

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

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

Type of event: Interview with NEADS Base Commander

Date: January 23, 2004

Special Access Issues: Clearance check

Prepared by: Geoffrey Brown

Team Number: 8

Location: Commander's Conference Room, Building 102

Participants - Non-Commission: Colonel Robert Marr, Base Commander, NEADS, and Lt. Col. Fred Davies, Esq.

Participants - Commission: Team 8: John Azzarello, Geoffrey Brown. John Farmer, Miles Kara, Kevin Shaeffer

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

Background:

Marr began at the Air Force Academy in 1971. He graduated in 1975 and entered pilot training in Arizona. He was retained as an instructor pilot and instructed on the T-38 (supersonic flight training, a fighter version of the F-5). Following that he went to Langley flying T-33s assigned to the 48th Fighter Interceptor squadron. Each interceptor squadron had Ts assigned to them.

He spent a year at Langley, and then went to Griffis in the 49th Fighter Interceptor Squadron flying F-106s. He was the director of Standardization and Evaluations. He was given an assignment with the 67th Fighter Squadron in Okinawa in 1985, and stayed until 1988. He was promoted to Major and went to Toronto Canada to the Air Forces College. He was on the Canadian Forces Fighter Group Headquarters Staff between 1989 and 1991. This was an exchange tour under NORAD. He shared roles as SOEX Staff Officer for Exercises, flew the T-33, and ran operational examinations of the fighter exercises there. His work had much to do with checking jamming capabilities.

During the time period of the Gulf War, the NORAD mission did not change by that much since NORAD was still checking opposing forces capabilities. The area Marr worked in ran many of the responses to the Gulf War necessities. He does not recall any dramatic changes in NORAD at that point.

In 1991 he came to NEADS and was promoted to Lieutenant (Lt.), and became a manager of the operations shop. He followed this assignment with some "informal duties", and at one point worked throughout the NORAD sites on ROIs.

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In 1994 he spent 100 days as director of combat operations in Ryhad, Saudi Arabia.

Shortly thereafter he separated from active duty, and was hired on with Phoenix Air, a defense contractor. He was a captain for Lear 35s and 36s. Marr worked full-time with Phoenix for about twenty months.

The CVX position opened at NEADS, and Commander Scott recruited Marr. Marr built exercises that would cover the sector as a whole. He was not involved in crew exercises. Marr commented that the analysis section took the results of the exercises and analyze them for improvements. The shop would also work all exercises between the Falcon Indian, the Vigilant Guardian, the JCS exercises, and the National Guard Vigilant Patriot exercises. Marr commented that the intelligence shop influenced how regulations and the design of operations plans were incorporated. He continued and explained that the exercise shop would look to intelligence to build intelligence scenarios that would lead to an exercise that could meet the goals of what capabilities needed to be tested.

From the CVX position Marr became Vice Commander for the base.

NORAD Mission:

Marr stated he recalls there being about fourteen alert bases at the beginning of his history with NORAD. He commented that the bases often changed based on the perceived needs at NORAD. On 9/11 NORAD had seven alert sites. At NEADS there was Langley and Otis. This was the lowest number of sites Marr could recall.

Regarding the NORAD mission, Marr commented that there was a draw down from current deployment of forces to projected time periods it would take for certain deployment capabilities. In the early 1990s NORAD maintained a peacetime posture, but considering NEADS position in the NORAD mission, they trained for a number of continual threats.

Marr commented that NEADS is tasked with identifying all unknown aircraft, and thus drug surveillance was always part of the NORAD mission. He noted that over time this changed as law enforcement issues became connected to NORAD's work. Marr commented that they had very few drug interdiction missions. He noted that they did have some exercises, and had an exercise with Canada to test their cross-border cooperation.

He noted that NEADS does keep in contact with the FAA, and they coordinate at the point at which the FAA is involved with the NORAD aircraft identification mission.

Commission staff presented to Marr a General Arnold [or Myer?]'s quote on air sovereignty (note book "Air War Over America"). Marr commented that air sovereignty prior to 9/11 strictly pertained to ADAPS penetration, and isolated events. [check recording of answer] Marr choose to not answer whether terrorist and rogue nations were

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the greatest threat to national security. He noted that there have been developments of technologies and computer systems that were originally designed for cruise missile intercepts. This was designed due to a perceived threat of cruise missiles and unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) launched from the sea.

Regarding Colonel Marr's ability as Commander of NEADS to perform its NORAD mission and the draw down on fighter assets, Marr noted that as there is an increase in war time readiness, more assets are made available for military use and deployment. He explained that there was a scenario (either a coastal Russian Bear or Akula Submarine threat exercise) in which there were no forces between Langley and Jacksonville, and that caused him to be concerned over the pre 9/11 reduction in alert sites. Marr noted that his position is to use the number of forces at his disposal in the best manner possible. He continued and commented that using the forces that were on alert in the Paine Weber scenario there were not adequate forces to follow the aircraft across the middle of the country. Marr noted that given the way the com plans were written, and the way the intelligence threat assistance was written – given this “narrow scope” he had adequate forces to fulfill the objectives of these com plans. He noted that given a lone rogue event, or given a drug interdiction, or given an A2 distressed aircraft, he could provide an adequate response. Marr replied that NEADS was capable to meet the threat posed by the Russian posturing prior to 9/11. Continuing this line of thought, Marr noted that 1st AF and CONR gave the directive to load their air defense assets as they were on 9/11.

