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Bernie Stasulli
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START OF TAPE

Mark Schoepfle: The first major question — the first question is from the moment you became aware of what was going on, what happened?

Bernie Stasulli: Let me kind of stress from the beginning.

Mark Schoepfle: Sure.

Bernie Stasulli: We were outside. We had two crews. We were doing some work inside the hanger when we heard one of the World Trade Center Towers had been struck. So, when we heard that, we came in to watch it on the TV. We came in to watch it on the TV. We were sitting watching the TV. We could see the smoke coming from the first World Trade Center building. At that point nobody knew actually what had happened other than that the aircraft struck the World Trade Center. As we were watching that, a second aircraft that we could actually see live on TV, ended up striking the second World Trade Center. At that point, there were probably about four or five of us inside watching it on our large screen TV and we all looked at each other and said it certainly isn't an accident. It certainly looks like probably a terrorist attack.

Bernie Stasulli: With that, we all looked at each other and basically everybody had the same thought. If they struck some place up in New York, boy D.C. would be a perfect place to hit next. So, with that in mind, we went back out and started getting our aircraft ready, not so much knowing that there would be an attack but just with the fault that possibly something would happen — excuse me, here in the city. And, shortly after that we heard like a slight boom noise, like an explosion of some sort. Then we got a call. We have some direct lines. We called a crash line to Reagan Tower which comes through directly to one of our lines in our telephones and it has a specific tone to it. Unlike a regular sound of a telephone ringing, it's got like an alarm sound to it. And it was the Reagan Tower asking us if we could fly over, they had a report of a plane — possible plane going down in the area of the Pentagon. We had two helicopters sitting outside. The first helicopter was Eagle One. That's the name of the helicopter. He immediately launched that aircraft and started toward the Pentagon.

Bernie Stasulli: At this point where we were outside, you can't see the Pentagon from here, but we were looking in the general direction of the Pentagon and you could see a lot of black smoke throughout the sky over there. So, we figured something definitely went down in that direction. When that aircraft launched, as soon as they got airborne, we were trying to get our second aircraft equipped with what is called a mass casualty kit, which gives us the benefit of transporting four patients rather than two.

- Bernie Stasulli: Normal configuration on our aircraft is set up to transport two patients. With this kit, you can transport four. So, with our thinking that an aircraft that's going down, we were getting ready to transport more than the normal. More than what we would normally do. As we were hooking that kit up, Eagle One radioed back to us that they had just been informed, I believe it was Arlington County Fire Department, that they had, I believe it was eleven severely burned patients that needed to be air-vacced immediately. So, we were ready. We launched. We arrived to the Pentagon, I'm going to say, within ten minutes from the time when the Pentagon was struck. Our first helicopter arrived approximately five minutes after the actual act of the aircraft hitting the Pentagon. First aircraft, Eagle One, they stayed up in the air. They were, um, checking the entire Pentagon. The entire area they were controlling the air and we were advised to land and to start the evacuation of whatever patients needed to be evacuated. When I say we, I — the second aircraft was Eagle Two.
- Mark Schoepfle: Eagle Two.
- Bernie Stasulli: Eagle One had a crew of three. We had one pilot and two rescue technicians in Eagle One. Eagle Two, the one that I was in, had two pilots. They had myself and they had the commander of the unit. And we also had two medical people from, I'm not quite sure, they're the uniform — let me see — they're the Uniform Services University and Health Sciences. They're military health people. So, we had six people in our helicopter. When we landed, it was quite a scene. There was quite a bit of smoke coming from the building.
- Bernie Stasulli: We landed, I'm going to say, approximately 150 yards from the actual impact area of the Pentagon. And, there was, as I stated, there was quite a bit of smoke coming from the building. There were people all over the area. There were a lot of people leaving the Pentagon, walking away from the Pentagon. Several people rushing towards the Pentagon. It looked like a controlled chaos than anything else. They weren't — the people weren't just uncontrollably. I was very impressed at the way the people were even handling themselves. As soon as we landed, we tried to make contact with the medical services people that were on the scene. Number one, to let them know that we were ready to transport anybody that they had ready. And, also to find out if there's any assistance that we could provide with rescuing any of the people. Shortly after we landed, two or three of the officers from my helicopter grabbed some backboards and started approaching the building itself.
- Bernie Stasulli: My responsibility at that time was to secure the landing zone and to prevent anybody from getting close to the aircraft.

