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Major Thomas Pelling
March 29, 2002

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

INTERVIEWEE: Major Thomas Pellingier
Acting Operations Division Manager
National Park Police
(Interview No. Unlisted)

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INTERVIEW DATE: June 11, 2002

PLACE: Location Unlisted

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START OF TAPE

Mark Schoepfle: This is an interview with Major Tom Pellingner on March 29, 2002. My first question, Major Pellingner is from the moment that there was something going on, what happened?

Thomas Pellingner: Well, at that time I was in my office and it was brought to my attention from the media network television that a plane had crashed into the World Trade Center, up in New York, so I monitored that for a short duration, and — myself and my assistant commander — and we noticed that a second plane hit. So immediately we determined that it was most probably a terrorist attack. So, I headed downtown to headquarters to begin command operations in the event of strikes in Washington.

Mark Schoepfle: Then what?

Thomas Pellingner: Okay, so I was heading from a Navy Yard in Southeast Washington towards headquarters in Southwest Washington on the freeway, and I heard one of my motorcycle units go over the radio that a plane had struck the Pentagon, and he was responding in — shortly — in close range. So, I looked towards the Pentagon and I saw the smoke and thirty seconds later, traffic began to stop almost at a standstill on the freeway. So, I had to work my way down to headquarters, knowing that, as a command official, I really couldn't go to the scene. I had to put various command things in place for the Park Police in the downtown Washington area. Okay?

Mark Schoepfle: Keep going.

Thomas Pellingner: So, I proceeded and made it to headquarters and at that time, I was the acting Operations Division commander for the United States Park Police and the incident commander for all the Park Police units in Washington DC. So, I immediately established a command post at headquarters and deployed various units around the White House, all our monuments, and memorials in Washington — the main ones — meaning the Lincoln, the Jefferson, and the Washington monument and began evacuation procedures.

Thomas Pellingner: I also deployed command officials in the Secret Service command post and the Metropolitan Police command post, and we proceeded to evacuate downtown Washington, because it appeared to be getting into a panic situation. And we heard that there was another plane coming, not knowing where it was going to go.

Thomas Pellingner: We also deployed our helicopters. They were in route already to the Pentagon. They were already getting involved in Medivac. They were the first Medivac helicopter on the scene, and they were medivacking some burn victims at the Pentagon.

- Thomas Pellingner: And I deployed a second aircraft and they were being utilized as an air command post to all the aircraft in the area and to give periodic traffic reports.
- Thomas Pellingner: In conjunction with my motorcycle unit, we put the PM rush hour traffic pattern into effect. Now this is 9:30 in the morning now.
- Mark Schoepfle: Right.
- Thomas Pellingner: So, in other words, every day we usually have one-way traffic on the Rock Creek Parkway in town and one way, you know, out of town in the evening. So, we put the evening PM rush hour traffic in effect to evacuate vehicles more effectively from the downtown area because things were beginning to get gridlock and people were panicking and traffic over the bridges was everywhere and backed up and meanwhile the second plane was unknown and we heard that it was coming in.
- Thomas Pellingner: We were all so heavily involved in evacuating high level officials from the White House — members of the Cabinet, the Secretary of Interior and her staff, the Director of the National Park Service — out of the Washington area to key locations. And we also commenced a plan with the Secret Service to evacuate key cabinet officials. And also, we were involved in several escorts for the President, the Vice President, and the Secretary of State at that time.
- Thomas Pellingner: And once I had things in place, we insured that the closures of the monuments and memorials and around the White House was secure. I beefed it up with as much manpower as I could. We were running on numerous — throughout the day and into the evening — on numerous suspicious packages, bomb threats — with our K9 units and working with the other agencies, checking out suspicious packages, anything suspicious — because of the terrorist incidents — that came to light to our communications sections, and we had to check it out, and that kept us very busy for several hours.
- Thomas Pellingner: And also, once we heard earlier that that fourth plane crashed in Pennsylvania, and kind of allayed our fears that there was another incoming at that point.
- Mark Schoepfle: Okay, so you were mentioning a panic regarding the evacuation of people here in DC just the public and traffic and things like that. What was going on there?
- Thomas Pellingner: People were running to cars. They didn't know what was going on. They were driving a little bit erratically, trying to get out of the city. At various locations, traffic was gridlocked. People seemed to be running rather than walking.

