

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

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Event: North Eastern Air Defense Sector (NEADS) field site visit

Type of event: Interview with Capt. Steve Hedrick

Date: Monday, October 27, 2003

Special Access Issues: Clearance check

Prepared by: Geoffrey Brown

Team Number: 8

Location: Commander's Conference Room, Building 102

Participants - Non-Commission:

Participants - Commission: John Farmer, John Azzarello, Miles Kara, Geoffrey Brown

Note: Please refer to the recorded interview for further details.

On September 11, 2001 (9/11) Hedrick was an Air Weapons Officer (AWO) at NEADS. Now he is a Senior Director for Weapons (SD Weapons).

An AWO is the direct interface between NEADS operations and the Air Defense asset flight crews. Hedrick noted that the AWO is considered to have his own direction on assigning a flight the most effective vectors for an intercept, but the commands by which an AWO acts are given by the Senior Director (SD).

Hedrick was in the Delta Flight Office when the first report of a hijack was received. Typically the SD puts the controller who is on the first intercept on the first control console (next to the SD). Hedrick stated that he was probably placed at that desk.

Otis scramble:

Hedrick was assigned to control the Otis ANGB scramble of PANTA flight on 9/11.

Hedrick noted that Major Fox directed him to prepare to control a fighter scramble from Otis, and continued to give Hedrick direction as the events progressed. Hedrick's Weapon Director Technician was then Staff Sergeant (SSgt.), now Second Lt. Bradley Garner. Hedrick noted that Garner is currently at Tyndall AFB for the Air Weapons Officer School. The AWO and the WD interfaces with the technician, and then the technician serves as their interface with the FAA centers/entities.

Hedrick noted that when a base receives a scramble order all the parties that are in the scramble line loop receives information for the scrambled fighter heading. When the fighters are "stabilized" (clear of civilian traffic), the FAA passes communication with the fighters to Huntress.

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Henrick noted that Otis Command Post, the Otis ANGB approach control, the Boston Center En Route Center and the Otis ANGB Tower receives scramble notification when Otis ANGB Air Defense assets are scrambled.

ROE and Transition:

Hedrick recalls that at some point that morning the authority was passed to NEADS to direct fighters to engage a specific target if the target does not respond to "direction" from NEADS. This direction was passed to the floor from the Region Commander. This conversation was captured on the DRM1 DAT2 Channel 2 MCC Op Side line at 2:02 hours into the tape, which is approximately 10:02am.

Hedrick noted to Commission staff that the Current Authority dictates how a Rule of Engagement (ROE) is passed. The ROE can be in modes of Peacetime, Transition, or War Time. Hedrick noted that Current Authority is not something NEADS staff would have trained to pass to a pilot. He noted that the different Defcons all have certain ROEs, and this in turn dictates what Current Authority level there is. Hedrick acknowledged that any change in Defcon is authenticated immediately with the fighters.

He noted that the main change when a Defcon level changes is in who has the authority to declare a target hostile. Hedrick noted to Commission staff that the order on 9/11 from the vice president regarding a non-responding aircraft is distinct and different from the transition in Defcon levels.

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