Park Police officers quickly secured the site until the FBI arrived.²⁷

Park Police canine units helped sweep for bombs at the Little Falls Pumping Station and the Washington Aqueduct in northwest Washington. These critical facilities provided drinking water to the city. Two SWAT teams and canine units deployed at Camp David provided security for the president. Between September 11 and September 23, officers responded to roughly seventy reports of suspicious vehicles, packages, and persons. Through all of this, officers continued their day-to-day operations, which included investigating crimes, enforcing traffic and environmental restrictions, and assisting citizens.²⁸

Park Rangers Respond

Working closely with the Park Police in Washington was a significant contingent of law enforcement rangers from the National Capital Region. Shortly after 9:30 a.m. on September 11, the region's chief ranger, Einar Olsen, was sitting in a meeting at the Anacostia Naval Station in southeast Washington with representatives from the Environmental Protection Agency,

Department of Defense, and FBI. The meeting had just begun when suddenly a number of pagers began going off around the room. One Defense representative, who had left the room to take a phone call, bolted back in to announce that the Pentagon had been hit. The other participants rushed to the window and saw smoke in the distance.

Olsen drove quickly back to his office, arriving at the regional headquarters ten minutes later. Soon after, he and others who were meeting in the regional director's office heard a loud explosion. At the time they feared there might have been another attack, but the noise was actually the sonic boom from a U.S. Air Force fighter jet that had scrambled from Langley Air Force Base in southeast Virginia. Faced with uncertain threats, Regional Director Terry Carlstrom decided to close the regional office and send employees home. The headquarters was located a short distance from the Pentagon and some of the national monuments and he was anxious to get employees away from the area in case there was another attack. As with the other federal workers released early from the office, headquarters employees were unsure how to get home with the disruptions in mass transportation and traffic gridlock. Some ended up taking off on foot.

As noted earlier, the Park Police were already mobilizing because they had primary responsibility for the security of the national monuments and memorials. Olsen recommended that the region put all its law enforcement rangers on alert to assist.²⁹ Under the Service's decentralized organizational structure, park superintendents have ultimate authority over their personnel. Olsen recognized that in an emergency this

system could impede the ability to mobilize and transfer resources. He recommended that Carlstrom "regionalize" the park law enforcement rangers so that Olsen would not have to secure approvals from individual superintendents before deploying those rangers. This would give Olsen the flexibility and authority that he needed to shift resources within the region. The regional director gave him an emergency delegation of authority to put rangers under regional control, so that he could move them around in response to the immediate requirements. Carlstrom thus placed the region's law enforcement rangers under Olsen's direct command. Unfortunately, Olsen found that he had no way to communicate with many of these rangers. This dilemma, he said, became a "major issue."³⁰

With the authority issue resolved at least temporarily, Olsen walked next door to the Park Police headquarters and offered the assistance of the region's law enforcement rangers. Regional officials were concerned about possible future attacks on the monuments, the White House, or other facilities for which they were responsible. They also realized that Park Police resources were stretched thin. They agreed that Olsen would try to get some fifteen rangers and that the Park Police would relay assignments for them.

With the phone systems overwhelmed, Olsen was forced to rely on a radio system based out of a vehicle to communicate. He used one of the emergency vehicles in the parking lot outside the headquarters to contact the regional communications center in western Maryland. The center, which coordinated ranger activities throughout the National Capital Region, had only

become a twenty-four-hour operation six months earlier. In response to Olsen's call, the center put out a message informing parks that there was a regional emergency and all rangers were under the region's authority. The center then called all the outlying parks where rangers worked.

Olsen decided to establish a staging area at the headquarters of the George Washington Memorial Parkway. This was a convenient location, outside the congested downtown area but near major roads, so there was easy access. He advised the communications center to call the George Washington Memorial Parkway headquarters and direct them to prepare to be the staging area. Olsen then got in his vehicle and began working his way through what he described as "horrendous" traffic in Washington. By that time, federal offices had closed contributing to the traffic congestion, and even emergency vehicles were having difficulty navigating through the city. All of the major bridges providing direct access to the parkway were clogged, so Olsen spent the next hour slowly weaving his way north and west through downtown Washington and into Maryland up to the American Legion Bridge. He crossed the bridge into Virginia and drove south on the George Washington Memorial Parkway until he reached the park headquarters.

Meanwhile, the park's superintendent, Audrey Calhoun, had set up the staging area. Rangers were already arriving from other parks as far away as Antietam National Battlefield, Monocacy National Battlefield, Harpers Ferry National Historical Park, C&O Canal National Historical Park, and Catoctin Mountain Park. As soon as the first seven rangers

arrived, Olsen asked the communications center in Maryland to contact Park Police headquarters to get the first assignment for the rangers, and the Park Police relayed the assignment back through the center.³¹

The first assignment was to send rangers to the Columbia Island portion of the George Washington Memorial Parkway to assist the children who had been evacuated from the day-care center at the Pentagon when the attack occurred. Roughly fifty adults and children from the day-care center had crossed the footbridge by Columbia Island Marina, which is under Park Service jurisdiction, and were sitting in a grass field known as the Lyndon Baines Johnson Memorial Grove. Olsen led the seven rangers down the parkway in a convoy because they were unfamiliar with the area. He described the trip down the parkway as "very eerie" and quiet. The rangers passed checkpoints but saw almost no traffic.³²

The convoy reached its destination around noon. Olsen left Dwight Dixon, a district ranger from C&O Canal National Historical Park, in charge of the squad and returned up the parkway to the staging area. At Lyndon Baines Johnson Memorial Grove, Dixon found dozens of small children, including infants and toddlers. His team quickly set up a protective perimeter around the children and blocked one lane of westbound traffic on the George Washington Memorial Parkway to increase safety. The rangers were not equipped to transport such a large number of children. Eventually, they stopped an empty tour bus and asked the driver to help transport the children to a Virginia Department of Transportation facility near the Navy Annex just south of the Pentagon. Rangers

carefully loaded up the children, blankets, and other items and escorted the bus to the facility. Once there, they helped move children, staff, and portable cribs into the building. Someone brought in baby formula to feed the infants and lunch for everyone else. The rangers set up a security zone around the building and waited for the parents to claim their children. By 5:30 that evening all of the children had been picked up, and after determining that there were no additional assignments, Dixon and the other rangers drove home.³³

National Mall

While Dixon's team was busy caring for the young children from the Pentagon day-care center, enough rangers had arrived at George Washington Memorial Parkway headquarters to form a second squad. The Park Police gave the rangers another assignment—to report to the mobile command post located on the National Mall at Twelfth Street and Jefferson Drive in northwest Washington. About 2:00 p.m. Olsen led a second convoy down the parkway, across the Theodore Roosevelt Bridge, and into Washington. After receiving a briefing at the command post, the rangers led by Manassas National Battlefield Park Ranger Gil Goodrich were assigned to provide security and enforce closures along the National Mall and at the Jefferson Memorial. The squad was released later that evening after enough Park Police officers had arrived to replace them.

As rangers from outlying parks assisted the Park Police on the National Mall, employees from National Capital Parks–Central were also hard at work in the same area. National Capital Parks–Central rangers

immediately evacuated and closed all park sites. The site manager for the National Mall, Lance Hatten, was in the midst of giving a presentation at the Old Post Office Tower on Pennsylvania Avenue, when a Park Police officer informed him of the attacks in New York City. By the time he returned to his office at the ranger station, the National Mall area was already being evacuated and traffic was in near gridlock. Faced with a great deal of uncertainty and horrible traffic congestion, tourists looked to the rangers on the Mall for advice about what to do, where to go, and what road to take. Unfortunately, in this confusing situation the rangers had little information to provide. Hatten released his employees around noon. Later that afternoon, Hatten and the superintendent of National Capital Parks–Central visited the various sites to make sure that they were secured.³⁴

Meanwhile, while others fled the scene at the White House the morning of the attacks, Presidents' Park grounds crews remained on duty. In anticipation of the president's return to the White House by helicopter, they removed picnic tables that had been set up on the south lawn for a planned afternoon event to create a landing space. President's Park rangers and volunteers helped clear the area around the White House and comforted anxious visitors. Maintenance employees set up additional security barricades.

That evening, National Capital Parks–Central maintenance staff installed snow fence to close off the periphery of the Jefferson and Lincoln Memorials and the area around the base of the Washington Monument. They installed snow fencing and about ten miles of temporary

chain-link fence in the National Mall area. Days later, when the decision was made to close the entire Ellipse, the maintenance crew worked from 5:00 p.m. on Sunday until 8:00 a.m. the next morning off-loading and placing Jersey barriers at the entrances.³⁵

Catoctin Mountain Park

While some of the region's rangers and Park Police officers supported operations in the Washington area, others took assignments at Catoctin Mountain Park, site of the presidential retreat, Camp David. In the first hours after the attacks, park staff tried to contact the regional headquarters but failed to reach anyone in the chain of command. They began to route their communications through the region's communications center in western Maryland. Initially Catoctin managers decided not to release the staff because they thought they might be needed for security-related missions. The park, in fact, never received a call from the regional office directing it to close. Not until the next morning did employees learn that neighboring parks had released their employees.

The day of the attacks the Secret Service requested assistance from the park's rangers and from the Park Police to provide twenty-four-hour security at Camp David. When the president evacuated from Washington, D.C., to Camp David, the region sent additional park rangers to enforce various security perimeter zones around that area. This Park Police and ranger support included additional patrols, manning four checkpoints, and closing the central portion of the park. The security situation intensified a day or two later

when the president, vice president, cabinet members, and other senior officials began a series of high-level meetings at Camp David. Security became a long-term assignment. During the months that followed, the Park Service would institute more than fifty-six days of twenty-four-hour closures at various areas of the park.

During the closures, typically four rangers were needed each day to man posts and patrol. At the same time the staff was taxed with additional foot and vehicle patrols outside its normal duty hours, whether there was a visit in progress or not. Two shifts a day were needed to cover these patrols. The additional patrols were not covered by any reimbursable agreements with the Secret Service. The park did not usually operate twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, and had not budgeted or staffed for such operations. Managers had to draw on emergency law and order funds. Catoctin Mountain Park Superintendent Mel Poole observed that people did not immediately associate Camp David with Catoctin, so it was difficult to convince them that the park was as important as the Statue of Liberty or Independence Hall because the president and vice president were frequently in residence. A year earlier, the park had been cut from ten law enforcement positions to eight.³⁶

When park managers needed additional rangers from other parks, they submitted their request to the regional communications center. Though this twenty-four-hour dispatch center had been operating for only a year, according to Poole, it had proved itself to be "one of the best things that this region has done in many, many years." If the center could not fill the

request, the request went to the Eastern Interagency Coordination Center (EICC) in Shenandoah National Park. There was also a less formal process for sharing and coordinating resources within the region. For example, on September 12, Poole informed the regional director that Catoctin would quickly exhaust the existing ranger resources, and the regional director mentioned another park that might have some available resources. So Poole informed the regional communications center that this park might have some rangers available who could meet his need. Having this unofficial communications system in addition to the official one, Poole noted, “makes us more efficient.”³⁷

The security mission prompted Catoctin Mountain Park to draw on rangers from throughout the National Capital and Northeast Regions to fill shifts. Rangers came from as far away as the Gettysburg, Fredericksburg, and Spotsylvania battlefields, Delaware Water Gap, and Valley Forge. As a result some of the outlying parks in the National Capital Region were stripped of most of their protection rangers and forced to close gates and buildings temporarily.³⁸

After September 11 attacks, the National Capital Region embarked on a comprehensive effort to enhance its emergency response capability, focusing increased attention on safety, training, employee and public information, planning, mobilizing resources, and logistical support. It also took steps to improve communications among the parks, specifically establishing radio links and expanding the use of satellite phones.

Conclusion

The success of the region’s response to the September 11 attacks can be attributed to a number of factors: the superb cooperation between the region’s law enforcement rangers and the Park Police; the willingness of parks to share their ranger resources; and the dedication of individual law enforcement rangers and Park Police officers who worked extended duty hours, sometimes for weeks and even months. The region’s law enforcement rangers and the Park Police had worked together in the past during demonstrations or other special events. With this event, however, said Capt. Sal Lauro, the number of rangers who supported the Park Police and the speed of their response was unprecedented.³⁹

Another key to the successful response in Washington was the close cooperation between the Park Police and the police and fire departments in Arlington County, Alexandria, and Fairfax County in Virginia, as well as with various federal entities. Over the years, the Park Police, particularly its special forces branch, had often worked closely with the Secret Service, U.S. Capitol Police, FBI, and various local jurisdictions—metropolitan police, metro transit police, Arlington and Fairfax Counties. The strong relationships that Park Police had forged with those entities enabled them to work effectively as a team on September 11.

The role that park rangers and Park Police played in evacuating government leaders, protecting the public, and securing some of the nation’s most revered monuments and memorials was unprecedented. The same remarkable level of dedication and cooperation would characterize the response of Park Police and park rangers in the New York City area.





Watching the second attack, NPS staff quickly concluded that this event was no accident. A minute after the building was hit, the jarring sound of the explosion reached them.

III. New York City

While Park Service employees in the Washington area struggled to respond to the terrorist attacks, many of their fellow employees in New York City were also grappling with the immediate impact. Some employees in New York personally witnessed the attacks on the World Trade Center; some were directly involved in caring for victims; and still others participated in search and recovery operations at the site of the collapsed towers, known as Ground Zero. Many of the roughly 450 National Park Service employees at the twenty-one Park Service sites in New York Harbor were profoundly affected by the events of September 11.¹ The units most affected were no doubt two units of Manhattan Sites, the Statue of Liberty, Ellis Island, and Gateway National Recreation Area. Park staffs and the Park Police New York field office played a significant role in the response.

U.S. Park Police New York Field Office

The Park Police field office in New York City traditionally provided law enforcement services at all the units in Gateway National Recreation Area as well as at Statue of Liberty National Monument and Ellis Island. Field office commander Maj. Thomas Wilkins was at his residence at Fort Wadsworth, across the harbor from Manhattan, when he saw television coverage of the first plane slamming into the tower. Grabbing his binoculars, he hurried up to the overlook near the Verrazano Bridge where he would have a clear view of Lower Manhattan. Capt. Neal Lauro (brother of Capt. Sal Lauro), who was district commander for the

Opposite page, the World Trade Center towers soared as a backdrop to Liberty Island before the September 11 attacks. Above, the United Airlines plane circles before tearing through the second tower.

Park Police responded quickly at the various park units in New York City and spent much of their free time participating in the rescue operations at Ground Zero.

Staten Island Station, the Statue of Liberty, and Ellis Island, learned of the attack from his son who was on a bus heading into Manhattan. Capt. Neal Lauro and two of his officers, Lt. Dave Buckley and Sgt. Frank Abbatantuono, who were in his office at the time, drove to the overlook where they joined Wilkins and a few others. Against the brilliant blue sky, they could see smoke and fire pouring out of one of the trade towers. Together they watched as a second plane swept in low across the harbor and slammed into the second tower.

Watching this second attack, they quickly concluded that this event was no accident. A minute after the building was hit, the jarring sound of the explosion reached them. The officers said little. They all came to the same conclusion that the Statue of Liberty was a potential target for another attack, and they would be in a better position to respond if they were at Ellis Island. Captain Lauro immediately contacted the commander at the Statue of Liberty and directed him to evacuate the island. Lauro, Buckley, and Abbatantuono quickly got back in the car and drove to Ellis Island. Eight or nine officers were on duty at the Statue of Liberty and at Ellis Island at the time. Lauro's most immediate concern was to do everything possible to prevent

another attack. He got on the phone and the radio giving instructions and arranging to bring off-duty officers back into work. Buckley who commanded the field office's SWAT team made a call to ask the Park Police dispatcher to direct his team to go to Ellis Island.²

Before leaving for Ellis Island, Captain Lauro ordered the closure of Fort Wadsworth. Major Wilkins began coordinating with U.S. Coast Guard officials to institute security measures at the post. Fort Wadsworth housed the command center for the Coast Guard's New York Harbor operations, an Army Reserve center, a Defense Logistics Agency facility, and the foot of the Verrazano Narrows Bridge. As a result, security concerns for the area were particularly great. Officers immediately closed the back gate and placed guards at the main entrance to control access. A police lieutenant was assigned to serve as liaison and help the park and the Coast Guard put in place appropriate security measures.³

Major Wilkins had just dropped in on a Coast Guard briefing when the first tower collapsed. He returned to the overlook in time to see the second tower collapse. At that point, he decided to drive into Manhattan to the New York Police



Department (NYPD) command post at One Police Plaza. Thick gray ash coated his windshield as he came across the Brooklyn Bridge. He pulled up at One Police Plaza and with the electrical power out climbed eight floors to the command post, where representatives from various state and local agencies were gathering. The major thought his presence in the command post would enhance communications and coordination with other agencies. He believed it was important to have a Park Police representative in the command center with enough authority to make quick decisions if necessary, and he was confident that his two district commanders, Capts. Neal Lauro and Marty Zweig, could handle the operations in their areas. Wilkins's primary role at the NYPD command post was to inform the other representatives of the resources that the Park Service had available. Later, he also relayed information about injured firefighters who had been taken to Ellis Island.

While Major Wilkins performed his tasks at One Police Plaza, the Park Police field office continued operating under its normal structure. At 9:15 a.m. the field office had notified all off-duty personnel to report for duty immediately. Some officers had

difficulty coming in to work because of traffic congestion and road closures. As in Washington, D.C., officers enrolled in the home-to-work program had an easier time driving in. Captain Lauro continued to oversee missions at Staten Island, the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island, and Captain Zweig, district commander for the Brooklyn and Queens unit, remained at Floyd Bennett Field dispatching Park Police throughout the area. Zweig quickly called in additional officers, closed off Floyd Bennett Field, and dispatched several boats to Manhattan. The Park Police field office was able to deploy its officers and boats to different areas based on information that Wilkins relayed from One Police Plaza.⁴

The Park Police marine unit included a forty-one-foot patrol boat (*Marine 4*); twenty-six-foot Whaler patrol boat (*Marine 3*); twenty-five-foot Sea Ark patrol boat (*Marine 5*); thirty-foot Intrepid patrol boat (*Marine 2*); and twenty-seven-foot Glacier Bay patrol boat (*Marine 1*). Fire Island National Seashore dispatched two boats with rangers to assist the Park Police with marine operations. The Park Police vessels quickly formed a security perimeter around Ellis Island and Liberty Island and

Above, Park Police assist with debris removal at Ground Zero.



helped evacuate employees and residents on Liberty Island. The marine vessels transported wounded police and firefighters, and frightened civilians from the Battery Park area to Ellis Island. The marine unit evacuated the Secret Service's entire New York field office from 7 World Trade Center and also carried doctors, nurses, and supplies that had been prepositioned on Ellis Island into Manhattan.

A couple days after the attack, as Officer David Moen and two other officers patrolled on *Marine 5*, they noticed one of the buildings near the South Cove marina starting to collapse. Thousands of frightened rescue workers from Ground Zero suddenly began running. *Marine 5's* crew saw some deputy U.S. marshals running toward the water to escape. The crew motioned them toward the boat and held a line around the dock so the eight deputies and a construction worker could jump onto the boat. During this process, one deputy fell into the water and quickly went under. The crew pulled him out and took the deputies safely out into the harbor and to Ellis Island.⁵ The marine unit played a key role in the response. "Without

the boats," Officer Moen explained, "we would have felt like we were helpless." Without the boats, he said, traveling in and out of Manhattan would have been "next to impossible." The boats allowed the Park Police to travel back and forth from Manhattan to Jersey and from Staten Island. Having a direct link by water allowed them to get where they were needed much faster. The marine unit coordinated closely with the Coast Guard and provided support to the Coast Guard and other agencies. The boats provided escorts, enforced safety zones, and transported personnel between Ellis Island and Manhattan.⁶ Throughout the response, Park Police officers continued to work closely with the staffs at Manhattan Sites, the Statue of Liberty, Ellis Island, and Gateway National Recreation Area.

Manhattan Sites

Manhattan Sites, an urban park in the New York City area made up of six separate sites (Castle Clinton National Monument, Federal Hall National Memorial, General Grant National Memorial, Hamilton Grange National Memorial, Saint Paul's Church

*Above left, view of burning trade towers from New York Harbor.
Above right, Park Police vessel patrols the harbor.*

The Park Police marine unit played a key role in the response. Its vessels provided a direct water link between Manhattan and New Jersey.

National Historic Site, and Theodore Roosevelt Birthplace National Historic Site), was one of the most immediately and dramatically affected units in the National Park System. All six sites were briefly closed to the public immediately after the attacks and two of these remained closed for weeks after. The impact on Federal Hall National Memorial and Castle Clinton National Monument was particularly great. Federal Hall, located on Wall Street in the center of the financial district just a few blocks east of the World Trade Center, became a disaster shelter moments after the trade towers collapsed. The small staff provided shelter and aid to an estimated 250 people fleeing the smoke, dust, and debris that rained down on the streets of Lower Manhattan.⁷

Interpretive Ranger Laura Brennan had arrived at Federal Hall before 8:00 a.m. to prepare for the regular 9:00 a.m. opening. Promptly at 9:00 a.m. she and maintenance laborer Daniel (Danny) Merced opened the doors to visitors. When they walked outside, they were startled to find the front steps completely covered with papers and burning debris. A large column of smoke loomed overhead. They headed back into the building so Merced could make sure the burning debris did not start a fire on the roof. As they walked toward the stairs

they heard the loud boom of the plane hitting the second tower. They hurried back to the front door where they saw what they described as hundreds of people running down the narrow Wall Street. One passerby screamed that the World Trade Center had been struck. Although no one on the staff could yet fully comprehend what was going on, they decided to secure the building as a precaution.