- Bernie Stasulli: One of our danger areas is the tail of the aircraft where there's a rotor blade that's spinning and if you're not watching, what you can do you can possibly walk into the rotor and you're probably not going to survive that. So, that was my whole responsibility there. We were on the ground it seemed like a little bit more than five minutes, five to seven minutes. To me that's what it seemed like when our people came back and they brought, not our people but some of the rescue people, brought two patients out. They were severely burned patients.
- Bernie Stasulli: We were able to load them in the aircraft. We were waiting for more patients. We were able to take four, but they told us to get out of there. Get these out right immediately, these two that needed to be transported. So, the aircraft left and transported these two patients to the Washington — we call it the Washington Hospital Center — is where they took them to. It's called Med Star is a short term that we use. It's their trauma unit. I remained on the scene to secure the area. Our second aircraft landed and was standing by to transport any other patients that needed to be transported.
- Mark Schoepfle: Was this Eagle One or?
- Bernie Stasulli: Eagle One, yeah. Eagle Two was the one I was in. They had left to make the transport. Eagle One landed.
- Mark Schoepfle: Right.
- Bernie Stasulli: While Eagle One — as we sat there waiting for more victims to be brought to us, Eagle One had made several notifications. They had called several different other aviation units to respond who were able equipped to do the Medivacs. I don't know if you're interested.
- Mark Schoepfle: Keep going. This is all important. Keep going.
- Bernie Stasulli: I know Med Star was contacted. They have — it's a private company that works out of the hospital. We request requested their air ambulance to respond. Fairfax County Police, they do Medivacs. We were requested to respond and the Mountain State Police. The rest of these units we work quite well with and we are very aware of their capabilities. They were all requested to bring their aircraft out. We also requested for the D.C. Police Department to bring their aircraft to take control of the air. Currently Eagle One was controlling the air but they felt that they would best be needed to do the medivacs. When they landed, we had already called the D.C. police to send their helicopter so they could control the airways.

Bernie Stasulli: A unique thing happened prior to Eagle One landing, the Reagan Tower had come over the radio and advised Eagle One, being as we were the only aircraft in the area at that time, that they were evacuating the tower due to the smoke from the Pentagon was actually being blown into their air system and they had to evacuate the tower. Of course, they couldn't breathe or see too well due to the smoke coming from the Pentagon. And, basically, they said that they were turning over the control of the Washington Metropolitan area to Eagle One, which was in 30 years I've never heard that. But that's a — that was very unique.

Bernie Stasulli: Fortunately, though, I think as that was happening, all aircraft were ordered to land somewhere at the closest airport and to stay away from Washington D.C. area. I don't think it created the big problem that originally, we thought it would be where our helicopter was controlling all the commercial aircraft. So, I had Eagle Two at the hospital. Eagle One lands. Shortly after they had arrived on the scene — I slow down for you.

Mark Schoepfle: Go ahead.

Bernie Stasulli: After they had arrived on the scene, the tower came back and advised us that — they wanted us to get out of the area as they had an unidentified unauthorized aircraft that was approximately four miles out headed toward the Pentagon. Our first thought was, oh, here comes the second plane. And, after just watching two planes hit the World Trade Center, we thought maybe their sending a second plane coming toward the Pentagon. Eagle One, after sitting there for about ten minutes or more, no other patients being brought out to us and there was no indication that any other patients were going to be brought to us, they finally made a decision to move the aircraft to a safer or to relocate out of the, I guess, the hit zone of the Pentagon. So, they repositioned themselves to a field maybe a quarter mile away from the Pentagon.