- Thomas Pellingner: All the buildings were being evacuated. What they heard and what they saw — they didn't know the full story. They didn't know if there were more planes coming or if there was going to be an attack on the Capitol, the White House, or other Federal buildings, the Monuments.
- Thomas Pellingner: We were just doing the best we can, closing our areas, and just insuring a safer evacuation as best we could. We do have limited resources and personnel shortages, and we were fully strapped. I also deployed a mobile command vehicle in the Mall, in addition to our permanent command station up at the Chief's conference room, which is where I was for a good part of the day, in and out. But mainly there because of the numerous decisions I had to make and notifications and phone calls that I was receiving.
- Thomas Pellingner: We were in constant contact via telephone with the Department of Interior Watch Center and various other command centers, informing them of the latest happenings in Washington.
- Mark Schoepfle: What other kind of centers were there? You were mentioning this "Watch Center," a Department of Interior Watch Center? Did I understand that right?
- Thomas Pellingner: Correct. That's a Department of Interior law enforcement notification center that was manned up at that time twenty-fours, and there was also another command communications center that was set up for the Park Service out at Shenandoah, that our command folks, communications and PIO people in our command center had to periodically update and communicate with about the latest happenings.
- Mark Schoepfle: So, you were communicating to the command center in Shenandoah?
- Thomas Pellingner: Correct.
- Mark Schoepfle: Were they communicating with you on anything?
- Thomas Pellingner: They would just be calling us for updates because nothing was happening out in their location, so we were basically giving them updates and that's the way the system is. You know, that's a notification center also to other areas of the National Park Service in the event of there were strikes in the National Park Service areas. And the Watch Center in Interior, they deal with all the dams and other things owned by the Department of Interior that were becoming concerns of importance, whether a terrorist will strike there.
- Mark Schoepfle: I don't know too much about it — when did this Shenandoah Command Center appear? I mean when was it put together? All of these different centers, have they been getting some build up over time or what?

Thomas Pellingner: Well, once things started to settle down and folks started to realize what was happening, that's when these command centers began to be formulated that day. And I guess by the afternoon they were put into effect.

Mark Schoepfle: Okay, so you mentioned that people were evacuating. You were escorting the President, the Secretary of State, the Vice President, Secretary of Interior, in various places; when was this occurring? Was this all in the morning? I mean you mentioned that you put the PM rush hour traffic pattern in at what — nine in the morning to get people out of there? And I know we were aware of what was going on by eleven and were on our way out. Just sort of approximately when were all of these things occurring?

Thomas Pellingner: These things were occurring — these escorts and evacuations — were occurring all through the day, as information was received by various officials. We just continuously got requests to escort or drive folks — people, officials — to various locations. Police people driving high-level officials due to the nature and the danger of the situation, thinking that due to the volume of traffic it was difficult to get out of town. So, a police vehicle with emergency equipment — it helped facilitate getting out of Washington DC a little quicker.

Mark Schoepfle: Yeah, so as the day went on, just to continue, what happened for the rest of this day?

Thomas Pellingner: It was just sort of non-stop. Running on suspicious packages, evacuating, finding out more information as to what's going on, getting updates of what's happening in New York and what's happening in the Pentagon. We assisted the FBI at the crime scene over there. We deployed more officers to the Pentagon for traffic control, perimeter pedestrian control, to assist the FBI and the Pentagon and Arlington County police. I was constantly working with the Secret Service, reevaluating the security personnel and manpower arrangements around the White House.

Thomas Pellingner: There's different levels of security that we put into effect depending on threat levels and constantly reevaluating that — what roads to close, things like that. Whether an area should be closed for vehicles and pedestrians or just vehicles — evaluating all that.

Thomas Pellingner: It was just a myriad of issues happening very fast and making quick decisions on what to do, and I guess by late morning, early afternoon, most of the areas that we wanted to evacuate and close were put into effect. And then we had issues of fencing areas to make sure that they were closed and lighting coming up for the night, to help better visibility for the officers on site.