While Brennan called down to nearby Castle Clinton National Monument to find out what was going on, Merced and maintenance mechanic Archie Johnson walked up the street to get a glimpse of the damaged trade center. After witnessing the gruesome scene and assessing the situation, they returned to Federal Hall and asked for permission to go home. By that time the radio was reporting major disruptions in traffic and public transportation around the city so they decided to stay put. Meanwhile, Christopher Keenan, supervisory park ranger at General Grant National Memorial and the only commissioned law enforcement officer for the Manhattan Sites, was in a government van driving into Lower Manhattan hurrying to the regularly scheduled monthly staff meeting at Federal Hall. As he headed south he saw a huge cloud of smoke coming from the World Trade Center. He pulled over to let fire engines pass. He later vividly recalled seeing the faces of those firefighters and cheering them on. Tragically, many of the first firefighters to rush to the scene would later be trapped when the trade towers collapsed. As Keenan continued on at a much slower pace, frantic strangers ran directly into his van. He heard a thunderous explosion and screaming and wondered what was going on. When he could progress no

The small staff at Federal Hall provided shelter and aid to an estimated 250 people fleeing the smoke, dust, and debris that rained down on the streets of Lower Manhattan.



farther because of road closures and traffic, he parked the van in Battery Park, grabbed his riot helmet, and set off on foot for Federal Hall.

The superintendent had not yet arrived at Federal Hall, so the chief of interpretation for Manhattan Sites, Steven Laise, took charge temporarily. After hearing news of the second attack on the radio, he directed the staff to close down the building. Laise and Keenan carefully searched the building inside and out for explosives and suspicious packages. They were outside when the first tower collapsed. Shortly after the collapse, people came running down Nassau Street and Wall Street, frantically trying to outrun an enormous cloud of dust and debris, a scene that Brennan later compared to something out of a *Godzilla* movie. The dark cloud moved faster than the people could run. As the darkness overtook them, they found it increasingly difficult to breathe and desperately sought shelter. Keenan, Merced, and Laise, who were at the Nassau Street entrance, began grabbing people and shoving them into Federal Hall. They slammed the door behind them.

The small basement quickly filled with strangers covered with gray dust and soot. Suddenly Brennan and the others felt the building “rumble.” They had no way of knowing at the time that the frightening “rumble” they experienced was caused by the collapse of the first tower. Concerned about the safety of her coworkers upstairs, Brennan ran from the basement to the third floor staff offices. The third floor was the least secure area in the building because of all the windows. As Brennan hurriedly moved the staff off the third floor, she noticed a dark cloud had engulfed the building.

Johnson and Merced had decided to head home, but they did not make it very far. When Johnson opened the back door to leave, more people rushed into the building seeking shelter. He spotted a large cloud of debris and quickly closed the door. When he reopened the door, it was pitch black outside. He heard women yelling from across the street, ran over to assist, and brought them inside.

Meanwhile, out on the street, eyes stinging Merced was overtaken by the dust cloud when the South Tower collapsed. The

View of Federal Hall National Memorial along Wall Street.

dust aggravated his chronic asthma, and he began to have difficulty breathing. As Merced tried to push down his own fears and struggled for breath, frightened strangers who had seen him speaking to a police officer minutes earlier and seen his uniform now approached him. A few frantic strangers grabbed onto him screaming for help. As Merced tried to calm them, he concluded that he had no choice but to bring them back to Federal Hall. Although he was only two blocks from Federal Hall, the smoke was so thick that he temporarily lost his bearings. He had to feel his way along a wall leading the others until he found the doorway. By the time he reentered the building, he was covered from head to toe with dust and dirt. After showering and changing into a clean uniform, he noticed that other strangers had already taken refuge in the basement. Merced grabbed some rags and pulled the bottled water machine from the maintenance shop area out into the basement so that people could clean off some of the dust and ash. The staff handed out cups of bottled water. They took turns standing by the door to let in the people who continued to seek shelter.⁸

The staff left the air-conditioning on, but this seemed to draw in even more dust. As more people entered the building, the basement filled with dust, making it increasingly difficult for them to breathe. Fortunately, the park had recently received a large shipment of dust masks for its maintenance staff, which the staff now handed out. The air quality in the now crowded basement continued to deteriorate. The staff realized that they needed to get the visitors out of that area. They asked those who were coated with dust to brush themselves off and then move up to the first

floor where the air was better. They moved those who needed medical attention to the second floor where the air was better still. Meanwhile, the staff had to deal with fear and uncertainty. They heard on the radio about the attack on the Pentagon and worried about additional attacks. With the New York Stock Exchange just across the street there was some concern that they were perilously close to a potential target.⁹

Manhattan Sites superintendent, Joseph Avery, on his way to the monthly staff meeting was delayed in traffic. He parked on a side street near Federal Hall and began running. The overpowering dust and smoke turned his blue coat gray and forced him to take temporary refuge in a nearby building. By the time he arrived and went through the side entrance, he found his staff already busy caring for the stranded guests. Roughly 150 visitors were in the cramped basement covered with dust, with another 100 sheltered on the first floor. Some were crying. Some were washing themselves off as best they could with water and paper towels. Many had cuts and other minor injuries, several had asthma, some were understandably very distraught, and two women indicated they were pregnant and in need of a place to rest. One asthmatic was having a particularly difficult time breathing. Fortunately, Keenan and Brennan both had emergency medical training. Brennan performed first aid up in the rotunda area, while Keenan tended to those who remained in the basement. Federal Hall had little in the way of first-aid supplies and Keenan regretted that in his haste to get there earlier that morning, he had left his emergency medical kit behind in his vehicle.

People huddled on the floor while staff members did everything they could to make them comfortable and calm them. Some visitors were panicky, while others stared blankly into space. Still others settled into the benches in the Peter Zenger Room, the only windowless room, and to provide a diversion Merced put in a film that park staff used for interpretation. He also took one of the pregnant women who was complaining of pain down to the maintenance area where she could put her feet up and be more comfortable. He even shared his own asthma medication with the young woman who was having much difficulty breathing. Another sympathetic staff member gave a pair of sneakers to a woman who had literally run out of her shoes in her frantic effort to escape the dust and debris. The sight of well-dressed women in business suits barefoot with their legs cut up left an incongruous and unforgettable image for staff members. The staff managed to get a working phone line and allowed their guests to call family members to let them know that they were okay. Few had any idea where they were. People had run blindly into the building and some were interested in learning about the site, so Johnson gave them a tour. The routine tasks of showing the interpretive film and leading a visitor tour must have seemed somewhat surreal under these circumstances.

The force of the tower collapse shook open some of the building's old windows allowing dust to stream in. More than an inch of dust piled up on the first floor. People were terrified. The staff let them go up to the second floor. When the second tower fell, people did not hear the loud rumble as with the first one because the dust and debris hanging in the air muffled the sound.

But they heard a gush of air pass and saw the sky become completely dark. More people rushed in from outside. Desperate strangers seeking refuge broke out a window facing Wall Street.¹⁰

With so many people to care for, the staff asked the Park Police for help. Capt. Marty Zweig sent two officers to Federal Hall. Sgt. Clyde Solomon had just dropped his children off at school when the dispatcher directed him to respond to Federal Hall. He and Officer Bekim Cobaj drove their police van through the smoke of Lower Manhattan to Federal Hall. The staff was relieved to see the two officers who arrived in their SWAT uniforms. The officers joined the staff in trying to calm and reassure the visitors. They helped identify those in greatest need of medical attention. While Sergeant Solomon helped the staff move the injured to the second floor, Officer Cobaj went in search of medical assistance. Officials had set up triage centers with medical personnel in certain parts of the city. One of these centers was a few blocks away at the Federal Reserve Bank. The two officers used their police van to transport the injured, sick, and pregnant to this triage center where the most critical patients were placed in ambulances and carried to the hospital.

After helping transport the injured to the Federal Reserve Bank, Keenan returned to Federal Hall where Merced brought his attention to a hot dog cart across the street that had been abandoned. After checking for suspicious packages, Keenan, Merced, and Solomon took bread, soda, and other packaged food from the cart to give to the hungry and thirsty people inside.



Federal Hall remained closed with tight security in the days after the attack.

By early afternoon, some of the dust had settled and the visitors began to head home. Solomon distributed dust masks and advised them to walk across the Brooklyn Bridge, which seemed to be the safest route out of town for pedestrians. By around 1:30 p.m., after the last visitors had departed, Johnson, Merced, and Brennan began their long, somber walk home. Avery, Laise, and a couple others stayed behind to inspect the building for major structural damage. Laise and Avery finally left at 5:00 p.m. Solomon and Cobaj remained on-site until around 10:00 p.m. and then used their van to shuttle firefighters closer to Ground Zero. Keenan would remain on duty at Federal Hall through the night. During the night the cooling tower on the roof overflowed because dust had blocked the drains. The chief of maintenance at the Statue of Liberty, Peter O'Dougherty, came over around midnight to address the problem.¹¹

The next morning transportation was still disrupted and parts of Manhattan remained closed off. Despite this situation, thinking that he might be needed a determined Danny Merced slowly made

his way in to work. He relieved Keenan around 9:00 a.m. Park Police officers were on-site, but Merced and Sheila Hamilton were the only staff members to come in that day. Hamilton handled the phones while Merced cleaned the building. He made sure that the basement area and bathroom were clean and available to policemen and firemen working in the area.

Federal Hall remained closed on September 13, but Keenan and Avery came in to assess the damage. They conducted a preliminary examination of the building's structure to determine whether a more extensive evaluation would be needed. More than an inch of dust and debris blanketed the roof. On September 11, the air-conditioner had pulled the dust into the air-conditioning ducts and filled the building with dust. The two men concluded that the building's interior would have to be professionally cleaned using hazardous material procedures and equipment before the staff could be allowed to return.¹²

The imposing building was a solid masonry structure of granite and marble that had stood since 1842. It was so sturdy that the lowest floor had been designated an air

Park Police canine unit on duty at Federal Hall after September 11.



Although Federal Hall was solid masonry, constructed of granite, the force of the crumbling trade towers and the resulting dust and debris caused significant damage.

raid shelter during the Cold War. However, the powerful seismic waves following the collapse of the towers caused serious structural damage. The force of the collapse caused a significant expansion of pre-existing horizontal interior cracks along the west wall running parallel on the basement and first floor. Vertical cracks extended above the interior doors and through the lintels.¹³ Over the next few days, the staff slowly resumed operations. Within roughly a week, phone service, electrical power, and water supply were fully operational and the broken windows had been replaced. Contracts were negotiated for cleaning the interior and the heating/air-conditioning system. Cleaning was particular challenge because the asbestos that had been used in the construction of trade towers permeated the area.

Preliminary estimates indicated that the cost of stabilizing the cracks could reach \$15 million. Other needed repairs included replacing the filters, gearbox, and chiller fan unit in the cooling tower on the roof; replacing glass in the skylight above the rotunda and in a Wall Street window; removing dust and debris from the roof and gutters; replacing soiled carpet in the

basement; and cleaning more than twenty dust-filled air handler units. Reopening the site also hinged on providing adequate security for the site, the public, and the staff. Park Police officers were stationed at the site twenty-four hours a day, and security guards operated a magnetometer and inspected packages.¹⁴

Just south of Federal Hall, Castle Clinton National Monument also struggled with the impact of the attacks. Castle Clinton is a circular structure that had been built in the nineteenth century to defend New York Harbor. It is located in Battery Park at the southern tip of Manhattan, less than a mile southwest of the World Trade Center. Site manager Charles Markis arrived at 8:15 a.m. on September 11 anticipating another routine day. He had no way of knowing that this day would quickly become anything but routine. With the mild temperatures and clear skies, a number of visitors had already gathered outside when Markis and other rangers opened the doors to the public promptly at 8:30. The site manager returned to his office, which looked out onto the central parade ground in Battery Park. At approximately 8:45 a.m. he noticed people pointing as they looked north

Workers remove dust and debris from the entrance to Federal Hall.



With no telephone service, electrical power, or batteries for the radio, employees at Castle Clinton National Monument in Battery Park were completely cut off, without communications.

toward the World Trade Center and became curious. He stepped outside his door and looked up to see one of the trade towers in flames. Soon after the staff began to see papers from the offices and other debris floating in the air.

Back inside, Markis heard a radio announcement that there had been some kind of accident at the trade center and began to think about evacuating his staff. A call came in from the regional office directing the site to close. The first Circle Line boat that carried visitors to the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island was scheduled to depart at 9:00 a.m. and passengers were already boarding. Markis walked over to the ticket office and directed the manager to get the passengers off the boat. He also instructed his staff to clear visitors from the site, from the bookstore, restrooms, and museum area. After clearing out the visitors, they secured the back door.

The site manager and a few others were outside the building preparing to secure the doors when they saw the second plane fly overhead and dive into the second tower. Then came the chilling realization that they were under attack. Markis went back inside

to close up his office and discovered that they had no telephone or electrical service. He and his staff decided to evacuate. As they prepared to leave, they heard a loud explosion. Not knowing at the time that a tower had collapsed, they feared that the noise might be a bomb or missile. Then they saw a huge debris cloud fast approaching and realized it was not safe to leave. The small group of employees and partners hurriedly took refuge in the site manager's office, donning dust masks that he pulled from a supply closet. With no telephone service, electrical power, or batteries for the radio, they were completely cut off, without communications. They heard another explosion as the second tower collapsed and heard the sirens and fighter jets overhead but could only surmise what was happening. Peering out through a small window they saw a frightening mix of ash, concrete, business cards, stationary, and other debris rain down. The sky turned black. Markis tried to calm his staff as they sat in the dark imagining the worst.

The police were not letting civilians go north of Battery Park so a number of people were huddled outside around the

Castle Clinton on the southern tip of Manhattan was less than a mile from the World Trade Center.

**Staff at the Manhattan Sites set aside
their own fears and safety concerns
to provide food, water, shelter, and medical assistance
to the victims of the attacks.**

monument where the dust and debris were thickest. The staff could hear their voices, but Markis concluded it would not be wise to invite them in. He worried that the burning debris he had seen would ignite the wood shingle and truss roof that covered the perimeter of Castle Clinton. If there was a fire, he knew his small staff could retreat to the cellar, but they would not be able to take care of more people. The staff remained secluded in Markis's office for about an hour and a half under the rain of dust and debris. When the sky began to clear, they went out to look around. One of the first things they did was look to reassure themselves that the Statue of Liberty still stood.¹⁵

The ticket office manager and one of the Circle Line owners had a cell phone with a radio function so they were able to contact the Circle Line boat captains and ask them to bring the boats in to help evacuate people. Two Circle Line boats from across the East River where they were tied up arrived, and the staff provided the crews with dust masks. As with Federal Hall, the incident highlighted the importance of having a supply of dust masks on hand for emergency situations. Authorities used the seawall behind Castle Clinton as a staging area and commandeered all boats in the harbor to

evacuate people from Lower Manhattan. Circle Line boats carried people to New Jersey.

The experience also highlighted unexpected problems. Castle Clinton's restrooms had been renovated with electronic flush mechanisms. These mechanisms could not function without a power supply, so the staff was unable to draw water into a sink or flush a toilet. None of the drinking fountains functioned because emergency responders had tapped into the water system and the water pressure was low. Also, without electricity to operate the pump, sewage backed up within twenty minutes, so the staff could not allow the public to use the restrooms. They later allowed some limited access to the restrooms and distributed some bottled water. When the situation calmed down, the staff began to leave. Markis, the last to leave, began to walk home around 1:00 p.m.

Communications remained disrupted for days after the attack. The site manager could only contact employees who lived in New Jersey and Connecticut by cell phone. The city closed off the part of Manhattan south of Fourteenth Street. The military established a staging area for the National Guard in Battery Park. Staff members were temporarily placed at other sites. Markis

later took a position at Sagamore Hill National Historic Site and did not return to Castle Clinton as site manager.¹⁶

Unlike Federal Hall, which sustained significant damage, Castle Clinton came through attacks “in remarkably good condition.”¹⁷ It reopened a few weeks later without any special cleaning or additional security personnel, though the sale of Statue of Liberty ferry tickets at Castle Clinton was suspended temporarily.¹⁸

September 11 was a defining experience for employees at Manhattan Sites, particularly at Federal Hall and Castle Clinton. Superintendent Avery was justifiably proud of his staff, describing them as patient, kind, and comforting. Staff members put aside their own fears and safety concerns to provide food, water, shelter, and medical assistance and to calm panicky and occasionally hysterical victims. For example, despite his own serious asthma condition, Danny Merced worked continuously filling the water machine and helping the visitors. Fellow employee Archie Johnson found himself drawing on his Vietnam experience that day as he went around calming individuals and making sure that everyone was all right. “Help your fellow man was just—that was the day to do that, you know,” he explained.¹⁹ Steve Laise explained that in helping people that day, staff members drew on the Service’s “strong tradition of service.” “It’s been that way ever since 1916, when the Park Service was created, that rangers are there to help people,” he added. “If it’s deep in the wilderness and somebody’s lost, or if it’s in Lower Manhattan and somebody’s seeking shelter, that’s our job. That is what a park ranger does.” Christopher Keenan, too, felt the personal

satisfaction of knowing that he had done “exactly what I was supposed to do.”²⁰

For some, the experience changed the way they viewed their fellow workers. It forged a tighter bond among park staff. They felt renewed respect and appreciation for each other. “I could have been no prouder if they were my children or my best friend because they hung in there, man. They really hung in there,” said Johnson. “I know that when push comes to shove and you need them,” he added, “they’ll be there for you.” Managers expressed great pride in the way the staff pulled together and responded to the crisis, especially the maintenance employees and rangers. “We could have shut our doors and went home,” Keenan said. “We didn’t. We stayed on, and I’m very proud of us.”²¹

In the weeks that followed, some of those who had taken refuge in Federal Hall that traumatic day either sent notes or came back to thank the staff personally. Another gentleman sent a poignant thank-you note on behalf of his daughter, a young attorney who had taken shelter at Federal Hall. It was not unusual for strangers to stop Merced and Johnson on the street to thank them for their efforts that day. One woman who had escaped the trade center returned to thank and embrace a Castle Clinton ranger who had led her safely to a boat that carried her to New Jersey.

Federal Hall reopened to the public on October 15, but with new security measures in place. Visitors now went through magnetometer screening. Before September 11, the Park Police provided support at Federal Hall only in response to special circumstances as needed. Now they had a continual presence there. Castle Clinton did



not reopen until nearly a week later, on October 22, because of the Army Reserves occupying Battery Park. Visitation did not immediately return to its pre-September 11 level. Federal Hall and Castle Clinton had always been considered secondary destinations for visitors to Manhattan. To further complicate matters, transportation in Lower Manhattan was disrupted for some time. With the major attractions in Lower Manhattan gone or closed and Ellis Island and the Statue of Liberty closed, fewer visitors came to Federal Hall in November 2001 than in November 2000.²²

Manhattan Sites was left with significant concerns. The first was the high cost of stabilizing the structure of Federal Hall and implementing the additional security measures required at Federal Hall and Castle Clinton. The magnetometers, X-rays, and Park Police or protection rangers required at those sites added significantly to costs. Months later, Superintendent Avery reported, "Manhattan Sites continues to suffer from inadequate funding and FTE [staff positions]...."²³

Senior staff of the House and Senate Appropriations and Authorizations

Committees toured both Federal Hall and Castle Clinton, and Congress later appropriated \$16.5 million to repair and rehabilitate Federal Hall. Counterterrorism funds made possible the installation of surveillance cameras at Castle Clinton and Federal Hall. As noted, security guards, magnetometers, and X-ray machines were employed. A radio system was purchased for park communications and the park acquired two emergency response vehicles. Castle Clinton received a surveillance camera and public address system.²⁴

Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island National Monuments

Federal Hall and Castle Clinton were just two of the Park Service sites in the New York City area that were directly affected. Education specialist Park Ranger Vincent DiPietro was assembling children's coat racks for the education room in the main building at Ellis Island when he heard an explosion. He went outside and stood with a few others scanning the Manhattan skyline. Soon they saw flames pour out the windows of one of the trade towers and thick black smoke rising. It was eerily quiet,

View of the main building at Ellis Island. After the second plane struck the trade towers, park staff evacuated the building and gathered at the flagpole.

**As employees gathered near the flagpole,
park officials worried that the Statue of Liberty
might be attacked and decided to
evacuate nearby Liberty Island.**

he recalled, as they waited to see what would happen next. DiPietro waited to hear the sound of sirens responding as they had after an attack on the World Trade Center a few years earlier, or to see the smoke diminish as sprinkler systems kicked in and firefighters responded. Yet, nothing seemed to happen for the next fifteen or twenty minutes.