Mark Schoepfle: This is Eagle One?

Bernie Stasulli: Eagle One. Eagle Two still at the hospital.

Mark Schoepfle: I was going to say they were at the hospital center.

Bernie Stasulli: Eagle Two was coming back, just prior to Eagle Two leaving the hospital, the Reagan Tower people did inform us that the first plane turned out to be a friendly plane — to disregard their earlier radio transmission. After Eagle Two left the hospital and was coming back to the area, Reagan Tower advised us that the second plane that was unauthorized unidentified that was heading toward the Washington D.C. area, we can only assume that it was the plane that went down in the Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania area.

Bernie Stasulli: They told us it was about 100 and some miles, 150 miles, out but it was headed toward Washington D.C. in the restricted air space.

Bernie Stasulli: Eagle Two came. They landed over by Eagle One. By then other helicopters, military helicopters, had arrived on the scene. There were quite a few aircraft, especially military aircraft, that had come into the military area at this time. Once it was determined that we wouldn't be needed for any more medical transports, we just — we remained in the area for a short period of time and eventually we ended up getting out of the area. We came back later at the request of the FBI and the Department of Defense and we did quite a bit of flying over the Pentagon. We have a downlink system on the helicopter, which provides live time video to the ground units. Much like a I guess in the morning you see a live —

Chuck Smythe: News 7.

Bernie Stasulli: News something, right. Only their equipment costs about \$100 and something thousand. Ours is only about \$30,000 so they have a much nicer picture than ours quality wise. But we're still one of the few helicopters in the area that can provide this. And, that's pretty much what we did for the remainder of the day. We flew quite a few missions for the FBI and the Department of Defense. Everybody was like, "I wish I could do some photo shoots for the Pentagon and monitor where the damage was" because you could see from the air. It's certainly a much better vantage point looking at the damage and the intrusion—where the aircraft that hit—from the air than you could from the ground. It was strange — when we first got to the ground, the damage didn't look that severe when we first got there. Shortly after we were there, then the walls starting caving in. When we first got there, we were wondering, "What kind of aircraft could have hit this?" because you couldn't see much of an impact. You just see a lot of scorching, a lot of fire and smoke and just a slight hole through — a crack through the wall of the Pentagon. But after we were there and then the walls starting caving in, you could see it pretty good — a pretty good amount of damage to the Pentagon.

Mark Schoepfle: Mmhmm.

Bernie Stasulli: I'm trying to think what else I can add. Eventually, the D.C. Police Department did get their aircraft out there and they took over the controlling the airways for us as we felt we would be used better to do the transports for any patients. But we only ended up transporting two patients by helicopter and sometime after that we come to find out that the reason was — normally the serious patients, they try to triage them and get them stable and then transport them out.

- Bernie Stasulli: But when they got the call of this other aircraft coming, they were just throwing these people in any vehicle that they could to get them out of there. Because everybody felt there was a second aircraft coming so even the rescue people were trying to get the patients out of there as quickly as possible. Something that maybe under normal conditions they might not ordinarily do. They would leave them at the scene and stabilize them.
- Mark Schoepfle: How many people do you estimate were — you had estimated earlier that there were a lot of burn victims. How many do you think there probably were?
- Bernie Stasulli: Personally, I couldn't give you a number.
- Chuck Smythe: Right.
- Bernie Stasulli: I'm sure in that type of incident especially with the fuel, they were probably — there had to be quite a few. I mean, a lot of them certainly didn't make it. We normally don't transport anybody who's deceased. Usually just transporting live victims.
- Mark Schoepfle: Right. So basically, this included Eagle One and Eagle Two?
- Bernie Stasulli: That's correct.
- Mark Schoepfle: You got basically two victims out of there?
- Bernie Stasulli: Two victims were transported by Eagle Two. Eagle One didn't transport anybody.
- Mark Schoepfle: Okay. They were still up there monitoring? Okay.
- Bernie Stasulli: Even though they had landed after Eagle Two had left, there were no more transports made by — and I do believe Med Star, their helicopter ended up transporting one patient. I think there were three that were actually airlifted out of there.
- Mark Schoepfle: Yeah. You were getting a lot of communication from Reagan Tower. What — were there other coordinating centers that you were working with? Or was it mostly you got your communication from Reagan Tower.
- Bernie Stasulli: It was mostly just Reagan Tower. Generally, when your flying, they're the ones that are controlling the air space. You do most — most of your communicating with them. You can go aircraft to aircraft. I was out of the aircraft most of the time, so I wasn't really in contact to hear what other communications were going on. Sergeant Gale, he was the pilot of Eagle One. I'm sure he can shed a lot more light on all the communications that were taking place.
- Mark Schoepfle: Let's look for a minute. What was going on on the ground?