- Thomas Pellingner: So, we worked all that out with the National Park Service Maintenance Division and Central in the National Capital Region.
- Thomas Pellingner: Then I was overall responsible for the deployment of manpower. One of the things that happened was I recalled all people that were off duty, and we also had to consider the nighttime coverage, so people were working very long hours. So, we had to work all that out with night and daytime coverage for the next several days. So, we did that. And we did not want to lessen our security levels at all. We wanted to maintain that continuous coverage of a good show of police officers around all our monuments and memorials and that's what we did.
- Thomas Pellingner: I deployed our aircraft also around the White House. Around the White House and the Capital is all limited and restricted air space. So, in conjunction with the Secret Service, we dedicated an aircraft to fly security zone checks continuously around the White House area and the Capital area for further possible terrorism incidents. And that continued on for several days.
- Mark Schoepfle: Could you go on a little bit about what were some of the things that were occurring over the next several days?
- Thomas Pellingner: Well, over the next several days, of course, the heightened alert was still there, so we had to maintain our vigilance around everything we were doing. Around the Lincoln, the Jefferson, and the Washington Monument, and the White House, —both sides — Lafayette Park side and the Ellipse. And in order to do everything that I needed to do, we had to put officers on twelve-hour shifts and all our regular, normal routine coverages, and all our outlying districts in Washington — extra personnel were brought downtown to supplement the detail, and in order to do that they had to work twelve-hour shifts to make their coverages on a twenty-four-hour basis.
- Mark Schoepfle: So outlying districts were pulled in to help here?
- Thomas Pellingner: Correct.
- Mark Schoepfle: And they still had to cover where they were supposed to be originally too.
- Thomas Pellingner: Absolutely. So, in order to do that, we put them on twelve-hour shifts. We continued our command officials in a twenty-four-hour basis in the Metropolitan Police Command Center and the Secret Service Command Center, to better facilitate communications. I know there's a lot of command posts and there's redundancies in it, but it's built in to make sure that nothing is missed. And we did that along with — we maintained our Chief's command post for the next several days, a good week or so, for notification and so forth.

- Thomas Pelling: We continued our aircraft vigilance support and we maintained support to the Pentagon with traffic and perimeter control of pedestrians and traffic control. And we also manned up the Arlington County and the Pentagon Command Center. And working in conjunction with the FBI, our detectives were active in working cases.
- Mark Schoepfle: That is interesting. And these cases were things such as the suspicious packages or what?
- Thomas Pelling: Cases of suspicious packages, suspicious vehicles, suspicious persons; you know, any bits of information that were received or observed, were checked out by our offices. If things looked more suspicious, persons were taken into custody and turned over the FBI for their investigation. And once again, we have bomb K9s, dogs, and the other agencies do also. And we were running on a lot of suspicious things for the next several days.
- Mark Schoepfle: Did I understand you right, that you had mentioned bomb threats, or did I just infer that from what you were saying?
- Thomas Pelling: I believe there were calls of bomb threats at various buildings where people were evacuated. And then several days later, of course, or weeks later the anthrax stuff started, and the suspicions of contaminated mail brought us up to another heightened alert about anthrax. And of course, we know what happened at the Capitol. Any letter that looked suspicious, we took safe procedures to screen — evacuate the area and turn the letter over to either to the FBI or the DC Fire Department, who were equipped to deal with weapons of mass destruction, biological and chemical weapons.
- Mark Schoepfle: So, this went on, with these twelve-hour shifts, both with you and the staff from the outlying units; how long did this go on? What happened?
- Thomas Pelling: Well, as a result of 9-11, we bolstered our security around all these monuments and memorials and put security procedures in place that are effective today. Our security levels around the monuments and memorials have been enhanced since 9-11 and will probably be—continue to be enhanced for many years to come, because I don't think it's ever going to go back to pre-9-11 normalcy. Right now, things are staffed up and a lot different than it was.
- Mark Schoepfle: When you mentioned staffed differently, how does that play out? What are some of the features of that?
- Thomas Pelling: Well, we have added security features around the White House, which I really don't want to discuss, and around our monuments and memorials. Vehicles, other than police vehicles, are not allowed to access around the Lincoln, and additional personnel have been assigned to the big three monuments on a twenty-four-hour basis, and around the White House.