Meanwhile, dozens of employees gathered at the fuel dock, the best spot on the island for viewing Lower Manhattan. They watched a second plane fly in low directly overhead, so low they could see its United Airlines logo. The fact that it was a commercial airliner struck DiPietro as odd. The plane sailed in at an angle around the second tower and directly into the imposing structure as if to cut it in half. It appeared to explode inside the building as if, DiPietro vividly recalled, “the building just swallowed up that airline.” Witnesses stood in stunned disbelief. More than a few described watching the plane hit as “surreal,” much like watching a movie. “It was as if someone had just hit you over the head with a two-by-four,” DiPietro explained, “and you’re just shaking your head and thinking—What just happened? Did we all see the same thing?”

Suddenly, the staff knew that this scenario was no accident. Something was horribly wrong. Their minds simply could not absorb the horror of what they had just seen. Some started running back and forth, not knowing where to go or what to do. Others grabbed their cell phones and began calling loved ones. For some, there was the uneasy feeling that the event they had just witnessed could affect them directly. In the back of their minds, they knew that both the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island could be targets.

After the initial shock, managers and staff began to mobilize. They started to receive reports of other attacks and began preparing an appropriate response. After watching the second plane strike, few, if any employees, were comfortable remaining inside. Getting everyone out of the building and accounting for them was paramount. Protection rangers quickly evacuated the building and gathered employees on the lawn near the flagpole at the front of Ellis Island. Unfortunately, those standing near the flagpole were in direct sight line of the smoke and burning towers, which added to the emotional distress of some. Standing near the flagpole, horticulturist Alfred Farrugio was struck by the fact that the seagulls, which normally circled the patio

area outside the cafeteria scavenging for food, were on the ground. The seagulls sat perfectly still with their heads tucked into their bodies, as if they knew that something was terribly wrong.

Meanwhile Assistant Superintendent Frank Mills quickly moved to stop traffic from coming across the bridge that connects the island to Liberty State Park in New Jersey. He positioned himself at the gate with the keeper of his weapon unsnapped, determined not to let anything cross the bridge. Park Police officers relieved him a few minutes later and he assumed the role of incident commander making sure that structures were in place for the emergency medical operations. Only later did he realize that if terrorists had driven a rental truck filled with explosives across, there was little he could have done to stop them.²⁵

As employees gathered by the flagpole, park officials decided to evacuate nearby Liberty Island believing the Statue of Liberty might be at risk. Park Police officers evacuated the island and then surrounded it with a cordon of boats. Capt. Neal Lauro even pulled his own officers off the island because he knew that they could not prevent an attack from another plane. If the threat came by boat, however, they could take certain measures to defend the island. Fortunately, this early in the morning no visitors had yet arrived on Liberty Island and the number of residents was fairly small, so the evacuation went smoothly.

Back at Ellis Island, perhaps as many as 150 or 200 employees stood on the seawall behind what is known as the “wall of honor,” waiting to evacuate. They spotted a speedboat charging toward them. Some

wondered if the boat was a kind of suicide bomber because it ignored warnings to turn away and raced through a sign that said no docking permitted. Thinking they were under attack, terrified employees, some hysterical, began running to the opposite side of the island. Knowing how close they were to the site of the attacks and feeling somewhat isolated on the island, they felt particularly vulnerable.

When the first plane hit the North Tower, boat captain Alfred Arberg was at the Marine Inspection Office next to the Staten Island Ferry in Battery Park changing the oil in the generator on *Liberty IV*. This sixty-four-foot vessel usually carried staff and VIPs to Ellis and Liberty Islands. Captain Arberg launched the boat and as he headed toward Ellis Island, he received a call directing him to the Statue of Liberty to evacuate the staff and residents. Normally the staff boat went to Ellis Island first and then Liberty Island. After loading passengers at Liberty Island, Arberg headed on to Ellis Island. Passengers who tried to get off at Ellis Island were instructed to remain on the boat and go home. Some Ellis Island employees also got on the boat. Unfortunately, the staff boat deposited its passengers in Battery Park just as the first tower collapsed, and they suddenly found themselves in the midst of the dust and ash and hysteria. Police directed them onto the Staten Island Ferry, which dropped them off in an unfamiliar area to make their way home from there as best they could. Once at Staten Island, some were taken in temporarily by staff who lived at Fort Wadsworth. In hindsight, Assistant Superintendent Cynthia Garrett later conceded that the decision to take that first group of

employees to Manhattan had not been thought out carefully.²⁶

While the first load of passengers made their way home, Captain Arberg had returned to Ellis Island, picked up a second group of employees, and headed back to Manhattan. By that time, however, the second tower had collapsed and people were jumping off the dock at Battery Park to escape the dust and debris. When Arberg saw the situation, he turned the boat around and brought his passengers back to Ellis Island.

After Arberg returned to Ellis Island, Chief of Maintenance Peter O'Dougherty directed him to put *Liberty IV* back in its berth and placed the sixty-five-foot *Liberty II* in service. *Liberty II* was a wider vessel with an open front normally used for hauling garbage, so it could better accommodate gurneys for the seriously injured. Arberg headed back across the harbor to Manhattan with O'Dougherty and two emergency medical technicians on board to help with the evacuation of Lower Manhattan. They stood by for half an hour, but there were so many boats that *Liberty II* was not needed and they returned to Ellis Island. The fire department commandeered another vessel, *Liberty III*, to carry firemen to and from the North Shore Marina. *Liberty IV*, which could carry up to eighty people, was later used to transport emergency personnel from Brooklyn Navy Yard to Lower Manhattan.²⁷

As Arberg carried that first group of park employees and residents to Lower Manhattan, Statue of Liberty Superintendent Diane Dayson was making her way into work. The only car access to Ellis Island was through Liberty State Park and New Jersey officials

had restricted access, causing her some delay. By the time she arrived, the second plane had struck and the towers were near collapse. Dayson's most immediate concern was the safety of her employees. Some employees who were anxious to get home and reconnect with loved ones as quickly as possible left the island, while others wanted to stay and help when they learned that evacuees from Lower Manhattan would be arriving. The superintendent and the other managers wanted to limit the number of employees on Ellis and Liberty Islands because of concerns about additional attacks. Managers asked those staff members who were involved in visitor protection services or had some first-aid skills or emergency medical training and could help with a planned triage center to stay. They advised the others to go home. However, some employees who lived in New Jersey were unable to get home because of bridge and road closures. Dayson and the boat captains discussed possible locations where the boats could safely drop off staff members and put them in a position to get transportation home. Some were deposited in Upper Manhattan and other boroughs in New York City.

Capt. Neal Lauro and two of his officers had arrived and established a command center at Ellis Island. Assistant Superintendent Garrett and no doubt many other employees were very glad to see the officers that day. Lauro, Dayson, and Garrett would work side by side throughout the day as they determined what needed to be done. The spirit of cooperation remained strong as they coordinated the response.²⁸

In a hastily established triage center, Ellis Island employees cared for hundreds of wounded trade center victims, and injured rescue workers, firemen, and police who arrived by boat from Manhattan.



Early on, the Park Police received word that Ellis Island would be used as a triage center for victims from Lower Manhattan. The idea of using the island as a triage center was not new. The Secret Service had previously identified Ellis Island as a possible evacuation point for special major events scheduled in New York City. The island was considered a good evacuation site because of its proximity to Lower Manhattan and because of the land bridge connecting it to New Jersey.²⁹

Park staff immediately began preparing for the arrival of the first victims. Maintenance workers carried chairs outside and set up the triage center at the front of the island with tables and portable toilets. Staff started amassing emergency medical gear on the front lawn. Not long after, boats from NYPD, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and other agencies began arriving with trade center victims, as well as injured rescuers, firemen, and policemen. Staff members described the people coming off the boats as “walking wounded.” Although most arrivals did not have serious physical injuries, many were scared, disoriented, and coated with dust. They came off the boat, said one staff member, “grasping for air, coughing, looking like they had been through a snow storm, a sugar factory, dust and everything covering their bodies.”

Some struggled with broken limbs and respiratory problems; others appeared to be in shock. A few were soaked with jet fuel. Months later, park employees recalled vivid images of seeing people in business attire walking around shoeless, in torn clothing, with stunned, vacant expressions on their faces. One staff member noted that even if he had not seen the smoke and fallen towers, he would have known that terrible destruction had occurred simply by watching the victims come off the boats.³⁰

An emergency medical services team from a Jersey City hospital assisted with the triage center. Officials organized three teams, and a fairly organized process evolved. One group made up of the Jersey City emergency medical team, first responders, and a few staff members with emergency medical training provided medical treatment. A second group did what they could to calm people and make them comfortable; and the third group addressed basic needs such as food, water, diapers, and restroom facilities.

While the emergency responders and a few staff members tended to the medical needs, others did what they could to comfort the victims and make them comfortable until New Jersey officials could transport them to a hospital. Boats carrying victims from

Lower Manhattan radioed ahead to let staff know if they had any serious burn victims, so that the emergency medical team would have gurneys and stretchers ready. One boat arrived after another, each carrying fifty to seventy passengers. As each new arrival got off the boat, he or she was wetted down with a hose to remove the dust and soot. Joan Kelly, a secretary at the park, then recorded their names, address, telephone numbers, time of arrival, and the phone number of a contact. Kelly passed the information on to Paula Castro who entered it into a computer database. Another employee maintained a list of boats and their arrival times. The names of the refugees were organized by the name of the boat on which they arrived. The information was ultimately provided to the Park Police and NYPD to help families and friends locate the refugees. One employee, drawing on his previous emergency training, placed a piece of tape around each person's wrist with his or her name and social security number as an identifier. After recording the names, staff directed the arrivals to a shaded area with chairs where they could get out of the sun and provided them with water and sandwiches. The park's concessionaire and some employees prepared and brought out food for the visitors. Staff handed out T-shirts provided by the concessionaire to replace the dust coated or torn clothing worn by some victims. They also fashioned baby diapers out of T-shirts and distributed makeshift baby bottles. After a few hours, refugees who did not need medical attention were transported by bus to Liberty State Park and later to Brooklyn.

Some of those coming through the triage center shared heart-wrenching

stories about what they had experienced that morning. Some were in tears. Kelly described the frustration many staff members no doubt felt that day. "You felt like you wanted to make it all better for them and you couldn't," she explained. A few visitors left particularly lasting impressions. Kelly recalled a frightened little girl with a heart condition to whom she gave special attention. Daniel Brown recalled a stunned female police lieutenant who was anxious to contact her sister to let her know that she was safe. Brown placed the call for her and took satisfaction in knowing that he had brought some comfort to the lieutenant and her family. After a grateful hug from the lieutenant he moved on to assist others.

By some accounts as many as 275 people had come through the triage center that day, some of them badly burned. Fifty of these were transported to local hospitals. Dozens of trained medical personnel were positioned on the island and a long row of ambulances lined up on the New Jersey side of the bridge stood ready to transport the injured. Tragically, the devastation at the trade center was so great that the large numbers of injured victims they expected never materialized. As hours passed and relatively few injured arrived, some employees began to feel increasingly helpless and disappointed.³¹

Dayson spent much of the day out in front of the main building supporting her staff. Periodically she came inside to try to contact the regional office. There was no phone service, and with power disrupted, no computers or television. Fortunately the Park Police had radio contact with NYPD and could find out what was going on in the city. The superintendent found that tending

to the injured while ensuring the safety of her staff was no easy task.

Later in the day, employees who lived in New Jersey were finally able to go home. As the last of the injured were taken away and operations were winding down, the park received a call saying the island might be needed as a morgue. Dayson and a few others stayed to make the arrangements. O'Dougherty and his maintenance crew hurriedly set up a temporary morgue in one of the large storage buildings on the island. They cleared out the building and set up lighting. Various self-contained morgue-type units were brought over from New Jersey and staged on the island. The temporary morgue was never used and later when it became clear that few bodies would be recovered from Ground Zero, it was demolished. By early evening there was little left to do and most of the staff had headed home. O'Dougherty, who felt particular responsibility as the facility manager, stayed on duty all night to make sure all the equipment and lights operated properly. The concessionaire remained all night as well, preparing food for the few who remained. Dayson later praised her staff for "putting our emotions aside and our fears and anguish to deal with the moment at hand... to serve the victims that were brought over from the World Trade."³²

The park remained closed for the next few days and managers directed employees to stay home. Frank Mills, one of the few employees to report for work the next day, had positive experiences with the Service's peer counseling program in the past and was anxious to address the issue of employee assistance and counseling. By September 13, members of the

Service's critical incident stress debriefing team were on their way to provide support to employees in the New York City area. Six peer counselors arrived at the park on Friday afternoon and began work the next day, meeting with Ellis Island and Statue of Liberty employees. These employees had to deal with the trauma of witnessing the attacks and the collapse of the towers. Some mourned the loss of a familiar skyline. They had to come to grips with not only sight of the destruction, but the strong odor, a smoky, burnt smell, that permeated Lower Manhattan, what one employee called "the smell of tragedy." On the day most employees returned to work, they found their supervisors lined up to greet them, as if they were VIPs, a reception Castro later described as "heart-warming."

Each employee carried indelible memories of that day, memories easily triggered by a particular action, image, or even smell. Months after the attacks as Vincent DiPietro straightened up the front desk, he noticed the cancellation stamp normally used for the Park Service's passport program. Apparently no one had touched the stamp since that fateful day because the date on it still read "September 11." DiPietro decided to save the stamp as a tribute. "It's like one thing that froze that day in time," he explained.³³

The issue of reopening Ellis Island and the Statue of Liberty was complex and troublesome. The question was not just when to reopen but how to do so in a safe and secure manner. In those first weeks, Diane Dayson participated in a number of conference calls with the regional director and Director Mainella. They discussed the impact of the tragedy on the staff

and on operations as well as the measures needed to improve security. Later, Northeast Regional Director Marie Rust came to Fort Wadsworth and met with staff from Manhattan Sites, Gateway National Recreation Area, and the other parks in New York Harbor. Officials tried to determine how best to get the parks back in operation.³⁴ As islands, both sites were vulnerable to attack by boat and air. Their staffs had watched transfixed as the plane had swooped low overhead before slamming into the second tower and had seen the towers collapse. They were understandably concerned about air traffic and keenly aware that the Statue was a potential terrorist target.

Reopening the Statue of Liberty was a particularly thorny issue. Park officials reviewed the existing information about how long it would take to evacuate visitors from the various parts of the building safely. Having this information and knowing that the Statue was a potential target, managers questioned whether the Service could do enough to guarantee the safety of visitors. With only one way up and down, managers were left pondering how they would get people out safely in an emergency. Service leaders realized that they needed to take extreme care not to put visitors in the same position as those who had been trapped on the top floors of the trade towers.

Assistant Superintendent Garrett observed that the park was “forever changed” by the events of September 11. On some level employees had already lived with the realization that Ellis Island and the Statue of Liberty were potential targets, but the attacks brought this reality home more

forcefully. Employees understandably became more cautious or even suspicious in the way they viewed visitors. Reflecting the new dilemma faced by managers at a number of parks, Statue of Liberty officials struggled with the issue of enabling people to experience the park’s rich resources while at the same time keeping them and the Statue safe. Like managers at other parks, Garrett had to learn more about security than she ever imagined. The Service’s mission had always been to balance preservation with use, but now managers had to weigh security concerns as well. Finding the right balance, she conceded, was “unbelievably complex.”³⁵

Before reopening either Ellis or Liberty Islands, officials had to develop effective procedures for screening visitors. Managers had to make decisions about security inspections and where to place the metal detector and X-ray machine. They had to develop a screening plan that would satisfy the director, the regional director, and others. It would take months of planning and the recommendations of many experts before the park felt comfortable moving forward. Officials adopted off-site screening. In the past officials screened visitors with a magnetometer after they arrived at the Statue of Liberty. Now they decided to screen visitors with X-ray machines and a magnetometer at Battery Park and Liberty State Park, before they boarded the Circle Line boats to go to Ellis Island or Liberty Island.

Security changes brought an increased role for the Park Police. Off-site screening required the presence of Park Police, even though a private security firm operated the equipment. In addition, before September

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11, the Park Police marine unit's role at the Statue of Liberty had been limited. Park Police officials had received authorization and funding to buy a boat for law enforcement purposes at the Statue of Liberty, but the boat had no dedicated crew. It was manned by what were called "incidental operators," specially trained individuals who could be pulled temporarily to do this. After September 11, the marine unit continued its patrols and played an integral role in maintaining a security zone around the Statue of Liberty.³⁶

Superintendent Dayson and her staff spent many hours working with security experts from outside the Park Service who advocated a slow, methodical approach to reopening. She sometimes felt she did not have enough support for this approach from Service leaders who to her seemed more focused on visitation than security. Service leaders, she explained, were feeling pressure from concessionaires who complained about losing money because of the closure and from private foundations that complained the closing impeded their fund-raising efforts. Before the attacks, more than five million people visited the park each year, and concessionaires wanted to see that level of visitation again. They wanted full open access to the Statue

of Liberty. From their perspective, off-site screening slowed the flow of visitors. Dayson later observed that she felt pressure to reopen before she believed the park was as safe as it could be.

Dayson preferred instituting security systems slowly and methodically. She wanted the Secret Service and local police to conduct security assessments and make their reports. Then, based on their recommendations and on a series of meetings with Washington and regional officials, they would determine how best to phase in these security measures. She would then share the plan with the city, the concessionaires, and the other partners, ask them to help fund it, and discuss how they might recoup their losses. The property in Battery Park where the screening occurred belonged to the city, and the park needed authorization from city officials to install temporary structures to house its metal detectors and X-ray machines. The property at Liberty State Park where visitors entering from New Jersey would be screened belonged to the state of New Jersey. The park's screening operations significantly affected its partners and strained relationships that had been cultivated over the years. Instead of giving partners a complete plan to review to get their support, the

**Park managers soon discovered
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Service implemented temporary measures. City officials complained that the huge tent in Battery Park obstructed the view of the harbor just as they are beginning to revitalize the park. Everything was, she said, “haphazardly done” in order to meet the immediate need of reopening.³⁷

Officials continued to regard the Statue of Liberty as a potential target, and though visitors were allowed to walk around the island, the Statue itself remained close. The decision about reopening the Statue ultimately would be made at the highest levels of government, after the introduction of enhanced security measures. On the positive side, with the Statue closed, Garrett pointed out, visitors benefited from a “more intimate experience” of it. Rather than simply riding the elevator up inside the Statue, they walked around Liberty Island, read the wayside exhibit signs, and enjoyed a quieter, more contemplative experience. The park changed the way it interpreted the New York City skyline. It began giving interpretive talks off-site at Battery Park and Liberty State Park. While visitors waited to be screened, guides described what they would experience at Ellis Island and talked to them about the skyline.³⁸

Although Ellis Island reopened to the public months after the attacks, the inside of the Statue of Liberty would not reopen for several years. The temporary closure at Ellis Island and prolonged closure at the Statue of Liberty gave staff the opportunity to catch up on routine maintenance projects. At Ellis Island, they painted bathrooms, refurbished the historic floors, and undertook other long overdue maintenance projects. The museum program was able to significantly reduce its backlog of cataloging. Over time officials developed a visitor use and protection plan for the Statue of Liberty that would provide visitors with increased access, and with the new security measures in place the Statue was scheduled to reopen in August 2004.³⁹

Gateway National Recreation Area

Gateway National Recreation Area also felt the powerful impact of the attacks. The park encompasses more than 26,000 acres of sandy beaches, marsh, wildlife sanctuaries, recreational and athletic facilities, historic structures, and airfields in several Park Service units surrounding New York Harbor. When the attacks occurred, the superintendent of the Jamaica Bay unit of Gateway National Recreation Area, William (Billy) Garrett, quickly contacted



Part of Floyd Bennett Field in Gateway National Recreation Area became an important staging area for food and equipment to support recovery operations at Ground Zero.

Capt. Marty Zweig. They began coordinating with the FBI and NYPD to accommodate their needs. At the request of the police department, Jamaica Bay officials closed all entrances to Floyd Bennett Field, which housed the police department's special operations division and served as the department's central staging area in that part of Brooklyn. The police department blocked the front gate with garbage trucks and Jersey barriers. The park had an existing agreement with the police for the city to use parts of the airfield for their helicopters and other special programs. The FBI asked to use some of the storage space at Floyd Bennett Field. FBI and park officials discussed the FBI storing parts there or using some of the aviation hangars as temporary morgues. Eventually the FBI used one small hangar. Park Police officers provided security for an FBI evidence-collection site at the airfield. While anxious to accommodate the FBI and the metropolitan police, Garrett and Zweig had to carefully weigh the potential impact on park resources and address the need to reopen the site to visitors and resume normal operations.⁴⁰

With so many agencies eyeing Floyd Bennett Field as a potential staging area for

their support functions, Garrett discovered that the idea that the field was part of the National Park System somehow got lost. He had to continually assert that it was a national park and should be treated appropriately. Like many other park managers, he discovered there was a delicate balance between protecting the park and contributing to the response effort. He wanted to support the response effort but also leave the park in a position where it could resume normal operations as quickly as possible. Ultimately the park and the metropolitan police forged a cooperative relationship and communication between the two improved.