Bernie Stasulli: It was kind of strange. I've been with the Park Police for this is my thirtieth year. I've been involved with a lot of rescue incidents, most of them where involving motor vehicles. And, you have a lot of rescue people going around and what I've always felt was strange is you're pretty much focused on your job. You really don't — you're not involved in everybody else. Everybody has a specific job to do.

Bernie Stasulli: From my viewpoint and my — where I was standing on the ground, you know, what I could see is a lot of, ah, especially a lot of military people going towards the building and going into the building carrying - we call them backboards — they're just like a hard wooden stretcher to carry people out. They had them lined up there trying to get into the building. Other than that, the other people were basically going away from the building. There were people running, moving at a fast pace and there were quite a few people walking around with a dazed look on their face that were leaving the building. The people going towards the building, you could sense that they had a sense of purpose going towards the building. The people walking away, I mean, there were quite a few people with a blank stare in their face getting out of there which you could only imagine after they were involved in something like that. I really sensed it was [inaudible] home. I mean, I was so focused on keeping people away from the rear of the aircraft because it's even when we land out on a crash scene to medivac people, we always get these onlookers. Even rescue people who don't really — they're not tuned into the aircraft and if they start walking toward the rear of the aircraft, you just got to keep them from getting behind the aircraft because that's just a no person zone.

Mark Schoepfle: Yeah, really.

Bernie Stasulli: You have a blade that's going around this way rather than this way, it's not good. If you get hit by that, you — we won't have to carry you out because there's not going to be much left of you.

Mark Schoepfle: Right. You'll be pureed. So, you were mentioning a lot of the people there were getting out of there in pretty good order.

Bernie Stasulli: Yes, they were.

Mark Schoepfle: What kind of order did you — would you have expected, say, from training or just in your own mind's eye? What would you really expect to get out there [talking together]?

- Bernie Stasulli: I really believe if this wasn't a military building, you would have had mass chaos. You would have had people just tripping over each other in hysterics. But with that being a military building and there are a lot of people in military uniforms that were coming out of that building and there were people in civilian uniforms, but I personally think it was a military [inaudible.] [Telephone ringing.] tuned into disasters a little bit and ready for disaster more so than the average citizen.
- Mark Schoepfle: When you got there on the ground, just to back up a little bit more, you were in charge actually of getting the burn victims out? You were in on Eagle Two, right?
- Bernie Stasulli: I was in on Eagle Two. When you say in charge, our responsibility was to whatever victims — we weren't responsible for going into the building and getting them. Essentially, there were a load of people already in the building. Our responsibility was when they hauled them out, to take charge of those people, to provide whatever medical attention we could and to get them over to the trauma center as quickly as possible.
- Mark Schoepfle: Right, and you had mentioned that you had a kit put on that you could carry four people and you got two loaded on, I gather, and you waited around, you said about ten minutes to make sure.
- Bernie Stasulli: No, when we received the first two victims, we probably — we left within a couple minutes after the second victim was loaded.
- Mark Schoepfle: Okay.
- Bernie Stasulli: And to find out that there were no other victims coming out at that time. The medical people on the scene, and I'm not sure who they were that were probably from Arlington County said, you know, and these people were severely burned. They said, "They gotta go right now. Just get them out of there."
- Mark Schoepfle: So, they made the judgment call and away you went?
- Bernie Stasulli: To get them out of there. And, as soon as Eagle Two left, Eagle One came in and landed at that spot and sat there for close to probably ten minutes waiting for any other victims to be brought out.
- Mark Schoepfle: Mmhmm. All right, so. When did — this was all happening around the eleven — eleven in the morning — between eleven and noon probably about that time, right?
- Bernie Stasulli: My recollection of time is not that good. I'm thinking original incident probably went down about quarter of ten — somewhere around ten. Eleven o'clock seems like a good timeline by the time we got there — ten thirty something like that.