- Mark Schoepfle: The big three being Washington, Lincoln, and —?
- Thomas Pelling: Jefferson.
- Mark Schoepfle: Jefferson, okay. What affect has this had on other kinds of activities that you have had to do? I mean if you've been directing these staff now more towards the security, what has changed? What has been affected?
- Thomas Pelling: Well, a couple things have been affected by it. Other programs have been either cancelled or postponed, such as our training agendas, foreign service training. Our outlying patrols and so forth have been not done away with but modified, because we just don't have the personnel now because we're focusing our attention around the downtown monumental core area. As you know, twenty-five percent of Washington DC is lands owned and administered by the National Park Service and DC is broken up in parks throughout all areas of Washington. So, a lot of these outlying parks such as DuPont Circle and so forth, don't get the more frequent patrols that we used to because of the terrorist strike. And in all these outline areas there's drug problems and assaults and crimes against persons and larceny that, although we're focused on it, we're not as focused as we were because of the terrorism stuff. So, it's taken a little bit away from that.
- Mark Schoepfle: And what's been the result of that, having to take some of that; I mean have the rates gone up or anything like that?
- Thomas Pelling: I don't statistically — I did not recall seeing a spike in any crime or raise in it because — I don't know the exact reason why not. Maybe it's just a sign of the times and because of terrorism incidents, meaning that tourism has dropped and a lot of crimes against persons and so forth have decreased because they're not in town. I don't know but did not notice that there was a rise in criminal activity.
- Mark Schoepfle: What about the tourism? I mean have you seen any changes in patterns on that?
- Thomas Pelling: Well, throughout this whole thing, until recently, the Washington Monument has been closed due to renovation and it just opened recently, so — and we're starting to see tourism picking up again and that's probably a result of the nicer weather coming but throughout the winter it wasn't that big.
- Thomas Pelling: And around the White House area, there's been restrictions on large demonstrations, especially on the north side, the Lafayette Park side, due to security reasons. So that has dropped.

- Thomas Pellingier: And we were planning back in September, for very large and possibly violent demonstrations because of the World Bank International Monetary Fund annual, large, meeting, and we were expecting upwards of fifty to a hundred thousand demonstrators against the World Bank and capitalism. So, we were preparing for largescale protest and possible civil disobedience and violence. And as result of 9-11, all of those demonstrations and so forth were pretty much cancelled. They did have a very small demonstration at the end of September because of World Bank meetings that were going on, but very manageable and totally not what we anticipated prior to 9-11.
- Thomas Pellingier: In fact, the morning of 9-11, we were training with our operational personnel, for our horse mounted units and so forth, for riot control and gearing up for the World Bank demonstrations.
- Mark Schoepfle: You mentioned that because of the greater deployment that you've had to cut back and cancel training and cut back and cancel some of these outlying patrols. What else have been some of the other affects?
- Thomas Pellingier: Let me think here. Well, another affect definitely was the fatigue factor. Officers were working for twelve-hour shifts for many, many days and months and it was tough getting through the holidays when people want to take leave, vacation time, and some of it was cancelled, and so forth, because of we needed to deploy our personnel, with high vigilance continuing around the monuments. And a fatigue factor was definitely there.
- Mark Schoepfle: What is this fatigue factor like? I mean, again I have not experienced this kind of thing, so it wouldn't be obvious to me.
- Thomas Pellingier: Oh, I guess when you're working twelve-hour shifts for five or six days a week, and with limited chances of getting time off, days run into each other and perhaps the officers get tired. And we did see a spike, a little bit of an increase in officers going sick because perhaps of being tired, fatigued, you know, over time.
- Thomas Pellingier: But one of the things I definitely noticed as a result of these terrorism incidents, the United States Park Police pulled together strongly in its mission to protect the visitors, our monuments, the President, and high-level officials. We pulled together and with high morale and effectively and successfully did the best job we could.
- Mark Schoepfle: Well, as the weeks went on, what are some of the things that happened?

Thomas Pelling: Let me think here. Well, there was continuous discussion as to how we're going to better secure our monuments and memorials, and I think the National Park Service is in agreement with us now on enhanced security measures being put in place around the monuments and memorials, as a result of terrorism. As you are probably aware from the media, that cameras and so forth are being installed and barriers will be installed around our monuments and memorials to prevent vehicles from driving up or car bombs, and so forth. So, there's been a number of meeting about that as to how to best secure our icons and treasures; however, not making it an eyesore either.

Mark Schoepfle: What are some of the things that have been implemented?

Thomas Pelling: Well, of course, around the Washington Monument, visitors are screened.

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Thomas Pelling: A more efficient screening process for visitors at various locations. To the White House Visitor's Center, we deployed Park Police personnel there with a magnetometer, and also at the Washington Monument. And we're looking at better security perimeters around the other monuments, and as of right now, I think barriers were put in place on the east side of the Lincoln, where vehicles cannot drive through — like they used to — and just the increased deployment of manpower, as of right now. And of course, cameras and so forth, will be installed around the monuments so that they can be monitored on a twenty-four-hour basis by police officers, in addition to our personnel that are deployed there. These cameras could be effective if the officer on the foot beat missed it and it might be picked up by the monitoring officer at a remote location.