The park also supported the American Red Cross. The American Red Cross operated a major food preparation operation out of a hangar on Floyd Bennett Field for nearly four months after the attacks. At one point, the relief agency was preparing ten thousand meals a day for relief workers at Ground Zero. The presence of the American Red Cross, however, proved to be a drain on park resources. Park staff had to quickly arrange housing for more than one hundred Red Cross workers as well as

View of building 7 at the World Trade Center after the attack.

maintain the restrooms and the electrical power for them.⁴¹

At Fort Wadsworth in the Staten Island unit of Gateway National Recreation Area, Superintendent Shirley McKinney quickly took steps to enhance security on September 11. Capt. Neal Lauro assigned an officer to help her address security issues at Staten Island. McKinney's responsibilities included Great Kills Park with its marina and Miller Field, located near one of the major thoroughfares on Staten Island. She directed the ranger in charge at each site to clear out visitors and close their sites, with help from the Park Police. "It was really a good team effort," she observed. After personally visiting each site and assuring herself that her employees were all right, she returned to Fort Wadsworth.⁴²

The metropolitan police ultimately used a historic hangar at Miller Field as a command center and as an equipment-staging area for two months. The mayor of New York City and the governor of New York used it as a landing area for their helicopters.

By legislation, the Park Service was the lead agency for the Fort Wadsworth complex, so final decisions about security rested with McKinney. Decisions about security were complicated by the fact that the park's partners at Fort Wadsworth, specifically the Coast Guard, Army Reserve, and the Defense Contract Management Agency, had very different missions. No protocol existed for an event of this kind, but McKinney did what she could to accommodate the varied security needs. In addition the Coast Guard's mission was to protect the New York Harbor. To do this job, Coast Guard officials had to be able to communicate

quickly and effectively with the crews on their vessels. Because of their grave concern about the security of their communications equipment, they often operated under a higher threat level than the Park Service, U.S. Army Reserve, or Defense Contract Management Agency. The Coast Guard also set up a temporary camp to support the two hundred additional personnel brought in to protect the harbor. At the Coast Guard's request, park managers temporarily closed Fort Wadsworth and instituted a 100 percent identification check at the main entrance. The post would remain closed for two months.⁴³

Much like her counterpart at the Jamaica Bay unit, Billy Garrett, McKinney found herself in the position of reminding other agencies (and a particular Coast Guard captain) that Fort Wadsworth was a national park and she needed to allow public access. The Coast Guard captain agreed to the reopening but installed barricades around the Coast Guard property within the post. McKinney stationed a person at the main gate to provide security and asked the captain to remove his personnel. She felt strongly that a visitor's first contact should be a Park Service representative in the green-and-gray uniform, not an officer in a blue uniform carrying a gun. The captain understood her concerns. When the war in Afghanistan began and the Coast Guard threat level went back up, however, she had to close the park again. The closure lasted until December 2001. Again, balancing the need for security with the park's fundamental missions proved difficult. When fishermen protested the closure, McKinney worked out a compromise that would allow them access but only after recording their fishing permit and license numbers.

The response in the New York City area clearly demonstrated the close connection between these parks and their surrounding communities and the value of having protected areas and facilities that can be used to support other agencies during emergencies.

McKinney had high praise for her staff at Staten Island. “I think we are stronger as a result of it,” she concluded.⁴⁴

At the Sandy Hook unit of Gateway National Recreation Area, business manager David Luchsinger went to North Beach for a firsthand view of the trade towers when the attacks occurred. He immediately contacted the Coast Guard station at Sandy Hook. The Coast Guard indicated that they needed to borrow the park’s forty-one-foot patrol boat, named the *George B. Hartzog, Jr.* after one of the Service’s former directors. The boat and crew assisted the Coast Guard by transporting volunteer New Jersey firefighters and a Coast Guard admiral and his staff to New York City. Coast Guard officials also asked for help patrolling New York Harbor. That evening, Luchsinger, along with three other park employees and a Coast Guard representative, took the boat out into the harbor and positioned themselves at the foot of the Verrazano Narrows Bridge. Armed with automatic weapons, the crew chased and intercepted unauthorized vessels attempting to sneak into the harbor.

Park managers decided to close the Sandy Hook unit to provide additional security for the Coast Guard station at the tip of Sandy Hook. The park closed on September 11 and

partially re-opened at the end of the week under heightened security to include Jersey barriers at park entrances. Portions of the park remained closed much longer because of their close proximity to the Coast Guard facilities.⁴⁵

Conclusion

Weeks after the attacks, Fort Wadsworth, Miller Field, and parts of Floyd Bennett Field remained closed to the public. Superintendents from the parks in the New York City area met on Friday, September 14, to discuss transportation, peer counseling for employees, security and law enforcement, and other important issues and to assess the current situation at the various sites. A few days later, Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island employees gathered at Ellis Island for the first time since September 11 and shared their emotional stories. On September 19 the Director Mainella addressed roughly three hundred Park Service employees from the New York area who had convened on the main floor of the Ellis Island museum. The director, along with the Northeast Regional director and her deputy, visited Ground Zero. They also visited Federal Hall and the New York Stock Exchange, one of the Park Service’s partners. The visit no doubt gave these

leaders a fuller appreciation not only of the impact of the attacks on the parks and park employees but also of the pressing security concerns.⁴⁶

Although park employees resumed their tasks and all the park sites in the New York City area except for the Statue of Liberty reopened to visitors, there was no sense that things had returned to normal. Managers and staff struggled with new feelings of vulnerability. As one superintendent observed, “the emotional scars will last a lifetime.” Months after the event managers and staff still struggled to describe the shock they felt that day and the difficulty they had accepting what had happened. As Joseph Avery noted, “You just did not believe what you were being told hardly. Or you didn’t believe it could happen. It was bewilderment. It was confusion.” Laura Brennan echoed that they were all in “total disbelief, much like—this can’t be happening.”⁴⁷

The fear and uncertainty remained long after for some employees. Vincent DiPietro observed, “Not many people go home knowing that the place [where] they work influences so many other people for good or bad” or that the place they work generates so much hatred that terrorists would be willing to kill employees and visitors. Statue of Liberty Assistant Superintendent Frank Mills, too, described a new element of uncertainty. “I think we’ve learned that the National Park Service plays a role in the community, in the local community as well as in the national community....But I think mostly we learned that we are vulnerable.” The American people, said Mills, went to parks for comfort and were met by competent, caring Park Service staff. They found

they could rely on the parks when they needed them.⁴⁸

The response in the New York City area clearly demonstrated the close connection between these parks and their surrounding communities and the value of having protected areas and facilities that can be used to support other agencies during emergencies. The response in New York, much like the one in Washington, D.C., was characterized by and strengthened by the close cooperation between the parks and the Park Police and the outstanding service of park managers and staff and Park Police officers. At the same time, the Park Service’s experience dealing with the Coast Guard and NYPD highlights the complexities created when agencies with contrasting missions and functions are housed inside park boundaries.





Within the first 24 hours the center at Shenandoah had set up a process in which every park unit would provide a regular update of their closures and special events.

IV. Incident Management

As park managers and staffs in Washington, D.C., and New York City struggled to respond in those first chaotic hours after the attacks, senior leaders in Washington took the extremely important step of activating the Service's incident management system, its organizational structure and procedures for responding to extraordinary events. This decision would ultimately have a huge impact on the nature, effectiveness, and success of the Service's response operations.

Convening Incident Management Teams

Associate Director Dick Ring was among those who encouraged officials to immediately activate the Service's national all-risk incident management team to coordinate the response. He recognized that the headquarters' function had been disrupted and no orderly plans were in place to address that situation. He had learned through his experience with other major incidents that during an emergency, existing plans were quickly tossed aside. Incidents and events rarely unfold as anticipated, Ring observed, and the existing plan usually addressed the previous event, not the immediate one. The established, routine organizational structure was not the appropriate structure for responding to an emergency: the regular staff did not necessarily have the necessary skills, and the normal operating processes were not designed for the speed and coordination required during an emergency. No organization set up to provide routine day-to-day services, Ring explained, was designed to operate effectively in an emergency environment. The incident

View of Main Interior Building in downtown Washington, D.C. The rolling hills of Shenandoah National Park stood in stark contrast to the turmoil in Washington, D.C.

The incident management system was the most effective tool that the Service had to quickly deploy people who were pretrained to handle any kind of event.

management system was the most effective tool that the Service had to quickly deploy people who were pretrained to handle any kind of emergency situation or event. Particularly with the temporary relocation of the headquarters function to West Virginia, the Service needed people who could respond quickly to rapidly changing circumstances and coordinate effectively with department senior leaders.¹

Rick Gale, who had served as the incident commander for both the Yellowstone fires in 1988 and Hurricane Andrew in 1992, also recognized the need to convene and reposition the national incident management team so that it could respond quickly if needed. Initially, Gale, Dennis Burnett, and others opposed staging the team in Washington because the situation was so uncertain. They discussed convening the team at Shenandoah National Park, safely away from the chaos, where it would have ready access to the dispatch center. Moreover, three of the team's key members (Greg Stiles, Dennis McGinnis, and Chester Mikus) were already based at the park. On the Director Mainella's behalf, Gale instructed the dispatch center activate the team.

Incident Commander Skip Brooks, chief of maintenance for Colonial National

Historical Park in southeast Virginia, was meeting with York County officials when Greg Stiles called to alert him that the team might be activated. Team member Dennis McGinnis, chief of maintenance at Shenandoah National Park, was on vacation in the Outer Banks of North Carolina having his hair cut in a local barbershop when he saw the planes strike the World Trade Center on television. McGinnis, who served as the team's operations section chief, was one of the few members who had responded to every incident since the Pearl Harbor commemorative event in 1991. He immediately contacted the dispatch center and confirmed that the team was being activated. McGinnis then drove to Colonial National Historical Park to meet up with Brooks and they headed to Shenandoah National Park. When the two men arrived at the park later that night, they initially were instructed to go to the alternate site where department leaders had gathered. Not long after, they were told to remain at the park. By midnight four team members were at the park. They formally began operations early the next morning.²

Team members had always been confident that they could be on-site within 24 hours, but this assumption hinged on being able to use commercial air transportation. The

events of September 11 taught them not to make this assumption again. As noted earlier, all commercial flights were temporarily grounded, and team members scattered around the country had great difficulty responding. Brooks found himself two to three days behind schedule because of delays bringing in his team members. Although each team member had a designated alternate, filling the positions proved difficult. For example, Stiles, the team's planning section chief, was pulled to work for the department, leaving Brooks temporarily with a key position vacant. Stiles' alternate from Zion National Park in Utah did not arrive for two and a half days. The finance section chief spent three days driving across country from Arizona to Chicago and then caught a flight after air traffic resumed. It took the team's information officer nearly a week to travel from the West Coast. Members of a regional incident team helped fill the gap until the national team, known as a Type 1 team, was fully established.

The alternate incident commander, J.D. Swed, drove from Indiana to join the team as Brooks's deputy. In addition to Brooks, Swed, and McGinnis, the team included Aniceto (Cheto) Olais as planning section chief, Bob Howard as logistics section chief, Kim Glass (later replaced by Ruth Kohler) as finance section chief, and Debee Schwarz as information officer. Gale served as the team's agency representative, the incident command system's advisor to the director.³

That first night in Shenandoah National Park, Brooks found it difficult to communicate effectively with officials in Washington, D.C. He decided that his team needed to be in Washington, with another team

established in Shenandoah as a backup. Although officials initially had wanted the team safely outside the Washington area, by the afternoon of September 12 they had concluded that the immediate threat of another terrorist attack had subsided, and the team needed to be physically closer to support the leadership more effectively. The team began operations in the Main Interior Building early on September 13, working out of the ranger activities office. A few days later, they moved across the street to the top floor of the South Interior Building, into a well-equipped facility with phones and computers. It was the same facility the team had occupied earlier when they had worked on the Service's facilities management software. By the end of the week, forty team members were at work in Washington.⁴

The team's arrival in Washington took some pressure off headquarters officials and the small ranger activities staff. The team was able to establish itself quickly and provide the needed oversight and staff support. With the decentralized authority and limited law enforcement staff in the Park Service, Maj. Gary Van Horn observed, "We really couldn't get done all that needed to be done at [the Washington headquarters] without calling in a Type 1 incident team."⁵ The headquarters was in the midst of a move to a nearby building on G Street, and all their operational plans were in boxes. Despite this, Brooks found that the ranger activities division knew exactly what to do and implemented the all-risk plans.

With the activation of the team, the Park Service moved to the forefront in the Department of the Interior's response because it was the only bureau in the

Each incident management team operated under a “delegation of authority,” which defined its mission and authorized its operations.

department with an all-risk incident system and the needed resources. The Service had more resources for responding to this kind of incident in the form of law enforcement personnel, heavy equipment, and heavy equipment operators than any other bureau.⁶

Incident Management System

The Service’s incident management system had been in place approximately twenty years. Its structure was loosely based on a military model of an incident commander with staff reporting directly to an incident commander. The typical staff includes an information officer, safety officer, operations section, logistics section, and planning section. Although the Service initiated the system years earlier specifically to respond to wildland fires, in 1985 it adopted the system for responding to all types of emergency operations, so called all-risk incidents. Since that time, the system had been used to respond to a large number of events and incidents, both large and small, and it has been used occasionally on an interagency basis. For example, in 1988 officials used the system to deploy roughly 12,000 people to respond to the major fire in Yellowstone National Park. They also used an incident team to develop

the implementation plan when the Service underwent a major reorganization in the mid 1990s.

The system was rooted in the concept of bringing in a preestablished team specifically trained and experienced in incident management to oversee a particular incident or event so that the affected park, region, or national organization could focus on its normal day-to-day operations. Members trained, exercised, and deployed as part of a team so that they did not lose valuable time becoming familiar with each other and with the operating procedures. They were trained and equipped to handle a broad range of responsibilities to include planning, logistics, and public affairs. All had completed training at the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center.

Under the all-risk incident management system, teams were organized at the local, regional, and national levels. A so-called Type 1 team operated at the national level, while Type 2 teams functioned at the regional level. There was an Eastern Type 2 team, for example, that was three deep, meaning three individuals were designated for each position. Two of the three individuals assigned to each position were from the Park Service’s Southeast Region, and

The Service had more resources for responding to this kind of incident in the form of law enforcement personnel, heavy equipment, and heavy equipment operators than any other bureau.

the third was from the Northeast Region. Type 3 teams were formed at the park level, though not all parks had them. Teams at each level had the same five-person core that included section chiefs for operations, planning, and logistics, as well as information and safety officers. By the time individuals worked their way up through the system from Type 3 teams to Type 2 to Type 1, they were seasoned professionals with extensive operational experience.

Delegation of Authority

Each incident team operated under what was called a “delegation of authority” letter authorizing its operations. A team typically developed the delegation of authority in partnership with the official who called them in. Depending on the scope and nature of the incident or event, the delegation of authority was signed by a park superintendent, a regional director, deputy director, or the director. Because the September 11 response was a major, national event, Director Mainella signed the delegation of authority letter, which conveyed her expectations to the team. The director’s letter delegated to the team “authority and responsibility to manage the continuity of operations for the National Park Service.” This

broadly written delegation of authority gave the team the authority to act on the director’s behalf as well as the equally important authority to expend funds. It also specified the actions they could not take without the approval of the director or her designated representative.⁷

Typically, after the delegation of authority was signed, the incident team established its objectives and developed a plan for its operations. During the September 11 response, Brooks’s team found itself continually revising the operational plans. The objectives, which could be fluid, described what the team wanted or planned to do in a specific period of time known as the “operational period.” To establish the objectives, management worked with the advisor agency administrator (and for the September 11 event they worked with a representative from the secretary of the interior’s office). Then the team developed strategies and tactics that would enable them to meet their objectives. The “tactics” were the specific task the operational staff performed to attain the objectives. During the response, the objectives and the tactics frequently changed, sometimes on a daily basis. The team put together an incident action plan (a notebook) that laid out the incident objectives, command and control

The requirement to coordinate with the department was a unique and ultimately very significant provision. This situation was the first time that the national team had been asked to provide such extensive resources in supporting the department.

structure, delegation of authority, phone numbers for contacts, and other important information. The objectives, strategies, and tactics were all rooted in that original delegation of authority.

The director's delegation letter for September 11 outlined nine "responsibilities," which ultimately became the team's objectives. The team's first responsibility was to "protect human life and operate safely." When appropriate, the team was to notify managers and supervisors of the potential need to provide employees with alternative work sites or other accommodations. Team members were to analyze information about the "overall situation" and determine the best measures for maintaining essential operations while keeping employees safe. In addition they were to help develop and coordinate information about ongoing response operations for employees in the Washington office. Particularly significant, the delegation of authority directed the team to coordinate its activities with the department as needed. The team was to keep members of the Service's National Leadership Council informed of significant events and gather all the information about the parks that the director or her representative requested. Also significant, the authorization specified that the team was to keep

its costs below \$100,000 unless the director approved an increase. Finally, the letter designated Rick Gale as the director's representative for this incident.

The requirement to coordinate with the department was a unique and ultimately very significant provision. This situation was the first time that the national team had been asked to provide such extensive resources in supporting the department. Although the team had worked with the department in the past and had supported department officials during the transition to the new millennium (known as the Y2K event), the September 11 incident was very different. With Y2K, the team had focused on safeguarding a process rather than supporting an operation with rangers, equipment, and other resources. The director had given the team responsibility for looking at the Service resources and response activities from a national perspective and to prioritize resources. The delegation letter specified that the team would be financially accountable and operate safely.⁸

Role and Activities of the Type 1 Team

During the September 11 response, the Type 1 team's primary role was to develop plans and gather information. Its job was

to identify available resources and provide the director with clear, accurate information that would allow her to make informed decisions about responding to the incident. Its goal was to give the director a reliable “snapshot” of all the resources she had available at a particular moment in time. She, in turn, conveyed this information to the department. Though the team “never shoveled any dirt or moved any material,” Gale explained, its role in planning was “vital.”⁹

The team quickly became the agency focal point for gathering, consolidating, and updating information about the status of individual parks. Within the first twenty-four hours, the center at Shenandoah had set up a process in which every park unit would, by phone or fax, provide a regular update of their closures and planned special events. The center used the information to generate a status report. They faxed the report to the Type 1 team and the team used it to brief the director. The report changed over time as headquarters officials requested certain types of information. Early on September 12, officials directed all park units to report to the Type 1 team the special events planned from September 12 to October 1 with a brief description of those events and any changes to park status as they occurred.

The center also received numerous requests for law enforcement rangers and tried to use the existing national fire system to fill these requests. But initially some park units were reluctant to release resources and the center had difficulty filling all the requests. There were conference calls to discuss the security priorities, but initially no real priority system was in place. Brenda Ritchie

and her staff had no national database they could use to easily identify and locate available resources, so they created their own. The regional law enforcement specialists directed their parks call the center each day with information about resource availability. Park Service areas reported in twice a day and later once a day. The team collected the information and prepared reports twice a day.¹⁰

Director Mainella was keenly interested in what was going on in the parks, how they were doing, what parks were opened, and which ones were closed. Skip Brooks briefed the director and senior staff twice each day, at 7:30 a.m. and around 5:00 p.m. After the morning briefing, the director then took the information to her 8:15 a.m. departmental meeting. On weekends, Brooks called her at home to keep her informed.

The director also held daily conference calls with the regional directors and associate directors at noon eastern standard time. In this forum, regional directors reported on the situation in their parks and the status of their resources. Participants discussed key issues and shared updated information that the director in turn provided to the secretary. Gale and Brooks participated in these calls. During these calls, the director or regional directors occasionally asked Brooks or Gale to follow up on specific issues or questions. Brooks found these conference calls particularly useful because they provided information that he did not get anywhere else. After the first or second week when the situation had stabilized somewhat, the director scaled back the conference calls to every other day.¹¹

The team established an effective system for identifying law enforcement rangers, equipment, and other types of Service resources. Working with facility management experts, the team developed templates that could be used in concert with the existing Park Service facility management software to help identify and track emergency resources (e.g. people, equipment) in a national emergency. Team members contacted each of the 385 units in the National Park System at the time and asked the chief rangers or chiefs of maintenance to identify their available resources. They tried to gather the information in a logical sequence so it could be entered into the existing Facilities Management Systems Software (FMSS, also known as MAXIMO). This computer software allowed them to track a variety of resources throughout the Service. As the facility manager at Shenandoah National Park, Dennis McGinnis was already well acquainted with the MAXIMO system. Other members were also familiar with the system.¹²

In addition to identifying and obtaining needed resources, team members gathered critical information and disseminated it to high-level officials in the Interior department, Director Mainella's senior staff, and employees in regions and parks. They prepared reports on status of parks (based on information from dispatch center) for directorate and secretariat and coordinated the flow of information to the dispatch center.

