

# The Pentagon Disaster 9/11: Lessons Learned

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# Agenda

- Overview of Routine Daily Operations
- Pentagon Disaster
  - Preparation
  - Execution
  - Lessons Learned
  - Aftermath

# “Normal” Operations





# DiLorenzo TRICARE Health Clinic

- A DoD Primary Care and Dental Clinic
- Moved to new location within the pentagon in APR 2000
- Includes several small specialty clinics

# “Routine” Emergencies

- Patients Contact Clinic or Pentagon security
- Medic team dispatched
  - Aid Bag
  - Ambulance or Bicycles
- Dispatch nurse/provider
- Transport to DTHC
- Link to Arlington County EMS
  - At DTHC
  - At scene

EXIT

NO MPV Carries other than  
AMBULANCES  
at 8th Cavalry  
For information please call 202-304-2000



**“People are not likely to give priority attention to an unlikely future disaster when there are fifteen tasks to be accomplished by Friday”**

# Keys to Notional Plans

- Disaster plans become illusions unless:
  - Based upon valid assumptions about human behavior
  - Incorporates inter-organizational perspective
  - Linked to resources
  - Known and accepted by participants
- Written plan is NOT end product
  - Training/exercise validates the plan



# Assessment for DTHC MASCAL Plan

- Command emphasis
- Where did clinic stand since move
- Designate a leader
- Develop a timeline
- Designate training time

# MASCAL Training

- Individual
- Section
- Clinic
- Organization-wide
- Involving community assets

# Emergency Plan Implementation

- “Rock Drill” with key leaders: table top –  
Accomplished May 01
  - Moving scenario with moulage patients projected for Nov 01
  - Integrate plan with WHS/DPS MASCAL exercise with moulage patients projected for May 02

# Lessons Learned From Exercise

- Corrective Actions Taken
  - Triage/Treatment Training
  - “Jump” Aid Station (Command and Control with higher agencies)
    - Send representative to security headquarters
    - Coordination with 8 military medical centers
  - Manpower
  - Evacuation
  - Resupply/Resources

# Equipment Modernization

- Purchases:
  - Update packs
  - Pediatric equipment
  - AEDs
  - Mascal equipment
    - Triage tapes/tags
    - Identifying vests
  - EMS shirts
  - Radios/hands-free devices

# Special Considerations

- Pentagon Renovation Project
  - Ongoing construction
  - Limited/changing movement around building
  - MASCAL equipment storage relocated
  - Stretcher room unopened

# Pentagon Terrorist Attack



# 11 Sep 01

- 0845 EDT: Hijacked American Airlines Flight # 11 crashes into WTC North
- 0905 EDT: Hijacked United Airlines Flight #175 crashes into WTC South
- 0940 EDT: Hijacked American Airlines Flight #77 crashes into the Pentagon
- 1010 EDT: Hijacked United Airlines Flight #93 crashes in Pennsylvania, enroute to Washington, DC

# The Pentagon Attack

At 9:41 a.m. Eastern time, American Airlines Flight 77, hijacked while carrying 64 people from Washington to Los Angeles, tore into the side of the Pentagon in a terrorist attack. The Pentagon burst into flames, sending a huge cloud of smoke into the sky, visible for miles. A part of the western side of the building in suburban Arlington, Va., collapsed. The area hit was under renovation, and some offices may not have been occupied, officials said.

**1** According to federal aviation sources, Flight 77 leaves Dulles airport at 8:21 a.m., heading west for Los Angeles

**2** Someone on board apparently turns off the transponder. The plane turns back toward Washington, with no radio contact.

**3** Dulles controllers notice a fast-moving primary target in their airspace east-southeast of the airport heading directly toward the White House.