Mark Schoepfle: Has there been — as times have gone on — any kind of — well, I guess I would call it a return to normalcy. I mean, I realize that things are never going to be, as you were saying before, the way things were before September 11th. But is there any kind of normalcy to which we've returned?

Thomas Pelling: Well, as of right now, although there are alerts out there every week about don't let your guard down, across the country and elsewhere — that possibly that al Qaeda is regrouping and going to strike again somewhere — it seems like life is getting back to some sort of normalcy because we have not had a strike since September 11th, other the individual anthrax stuff. And we know there are going to be many events coming up in Washington.

- Thomas Pellingner: We do have World Bank, IMF demonstrations scheduled April 20th, 21st, and 22nd, and other demonstrations coming up and numerous foot races.
- Thomas Pellingner: Another effect of 9-11 was the Army Ten Miler Race was cancelled. Thinking in terms of that would be an opportunity for a terrorist to strike, and there were other races that were cancelled as a result of 9-11 — large events — and these things are starting to return back to normalcy, whereas rescheduling of these events, are happening.
- Mark Schoepfle: Are there other things like this?
- Thomas Pellingner: One of the things that did happen after 9-11 — it was proposed to the National Park Service that they hold a large concert in the Mall in support of the victims of the terrorist attacks. And the police, meaning myself and my chief, were on record as saying we were against a large concert in the Mall, it's not a venue for it and it's an opportunity for a terrorist to come in and do something, and it would be very hard to manage a large-scale event. And another example of that, in New York, they were going to have a large-scale memorial service in Central Park, and that was cancelled and moved to Yankee Stadium because it was a better venue for it. So, just like Central Park, the Mall is an open venue and it would not be a good venue for a large concert. It would be very difficult to police and secure. So, the organizers were talked out of that and it never did transpire. But these things are continuously popping up, as to the proposals of large events in the Mall, that the police are on record that it's not a good idea due to terrorism, not a good venue, manpower shortages, and so forth.
- Mark Schoepfle: Looking back on this then, what are some of the lessons — that you can talk in terms of — what are some of the lessons that have been learned?
- Thomas Pellingner: Well, the lessons learned — I guess — communication among agencies could be improved because a lot of the reports of explosions and bomb threats and so forth were unsubstantiated. Because of 9-11, people were crying — citizens or other agencies or — were crying “Wolf!” and upon investigation they turned out negative, so we were running on a lot of false reports. So that's one lesson.
- Thomas Pellingner: The Park Police, since then, has trained more bomb K9 dogs to deal with suspicious packages. We're in the process of procuring chem/bio-HAZMAT suits in the event of a weapon of mass destruction strike. Basically, everything that the Park Police did on September 11th, we would probably do again. As far as our traffic and evacuation plans — and lessons learned is that our monuments and memorials, although manned, they definitely need enhanced security, and that's what we're in the process doing right now. I can't really think of anything right now.

- Mark Schoepfle: Sure. Well, that's no problem.
- Thomas Pellingner: Okay.
- Mark Schoepfle: So, there is, because of just having to deal with more of the routine things that you've had to deal with in the past, things are getting back to a normal situation, right?
- Thomas Pellingner: That's correct.
- Mark Schoepfle: And is there a point at which you kind of figured that there was sort of a normalcy going on? Any kind of events triggered it or it just sort of gradually appeared over time?
- Thomas Pellingner: I think normalcy has gradually appeared over time because of the lack of terrorist activity happening.
- Mark Schoepfle: Yeah.
- Thomas Pellingner: So, we're seeing that.
- Mark Schoepfle: Looking back over all this — this is a question I've asked people particularly up in New York, where things, of course, were a little bit different — but if there was going to be any kind of monument to what happened here or any kind of a memorialization might be a better term for it, what would be important in your experience on that, any kind of a memorialization?
- Thomas Pellingner: Of course, a permanent monument or memorials for the victims of the Pentagon would be appropriate here in the Washington area. And, of course, all the law enforcement and emergency personnel that were killed in the line of duty should be memorialized on the Law Enforcement Memorial here in Washington; and I know, in May, during National Police Week, our Law Enforcement Memorial, which is owned by the National Park Service, will host a huge event down there, probably the biggest ever, because of the number of casualties as result of 9-11 and that would be most appropriate. And I also know, two days after that one, on our property, there will be a large memorial service at the US Capitol, and I believe it'll be visited by the President and many high officials.
- Mark Schoepfle: Good. It's good to know that.
- Thomas Pellingner: Yeah.
- Mark Schoepfle: This is the Law Enforcement Memorial over by the —
- Thomas Pellingner: Judiciary Square.
- Mark Schoepfle: Judiciary Square. Is that the one?