The team also performed security-related missions. The team's operations section contacted all regional safety officers and risk managers to determine if evacuation plans were in place for their regional offices

and if safe havens had been established for employees. Another, much more narrowly focused, security-related task was to evaluate security at the Main Interior Building, as well as at Park Service offices at 1800 G Street, 800 North Capitol Street in northwest Washington, D.C., and later the Accounting Operations Center in Reston, Virginia. Brooks brought in a group to conduct the security analysis under McGinnis's direction. The team soon found that much of the security work for the Main Interior Building had already been done and was under review at the departmental level, so they concentrated on evaluating security at the G Street and North Capitol facilities. They also drafted an evacuation plan for the Accounting Operations Center in Reston. By the end of its first week, the team had completed a security evaluation for the department and continued its security and risk assessment of Park Service offices in Washington.¹³

Managers were particularly concerned about the inadequate security at the G Street location. Approximately 130 Service employees had moved into new offices on G Street the weekend before the attacks as part of a larger effort to free up space for a planned renovation of the Main Interior Building. Major Van Horn and Risk Management Manager Dick Powell led the effort to address these concerns. After the terrorist attacks, officials decided to move those employees back into Main Interior. Brooks's team hurriedly located a furniture supplier and negotiated a purchase agreement. The furniture was installed in the headquarters building by the time employees arrived on Monday, September 18. The team's logistics element knew how to perform these tasks quickly,

Initially, the process of gathering information from hundreds of individual parks was not as smooth or as precise as officials would have liked.

and the contracting officer had \$5 million authority. The department also ordered various resources, everything from tables to law enforcement rangers, through the team perhaps because, as one team member contended, the team could get these resources more efficiently. The team and senior officials focused primarily on the security of parks, buildings, and monuments. Although Powell tried to draw more attention to employee health and safety issues, he found that he had little success in this effort until the discovery weeks later of the first anthrax-laden letter.¹⁴

The information-gathering process was not as smooth or precise as officials would have liked. Occasionally, there were discrepancies between the information the team provided to the director in its report and information in the daily electronic Service-wide newsletter called *Morning Report* put out by the ranger activities division. Brooks became increasingly concerned about these discrepancies and asked the *Morning Report's* editor, Bill Halainen, to join his team. Halainen's primary function was to ensure that timely, accurate information was conveyed to the field through the *Morning Report*. After he joined the team, there were fewer discrepancies between the information in the *Morning Report* and the

park status reports that Brooks provided to the director.¹⁵

In those first critical days, team members compiled a list of significant dams located within Park Service areas as well as a list of heavy equipment and operators available within a day's drive of New York City and the Pentagon. They collected and provided information about staffing levels and availability for the Park Police in Manhattan.

The team compiled status reports on parks and dams and compiled resource availability lists organized by region. For two weeks after the attack, team members continued to call every park to establish a comprehensive list of qualified people (e.g. people with law enforcement commissions or EMS certification) and equipment (e.g. front loaders, backhoes) that could be used in emergencies. The focus was on resources similar to those needed in past incidents such as the Yosemite floods and Hurricane Andrew. By September 27 the team had contacted nearly every park unit.¹⁶

After the first week, officials brought in an incident team from the Southeast Region to assist with the extensive communications requirements. They also wanted the team to serve as a backup in case there was another attack in Washington. With

the director's approval, Brooks mobilized the eastern incident management (Type 2) team, headed by Incident Commander Robert (Bob) Panko from Everglades National Park, and directed them to Shenandoah National Park. Panko's team was in place on September 20. The primary function of this seven-person team was to support the Service's expanded communications operations at the dispatch center and serve as a backup in the event that the Type 1 team had to be evacuated from the Washington area. Shenandoah National Park Superintendent Doug Morris gave Panko's team a limited delegation of authority, which authorized it to coordinate the flow of information, provide support to the expanded dispatch operations, and use park facilities and resources. However, even though the superintendent signed the delegation of authority, the Type 2 team reported directly to Brooks who retained the overall delegation of authority from the director.¹⁷

Brooks's team completed its standard fourteen-day tour, and on September 25 a new Type 1 team under Incident Commander Eddie Lopez assumed responsibility for managing the incident. During its tenure, this team either completed or assisted with the following tasks. It produced a Service-wide emergency resource inventory of law enforcement rangers, emergency medical service's personnel, boat operators, maintenance mechanics, electricians, plumbers, carpenters, equipment operators, and specific types of heavy equipment for all the parks. It compiled daily status reports for units affected by closures or restrictions related to the terrorist attacks. Team members reviewed and updated the Service's continuity of operations plan and assisted

in completing a risk assessment for the South Interior Building.

At this point, Lopez's team recommended that it transition to a smaller organization which could provide limited incident support indefinitely. It recommended that officials demobilize Panko's Type 2 team in the near future and demobilize most of Lopez's team by October 3. It also recommended that officials detail personnel to the Washington headquarters to provide continued incident support and deactivate most of the expanded dispatch function at Shenandoah National Park on October 3. Having completed its missions, Panko's team officially ended its operations on September 28. Lopez's Type 1 team did demobilize on October 3, and there was a transition from a national incident management team to another team for a few more weeks to provide logistical and financial support. After October 12, all requests for resources related to the ongoing security operations would be handled through the Service's normal procedures for ordering resources.¹⁸

Type 2 Incident Management Team— Northeast Region

While the Type 1 team mobilized at the national level, the Northeast Region called in a Type 2 team to support its response. Much like officials in Main Interior, after learning of the first attack, Regional Chief Ranger Robert (Bob) Martin and others gathered around a television in a conference room in the regional headquarters in Philadelphia. Martin, who had come to the chief ranger job fairly recently after a seven-year vacancy in that position, began discussing what needed to be done with the

other staff. The small group that had gathered around the television quickly formed an ad hoc incident command team and set up a command post. This team included representatives from interpretation, operations, and law enforcement.

With commercial flights grounded, Regional Director Marie Rust found herself stranded in Florida, and the acting regional director, Associate Director for Park Operations Dale Ditmanson, was out of the office, so Martin temporarily assumed responsibility for directing the region's response. He would serve as incident commander until the Type 2 team arrived. After contacting Dennis Burnett in Washington, Martin and others began planning their immediate response. When Ditmanson arrived later that morning, officials began to discuss a more long-term strategy and made plans to activate the region's incident management team. Martin sent e-mail messages to all the park chief rangers encouraging them to become more vigilant about security and to consider possible evacuations and measures to secure their parks. The region asked all the parks to report their available resources. Ditmanson requested that the Type 2 team under Incident Commander Rick Brown immediately come to Philadelphia to coordinate the response for the regional director.¹⁹

Until Brown's team arrived, the original team with Ditmanson, Martin, Clark Guy, Jimmie Moore, Russ Smith, and Kathy Dilonardo would continue to oversee the response. Martin assigned one of the managers as a public information officer to respond to media queries. Team members worked well into the evening answering questions from the press, contacting parks

about their planned openings and closures on September 12, determining the availability of various skills within the region like heavy equipment operators and emergency medical technicians. Martin and Moore remained in the command post all night so that they could respond quickly if necessary. Shortly before dawn, Martin received word that the decision had been made to reopen the parks on September 12 and his team began notifying the parks.

The Type 2 team was able to mobilize more quickly than the Type 1 team in part because its members were closer geographically and less dependent on air transportation. Regional staff set up a command center for the team in one of the training rooms in the Philadelphia Support Office. They worked through the night to install phones and computers so that Brown's team would be able to begin work as soon as it arrived. The team formally took over operations in Philadelphia early the morning of September 12. It included Planning Section Chief Carl Merchant, Operations Section Chief Will Reynolds, Safety Officer Ben Morgan from Everglades National Park, Public Information Officer Paul Pfenninger, and Chester Mikus. Morgan, who was in Manhattan at the time of the attack, had contacted the team knowing that they would need a safety officer.

Pfenninger, an interpretive program manager at Shenandoah National Park, had learned of the terrorist attacks on the radio while in his car that morning. He immediately called into the communications center to offer assistance. At noon, he received a call back informing him that his Type 2 team had been activated. That evening Pfenninger and Mikus, also from

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Shenandoah National Park, set off for Philadelphia. They arrived at their hotel around midnight. When they showed up for work at the regional headquarters early the next morning they were quickly tasked to gather information about parks in the region that had been affected and available resources. Since the park units in Manhattan were without communications, the first challenge was to establish connections using cell phones and e-mail. A Philadelphia company donated cellular phones with a two-way radio feature that proved useful.²⁰

As noted, the Type 2 team had responsibility for coordinating the region's response. More specifically, its task was to assist parks, develop contingency plans, and help get information out to the public. Martin worked closely with the team and together they began formulating a plan of action. Team members began contacting each park in the region to get a status report and identify those parks in need of additional security—in effect to do a risk assessment. They then provided this information to their counterparts on the Type 1 team in Washington, D.C., so that the information could be passed on to the director. The team's primary responsibility was to gather information about park closures

and upcoming events and transmit it to the communications center in Shenandoah National Park, which had a direct link to the Type 1 team. Information flowed primarily from the Type 2 team incident commander to the Type 1 incident commander, though the various section chiefs occasionally communicated with their counterparts directly. The two teams were in constant communication. The members were familiar with each other and had a good rapport.

Regional leaders decided to keep the team at the Philadelphia headquarters where it had access to computers, telephones, and all the resources and support it needed from regional managers and staff rather than send it to New York City. Some team members visited the parks in Manhattan to assess the situation firsthand, but for the most part they relied on televised news broadcasts and information gathered by phone. They were in daily contact with Park Service employees in Manhattan. Operations Section Chief Reynolds, a law enforcement ranger, worked with security issues and coordinated with the Park Police and the FBI. The FBI fed information to Park Police representatives who in turn provided information to the team. The team presented briefings to Ditmanson each morning and afternoon and occasionally

participated in conference calls with Marie Rust. The team conducted briefings, handled questions, and occasionally made operational decisions. It had the authority to transfer resources within the region.²¹

Conclusion

The Type 1 and Type 2 teams played a vital role in shaping and implementing the Service's response to the events of September 11. Although the all-risk incident management system had never before been used in response to a terrorist attack, Dennis Burnett, Rick Gale, and other managers expressed great satisfaction with its overall effectiveness. One of the major strengths of this system was its tremendous flexibility. The general framework and guidelines for the system had enough flexibility that decision-makers and operators could respond effectively to a broad range of incidents and events. The incident management structure could be rapidly expanded, contracted, and tailored to fit the size and nature of a particular event. This allowed managers to bring in additional staff from around the country in response to expanding mission requirements or to reduce staff as an incident drew to a close. The teams were made up of seasoned professionals who were trained to deal with fires, earthquakes, and even hurricanes and had worked with each other for years.²² They were well prepared to respond quickly to a variety of emergencies.

In addition to its flexibility, incident management system freed up personnel at every level to focus on their normal day-to-day operations. "Once the team hits the ground and gets going and has some clear assignments," Paul Pfenninger explained,

"the positive things are that they can take the stress away from the employees that are working at the park." Also the system brought greater organization and continuity to the situation and made ordering resources easier. On the other hand, the teams sometimes created stress for the existing staffs by coming in and taking over.²³

Although the system worked well, some speculate that it might have functioned more effectively at the regional level than at the national level in Washington. The September 11 response posed unique challenges for the Type 1 team. The normal means of communication and transportation were not available. As noted earlier, with planes grounded and rail service disrupted, bringing in team members from around the country proved difficult. Team members needed to be on-site quickly to accomplish the objectives, but for the first few days Skip Brooks had no finance person or planning section chief. Although Brooks had high praise for the system, its success, he said, depended on team members having the necessary tools. Typically his team completed its action plan within the first twenty-four hours, but in this instance his team could not develop a plan until all its members arrived several days later. The shortage of staff and resources for those first two to three days was a matter of serious concern for Brooks and others. Because developing the action plan took three or four days, he explained, the team was already behind. Dennis McGinnis recommended that leaders take the necessary steps to ensure that proper mechanisms were in place to bring in team members more quickly in the future. Although plans later developed to deal with the

transportation problem, there remained a need for greater redundancy in positions on the team. Having continuity in these positions was particularly important. Personal relationships were critical to the success of the incident management system. Members needed to be able to trust the information they provided and received was accurate.

The team also faced the challenge of tapping all the resources required. Under the incident management system, the team issued what was called a resource order (a request for a person or equipment, etc.) and the dispatch center called parks to identify and order that resource. During this response, the team had difficulty filling these resource orders. Some park officials were understandably reluctant to release resources because of concern about potential threats to their own sites. Some parks, such as Independence National Historical Park, tried to respond to requests for resources but were already struggling to meet their own security needs. As might be expected, parks farther away from high threat areas tended to be more willing to share their personnel. Also, superintendents might not have understood initially that the resources were not only to help other parks, but also to support the Bureau of Reclamation. Whatever the reason, the reluctance to share resources made it difficult to get these resources into the system so they could be transferred to other areas with higher priority. Occasionally, some coaxing from the director was required.²⁴

In addition to communications and resource challenges, team members found themselves struggling to meet all of the expectations of department and Service officials, especially when these expectations

were, as McGinnis noted, “growing geometrically day by day.” The greater the team’s success, the more people called on it. With officials pulling the team in different directions, Brooks conceded, “It was difficult at times to meet everybody’s needs.”²⁵

Defining the relationship of the incident command system to the normal organizational structure also posed a challenge. The relationship was generally fairly clear when the incident command system performed separate functions that did not interfere with the normal operations of the agency or when normal operations ceased. When both organizations were functioning but some of the agency’s normal mission and functions had been disrupted or scaled back, defining the relationship between the two became more difficult, confusing, and time consuming. Inserting the team in the middle of existing bureaucracies sometimes created resistance. One team member recommended that the Service do more to educate managers about the team’s purpose, function, and responsibilities. The delegation of authority letter clearly stated that the team would perform only the specific tasks that the director assigned. The team was designed to free managers and staff to focus on their day-to-day operations. However, at times managers were reluctant to hand off some of their responsibilities to team members, and this reluctance created tensions. In some instances, the team simply had to work around certain individuals.²⁶

Finally, some of the Service’s most experienced incident managers are nearing retirement, and the agency stands to lose a great deal of experience and institutional

knowledge in the coming decade. The Type 1 team already has several vacant positions. Brooks recommended that the Park Service develop and execute a recruiting strategy to fill the void and designate someone in the Washington headquarters to manage the teams, oversee funding and recruiting, and ensure ongoing training and exercises. The Service, he explained, needed a structure in place to support the rangers who are called up, house them, provide action plans and direction, and handle finances and the media. For fire response, a specially designated center in Boise, Idaho, directed the response, but the Service had nothing comparable for all-risk response.²⁷

Eddie Lopez's team recommended that Service leaders enhance the response capabilities of the Type 1 and Type 2 teams and the nine regionally based "special event teams." Specifically, the team recommended that managers fill all the existing vacancies on the Type 1 and Type 2 teams, schedule training, develop standard operating procedures, and consider establishing an additional Type 1 team. At the time, the Service had six regionally based Type 2 teams capable of rapidly mobilizing in their geographic regions. Finally, Lopez's team recommended that Service leaders review administrative policies that might impede response, such as the policies concerning pay caps and back-filling positions.²⁸ Despite the challenges, the incident management system proved to be an invaluable tool for Service leaders and had a huge impact on the effectiveness of the Service's response.





Service leaders quickly learned that in an emergency they could not rely on the regular telephone system to meet their communications needs.

V. Challenges

While the incident management teams grappled with the challenges of setting up their operations and carrying out their missions, problems with communications, coordination, and funding continued to hamper the Service's response.

Communications

One of the most difficult and sometimes least successful aspects of the Service's response to the attacks was in the area of communications. In the first hours after the attacks, there were difficulties with almost every aspect of communication, from notifying employees about evacuations and closures to gathering intelligence and sharing information. Communications lines within the Washington headquarters broke down or were nonexistent. As noted earlier, the department had no public address system and no formal systems in place to inform employees that Main Interior was being evacuated or to direct them to the basement. Other than phone and e-mail, the Service had no communications link between offices or buildings in Washington, D.C. When employees were directed to the basement of Main Interior on the morning of September 12, Park Service employees at the nearby G Street office and at 800 North Capitol Street were not immediately notified.

Communication outside the Washington headquarters was not much better. Although some regional and park offices did an excellent job of communicating with their employees and reviewing their emergency procedures in the first hours after the attacks, in others there was confusion. Some parks had difficulty contacting their regional offices and

Park Police officers in New York City relied heavily on their radio communications.

some regional offices had difficulty contacting personnel in the headquarters. The *Morning Report* proved useful for Service-wide internal communications, but even when distribution of the report increased briefly to twice a day, it could not fill the need for real-time information and instant communications. The *Morning Report* had never been designed for that role. Not all employees read this report on a daily basis or even had access to it on computers.

As noted earlier, on September 11, many landlines in the Washington, D.C., and New York City areas were either down or overloaded and cellular phone systems functioned sporadically or not at all. Service leaders quickly learned that in an emergency they could not rely on the regular telephone system to meet their communications needs. Officials throughout Main Interior had great difficulty calling out of the building. Senior leaders found themselves relying to some extent on information that Maj. Gary Van Horn was able to get from the Park Police using his police radio. With landlines unavailable, Type 1 team members also had difficulty getting all the information they needed during the first forty-eight hours. The situation did not improve significantly until the dispatch center in Shenandoah National Park set up a satellite dish and distributed cellular phones linked to that satellite. Although the situation improved in the Washington area, the Northeast Regional office continued to have difficulty communicating with its field offices.¹

Officials found that initially the Government Emergency Telecommunications System (GETS), a restricted emergency phone system, provided the only reliable

means of communication. Unfortunately relatively few managers had access to this system, and in those first chaotic hours not all of them immediately thought about using their GETS access cards. Operations became easier later in the day when managers began using priority phones lines in the directorate offices. GETS access was particularly useful to the senior leaders who evacuated to West Virginia that first day and to Type 1 team members. The Park Police also found the system useful. At one point, using GETS was the only way they could consistently make long-distance calls on landlines. Park Police officials recommended that in the future all key personnel have GETS access.²

Communications problems were particularly severe in New York City in part because the main telephone switch for Lower Manhattan had been located in the basement of one of the collapsed trade towers. Its destruction left some areas such as Fort Wadsworth without phone service for several weeks. Although Park Police used cellular phones and other means to compensate, the problems occasionally hampered operations. Initially, the police relied mostly on radio communications. Cellular phones became a “lifeline,” said Capt. Marty Zweig.³

Nextel cellular phones, which had a “direct connect” feature that functioned much like a two-way radio or walkie-talkie, proved to be invaluable for employees throughout the National Park Service, particularly for the Park Police. A number of the officers, detectives, and supervisors had Nextel phones. Deputy Chief Jack Schamp described these phones as a “very effective tool,” which allowed commanders to

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communicate effectively with each other and supervisors to communicate with their officers. However, even the Nextel phone system occasionally became overloaded. Also, although the Park Police used Nextel for operational matters, it was not a secure system. Park Police officials later recommended that a satellite phone be available at major sites in the New York field office.⁴

With the disruptions in both traditional and cellular phone service, the Park Police and park rangers relied more heavily on radio communications. Yet, this system had its own weaknesses. As with cellular communications, radio communications can be scanned by outsiders and are not secure. In addition, Park Police officers and park rangers in the Washington, D.C., area could not communicate with each other by radio because they operated on different frequencies. Most rangers did not have the Park Police frequency on their portable radios. Signals from the portable radios that rangers carried could not reach the National Capital Region's communications center in western Maryland because there were no radio repeaters in the Washington area. The signals from the radios in their service vehicles could reach the communications center, but just barely. With phone lines

jammed, rangers could only contact the Park Police by going through the regional communications center, a time-consuming process. Regional Chief Ranger Einar Olsen observed that the regional communications center was "critical" in organizing and communicating with personnel on September 11.⁵

Radio communications in the New York area were complicated by the fact that personnel at the Statue of Liberty operated on a different radio system than neighboring Park Service sites. Gateway National Recreation Area operated on a VHF band, while the Statue of Liberty system used a UHF band. Although the Park Police could operate on a UHF frequency from Brooklyn, generally communication was difficult. They could talk to the dispatchers who, in turn, could talk to people at the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island. However, Maj. Thomas Wilkins's radio would not operate from inside the building at One Police Plaza, so he had to rely on Nextel and landlines when they were operational. He found that he could only communicate with his station commanders 50 percent of the time. "There were a lot of different channels of communication going on and there wasn't always good overlap," Wilkins

conceded.⁶ Not until months later were Park Police officers all on the same frequency.

Coordination

Even when phone lines and radios operated smoothly, sharing information effectively within the Service and with the department remained a major challenge. Senior managers had considerable difficulty acquiring the timely, accurate intelligence information that they needed, particularly information concerning potential threats to parks. With no established mechanism in place to systematically gather such intelligence, the information they received was often spotty.

The Park Police served as a major source of intelligence information for both department and Service leaders. As noted earlier, Park Police representatives in various operations centers around the Washington area shared information with the military, FBI, Secret Service, metropolitan police, and other agencies. Every morning, Major Van Horn contacted each representative by phone to gather the latest information. These agencies shared information well, but the Service did not get the highly classified information that would come from the National Security Administration or the CIA.