- Mark Schoepfle: Okay. And, then the remainder of the day it was after you got the people back to — the victims back to the hospital center. You came back over here or over to the Pentagon for a while pretty much what? Monitoring, waiting for more people to come out?
- Bernie Stasulli: As I stated earlier, Eagle One after they set down on the ground waiting for victims, we were told there was another aircraft coming. They stayed for five minutes longer. They were there about ten minutes and finally they decided to stay each at an area out of the line of fire. So, they landed. Eagle Three — Eagle Two when they cleared the hospital, they came and landed, and they set there. They were probably there for another forty-five minutes to an hour. Just waiting to see if their services were needed. By then, there were numerous military helicopters that had landed. I know the Med Star people were there. They work for the Washington Hospital Center there and other hospitals in the area. So, after it was determined that there was just so many other aircraft there and it didn't seem to be a need for us, we decided that it would be safer to just come over here and wait and see if we were needed for anything else. So, in the air, it's not like cars. We can drive cars close to each other and you definitely don't want two aircraft occupying the same space at the same time or even close to each other. So, airways you need a level of safety much greater than you do on the ground.
- Mark Schoepfle: Mmhmm. So, the best deal was one was up, and one was down, and you didn't want them both up at the same time.
- Bernie Stasulli: Exactly.
- Mark Schoepfle: So, this continued into the afternoon about — when did things come to an end? How did things come to an end that day?
- Bernie Stasulli: For us, actually, they really didn't come to an end. That was the beginning. Once we came back over here, we were notified by the, I believe, it was the Pentagon people and the FBI that they needed us to come back over and start — actually, we started downlinking when we first got there. When I say downlinking, we started sending our live feed when we first arrived on the scene. Eagle One was up flying around while Eagle Two was on the ground doing the medivac. Eagle One had activated their live time feed.
- Mark Schoepfle: Right.

Bernie Stasulli: When we came back here, then we were requested to go back over, so we took up numerous people from the FBI, the fire department people and Pentagon people so they could overlook and see the damage and they were taking aerial photographs as we downlinked. Downlinking mostly to the FBI as I recall.

Mark Schoepfle: Mmhmm. All right. So, you continued downlinking to the FBI and then what?

Bernie Stasulli: From that point on, we flew quite a few missions the rest of the evening over at the Pentagon. Most of them were just aerial photo missions or aerial surveillance missions.

Mark Schoepfle: Mmhmm.

Bernie Stasulli: Sometime, I hope you'll excuse me. I'm a little [inaudible] here. My memory comes back [inaudible]. Sometime that day we got a request from the FBI to fly a couple of their agents out to Dulles Airport. This is when they had found the car that was actually, I guess, was parked there, and left there by some of the terrorists. They found several items inside the car — some, I guess certain maps and certain books on how to fly aircraft. I believe it ended up the car belonging to some of the terrorists. So, we had to fly some FBI people out there so they could shoot — secure that and set up a command post out there. So, we were just supporting most of the local federal agencies and local police departments that needed any type of aerial support. We provided that.

Mark Schoepfle: Mmhmm.