- Thomas Pellingner: Yes.
- Mark Schoepfle: Anything else along that line?
- Thomas Pellingner: Well, there is not a firefighter memorial here in Washington DC and that's something that could possibly be established, constructed because a lot of firefighters have lost their lives, and some here in Washington but many from New York. And the strike wasn't against New York. It was against America.
- Mark Schoepfle: Yeah.
- Thomas Pellingner: So, these firefighters, these 348 firefighters that were killed up in New York should be memorialized here in Washington as well.
- Mark Schoepfle: Important point.
- Thomas Pellingner: And another lesson learned is just we can never let our guard down. Keep ever vigilant forever, because we never know.
- Thomas Pellingner: The Office of Homeland Security has just recently come out with a threat level color code that the National Park Service and all the bureaus in the Department of Interior and the Federal Government, all the departments are trying to coincide. We're in a process of formulating that. Although we do have a policy on threat levels that we adhere to, we're trying to make in congruent with the Office of Homeland Security, so we're speaking the same language. That's all I can think of.
- Mark Schoepfle: That's great. Those are pretty much my questions and again, I've asked them mostly just to get you know, from your standpoint, what were the important events and the important things going on.
- Mark Schoepfle: One thing that did impress me and I just want to run this by you, I was very impressed with the fact people, you know, you were talking about the coordination with the White House, with the Secret Service, with the local police, with the FBI, these command-and-control centers, the communication centers out of Shenandoah. I'm getting distinctly the impression that people acted very quickly and without having to — there was not a lot of people just running around, trying to figure out what to do. People kind of knew what to do. It seemed that a lot of this had already been built up over time. Am I correct on that?
- Thomas Pellingner: I think you're very correct. One of the things that is so true in Washington, is that there is no city in this country that has more special events and demonstrations and so forth than Washington DC, because it is the capital of the nation.

- Thomas Pellingner: And because there are so many agencies, there's not just one police department. It's not just the Metropolitan Police; there's the Park Police, the US Capitol police, the FBI, the Secret Service, the outlying jurisdictions.
- Thomas Pellingner: And because of all these events that we have, we work together as a team so efficiently. Like for the past three years we've had the NATO summit. We had the inauguration. We had the Millennium events. We had the World Bank demonstrations. We had the Million Family March. The Million Mom March. Earth Day. Operation Rolling Thunder. We have parades every weekend, just about, in the spring. Each event involves pretty much a monumental task with all the other agencies because you're on streets, you're on property, you're passing from jurisdiction to jurisdiction within Washington, with different police agencies. We work together. We plan meetings together. Everybody knows what they're supposed to do, and it's been working very effectively. And that's one of the reasons 9-11 worked as smooth as it did.
- Thomas Pellingner: However, we're trying to improve it as best as possible, because right now I think we're working with Washington DC, the Emergency Management Agency and the Metropolitan police in reference to improved evacuation of the city, and also with the Metro Transit police and others to improve situations like that.
- Mark Schoepfle: I was going to say, us getting out of DC was really almost a nonevent. We just jumped on the Metro and went home early. And there were buses waiting for us. We just went home and there was really nothing to it.
- Thomas Pellingner: But would you get on a subway if there was a possibility of a chem/bio somewhere?
- Mark Schoepfle: No. That's an important question and many of us waited just to see what was going to happen. You know, just waited for the other shoe to drop and we didn't leave until, — what was it about, until eleven o'clock. At that point we figured well, what's going to happen is going to happen. But yeah, an important question.
- Mark Schoepfle: With all these different kinds of coordination, has this been a long-term kind of thing? Was there a point at which people really started doing this coordination? I mean, was this something that occurred in the '90s? Has it been even longer term than that or what?