The Park Police also assigned a detective to an FBI counterterrorism task force who relayed intelligence information to individuals with the proper clearance, and some of this information was passed on to the department. This FBI task force, however, was not strictly an intelligence-gathering mechanism and was not designed to provide agencies with the most current intelligence on a regular basis. Personal contacts

that the Park Police had established over the years proved to be a valuable asset because intelligence information is often relayed through personal contacts to specific individuals. Most sources are reluctant to share information with someone they do not know personally and trust.⁷

The chief's command post transmitted information to Major Van Horn and to the department's operations center as appropriate. Van Horn, in turn, provided department and Service leaders and the Type 1 team with as much information from the Park Police as he could, particularly information concerning potential threats to parks, and he coordinated closely with the department's office of security and law enforcement. The Type 1 team had its own representative in the chief's command post who conveyed information. Park Police officials later reported that, "The ability of the Force to access this type of information during this critical time played a significant role in the coordination of emergency services and the safe evacuation of department personnel as well as visitors to our monuments and memorials." Occasionally tensions surfaced when department or Service officials who asked the Park Police for classified information found their request denied because they lacked the proper security clearance or the requisite "need to know."⁸

Transmitting intelligence information in a timely, efficient manner from the Washington headquarters to the individuals in the field offices responsible for protecting the parks also proved difficult. The Park Service had to develop its own process to convey information to its field offices. As an added complication, few employees in park

and regional offices had the level of security clearance they needed to receive this type of information. Nor did most field offices have the secured phones and fax machines they needed in order to receive such information. Even if Service leaders had been able to gather more security-related information, they would have difficulty conveying it to the parks because there was no secured communications system. To acquire intelligence information, individual parks for the most part had to rely on relationships they had established previously with the local FBI office, Secret Service, other federal agencies, or state and local agencies.

Managers in regional and park offices concluded that they needed to coordinate better with the intelligence community. Regional officials in Philadelphia found that they could not get from Washington the intelligence information, particularly information about potential threats to parks, that they needed in order to make carefully considered decisions about staffing and resources. They decided to bring in some of the region's special agents and place them in the counterterrorism task force that had been set up Philadelphia and Boston to help coordinate the flow of information into those places. As a result, regional officials were able to quickly access any information affecting a park's security. These special agents were able to communicate with their counterparts at other agencies. As trained investigators, they understood the language.⁹

Conveying security-related information was but one aspect of more general problems with the flow of information. Park Service officials continued to struggle with the timeliness and accuracy of the information

that came into the Main Interior Building, something that experienced incident managers insist should not have happened after the first few days. Under the existing structure, information flowed from parks and regions to the communications and coordination center in Shenandoah National Park, from the center to the Type 1 team, from the Type 1 team to Park Service headquarters, and from that headquarters to the department. Such a complex communications chain increased the risk of transmission errors.

As Director Mainella's representative to the Type 1 team, Rick Gale was responsible for providing her with the information she needed to make effective decisions or to provide to the department leaders. He conceded that there were occasional "glitches." There were alternative communications sources and mechanisms and sometimes the director and other officials received inconsistent or inaccurate information. At that point, she would appropriately question which information was correct. She did not always receive the accurate, precise information that she needed to take to department leaders.¹⁰

Department leaders who remained at the alternate site also had to be kept informed. The director insisted that Skip Brooks send information to these officials by fax twice a day, but sometimes he would later discover that no one had picked up the information. Communications glitches like this were not uncommon. People occasionally complained that they had not received the information that the team had sent.

The director required a great level of detail, no doubt in part because she needed to pass that information on to department

leaders. For the Type 1 team, getting that detailed information from park rangers and maintenance employees through their superintendents and regional offices was not easy. The team had to make sure that everyone involved understood the director's requirement for detailed information and do its best to ensure that the information was accurate. Although the team constantly strove to provide her with the most detailed, current, and accurate information possible, the information varied depending on reporting methods and the time of day it was reported. The difference in time zones sometimes contributed to the confusion, and not all parks followed the prescribed format for reporting the information. As a result, the team found errors in the information that first week. Initially there were also occasional problems with the way the dispatch center interpreted the information it received, but these problems were addressed within the first weeks.

Brooks later indicated that with information changing so rapidly planning became more difficult. Sometimes the flow of information to the team was too slow and occasionally Brooks became concerned when things did not come together the way they should. Brooks observed that during Hurricane Andrew the team lost all its phone systems and had to get a satellite. It took three days, but once the phone links and satellite were in place, the team had a better handle on the movement of resources than it did with the September 11 event.¹¹

The Service's primary conduit for information was the communications and coordination center at Shenandoah National Park, but at times the demands for information

and resources were so great that they threatened to overwhelm the center. It was not always able to respond to the requests for information or resources quickly enough. The dispatch center transmitted two reports each day, one listing current park closures and the other with status reports on all parks. The reports sometimes contained inconsistent and contradictory information.¹²

The dispatch center was in an increasingly difficult position. Its staff had a critical role in providing information, but as Dick Ring observed, "often they were not allowed to play it." Rather than go through the center as procedures dictated, some officials in the directorate or secretariat began calling parks, regions, or the dispatch center directly to get information or request resources. This further complicated the flow of information and occasionally created confusion.¹³

Requests for information poured into the dispatch center. The Type 1 team and various department officials all clamored for information. Yet, accurate up-to-date information was not easy to come by. Some parks neglected to phone in their reports at the designated time. Information changed depending on the time of day it was reported. Officials in Washington might get more current information directly from someone they knew in a park that conflicted with what the dispatch center provided.

In the center's defense, it was very difficult for the center to perform its coordination and communications functions effectively for the Service and department when the staff was busy setting up its communications structure. Lacking an established plan

to follow, the center had to improvise to a great extent. Brenda Ritchie later recommended establishing a permanent facility rather than ramping up the center every time there was an event. Other managers recommended devoting more resources to telecommunications and other modern technology.¹⁴

Just as there were communications difficulties, there were occasional problems coordinating the response within the Service and between the Service and the department. Some officials in this relatively new administration had never dealt with an event of this nature and were unfamiliar with the capabilities that existed within the Park Service for responding, particularly its incident management system. Even those familiar with the Service's response capabilities were sometimes reluctant to turn responsibility over to an outside management team. Feeling personally responsible, they tended to turn to the normal day-to-day organization, which as noted earlier was not designed to respond to emergencies. As a result, officials spent more time than necessary figuring out what needed to be done and how to organize the response.

Some department and Service leaders were never totally comfortable with turning aspects of the operation over to an incident management team. Department officials never adopted an incident management system and structure, and though Park Service leaders adopted the system and convened a team, they never delegated enough authority for it to "do fully what it was designed to do." In the early stages of an event, Ring explained, leaders needed to know enough about emergencies to set clear objectives and then back out. The department and

Park Service responses, he asserted, would have been much more effective if leaders had fully employed the incident management system.¹⁵

At a meeting with department officials, Service representatives suggested creating a unified command system that would operate under the department's direction. The Service had successfully used a unified command system before, when it coordinated with the FBI during the Bridal Trail murder investigation in Shenandoah National Park. Department leaders rejected this proposal. As noted, they might simply have been reluctant to adopt a system that was unfamiliar. They understandably might also have been concerned that the incident team could not acquire critical resources quickly enough, and indeed this was sometimes the case.¹⁶

In addition to encouraging the department to adopt an incident management system, Service managers offered to share their own Type 1 team. Again the department declined. Some Service leaders later maintained that the department's decision hampered coordination, resulted in duplication of effort, and ultimately made the Service's response more difficult. They recommended in the future the department adopt an incident command system and utilize it fully. The department would be much better positioned for its homeland security mission, they argued, if it did not have to deal with the day-to-day operations. Yet, some managers were simply unwilling to relinquish control or had other reservations. They tried to order resources and enhance security but had no efficient mechanism in place to do this. As a result, interactions between Service and

There was no seamless mechanism for funding as there was with fire incidents. Beyond the issue of funding authority, there was the very real concern about whether the Park Service and the other bureaus would be reimbursed for the costs associated with the response.

department managers sometimes became strained. In an effort to promote better coordination, the Type 1 team placed a representative in the department's command center and worked hard to ensure that the representative had access to the most current information.¹⁷

Although efforts to improve coordination with the department had some success, supporting department requirements was neither simple nor easy. This support involved compromises, particularly when it came to allocating the Service's law enforcement ranger resources. Service managers constantly had to balance the department's need for law enforcement rangers to provide security at its sites with their responsibility to protect the parks. Rick Gale, acting on the director's behalf, often made the final determinations about resources. Ultimately, the Park Service met the department's needs, but the department's lack of familiarity with the incident command system created confusion. The response highlighted the need to better educate senior management about the potential role and contributions of the incident management system. For senior managers to feel comfortable and confident about bringing in an incident team with which they had never worked, Brooks

noted, they must first fully understand how the system worked.

The response also revealed the need for the Service to better integrate its activities with those of the department. The lack of adequate cooperation between the Service and the department expressed itself in various ways. On at least one occasion three different department officials submitted four requests to the Park Service for the same information. In other instances, department officials informed Service leaders they did not want the Service's resources and declined their offer of assistance from its incident management team, but then they ordered those resources directly from individual parks. The Service, for its part, might not have always done all that it could to coordinate well with the department.¹⁸

Director Mainella, too, reiterated the need for an organized structure that could be automatically activated for this type of response. She recommended that the department's office of managing risk and public safety help bureaus solve their emergency operations policy problems, coordinate interagency issues, provide technical assistance, and represent the department to the Federal Emergency Management Agency. The office of managing risk and public safety chose not to use the incident

command system. For several days, it struggled to organize emergency management.

The response highlighted many lessons learned in the areas of communication and coordination. Department law enforcement lacked a centralized organizational structure. At the time of the attack, the department's small six-person law enforcement security team was located in the office of managing risk and public safety. The secretary and senior managers had no meaningful single point of contact during an emergency. The historic lack of a prominent departmental law enforcement office resulted in, what the department's inspector general described as, "a void in leadership, coordination, and accountability in the law enforcement program." The department's bureaus operated their own law enforcement programs with little oversight and direction from the department, creating a "state of disorder" in the structure and operation of law enforcement throughout the department. The post-September 11 environment magnified the organizational and management problems of the department's law enforcement component. To address the problem, in late October, the secretary appointed a deputy assistant secretary for security and established a new office of law enforcement security.¹⁹

Funding

In addition to the problems of communications and coordination, Service managers had to grapple with the fundamental question of how to pay for the response. At the time of the attacks, the department had no national contingency authority for emergency funding. Nor did the Service have any emergency funding authority, except

for wildland fire response. With wildland fires, the Service had the authority to establish an account and begin expending funds immediately so managers could begin recording expenses, but there was no comparable authority for other types of emergencies. There was no seamless mechanism for funding as there was with fire incidents. Beyond the issue of funding authority, there was the very real concern about whether the Park Service and the other bureaus would be reimbursed for the costs associated with the response. If Congress did not later authorize a supplemental appropriation to cover the emergency expenditures, the agency would be forced to take the money from land acquisition or some other source or perhaps delay certain construction projects.

The funding issue caused confusion throughout the Service. Some parks and regions used the emergency law and order funding provided by the Washington headquarters. Managers in the National Capital Region initially struggled with how to fund the additional ranger assignments. Ultimately, they determined that the unit receiving the support would bear the cost. Months after the event, Congress still had not appropriated additional funds to cover past and future expenses related to the response, and Service managers reprogrammed funds to cover some of the costs.²⁰

The dispatch center faced its own funding challenges. It had no established account and regular budget to fund its operations but rather received funding only for specific emergencies. When a fire occurred and the National Interagency Fire Center in Boise, Idaho, asked the center to order

personnel for a fire event, the center had a series of account numbers that it could assign to send people out. But this arrangement was not the case for other types of emergencies. The center lost valuable time grappling with the funding issue. Brenda Ritchie observed that it was expensive to use emergency accounts and set up the center each time there was an emergency. It would be more cost effective, she argued, to have a permanent facility and an established account. Moreover, without an established account, the center could not sign contracts for services or lease equipment, both critical actions in responding to an emergency.²¹

Funding has often been an issue when responding to incidents and emergencies. Bringing in and maintaining the Type 1 team involved considerable expense. The director's original delegation of authority included a \$100,000 funding cap, and the team made every effort to keep costs within that cap. After the first few days, however, Brooks realized that the team's operating costs would quickly exceed \$100,000. He explained the situation to the director and asked her to lift the cap. The director agreed to consider removing the cap but only after Brooks provided her with adequate documentation indicating why this action was necessary and what the additional expenditures covered.

In his presentation to the director, Brooks explained that the team had already exceeded the initial operating cost ceiling of \$100,000. He pointed out that since the original authorization, the team's missions and responsibilities had expanded, to include help developing an evacuation plan for the secretary and her key staff. On

September 20, the director agreed to lift the \$100,000 cap in the delegation of authority and replace it with a provision to "keep costs commensurate with the needs of the incident."²²

Unfortunately the original cap had sometimes forced the team to focus more attention on funding issues than on the immediate requirements of the situation. The dilemma was whether operators should base their decisions and actions on costs or ignore the cost because some item or some personnel action was needed for safety and security. For example, although Brooks needed to bring his team members in as soon as possible so they could begin to plan and execute the response, he decided not to bring them in by charter airplane because of the cost. If not for the cap, he could have brought his resources in more quickly and accelerated the response.²³

To complicate the funding issues, initially the department assured its bureaus that their expenses would be covered and directed them to take the appropriate action regarding employee safety and protection of facilities and resources. Days later the department informed its bureaus that each would have to cover its own costs, and in the case of the Park Service, each park unit would have to absorb much of the expense. Since bureaus and parks were in the last two weeks of the fiscal year, budgets were tight.²⁴ The department's reversal had what was described as a somewhat "chilling" effect on the service's response. The decision sometimes caused managers to hesitate and to second-guess expenditures because of concern about money.

The Service had existing statutory authority to spend money on missions related to a

national disaster or national emergency, but as with wildland fire response, the issue was who would ultimately pay the bill. Without a supplemental appropriation from Congress, as mentioned before, there was the risk that the agency later might have to trade off some major construction projects. However, Ring explained, “If you try and hedge how you operate in an emergency based on having those questions answered at that point in time, you will almost certainly impair the effectiveness of your emergency operation.” In the emergency phase, typically the first few days, he insisted, managers must simply agree to do whatever was necessary to meet their emergency objectives and worry about funding later. During the September 11 response, the funding constraints during the emergency phase hampered the team’s ability to accomplish its tasks. Concern about costs and expenditures contributed to hesitation in making decisions, micromanagement, and second-guessing. Concern about funding delayed actions to communicate more effectively and deploy resources longer than necessary. During the short-term emergency phase, Ring argued, operators should spend whatever was necessary to respond effectively to the immediate emergency and sort out funding issues later.²⁵

The Park Police faced similar funding problems. Again, there was no emergency fund and existing operational funds were scarce because it was late in the fiscal year. There was an established procedure to request what was called emergency law and order funding, which included a cap on the amount of the request. If the Washington office approved the request, the funds were transferred from other projects and places. Park Police costs were wrapped into the department’s request to Congress for

supplemental funding, and later the Park Police received some additional funding. In their after-action report, Park Police leaders emphasized how important it was that managers know funding is available for these type of emergencies. They recommended that an emergency operations fund be established which could be immediately accessed with the approval of the assistant secretary for policy, management, and budget.²⁶

In the weeks after the attacks, managers worked to prepare a supplemental appropriation request for Congress. They instructed parks to establish holding accounts and start charging costs against it, believing that the money would eventually be reimbursed. Congress ultimately provided some additional funding for the Service’s internal expenses and for its support to the Bureau of Reclamation. The department received \$92 million in supplemental funding from Congress. More than \$63 million of this money was allocated to the Park Service to provide relief for the costs associated with increased security and emergency construction related to security at “icon” parks.²⁷ However, the broader issue of funding emergency response operations remained unresolved.

FREEDOM OF SPEECH

FREEDOM OF WORSHIP

FREEDOM FROM WANT

FREEDOM FROM FEAR



A year after the attacks, Congress established Flight 93 National Memorial to honor the passengers and crew.

VI. Aftermath

The September 11 attacks and their aftermath had profound and lasting effects on the national parks, park employees, visitors, and on the National Park Service. Although park units in New York City and Washington, D.C., might have felt the most intense and extensive impact initially, virtually every unit was affected to one degree or another. The attacks and the response also affected the organizational structure and processes of the Service. As one writer explained, “The attacks not only changed us as a nation, but also deeply affected the National Park Service and the sites under its care.” In the wake of the tragedy, park employees acknowledged this change. They spoke of adjusting to “a new normal.”¹

The terrorist attacks prompted the creation of a new unit in the National Park System. A year after the attacks, Congress established Flight 93 National Memorial to commemorate the heroic passengers and crew of Flight 93 who gave their lives on September 11, 2001, to thwart what many believe was a planned attack on the nation’s capital. At the direction of Congress, the open field near Shanksville, Pennsylvania, where the commercial airliner went down became a unit of the National Park System. Service representatives worked with the local community, assisted with public meetings regarding the future of the site and provided advice and technical assistance.

Opposite page, these words from the Franklin Delano Roosevelt Memorial assumed new meaning for park employees and visitors. Above, visitors left tokens of remembrance at the Flight 93 crash site in Pennsylvania.

Service leaders as well as park managers and staff around the country instituted new or enhanced security measures and became more security conscious.

Impact on Parks and Visitors

The terrorist attacks reaffirmed the status of parks as symbols of fundamental American values but also exposed them as potential targets. Though security concerns were not new to the Park Service, it now had to address vastly increased terrorist threats that could jeopardize the safety of its visitors and employees and the integrity of the natural and cultural resources for which it was responsible.

By all accounts, the attacks prompted greater security awareness among Service leaders, park managers, and park staff. A number of parks, particularly those considered to be at greatest risk, instituted new security measures to include an increased law enforcement presence, surveillance cameras, and metal detectors. Gateway National Recreation Area reported, "Security would become an issue, not only for us, but for our tenants and for other agencies that would call on us for help...we still witness the evolution of concerns generated on that terrible day." There were major, easily visible, security enhancements at the monuments and memorials on the National Mall, such as the installation of barriers and increased screening of visitors. Immediately after the attack,

park employees encircled the Washington Monument with concrete Jersey barriers and installed barriers on the east side of the Lincoln Memorial. The Service installed magnetometers at the White House Visitor Center and at the Washington Monument. Independence National Historical Park installed metal detectors and introduced new security procedures with restricted access. Parks near or bordering military installations, such as Sandy Hook unit of Gateway National Recreation Area and Minute Man National Historical Park in Massachusetts, stepped up their security.²

As managers instituted new or enhanced security measures, park employees around the country became much more security conscious, particularly in the way they viewed visitors. Employees became more observant and vigilant. Valley Forge National Historical Park staff, for example, began to look for "red flags," things that did not "look right," such as a visitor carrying a briefcase. "I think we all look at things a little bit differently," said one employee. The staff at Yosemite National Park, too, became more attuned to potential threats. "I think we're all thinking about things in a little bit different way," the superintendent explained. Security-conscious employees at Shenandoah National Park and Delaware

The parks became increasingly important to the American public as places of healing and reflection.

Water Gap National Recreation Area found themselves observing visitors more closely.³

Along with the increased emphasis on security, the events of September 11 prompted an immediate and significant overall decline in park visitation. Fear of commercial air travel, reduced flight schedules, disruptions in the economy, and high gasoline prices contributed to the drop in visitation. In 2001, roughly 280 million people visited park units, five million less than in 2000. Almost all of this loss occurred in the last quarter of 2001, after the September attacks. The sudden drop in international visitors had a particular impact on the large scenic parks in the West. *USA Today* reported that Grand Canyon had 60,000 fewer bus passengers in October 2001. Visits to Independence National Historical Park dropped from 4.8 million in fiscal year 2001 to 4.35 million in fiscal year 2002. Curtailment of school-sponsored trips, decreased foreign travel, and the general decline in domestic tourism contributed to this drop.

While overall visitation dropped off, particularly among travelers from overseas, more Americans were visiting parks closer to home. Statistics showed that visits to large, popular sites such as the Grand Canyon and Yosemite declined by more than 20 percent,

but parks in or near major urban areas experienced dramatic increases. For example, visits to Shenandoah National Park, a few hours drive from the Washington area, increased 22 percent. Visits to sites that inspired patriotism, such as the historic battlefields and Mount Rushmore, also increased. Valley Forge National Historical Park reported a decrease in visitors from outside the local community, such as those brought by tour companies, while the number of visits from locals increased. Visitation to Valley Forge eventually began to climb.⁴

For Americans who visited parks after the tragedy, the sites often took on new meaning and assumed greater significance. The parks became increasingly important to the American public as places of healing and reflection. The events of September 11, noted Director Mainella, “underscores the value of parks as places of healing and introspection and of the high value of large federal open spaces.” As the Park Service’s chief of communications, David Barna, explained, “This is where the public goes to renew their spirit.” A refuge manager at Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge found that many visitors just wanted a quiet place for reflection. They expressed a new level of appreciation for the park. Yosemite staff



After September 11 events, traditions, and values represented at many NPS sites had new resonance for both visitors and park employees.

found that visitors came seeking solace, a sense of security, and a place of reflection.⁵

Visitors from the Washington area who arrived at the entrance stations at Shenandoah National Park on the afternoon of September 11 explained to rangers that they needed to get away from the city and from nonstop news accounts of the tragedy. Visitation to the park spiked shortly after the attacks. Shenandoah National Park visitors came not only seeking a break from television news but also seeking comfort. The interpretive staff sensed that the visitors had an emotional need to connect with the park and changed their behavior in response. Instead of taking their usual fifteen-minute breaks, the interpreters used the time to move around and connect with visitors. Instead of giving a thirty-minute talk, they looked for more personal, creative ways to help visitors establish personal connections to the park. The chief of interpretation observed that visitors seemed more interested in finding meaning in the park.⁶

The events, traditions, and values represented at many sites had new resonance for both visitors and park employees who

were struggling to come to grips with the attacks. For example, as site manager Lance Hatten walked through the outdoor Franklin Delano Roosevelt Memorial the morning after the attacks doing a routine check, he happened to glance up at a quote carved into one of the granite walls: “FDR—freedom from fear.” Suddenly this simple, eloquent quote took on a powerful, new meaning for him. In the week after the attack, people gathered on the National Mall for candlelight vigils in expressions of patriotism and unity. They used chalk to write statements about freedom and democracy on the pavement. Hatten saw opportunity amidst the tragedy. In the past, he said, Americans had sometimes taken for granted the meaning of these sites, but September 11 gave them the opportunity to reconnect with these places. Visitors to Fort McHenry in Baltimore told the staff that they came out of a sense of patriotism. The superintendent reported, “Visitors come to look at the flag and experience solace and quiet at Fort McHenry.”⁷

Manzanar National Historic Site in California, where Japanese Americans had been detained after Pearl Harbor, was another site that assumed new meaning.