“Looking out” posture:

1) the “looking out” mission:

NEADS primary job is to identify aircraft crossing over the Air Defense Zone (ADZ). The second part to this, according to Marr, is the “friendly by origin” issue within the ADZ. Anything that was beyond this military responsibility was “in the hands” of civilian authorities.

2) physical capabilities:

Marr commented that NEADS was using fourteen radar, and many radio sites. He noted that these sites are focused around the perimeter of the coast. He noted that the radar coverage varied by the sites themselves. He noted that the sites were optimized for their off the coast vision.

Commission staff presented to Marr that the flights that were hijacked on 9/11 were within the physical capabilities of the radar NEADS is linked to.

Marr noted to the best of his knowledge there are now 57 radar feeds to NEADS, including lower altitude relays.

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Commission staff presented to Marr that there is evidence that there were difficulties with the radio feeds to NEADS on 9/11, and Marr replied that the radio and radio relays are optimized, but that at times other aircraft are used as radio relays to boost connectivity, especially when fighters are sent further out from the coast. He noted that there are points at the far reaches of Whiskey 105 at which there needs to be radio relays from other fighters.

Marr noted that NEADS now has access to more and better radios. He noted a continual process of improvement.

Standard procedures and exercises in Marr's experience:

Marr noted that he does not recall any exercises that involved commercial airline engagement by a fighter.

He noted that NEADS has practiced scenarios that involved passing the shadow of hijacked flights over Canadian airspace. He was at the CVX shop for the Lufthansa hijacking incident. His Commander had received word through a news broadcast that there was a hijacking bound apparently for the United States out of Europe. Marr spoke with the FAA, and began coordinating. He began to speak with FAA representatives at the Center level, and the coordination then began at higher authority levels both on the military and on the FAA side. This coordination carried through to the landing at JFK Airport. Marr commented that he received a call from the White House and he explained the necessity for the Air Defense role. NEADS kept their planning process, and latter in the day the White House called back and directed NEADS to assume the role they were planning for. He believes the trail of the aircraft consisted of two F-15s and two F-16s.

Marr noted that he did not recall any specific exercises that included direct defense of the National Capital Area. He noted that NEADS and NORAD had training and scenarios that called for protection of large scale areas. He noted that they did exercise intercepts of cruise missiles, which would entail a similar need for long range defense planning. He noted that these would be examples of large defensive coastal planning.

September 11, 2001 (9/11)

The Battle Cab

On 9/11, the Battle Cab staff was Commander (Marr), Battle Staff Coordinator, the Director of Operations (DO), the Fighter Officer (FO), the Air Control and Warning Officer (ACWO), the Intelligence Officer (Intel)

Marr commented that he attempts to train all positions to a time frame for information to flow to the FO, and for the FO and MCC to have simultaneous real time coordination. He noted that the DO is directed to look forward approximately six hours, and that he attempts to look forward approximately six to twelve hours. He noted that his

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primary communication is to higher headquarters, and that on 9/11 he spoke with General Arnold and General Bavarian. Marr commented that it would be very unusual for him to communicate with Cheyenne Mountain (NORAD) from the Battle Cab. He does not recall speaking with them on 9/11.

Chat Logs:

Marr noted that on 9/11 he does not recall inputting into the chat log information. He said he generally would leave chat log inputs to the direction of the MCC level. He believes that the CONR chat log received postings from the MCC and operations floor. He noted that there were exercise chat logs open that morning.

Marr noted that one of the chat logs presented to him by Commission staff "doesn't look right" [Commission staff noted this beforehand, but did not present to Marr as such.] Marr was presented with the MCC Tech's log book, and maintained that there are and have been a variety of logs used in the Battle Cab. He noted that he is not aware of any regulation mandating a log be kept in the Battle Cab.

Marr noted that Steve Culbertson and Bob Aires set up a Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) telecom on the morning of 9/11. He noted that he personally spoke on line with 1st Air Force and General Arnold specifically, and that at approximately mid-morning he began speaking with other Wing Commanders. He commented that his situational awareness was fed through a number of factors, including the floor, the MCC and these lines.

8:20 AM on 9/11:

Marr spoke with General Arnold and conveyed that the floor was prepared to begin the exercise. He noticed the front row of the operations floor had a number of people "huddled up", and he sent Major Dawne Deskins to the floor for information. Deskins returned to the Battle Cab and informed him of a FAA report of a real world hijack. He next spoke to General Arnold regarding an order for Battle Stations at Otis ANGB, and Arnold gave Marr the authority to scramble the fighters towards Whiskey 105.