- Thomas Pellingner: It started — I thought — pretty much at the end of the '90s, beginning of 2000, because events started to pick up for some reason, and demonstrations seemed they were on the upswing. They were very big in the '60s and '70s, then they kind of died off, and now I believe they are coming back, and just as a result of the volume of event, have increased over time and it just requires us to work together, because it involves all of us and we're compelled to work together. Knowing all the players in advance, from working so many events, definitely helps.
- Mark Schoepfle: Oh, yeah.
- Thomas Pellingner: So, myself, for example, through networking and knowing who the command people from all these other agencies are in advance, significantly helps when there is an incident or a large event to get something done, because you already know the players, who to contact. If you need something, you have a contact person that you'd call and it would get done, and vice versa.
- Mark Schoepfle: Is this kind of networking and contacts, is it written in a formal plan anywhere or is it just stuff that people know?
- Thomas Pellingner: Basically, it's stuff people know, because every event is different.
- Mark Schoepfle: That's the impression I've been getting. Yeah. Very interesting. Well, I really appreciate your help on this. Is there anything that I've forgotten to ask about that I should ask about?
- Thomas Pellingner: Let me think here. Just that, you know, we just pulled together and helped in any way we could here in Washington, with this, as part of the overall team with all the other agencies, and we certainly were a big part of it in New York. Our officers were on the Bucket Brigade there for several days and extended tours. Security has enhanced up there. Prior to 911 and 1999k and seven years prior to that, I used to be the commander of the New York field office, so I know what that's all about, and dealing with NYPD and so forth, and they did a tremendous job up there.
- Mark Schoepfle: How long have you been in the Service?
- Thomas Pellingner: Twenty-seven years.
- Mark Schoepfle: Oh, where did you come in from?
- Thomas Pellingner: I was hired in '75 in New York and I did my basic police training at the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center, and then I was reassigned back to the New York field office at Gateway National Park in Brooklyn-Queens-Staten Island.
- Mark Schoepfle: Okay, dumb question, but by your accent, are you from New York?

- Thomas Pellingner: Yes.
- Mark Schoepfle: Which neighborhood?
- Thomas Pellingner: Queens, and I went to high school and college in Brooklyn.
- Mark Schoepfle: Oh, I see. So, you started actually with the Service in just about '75 and you've pretty much there ever since.
- Thomas Pellingner: Well, I was there — out of my twenty-seven years, I was there for probably nineteen of them.
- Mark Schoepfle: Where else?
- Thomas Pellingner: I was a lieutenant here in Washington for five years, back from '85 to '90, and a major here from January, '99 until present.
- Mark Schoepfle: I see. Well, anything that you'd like to know about us that I can tell you?
- Thomas Pellingner: How is this going to be formulated or written up, or when is this history, chronology going to be out for public view or whatever?
- Mark Schoepfle: Okay, that's an important question. First of all, what's going to happen is that the tapes will be archived, in all likelihood archived, up at Harper's Ferry.
- Mark Schoepfle: What several of us are working on is to get a report out on what the Park Service did, and we feel that this is important, because even many people in the Park Service were not aware, for example, of the coordination that had to be built up, the networking, the way the people, not just here but everywhere else, reacted very quickly and there was very little confusion, at least that I've found so far, that was going on. And just the fact that the Park Service was working that way, if it's not something of great awareness within the Park Service; well, it would stand to reason that the public might not know or appreciate a lot of this as well.
- Thomas Pellingner: Right.
- Mark Schoepfle: And so, one of the things that we want to be able to do is to highlight the importance of this kind of government functioning and be able to get that word out both to the Park Service and to the public.
- Mark Schoepfle: There is no over-support, as usual, to do these kinds of things. For example, there will be some money made available for transcription. I hope to be able to get as many of these you know, transcribed and written down as possible. I'm not sure how much and that's what we're pulling for now.

Mark Schoepfle: But even if — regardless of the transcription or what's going on — to start getting a report out is going to be important and that's what we're pulling for. We're ethnographers and anthropologists. But we're working with historians on this, so that we're going to get something out. I'd like to be more definite on it but promising something we may not be able to deliver is always a danger, but that's what we're pulling for.

Thomas Pelling: Great. I'd love to see something eventually.

Mark Schoepfle: Well thank you.

Thomas Pelling: And I appreciate your interest, Mark. It was very nice talking to you about all this.

Mark Schoepfle: Well, great. I appreciate talking to you as well.

END OF TAPE