*This monument at Manzanar is inscribed,
“This is the place of consolation for the spirit of all mankind.”*

Visitors began to leave September 11 “offerings” at the site. A huge American flag was hung on the existing Manzanar Relocation Center signs. Smaller flags suddenly appeared around the cemetery, left there, Superintendent Frank Hays explained, “as a kind of recognition of the site as an important part of the civil rights story.” The park, said Hays, had a unique role advancing a public dialog about racism, civil rights, and other controversial subjects. Hays quickly recognized the connection between September 11 and Manzanar and the “obvious parallels” between Pearl Harbor and the terrorist attacks. The morning of the attack, he anticipated getting media requests to address the connection between what had happened to Japanese Americans at Manzanar and the current climate of suspicion surrounding Arab Americans. He and other park staff wanted to ensure that in their future interpretation, they allowed visitors to make the connection. September 11 prompted discussion about the Constitution that for Hays reaffirmed the relevance of Manzanar and provided park interpreters with a common context they could use to explain that relevance. The park received a number of media inquiries. The CBS *Sunday Morning* television program filmed a segment with reporter Charles Osgood highlighting the connection between September 11 and the Japanese-American experience after Pearl Harbor.⁸

The terrorist attacks prompted changes in interpretation at some parks. Staff at Valley Forge National Historical Park used the tragedy as an opportunity to address new interpretive themes. Interpreters traditionally talked about the experiences of an army in the field, the local Quaker popula-

tion, and the pacifist Germans. The attacks prompted them to rethink this approach. The way the park interpreted issues of national defense changed and the dialog with visitors became more provocative. The staff encouraged visitors to reflect on not only what the soldiers did at Valley Forge but also on how the principles of the American Revolution had shaped us as a people. Independence National Historical Park Supervisory District Ranger Frances Delmar found that more visitors came to Independence Hall seeking answers than at any time she could recall. They wanted to learn about constitutional issues, such as balancing individual freedoms with national security. Park staff was able to provide historical context for the questions visitors raised.⁹

In addition to giving new meaning to parks and prompting changes in interpretation, the September 11 event and its aftermath illustrated the way parks, particularly those in dense urban areas, were and continued to be an integral part of their surrounding communities. This was especially true in the New York City area. Sites such as Federal Hall and Ellis Island sheltered and cared for their neighbors on September 11. A number of New York sites allowed other agencies to use their facilities and open spaces.

Managers at Gateway National Recreation Area were keenly aware of the park’s role and responsibilities as part of the surrounding community. On September 23, 2001, the park co-sponsored a prayer vigil at Fort Tilden with community groups and churches in Rockaway, New Jersey. It provided space for the Rockaway Chamber of Commerce and other organizations that



Park managers became more acutely aware of their ties to and responsibilities to their neighboring communities.

were collecting donated clothing and other items for World Trade Center victims. Later, when Flight 587 crashed in Rockaway, the New York Police and Fire Departments and the Transportation Safety Board temporarily used park facilities. “We’re part of the community, while at the same time we’re part of a federal system, a national system of parks,” Superintendent Billy Garrett explained. He believed it was important to have programs that lent support to the parks neighbors. After learning of plans for a memorial service for victims of the crash, Garrett approached the local chamber of commerce and offered support. Park staff helped organize the event (sponsored by the city of New York and attended by 5,000 people), helped with traffic, and helped with the clean up afterward. Garrett gave the introductory remarks using the opportunity to remind people of the value of parks as places for people to come together. As an expression of the increased level of cooperation, the park signed a cooperative agreement with the police department allowing it to use the airfield in future disasters.¹⁰

Yosemite National Park, too, was keenly aware of its role in the broader community.

When President Bush called for a national day of remembrance and a moment of silence, Superintendent David Mihalic began to think about how his park could participate. He arranged for a public display of a fire engine, a rescue vehicle, a patrol bicycle, a ranger patrol car, one of the concessionaire’s security vehicles, an ambulance from a local hospital clinic, and a couple horse patrol rangers. The staff put out flags and white banners that said “In Remembrance” and invited visitors to sign them. By noon, hundreds had gathered around the display. At the designated moment of silence, all of the park’s shuttle buses pulled over to the side of the road and stopped. A uniformed ranger quietly brought her horse out into the middle of the crowd and all the emergency vehicles turned on their red lights. Staff and visitors stood in silence for a moment. Then the red lights were turned off and bus service resumed. Visitors of all ages and backgrounds left their signatures on a banner of 140 feet of plain brown and white craft paper. As Mihalic explained, “People were tying the National Park idea to the whole moment.” Yosemite later sent one of the signed banners to Manhattan

A candlelight vigil, sponsored in part by Gateway National Recreation Area, was held at Fort Tilden on September 23, 2001.

**The dramatic increase in homeland security requirements
created a strain on the National Park Service’s
law enforcement capability.**

Sites as a symbol of support for their colleagues. “It’s not just the World Trade Center story,” Mihalic observed. “It’s not just the Pentagon story. It’s not just the hole in the ground in some rural county in Pennsylvania. It’s something like blowing up the *Maine* or like the *Arizona* or like the bridge at Concord. It’s something that... transcends us as a nation.” It is a national story, he added, and the Park Service’s role was to preserve and tell the national story.¹¹

Shortage of Law Enforcement Personnel

In the aftermath of the attacks, the National Park Service grappled with severe shortages in its law enforcement capability. At the time, the Service had approximately 1,500 commissioned law enforcement rangers (not including seasonal rangers) and roughly 600 Park Police officers. More than 200 of the law enforcement rangers became involved in special assignments resulting from the attacks. Half of these people were assigned outside of their home parks, including sixty-one at Bureau of Reclamation dam projects, fourteen at the Interior department’s Washington headquarters, and twenty-five at Independence National Historical Park, Boston National Historical Park, USS *Arizona* National

Monument, and other parks. Their assignments generally were twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, for two to three weeks at a time. A report by Interior department Inspector General Earl E. Devaney noted that for months after the attacks, most of the protection rangers and Park Police officers assigned to “icon” parks worked twelve-hour shifts, seven days a week. “We have a concern about the long-term effectiveness of the protection staff and the officers who operate under these intense conditions,” the report noted. According to the inspector general, with the exception of Boston Navy Yard, no icon park had received a significant increase in permanent rangers since September 11 and many parks were operating with smaller protection forces than before the attacks.¹²

Some parks already had existing cooperative relationships with neighboring parks that enabled them to share resources. For example, Boston National Historical Park had relationships with Minute Man National Historical Park, Cape Cod National Seashore, and Springfield Armory National Historic Site. Independence National Historical Park had ties with Valley Forge National Historical Park, Gettysburg National Military Park, and Assateague Island National Seashore.

Initially their chief rangers shared resources with each other somewhat informally. As the response continued, however, “special event teams” were going out for their third or fourth rotation and there was growing concern for their health and well-being. As a result, some superintendents began holding back their resources. Managers realized they needed a larger pool of people. Parks that were already understaffed became increasingly reluctant to release rangers for duty elsewhere. As time went on, some parks started to feel that they were contributing more than others. “We really don’t have a real understanding of what the National Park Service wants from us,” said Regional Chief Ranger Bob Martin, “in this period of terrorism.” They were not sure what help the Service expected from them during the national emergency.¹³

The Southeast Region initially used its special event teams but they were being called out repeatedly. Regional leaders decided they could no longer rely solely on these teams, they needed to tap other available resources. They asked each park prepare a minimum staffing plan to reveal the shortfalls that would occur if its law enforcement rangers were dispatched elsewhere. Then the superintendents were to identify the specific resources they would need to provide the minimum level of protection and release the rest to support the national response. After the superintendents completed this plan and the regional director approved it, the parks released all other available law enforcement rangers to meet Service-wide requirements.¹⁴

Having by far the largest law enforcement contingent within the department at the

time, the National Park Service was called upon to do “some extraordinary things” after the attacks, Maj. Gary Van Horn observed. The Service was asked to perform functions that it had not performed in the past, or at least not to the same degree, such as providing extended security for Bureau of Reclamation sites in the West. These new homeland security requirements prompted managers to think more about how to respond rapidly to several locations with enough personnel to provide protection at the request of the president, department, or Service leaders. The Service was such a decentralized organization that aside from deploying its special event teams in response to specific requests, it relied on individual rangers who were available in other parks. Managers expressed frustration with the inability to identify individuals who could respond rapidly and provide security until others could be brought in. The September 11 experience convinced leaders that they could not rely solely on special event teams; they needed to be able to draw on other resources as well.

Not until September 11 did managers fully realize how desperately short the Service was in law enforcement personnel. Some now worried that the Service would burn out hardworking, dedicated law enforcement personnel and put additional strain on their families. Van Horn emphasized that regional chief rangers needed the authority and ability to call up law enforcement rangers on short notice, without having to go through the various levels of management for approval. In a crisis, managers needed to have pre-identified individuals in different parks and direct line authority to call them on duty immediately. In an emergency, there is no

**New homeland security requirements
prompted managers to think more about
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time to get permission from a number of people. Van Horn recommended having a direct line of authority within law enforcement during emergencies.¹⁵

Well before the attacks, a series of studies and reports had documented a significant shortfall in law enforcement personnel. Over the previous four years, reports from Congress, the department's inspector general, the International Association of Chiefs of Police, and the National Academy of Public Administration had addressed the issue of the increasing resource and visitor protection demands and their impact on law enforcement, fire protection, emergency services, and other protection duties. These studies revealed inadequacies both in the Park Police and the law enforcement ranger programs. They emphasized the need for increased staff, new training, and additional resources.

A congressional report on law enforcement within the Service called the Thomas Report had concluded that the Service needed 1,295 additional rangers. The National Academy of Public Administration had made an assessment of the law enforcement programs. A study by the International Association of Chiefs of Police identified need for 615 additional law enforcement rangers (roughly the equiv-

alent of seasonal staff). The Park Police had indicated a need for an additional 200 officers. The studies had received little attention and had not sparked any major reforms or initiatives at the bureau or department level. No new law enforcement positions had materialized. Meanwhile, according to *Federal Times*, the number of reported incidents had grown by 39 percent from 1999 to 2000 for the Park Service and other bureaus. The situation only grew worse when rangers were pulled for homeland security missions. Acting Chief Ranger Dennis Burnett explained, "Basically, we're overworking an already overstressed workforce." Rangers, he said, were trying to meet the new security needs, "as well as the day-to-day protection of the resources in the national parks that we're charge with protecting according to Congress."¹⁶

Responding to requests for rangers for long-term security assignments was a major challenge. While the number of requests for assistance grew significantly, the number of rangers had not kept pace. To illustrate the seriousness of the problem, Einar Olsen explained that in a recent six-month period, the National Capital Region had lost 20 percent of its rangers. The ranger force was often asked to perform special assignments, he added, "but we're in dire

Months after the attacks, officers in Washington continued to work extended shifts to cover routine assignments and the additional security at the monuments and memorials.

straits.” Because of the security assignments, parks were being asked to reduce their normal staffing levels. As a result, said Olsen, “We’re providing just the very basic public safety needs in the parks and things such as resource protection are really taking the backseat now.”¹⁷

Catoctin Mountain Park was just one example of the problem the region faced. The park had lost two of its ten rangers in the previous year, and Superintendent Mel Poole worried about burnout. One major lesson he saw coming out of September 11 was that the Service needed a significant increase in ranger law enforcement personnel. “If September 11 was not a wake-up call,” Poole warned, “I don’t know what would be.” Ranger Dwight Dixon observed that even under normal circumstances staffing the park and providing the necessary protection was difficult. The response time grew longer. “If you’re highly visible you can probably deter a lot of crime, just from being seen,” Dixon explained, “and if there’s only one or two rangers spread out over a 165-mile district, it’s not inconceivable that some visitors may come here fairly regular and never see a ranger.” A visible ranger force, he explained, helped deter and ultimately reduce car break-ins, vandalism, and other crimes in the park. With

the reduced force after September 11, the number of incidents increased.¹⁸

Parks in the Northeast Region grappled with similar shortages. For example, Shenandoah National Park sent rangers to assist temporarily at Shasta and Hoover Dams and to provide security at Independence National Historical Park, Boston National Historical Park and the Main Interior Building. These assignments left the park short staffed and falling further behind in its work plan. Even with some funding available to pay for overtime and to hire assistance, Ranger Rick Childs said, “There are some traditional functions that just cannot be done as a result of this.” The park had to cut back the hours and the area of coverage. During certain times of the day, rangers could not patrol as large an area. Nor could they always provide some of the services that they had in the past, such as assisting a visitor with a disabled vehicle. With lighter coverage, managers had to draw the rangers close in, leaving fewer rangers to patrol the periphery. No major tasks were ignored, but the rangers focused their response in the more developed, heavily visited areas such as Skyland and Big Meadows. Patrols in the extreme outlying areas in the north and south were less frequent. Homeland security

assignments typically involved twelve-hour days, for either fourteen or twenty-one days, plus a travel day on each end. This meant rangers were away from their home parks for twenty-three or twenty-four days at a time and were tired when they returned. By late fall the rangers working overtime were showing signs of fatigue.¹⁹

At Valley Forge National Historical Park as many as three protection rangers (representing 25 percent of its ranger force) worked outside park at one time. Two rangers left for the sky marshal program and a third relocated when her husband took a position with that program. In fiscal year 2002, Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River sent eleven people to support homeland security-related missions and assist other areas, which reduced its available staff during peak visitation season. The drain on the protection staff prompted joint river patrols with other divisions and agencies in order to promote visitor safety.²⁰

Much like the ranger force, the Park Police, too, was stretched thin as officers took on additional security missions. Months after the attacks, officers in Washington continued to work extended shifts to cover routine assignments and the additional security at the monuments and memorials. Weeks of twelve-hour shifts proved draining, and eventually the officers became tired. Though very proud of the professionalism of the officers, Deputy Chief Jack Schamp conceded that maintaining the desired level of alertness among officers who were working extended shifts for a prolonged period was a challenge. The Park Police after-action report highlighted "extreme staffing shortages." The Park Police, it noted, could

not maintain closures without significant overtime. These extended hours led to exhaustion and "reduced long-term effectiveness."²¹

Officers in the New York field office worked many hours of overtime to protect the Statue of Liberty and Federal Hall. Eight months after the attack, they were still working ten- to twelve-hour shifts, sometimes six days a week. The first signs of burnout started to appear. "We've been able to accomplish our mission, but it has been close," Capt. Neal Lauro said.²²

To make the situation worse, both the ranger force and the Park Police lost trained personnel to the new sky marshal program. This was a federal program, established as a result of the September 11 attacks, to place trained armed law enforcement personnel on commercial flights. The Service could not compete with the higher salaries that the newly created Transportation and Security Administration offered its sky marshals. Capt. Sal Lauro estimated that ten to fifteen officers left in a one-month period. In the first two months that the Transportation and Security Administration was hiring, the New York field office lost fourteen officers, roughly 10 percent of the force. Since these officers had already been through training at the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center, they could easily transition into sky marshal jobs, with only a single week of additional training.²³

The expanded security missions and functions and the loss of officers ultimately slowed the force's response time. Deputy Chief Schamp conceded that the overall quality of Park Police services had been affected. Fewer officers were available to

patrol the streets, parkways, and parks. In Washington, the specialized patrols felt the greatest impact. There were fewer mounted patrols on the horse trails in Rock Creek Park. Some of the undercover officers who had watched for car break-ins and assaults had been put in uniform and assigned to fixed posts. Some training and other programs in Washington were postponed or canceled. Outlying patrols were modified because of the shortage of personnel. With more officers focused on the monument area downtown, patrols in the outlying areas such as Dupont Circle in northwest Washington became less frequent.²⁴

The New York field office faced similar challenges. Not since *Operation Desert Storm*, a decade earlier, had Park Police officers been at Federal Hall on an extended basis. In the past, officers had provided support to Manhattan Sites only for limited periods during special events or investigations. After September 11, they assumed a continual presence. The expanded Park Police role in New York after September 11 strained the force and left it with position vacancies.

Even before the attack, the New York field office had difficulty meeting all the requirements placed upon its officers. The staff in the field office was operations oriented. The office had only a small three-person administrative staff to support more than one hundred officers. As a result, officers had had to take on nonoperational, collaborative duties. For example, one lieutenant, a shift supervisor responsible for supervising operations on the street, also handled radio communication and fleet management. His duties included ordering emergency equipment and overseeing

training. The officer had three full-time “jobs” in addition to his duties as shift supervisor. There were other similar cases. Maj. Thomas Wilkins observed, “They have a tremendous amount of responsibility and really not very much support in order to accomplish what they need to accomplish.” He praised his staff for doing an “excellent job” in a difficult situation. The increased security requirements forced the New York field office to push back training and semi-annual firearms qualifications. Wilkins worried that despite his staff’s hard work it would not be able to provide the same level of service it had in the past.²⁵

The New York field office’s SWAT team had played an important role helping with triage on Ellis Island and patrolling the perimeters of Ellis and Liberty Islands. The team, said Lt. Dave Buckley, was an “integral part” of the overall protection plan. In the months after the attacks, however, six people left the field office’s Emergency Services Unit (as the team was now called), four of these to become sky marshals. With so few members left, the unit was disestablished.²⁶

At the same time, the field office was assuming a more visible role in the Northeast Region. When dealing with security issues at the Statue of Liberty, Wilkins worked directly with the regional director and associate regional director and even with the director and the secretary. These individuals all took a personal interest in the Statue’s security plan. With a relatively new Park Service director and no permanent Park Police chief at the time, Wilkins found that he had difficulty focusing attention on the severity of the staffing problem



Providing adequate security for visitors at the Statue of Liberty remained an issue long after September 11.

and the planning for security at the Statue of Liberty.

Wilkins received additional funding for enhanced security but did not receive a commitment of increased personnel until months later. He had difficulty conveying the significance of the fact that he had lost fifteen people at a time when the workload had increased significantly. Wilkins did not believe Park Police officials in Washington understood the severity of the situation until April 2002 when he informed them that the field office could not support any of the upcoming scheduled events in the city, such as the five-borough bike tour. Nor could he support reopening the Statue of Liberty.

On the bright side, the centralized structure of the Park Police made allocating resources both in New York and in Washington, D.C., easier. Wilkins was able to pool resources, for example, pulling officers from Gateway National Recreation Area and directing them to the Statue of Liberty. He concluded, “Your people are your strength. They are what make the organization.”²⁷

Multi-region Coordination Group

Although the National Park Service responded to the attacks quickly and effectively and had enough resources to handle the immediate threat, leaders became increasingly concerned that they might not have enough law enforcement resources to respond appropriately to the increased security requirements over the long term. Months after the attacks, the requirement to protect park sites, Bureau of Reclamation dams, and the Main Interior Building was beginning to take a toll. In addition, the Service had committed itself to providing more than one hundred rangers to support the upcoming 2002 Winter Olympics in Utah. The Service was competing with other federal agencies for the same law enforcement/protection candidates, and despite its best efforts, it continued to have difficulty filling vacant positions. Leaders recognized that they could no longer simply react to individual requests for ranger resources, they needed to have a more effective Service-wide system in place to determine priorities and allocate resources.

Recognizing the growing strain on resources, on October 5, 2001, Deputy Director Deny Galvin convened a management assessment team to develop a plan

for how the Service could best respond with its law enforcement personnel in the post-September 11 environment. This small group headed by Rick Gale and made up of ranger activities division staff and regional chief rangers met in Main Interior over the Columbus Day weekend in October 2001 to develop what was termed a strategic assessment. In their assessment the team would address the issue of how the Service could best respond with its law enforcement personnel in the face of national security threats while still fulfilling its responsibilities of protecting its sites, employees, and visitors. It would also lay out alternative approaches to addressing the shortage of law enforcement rangers in the long term.