Bernie Stasulli: And, for the rest of the — probably for, I'm going to say for at least a month — our flight time was increased dramatically. We started doing security throughout the Washington Metropolitan area especially bridges, monuments, museums, the White House. We did a lot of security for the Secret Service. At least I'd say for a month, seven days a week, twelve hours a day shifts down here where we would just — we had a checklist of areas where we had to fly by at least once an hour to check.

END OF SIDE 1

START OF SIDE 2

Mark Schoepfle: What was going on for you, in these next couple of weeks?

Bernie Stasulli: My job here is more — I'm the assistant commander — my job is more in the administrative than in the operational. I go out on the flights when they need an extra body. Their training is far superior than mine. We have people who are trained as paramedics. They're trained to operate all the equipment on the helicopter.

- Bernie Stasulli: I'm not trained in a lot of that aspect of this operation. Most of my staff, there's staff making sure we have adequate staffing. Ordering equipment, handling — just about anything that comes under the administrative part is what I do.
- Mark Schoepfle: Well, in these events that occurred, I would imagine life, even from the administrative standpoint was not exactly normal? What were some of the changes that you had in the days and weeks after this event that occurred as far as administrative was concerned.
- Bernie Stasulli: The biggest change, I think, for just about every law enforcement officer in this area was we immediately went to long hours. For us, we were working anywhere from twelve to fourteen hours a day. Days off were canceled so we were working seven days a week. And this continued for — I'm going to say, for close to about one month — before they kind of relaxed and giving one day off a week. We're used to it. It's not as bad as it sounds. The other big change — and I'm sure what impacted everybody — was the security just about any place you went. Even though we were in marked — we had marked police cars and unmarked police cars. Even though we wear uniforms, we still were scrutinized like every other person. We had to have our identification with us at all times — which we normally should have — but usually you get in uniform police call, you can go through certain checkpoints without any — asked to exit the vehicle and the vehicle's being searched for bombs — security was very high here in the city.
- Mark Schoepfle: Mmhmm.
- Bernie Stasulli: So, for me that was a big impact.
- Mark Schoepfle: You mentioned the longer hours and the heightened security. What else?
- Bernie Stasulli: I really can't think of anything else. I think those were the two things the biggest changes. Of course, you don't see your family but that's acceptable in this job.
- Mark Schoepfle: Right. Was there a point in which anything returned to normal? You mentioned that things began to be a little less strict on the long hours after about a month. What happened after a month?
- Bernie Stasulli: Well, this happened in September and for us, I'm just going to give you a ballpark estimate probably sometime in December is when we actually started relaxing our schedules where most of the officers here are still working twelve hour shifts but they are now getting their days off. Whereas up until the first month, you get no days off.

- Bernie Stasulli: The second month you were getting one day off and we're back to the officers getting their full days off.
- Mark Schoepfle: Full days off being?
- Bernie Stasulli: For some officers, some are one a four-day work week. So, they're getting three days, they're on four, off three. Myself and the commander of the unit, we're the only two that are normally on a five-day, eight-hour day, five days a week. So, we're still working anywhere from ten to twelve hours a day, but we get our two days off. The other officers are back to getting their three days off.
- Mark Schoepfle: Mmhmm. In addition to the longer hours and the security, and this kind of thing, those were the major changes in the administrative aspect of things that you had to deal with?
- Bernie Stasulli: For me?
- Mark Schoepfle: Right, yeah.
- Bernie Stasulli: If you're — let me clarify. One of the biggest changes for us is, as an aviation unit was, the flying time. Our flying time increased probably — we would fly at least every hour twenty-four hours a day whereas before, normally, due to budget restraints, we would just fly when we got called for missions — whenever we had a mission — we pretty much had cut out routine patrol flights over the last couple of years due to — it's quite expensive to fly aircraft. The fuel, the maintenance and everything gets very expensive. So, for us we didn't — we hadn't done that much patrol flights in the last couple of years as we would like to do. But, certainly after September 11 for quite some time our patrol flights — we were just flying a great deal of increased flight time.
- Mark Schoepfle: Mmhmm.
- Bernie Stasulli: An example: we would get fuel delivered to our facility maybe once every two or three weeks during — ever since September 11th right up until probably December — we were getting fuel about every week. Five thousand gallons of fuel delivered each week here. Compared to five thousand gallons delivered every two weeks or three weeks.
- Mark Schoepfle: Mmhmm. What did that result in where you just having that greater number of flights?
- Bernie Stasulli: Probably a little bit more maintenance done on the aircraft. A lot of the maintenance on aircraft has to be performed according to so many hours on the engines or certain pieces of equipment. So, certainly the increase in hours demanded more maintenance to be performed — more inspections to be performed on the aircraft.