**4** The plane begins turning to the right, away from the White House.

## About the Building

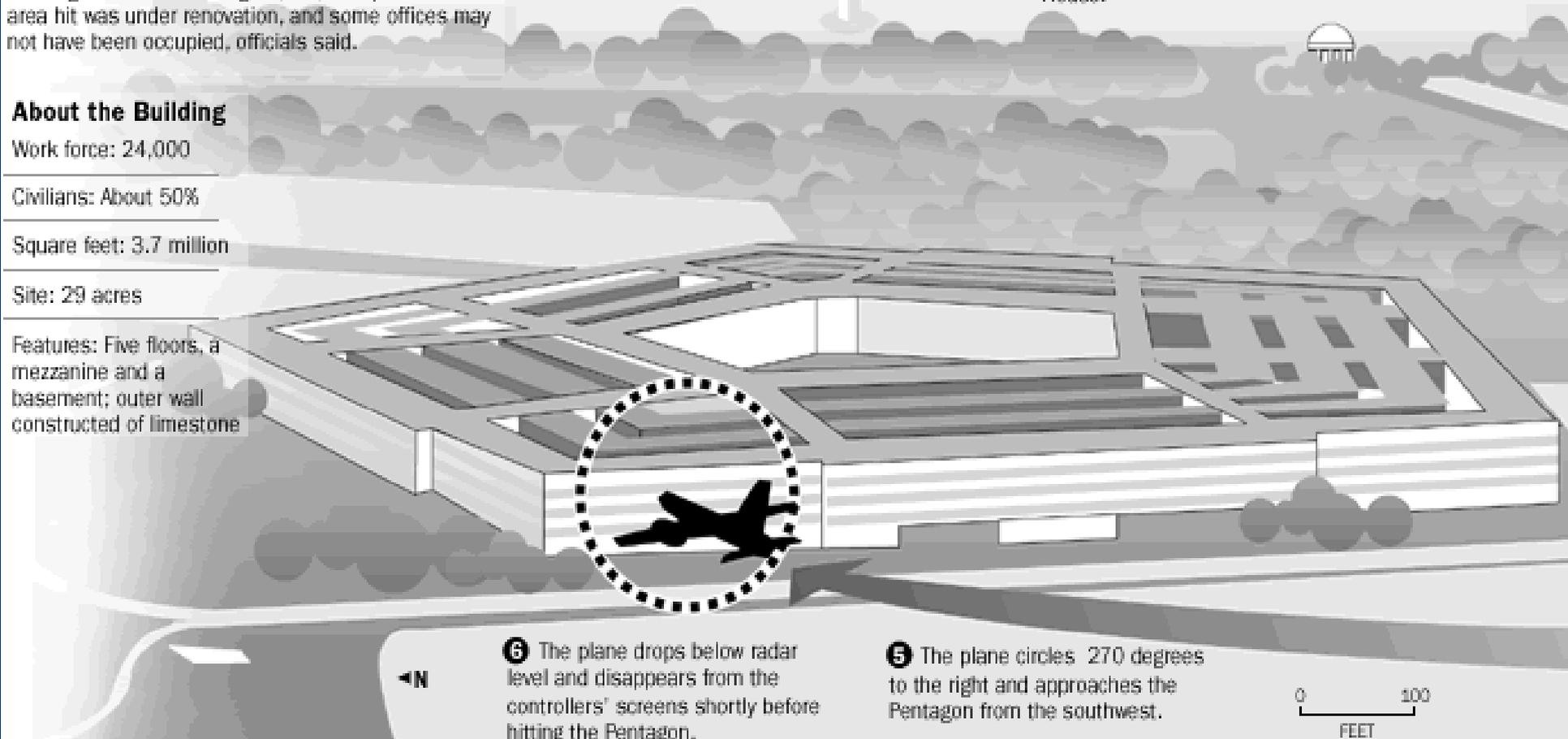
Work force: 24,000

Civilians: About 50%

Square feet: 3.7 million

Site: 29 acres

Features: Five floors, a mezzanine and a basement; outer wall constructed of limestone



**6** The plane drops below radar level and disappears from the controllers' screens shortly before hitting the Pentagon.