The team spent the holiday weekend developing an assessment of the current situation and a plan to allocate resources effectively on a large scale. They acknowledged that the existing system for allocating resources had not been efficient. At any given time, approximately two hundred law enforcement rangers were working outside their own parks and another hundred were working extended shifts in their own parks. Team members concluded that they needed a process similar to the national fire response system to identify, deploy, and manage resources.²⁸

With the national wildland fire response, managers had a system in place based on clearly defined threat levels. As the level of fire threat increased and additional resources were required to respond to the threat, park operations were reduced or drawn down. The levels went from level one where a fire or fires affected a single region to the highest level, level five, when parks were closed so that the Service could

respond to the particular fire emergency. There had never been a similar system of stages or levels of response in place for national security. Committing resources at level one was relatively easy, Dick Ring explained, but that task becomes increasingly difficult at levels two, three, four, and five. Describing in advance the trade-offs and impacts at each level, he added, was “critically important.” But, as noted, no such system was in place on September 11. The guidance from leadership was to send all the personnel and other resources that were requested but also to maintain their normal level of operations and keep the parks open. This task became inherently impossible. To make matters worse, no one authorized the parks to hire additional personnel to backfill vacant ranger positions. As a result, some parks found themselves struggling with conflicting demands they could not possibly meet. Park managers wanted and needed information and guidance concerning the trade-offs that were authorized and the level of emergency that existed.²⁹

In its assessment report, the team reiterated the Service’s statutory responsibility to protect park property and the public. This task was even greater, the report emphasized, because the Service was responsible for protecting many high-visibility national icons and parks that housed elements of public utility infrastructure. Invoking the familiar drawdown concept used in national fire response, the team laid out predefined levels of personnel commitment based on the level of threat severity. The team’s proposal would require park chief rangers and superintendents to identify acceptable drawdown levels and identify

Some regional chief rangers found that allocating park resources became easier with the creation of the multi-region coordination group.

protection staff who could be freed up for deployment elsewhere.

In addition to the drawdown concept, the team's proposal incorporated other aspects of the existing fire response system. The fire response system included individual coordination centers around the country that fed resources into the firefighting system. There was a multi-agency coordination group made up of representatives of various federal agencies that established priorities and allocated resources for fire response. This group had the ability to draw on resources of the Bureau of Land Management, Forest Service, Bureau of Indian Affairs, and other federal agencies. Experienced senior rangers recognized that a similar system could be used to feed rangers into homeland security missions. They argued that with the increased security missions the Service could no longer continue to react in a piecemeal fashion to individual requests for law enforcement rangers. Rather, the Service needed an integrated structure or system to set priorities and allocate resources, similar to the multi-agency coordination group that existed for fire response. The team presented its final assessment to Deputy Director Galvin on October 9, 2001, and later Galvin formally presented the team's assessment to the

Service's National Leadership Council.³⁰

On November 4, 2001, Service leaders adopted the team's recommendation and established a multi-region coordination group to coordinate the mobilization of resources for the ongoing security operations within the Service. Initially the group worked out of a coordination center in Portland, Oregon. Later it moved to the Columbia Cascades Support Office in Seattle. Mark Forbes from the support office served as coordinator.

Over a period of a few weeks, the ranger activities division along with the multi-region coordination group developed the criteria for a drawdown and an exercise for parks to go through to identify the resources they could temporarily make available to other parks. The regional chief rangers developed a national emergency response plan to organize and coordinate all the law enforcement resources to handle the current emergency and future emergencies. The plan described five distinct levels of preparedness and response, ranging from normal operations to national emergency, the level to be determined by the director. All parks were required to prepare drawdown plans to keep the minimum staff required and release the other rangers for security assignments elsewhere.

The emergency response plan would be used in the future to manage any national crisis or large-scale emergency to “ensure a unified and coordinated response.”³¹

Director Mainella approved the Service’s national emergency response plan on November 16, 2001. In transmitting the plan to the regional directors, she explained that the additional task of providing protection assistance at some department facilities had “taxed the normal operation of our national parks.” To date, she added, the Service had successfully met the department’s immediate short-term emergency needs for law enforcement personnel through voluntary reassignments from the parks, but long-term commitments required a mandatory program. These measures, she continued, would enable leaders to manage and allocate resources effectively during any national emergency or significant incident. In accordance with the plan, she asked regional directors to have parks develop drawdown plans within two weeks. These plans would help parks determine how many rangers or Park Police officers needed to remain in the park and how many could be made available to support the national protection priorities.³²

Under the Park Service’s emergency response plan, the director would declare a specific level of response based on the requirements the department placed on the Service. The director determined that the Service would respond up to a certain level of impact on the parks. Then the multi-region coordination group would serve as a broker to ensure that the demands were evenly distributed among parks and that no parks were disproportionately affected. An individual park superintendent was under

guidance from his or her regional director to release resources up to that specific level of impact. When superintendents reached that level of impact, they would inform their regional director or regional chief ranger, so that a negotiation or brokering process could begin.³³

Some regional chief rangers found that allocating park resources became easier with the creation of the multi-region coordination group. With the drawdown plan, all personnel who were not needed to provide support at the very basic levels were considered available for emergency operations to move around as needed. Every park submitted a list of a reasonable amount of resources considering what they had available. Einar Olsen, however, found that the National Capital Region simply did not have many rangers available for assignments outside of their own parks even at the highest response levels. He did not believe Service leaders fully recognized the strain on the ranger force. “In terms of shifting resources and priorities in the agency,” Olsen added, “I’ve seen no difference at all.”³⁴

Developing the multi-region coordination group and the national response plan were major accomplishments. In the Northeast Region, Chief Ranger Bob Martin expressed pride in the regional chief rangers. They had only been together as a group since May 2001 when the last two vacant chief ranger positions were filled. Yet, they had taken on new, challenging issues and formed a cohesive group.³⁵

In addition to the emergency response plan, in the aftermath of the attacks there were several major initiatives at the department and Service level that affected the

law enforcement program. At the director's request, Deputy Director Don Murphy organized a task force to review the previous law enforcement studies and resolve a number of law enforcement issues. The task force made up of Steve Calvery, Dick Ring, Dennis Burnett, a few regional directors, and some Park Police officials, held its first meeting in February 2002. Members spent the first meeting developing a long-term agenda and discussing the future of the Service's law enforcement program.

Secretary Gale Norton established the Law Enforcement Review Panel to evaluate the law enforcement reforms the inspector general had recommended in a January 2002 report, "Disquieting State of Disorder: An Assessment of Department of the Interior Law Enforcement." On July 19, 2002, she formally approved more than twenty measures proposed by the review panel to improve law enforcement throughout the department, including the appointment of a deputy assistant secretary for law enforcement and security. The measures were largely consistent with those recommended in the inspector general's report.

The secretary made it clear that she expected immediate action on the directives that affected the National Park Service. Not long after, Director Mainella outlined a series of reforms. "We must now demonstrate our commitment to move beyond planning and begin to take action," she explained. The director also created the new associate director for resource and visitor protection position to coordinate the diverse protection ranger functions. This associate director would be considered the functional "chief ranger" of the National Park Service and would

provide leadership and policy direction for various park ranger functions.³⁶

The aftermath of September 11 ultimately brought significant changes to the Service, its parks, and its people. Many of these changes were positive, though not all. Park visitation declined but the sites and the values they represented assumed new meaning and significance. In some instances, existing bonds between individual parks and their local communities were reinforced and strengthened. The attacks contributed to a shortage of law enforcement personnel and revealed weaknesses in the Service's procedures for allocating resources, but they also prompted promising reform and organizational change.





As a result of the terrorist attacks and the increased emphasis on homeland security, many park rangers who had been commissioned as law enforcement officers were drawn to a greater degree into security and law enforcement functions as part of their day-to-day responsibilities.

Conclusion

Much has been learned as a result of the events of September 11—and even more remains to be understood and analyzed. The attacks and their aftermath clearly demonstrated the importance of the large federal areas and facilities with controlled access in supporting emergency response. Floyd Bennett Field with its open areas and storage facilities, for example, became an important staging area; Federal Hall became a place of critical refuge for people fleeing the collapse of the trade towers; and Ellis Island served as a triage center.

The use of park property to support the response effort was readily apparent and relatively easy to document. Less apparent and more difficult to measure was the immediate and long-term impact of the response on park resources. Park rangers have always played a critical role in preventing crime and catching criminals in the act. Chief rangers in the parks warned that if they met the current requirements for drawing down their protection rangers they would not have enough rangers to catch poachers or adequately protect archeological sites. Some senior managers expressed concern that the monitoring and protection of natural and cultural resources in the parks had declined because rangers had been drawn away for homeland security missions elsewhere.¹

More than a year after the attack, managers were still trying to determine the extent to which the shortage of protection rangers had jeopardized natural and cultural resources. No one had yet conducted a comprehensive study of the impact on cultural and natural resources in the parks. The protection rangers were traditionally the “eyes and

Interacting with visitors remains an important function for park rangers and Park Police.

ears” of the parks, and resource managers often relied on them to detect and report changes, such as trees that had been cut or bloodstains from a deer. These rangers had not been out in the parks, particularly in the more remote areas, to the same degree as before September 11 and thus were not able to report the necessary information about resources. “We know there are impacts. We know they are out there, but...you have to be out there to see it and observe it or else you have to wait until somebody tells you about it,” said the Southeast Region’s Chief Ranger Judy Forte. Though the full impact of the September 11 response on park resources had not yet been revealed, some senior rangers speculated that crime had probably increased and some resources had been lost in the absence of protection rangers.²

Also difficult to quantify was the impact of the attacks on the role of the park ranger. Traditionally the park ranger functioned as something of a generalist who fulfilled many diverse roles and responsibilities. As a result of the terrorist attacks and the increased emphasis on homeland security, many park rangers who had been commissioned as law enforcement officers were drawn to a greater degree into security and law enforcement functions as part of their day-to-day responsibilities. The Service had already begun to focus more on law enforcement as a separate function, but after September 11 the pressure to narrow the park ranger’s function from a generalist to more of a law enforcement function increased. The inspector general reported that with the additional security responsibilities the role of the protection ranger had “made a significant exemplary shift.” Some managers and employees questioned the

appropriateness of using these park rangers as guards. The inspector general concluded that requiring police officers and protection rangers to perform sentry duties for extended periods of time was not in the best interest of the officers or the department itself.

Forte, like many other rangers, had come into the Park Service with the generalist view that her job primarily was to protect and interpret park natural and cultural resources. Her duties included search and rescue, interpretation, trail work, firefighting, and other tasks. Law enforcement was just one aspect of the generalist ranger function. After the September 11 response, she said, the career of the park ranger became more protection oriented. For years, the Service had assumed the benefits of the generalist ranger to the agency, but now it was weighing the benefits of generalist rangers against the need for homeland security. As regional chief ranger, Forte found herself spending more time on law enforcement, emergency services, and security than in the past and coordinating more with other law enforcement bureaus. “Homeland security is what is hot on people’s minds right now,” she stated simply, “and that’s where we are.”³

One side benefit from the increased emphasis on security in the nation and in the National Park Service was that it prompted a greater appreciation for police, firefighters, and other law enforcement representatives. The public held Park Police in higher esteem after September 11, much as they did other police and firefighters. New York City officials became more aware of the Park Police’s contributions, inviting Maj. Thomas Wilkins to participate in a citywide

counterterrorism subcommittee. Within the Service as well there was greater appreciation for Park Police. Parks that in the past discouraged a visible police presence, now found that visibility reassuring.⁴ One New York Park Police officer observed that September 11 “really showed the American people that no matter where the danger is we’re going to be there.” Deputy Chief Jack Schamp noted that the public image of the Park Police had improved. The Interior department, he believed, had a better understanding of the role and missions of the Park Police, such as ensuring the safety of the secretary of the interior. Capt. Neal Lauro expressed what was probably the sentiment of many officers. “I was never as proud to wear the uniform as that day,” he said. His brother, Capt. Sal Lauro, also expressed great pride in the way the officers had performed. Secretary Norton presented the Park Police with a unit citation for their response to the events of September 11.⁵

Much like the Park Police, protection rangers were also viewed a little differently after the attacks. The public became increasingly aware that security was part of the park rangers’ mission. Rangers in the Northeast Region were instructed to maintain a high level of visibility in part because their presence reassured visitors.⁶ The green-and-gray ranger uniform became an even more powerful symbol of security and protection. Thousands of Americans who visited parks were reassured when they saw uniformed rangers. The power of the uniform as a symbol of safety and protection was perhaps most dramatically and poignantly illustrated immediately after the attacks in New York when people on the streets desperately fleeing the smoke and debris

grabbed on to Danny Merced after spotting his uniform.

The Service has always faced the challenge of balancing its responsibility for protecting visitors with its fundamental mission of preserving resources and providing for the public enjoyment of those resources. This task became much more complex and difficult as a result of the September 11 attacks. In the aftermath, the Service struggled to adjust the effects of heightened security. The Park Service had always been involved in security, Dick Ring observed, but the level of resources and attention devoted to that activity increased significantly. Managers struggled to find ways to ensure that the security efforts did not disrupt visitor services, normal park activities, or the normal enjoyment of the parks. The Park Service worked with and provided support to the Bureau of Reclamation, the Navy, and other agencies, so its workload had increased.⁷

The long-term impact of the attacks on the National Park Service mission, resources, functions, and culture remains unclear. Some veteran responders viewed September 11 as a transforming event for the Service. “I think we’ve got to balance being able to protect our resources, our visitors, our employees, and then also letting our visitors enjoy the parks,” Skip Brooks explained. Rick Gale noted that the attacks could be a transforming event for the Service if it incorporated the lessons it had learned. He encouraged Service leaders to continue to look at innovative ways to allocate resources and address staffing shortages, to focus less on obstacles and more on opportunities. The greatest challenge, he conceded, was to think

strategically, to look ahead, and develop a proactive approach in dealing with incidents and potential threats.⁸

The National Park Service had reason to feel proud of its response. The actions of many individual Service employees represented the very highest standards of service and dedication. The efforts of the staff at Federal Hall, Ellis Island, and elsewhere on September 11 certainly reflect their outstanding performance. The service and dedication to duty was also reflected in the dozens of law enforcement rangers who spent weeks away from their homes and families working long hours to support the response. It was reflected in the Park Police officers who worked extended hours for weeks and sometimes months. It was reflected in the actions of employees who spent their extra hours searching for victims at Ground Zero, like Gateway National Recreation Area Ranger Theresa Marie Cervera. On September 11 Cervera, who had arrived early for a 9:00 a.m. first-aid/CPR class, was bird-watching at the Great Kills section of Staten Island. After witnessing the attack through her binoculars, she rushed to Ground Zero to assist. Once there, someone placed a stethoscope in her hand and she immediately went to work treating injured firefighters and police. Cervera worked through the night treating injured rescue workers and shouldered the grim task of digging for victims. In the following weeks, she drove to Ground Zero each evening after her regular duty hours and worked until midnight.⁹

Certainly one of the most dominant themes of the National Park Service's response was that of parks and park employees around the country pulling together and supporting each other. In New York City and Washington, D.C., rangers and Park Police

provided support to each other. Parks as far south as Assateague Island in Maryland sent up boats to patrol around the Statue of Liberty. As Officer David Moen observed, people put their personal differences aside and worked together as a team. New York and Boston area parks received assistance from rangers from Assateague Island National Seashore, Cape Cod National Seashore, Colonial National Historical Park, Fire Island National Seashore, Richmond National Battlefield, Petersburg National Battlefield, Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River, Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area, Gettysburg National Battlefield, Shenandoah National Park, and Blue Ridge Parkway. "We didn't have the numbers that we needed and we couldn't provide as much assistance as maybe we would like to or maybe the department would have liked us to provide," Dennis Burnett conceded, "but I think that we were in place and ready to respond with a phone call." He aptly summed up the Service's response by saying, "We did what had to be done and I think we got it accomplished."¹⁰

The Service clearly demonstrated that despite staffing shortages and communications problems, it could respond effectively to the attacks. Yet, in ways recounted earlier, the attacks might have left the National Park Service forever changed. In the span of a single morning, its mission and functions became more complex and the challenge of protecting its parks, its people, and its visitors became much more difficult.

Notes

Unless otherwise noted, copies of all interview transcripts and all files cited below are located in the administrative history files, *National Register, History, and Education, National Park Service (NPS), Washington, D.C.*

Preface

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I. National Park Service’s Initial Response

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Conclusion

¹Ring, interview, p. 22; Martin, interview, pp. 30-32.

²Forte, interview, pp. 9-10; Martin, interview, pp. 31-32.

³DOI, OIG, *Assessment of Security at the National Park Service’s Icon Parks*, Report no. 2003-I-0063; Forte, interview, pp. 12, 14-15, 19-24.

⁴Wilkins, interview, pp. 24-26; Neal Lauro, interview, pp. 23-24; Sal Lauro, interview, pp. 59-60; Buckley, interview, pp. 17-18.

⁵Moen, interview, p. 10; Schamp, interview, p. 38; Neal Lauro, interview, p. 29; Sal Lauro, interview, p. 47; Secretary of the Interior, memo “Unit Citation USPP National Park Service,” n.d., file: USPP.

⁶Martin, interview, pp. 25-26.

⁷Ring, interview, p. 20.

⁸Brooks, interview, p. 41; Gale, interview, pp. 30-32, 35.

⁹Theresa Cervera, interview by Chuck Smythe, January 24, 2002, pp. 3-7.

¹⁰Burnett, interview, pp. 26, 32-33; Moen, interview, p. 12; *Morning Report*, September 15, 2001, afternoon edition.

Oral History Interviews

Copies of all interview transcripts listed below can be found in the administrative history files, National Register, History and Education, National Park Service, Washington, D.C.

Amato, Tito. Interview by Chuck Smythe. New York, NY. January 23, 2002.

Arberg, Alfred. Interview by Mark Schoepfle. New York, NY. February 1, 2002.

Avery, Joseph. Interview by Chuck Smythe. New York, NY. January 23, 2002.

Bohn, Sgt. Keith. Interview by Janet A. McDonnell. Washington, D.C. December 17, 2001.

Boice, Ronald. Interview by Doris D. Fanelli. Valley Forge National Historical Park, Pennsylvania. April 5, 2002.

Brennan, Laura. Interview by Chuck Smythe. New York, NY. December 20, 2001.

Brooks, Gregory P. Interview by Janet A. McDonnell. Colonial National Historical Park, VA. June 12, 2002.

Brown, Daniel T. Interview by Mark Schoepfle. New York, NY. January 29, 2002.

Buckley, David L. Interview by Janet A. McDonnell. New York, NY. May 7, 2002.

Burchell, Sgt. Kenneth S. Interview by Janet A. McDonnell. Washington, D.C. December 17, 2001.

Burnett, Dennis. Interview by Janet A. McDonnell. Washington, D.C. January 29, 2002.

Castro, Paula. Interview by Mark Schoepfle. New York, NY. January 30, 2002.

Cervera, Theresa Marie. Interview by Chuck Smythe. New York, NY. January 24, 2002.

Childs, Rick. Interview by Mark Schoepfle. Shenandoah National Park, VA. May 6, 2002.

Dayson, Diane. Interview by Mark Schoepfle. New York, NY. January 28, 2002.

Delmar, Frances. Interview by Doris D. Fanelli. Philadelphia, PA. March 15, 2002.

Dillon, Officer John. Interview by Janet A. McDonnell. Washington, D.C. December 10, 2001.

DiPietro, Vincent. Interview by Mark Schoepfle. New York, NY. February 1, 2002.

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Farrugio, Alfred. Interview by Mark Schoepfle. New York, NY. January 30, 2002.

Gale, Richard. Interview by Janet A. McDonnell. Washington, D.C. December 12, 2001.

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Keneally, Sean. Interview by Mark Schoepfle. Washington, D.C. December 18, 2001.

Laise, Steven C. Interview by Chuck Smythe. New York, NY. December 19, 2001.

Lauro, Capt. Sal. Interview by Janet A. McDonnell. Washington, D.C. March 28, 2002.

Lauro, Capt. Neal. Interview by Janet A. McDonnell. New York, NY. May 7, 2002.

Luchsinger, David. Interview by Chuck Smythe. New York, NY. January 23, 2002.

Markis, Charles A. Interview by Louis Hutchins. New York, NY. February 26, 2002.

Martin, Robert R. Interview by Janet A. McDonnell. Washington, D.C. February 5, 2002.

McGinnis, Dennis. Interview by Janet A. McDonnell. Washington, D.C. December 5, 2001.

McKinney, Shirley. Interview by Chuck Smythe. New York, NY. January 25, 2002.

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Mills, Frank W. Interview by Mark Schoepfle. New York, NY. January 31, 2002.

Moen, Dave. Interview by Janet A. McDonnell. New York, NY. May 7, 2002.

Murphy, Christopher. Interview by Janet A. McDonnell. New York, NY. May 8, 2002.

Nelson, Doyle. Interview by Chuck Smythe. Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area. May 13, 2002.

O'Dougherty, Peter. Interview by Mark Schoepfle. New York, NY. February 1, 2002.

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Pfenninger, Paul M. Interview by Janet A. McDonnell. Shenandoah National Park, VA. January 23, 2002.

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Wallace, Lt. George. Interview by Mark Schoepfle. Washington, D.C. January 16, 2002.

Wilkins, Maj. Thomas. Interview by Janet A. McDonnell. New York, NY. May 8, 2002.

Zweig, Capt. Martin L. Interview by Chuck Smythe. New York, NY. December 11, 2001.

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