Mark Schoepfle: Mmhmm.

Bernie Stasulli: As far as the aircraft holding up, I don't think it was detrimental to the aircraft themselves, other than having inspections and certain maintenance performed on them. We have three aircraft here. We have a single engine which is Eagle Three and we have the two twin engines which were Eagle One and Eagle Two.

Mark Schoepfle: Mmhmm. Is this still going on — these increased flights?

Bernie Stasulli: It's been scaled back quite a bit.

Mark Schoepfle: It's been scaled back. So, have there been any long terms effects from these things. I mean, from the increased flights and the hours and these kinds of things or is it just slowly going back to normal or what?

Bernie Stasulli: I think it's back to normal. That's my personal opinion. You're out flying especially at nighttime. It's a lot more involved — night flights — as it is doing anything at nighttime compared to daytime. So, the impact on the officers on the night shift, I would think it probably had some type of impact on them, but that's — I really couldn't put my finger on the impact. But, I'm sure, having to work being stuck on a midnight shift because most of the people, whatever shift they were on, they stayed on that shift for an extended period of time which — and Ron Galey could probably tell you — I'm sure had an impact on their family. I recall somebody else was saying they weren't able to see their kids or their wives, the usual stuff. But, the majority of the people here realize that's part of the job and, I think, they did their job in a very admirable manner.

Mark Schoepfle: Looking back on this, the whole situation that we've been talking about, are there lessons to be learned from this as far as park service operation in the future — or just the way the park service does its business or the way we do our business or anything like that?

Bernie Stasulli: I don't know if I could say that we did anything that we could improve. I mean, there's always room for improvement but I really felt that this was an incident that was really above what we normally do. When I say normally, when we get called to a — it could be a fire scene, a crash scene involving the buses, or whatever, and mass casualties, we're well prepared. We're ready to go. But, in this instance, this was the first airplane disaster of this type that the people working currently were involved in. It's just, the sheer numbers of people that we could have transported, we can only do so much. We have two aircraft. We could have ended up taking out three people if we had to. I felt the crews worked very well and things were coordinated very well between the crews.

- Bernie Stasulli: When you talk to Ron Galey, he'll be able to give you some better insight as far as coordination with other agencies. Maybe there could have been something improved on that. But, from my viewpoint, I was very pleased with the way things went, and I thought everybody did a good job. Our intent was to go over there and do what we had to do. We were ready to go.
- Mark Schoepfle: Mmhmm. Just if we could go back a little bit. What are some of the normal duties that we all do as far as helicopters are concerned?
- Bernie Stasulli: Normally, our biggest function is law enforcement. We get calls from the officers on the street. There's a chase in progress. They're in foot pursuit of someone. They're asking us to search for people — especially at nighttime. We use flarance [phonetic], a piece of equipment which can detect the heat off of someone's body if someone's hiding somewhere.
- Mark Schoepfle: Infrared.
- Bernie Stasulli: Infrared device. We'll locate people. So, our biggest missions are basically all law enforcement oriented. Our second biggest, I believe, is medevacs. And, going back to law enforcement, we do a lot of search and rescue. We do river rescues over here in the Potomac River. We're forever getting people stranded in the river. We're capable of going out. We have a hoist. We can hoist down and scoop them out of the water. We get for the Park Service quite a bit up and down in the Shenandoah Valley in the mountainous areas where people get lost. We get search and rescue on the mountains. People — a lot of people fall off the side of the cliffs, the rock climbers. We do a lot of rescue missions. Second base would be Medivacs. We do Medivacs in Washington D.C., Maryland, and Virginia. Our third mission — mission classification — is the Presidential security. We do all the aerial security for the President whenever he's moving about the city. We have a Secret Service agent that comes over. Gets on board the aircraft and we do a route check. Wherever the President is going, we'll fly the route. Due to the security reasons, I can't tell you when, but we do it numerous times, checking the route. And, when the escort is in transit, we're right there doing the security of the route.
- Mark Schoepfle: Like motorcade?
- Bernie Stasulli: Motorcade. When he flies out of Andrews, we go out and we do the perimeter security — all the way around the perimeter. We're up until his aircraft is well on the way. So that's probably our third classification on missions. We do a lot of training missions for the local rescue services.