**5** The plane circles 270 degrees to the right and approaches the Pentagon from the southwest.

0 100  
FEET

# Pentagon Damage Assessment

The Pentagon is divided into five wedges. Wedge 1 suffered the most damage in the terrorist attack. A three-year renovation and reinforcement project on Wedge 1 was nearly complete, which experts believe kept the area from collapsing immediately and allowed an

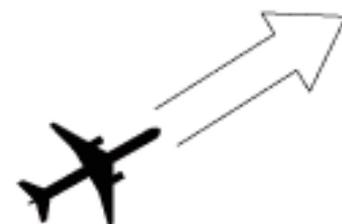
extra 35 to 40 minutes for survivors to escape. Wedge 2 suffered some damage, mainly from smoke. The building was originally constructed with low-grade concrete and limited use of steel, because of high demand for the material during World War II.

## Ground Floor Plan

- Structural damage
- Fire damage
- Water and smoke damage
- Missing column
- Damaged column

## Columns

The Pentagon's structure is based on 41,492 concrete columns on each floor. The original columns have inexpensive steel reinforcement.



## Path of the Plane

Trajectory of American Airlines Flight 77, the hijacked Boeing 757 that left from Dulles International Airport.

Sources: Department of Defense, Pentagon Renovation Program, wire reports

THOMAS SUH LAUDER / Los Angeles Times



# 11 Sep 01

## Movement to Areas:

- Sent two patient care teams to scenes
- By default patient care areas

# 11 Sep 01

## Immediate Response

- Medical requirements:
  - Render aid
  - Initial triage
  - POC for medical information from higher
  - Search for victims inside scene
  - Oversee medical evacuation
  - Call for reinforcements

# 11 Sep 01

## Communications

- Radio contact with key members of DTMC staff and channel to Defense Protective Services
- Sent representative to on-scene security headquarters

# 11 Sep 01

## Patient Care

- Expert care
- Vests to identify skill level
- Numerous Volunteers

# 11 Sep 01

## Types of injuries

- Burns
- Blast
- “Escape injuries”
- Psychological

# 11 Sep 01

## Evacuation

- Internal: Self-propelled Utility Vehicles, Litters, Buddy Care, Ambulatory
- Outside: Civilian Ambulance, POV, Ambulatory



Pentagon  
Mall and River  
Entrances  
EXIT 1/4 MILE

244 WEST  
Columbia  
↓

The background is a solid blue color. A white curved line starts from the top left and curves downwards towards the center. A white triangular shape is positioned in the lower right quadrant, pointing towards the center. The text "Take home lessons..." is written in a bold, white, sans-serif font, centered horizontally and slightly above the middle vertically.

Take home lessons...

# Pentagon Disaster Lessons Learned: THE BIG 3

- Communication
  - Internal & External
- Accountability
  - Staff & Patients
- Equipment
  - Accessibility & Logistics

# Internal Communication

- Evacuation Announcements
- Radios
- Radio etiquette

# External Communication

- Coordination with outside units
  - Civilian units
    - Arlington Co. – Incident Commander and Medical Officer
    - Search and Rescue teams
    - FBI
  - WRAMC/MEDCOM/NNMC/MGMC
  - MDW and other attached units
    - Mortuary Affairs
    - Military Police and Old Guard

# Staff Accountability

- Envision all possibilities
- Establish a system

# Patient Accountability

- Medical: focused on patient care
- Patient Administration

# Equipment

- Accessibility
- User-friendly Configuration
- Serviceability
- Interchangeable and standardized
- Research possible needs, many MASCAL AARs include unidentified needs



# Lessons Learned: THE LITTLE 3

- Training
- Training
- Training

# Training

- Train for your role
- Train at all levels
- Train others

# After the Fire's out...



# Aftermath

- Command and Control
- Equipment
- Operations
- Environment
- Mental Health
- Secondary Insults

# Aftermath for your Personnel

- Accountability
- Working environment/conditions
- Ongoing responsibilities
- Fatigue
- Grief/Mental health
- Isolation
- Information dissemination

Questions?