Mark Schoepfle: Were any of these adversely affected as a result of the September 11 — just because of having to what — divert your attention away from things or whatever?

Bernie Stasulli: Not at all. One of the missions that we do, we call them community outreach missions where we will fly over to some of the local schools or local fire departments when they have their open house. They like to have pieces of equipment on display so they can show the people what their job is. I feel we play a big part with the local fire departments because we do a lot of rescue work for them. That was one of the few things that definitely impacted when we had to suspend all of our community outreach programs for that period of time. But, during that period, they're not as — they're not as relied on as much as during the summertime. Most of your fire department programs are during the summertime when they have their open houses. But October is a big month for open houses, and we had to cancel everything we had then, due to our missions here in the city.

Mark Schoepfle: So, the law enforcement wasn't really adversely affected by September 11?

Bernie Stasulli: Not at all. We have, as I stated, three aircraft. Normally, we only have one crew available, but during this period of time we did have two crews in each twelve-hour shift. I had failed to mention that.

Mark Schoepfle: Oh, I see.

Bernie Stasulli: That's a big plus for us, having two crews. And, since that time, we normally — our crews consisted of just two people, the pilot and the rescue technician. The rescue technician is a trained paramedic and is also a pilot trainee. We do our own pilot trainee here. That's our normal crews. Since September 11th, we realized having a third crew member was a great advantage. So, we've been flying, since that time, with three crew members. How long we can do that, it all comes down to money. Because sometimes you have to — costs more to have extra crew members here. The third crew member can operate the downlinking system while the other crew member is — there's a lot going on — there's a lot of radio communication [telephone ringing]. You're not only talking to our communications people; you're talking to every other law enforcement and rescue agency that's present at the scene. You're talking to the Reagan Airport's — rescue technicians [loudspeaker]. We found, especially with the downlinking that it's — it worked out — it's more to our advantage to have the third person in that crew. That's what we've been doing. Like I said, everything comes down to money.

Mark Schoepfle: Right.

Bernie Stasulli: It's like the security in the city, they've kind of relaxed the security because of money right now.

Mark Schoepfle: So, the third person did actually help quite a bit?

Bernie Stasulli: Quite a bit.

Mark Schoepfle: Okay, that's significant It's been very interesting. Are there other things that you'd like to mention that I haven't thought of?

Bernie Stasulli: I can't think so. And I wish the other crew members were here because I'm sure what I'm giving you, they can give you so much more. Because I was pretty much stuck in this one spot. Once we got there at the landing zone, whereas the other guys — the guys, who actually did the medevac to the hospital, the guys who were circling the Pentagon, they'd be able to shed a lot more light on what happened and their impressions than I could.

Mark Schoepfle: Okay. And, let's see if I've got the person down here that you've recommended.

Bernie Stasulli: Ron Deon. He's the one. I'll check. If you're here with me.

Mark Schoepfle: Are there any other questions that you'd like answered from me? That I can help with or anything?

Bernie Stasulli: Not at all.

Mark Schoepfle: Well, thank you very much for your time on this.

END OF TAPE