Marr noted that once the Otis fighters were scrambled, the MCC (Nasypany) would have spoken to either himself or the FO. He noted that he tries to avoid being on the operations floor during an event because he finds it causes more confusion than it is helpful.

Marr explained to Commission staff that he would interpret the relationship between himself and Nasypany as Nasypany having the discretion to take the Otis fighters directly to New York City. If the fighters had had a track, then Marr would have expected Nasypany to look to the Battle Cab for direction.

UAL 175:

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Marr stated that he did not know there was a second hijacking, and believes his first notice of the second crash into the World Trade Center was through a television broadcast. Marr was not on a continual open line with Arnold.

Langley scramble:

Marr noted that by the point at which he had an indication that another event had occurred in New York, the fighters from Otis were running out of fuel. He noted that it would take a long time for the fighters from Langley to reach New York City, then roughly when the Otis fighters informed NEADS they needed to return to base, the Langley fighters could be launched. He noted that he does not recall considering a scramble, and only recalls directing Battle Stations.

Use of fighter assets in response to perceived threats on 9/11:

Regarding Marr's situational awareness on UAL 93 and the Langley scramble, he commented that his recollection was that there were three different situations going on: 1) ZNY and ZBW were grounding aircraft, and ZDC had not done so yet; 2) he recalled getting information on AA 11 still heading south, and upon discovery that the information was from ZBW (FAA Boston En Route Center) – thus to Marr having low reliability since it was out of ZBW radar range – and 3) the possibility of Delta Flight 1989 also being hijacked.

He noted that with all these factors combined he wanted to protect Washington, D.C., and thus scrambled Langley to do so.

Commission staff presented to Colonel Marr that it appears based on the evidence that Langley was launched in response to AA 11 being reported headed south towards Washington, D.C. Marr agreed that Langley was scrambled based on the perceived threat to AA 11. He did not concede that it was specifically relate to AA 11, and he concluded that it was based on a number of factors, including those noted above.

Marr noted that he “nixed” the tail chase – the Panta (Otis ANGB) fighters “chasing down” AA 11, as reported heading south to Washington, D.C. – “as soon as” he heard of it.

Marr noted that much going on led him to believe Washington was at risk, and he commented that in his recollection UAL 93 was hijacked. He acknowledged that as presented to him by Commission staff it is evident that UAL 93 was not yet hijacked when Langley was scrambled.

Authorization for Intercept Order (AFIO):

Marr noted that he supported Nasypany's decision to direct the Langley fighters to declare AFIO. Marr noted that he has the authority to delegate authority where need

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be. He does not recall declaring AFIO himself. He also noted that he does not recall using it prior to 9/11, but it has been used since. He commented that as of 9/11 it was an extraordinary measure to be implemented, but does not remember being advised that AFIO was declared on 9/11.

American Airlines Flight 77 (AA 77):

Marr's memory of AA 77 and its impact at the Pentagon was that he had received information on a threat perceived on Washington, D.C. and on the White House.

Search for more air defense assets:

Marr commented that he remembered directing the staff in general to look for more fighters. He noted that based on the transcript there were calls to Duluth, Minnesota for fighters. He recalled eventually getting fighters that were training in Selfridge. He noted that those fighters were going to be "too far from Cleveland to do any good." Thus he believes they were directed to UAL 93. Marr noted that the events began to spread from New York and began to include threats to the west, and the rest of the country. It was because of this that assets were located.

Transition and ROE:

Marr noted that Daniels, the FO, asked him how to direct a fighter that if it successfully intercepted an aircraft identified as a threat. Marr told Commission staff that he told his FO to bring the fighters as close as possible to a potential target, and "from there they would discuss a next step". Marr agreed to the best of his recollection there was no change of ROE or authority given to engage a target. Marr acknowledged that this was true at 10:00 AM the morning of 9/11.

Marr commented that he distinctly remembers watching the flight UAL 93 come west, and turn over Cleveland. He noted that he does not know if he transposed this with Delta 1989. Marr noted that he was watching an aircraft squawk, and this would indicate it was Delta 1989.

Marr noted that at 10:10 AM when the MCC tells the operations floor there is no clearance to shoot he (Marr) may have had the authority, but he never gave the MCC clearance to fire. He does not believe at this point there was a clearance to "kill".

Regarding Delta 1989, Marr does not recall what brought to his attention the area over Ohio. He can not recall specifically what held the attention at the floor or at the Battle Cab level. Commission staff represented to Marr that the first attention at NEADS of the area over Ohio was because of Delta 1989.

Commission staff represented to Marr the Leslie Philson book "Air War Over America", and a passage involving a shoot down order on UAL 93. After being presented with the transcript and the audio recording, as well as with radar data, Marr stated that he may

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have been confused with Delta 1989, but he believes the last point at which he saw flight 93 was when it was over Ohio, before it turned off its transponder.

Marr was presented with the Chat Logs and noted that it appeared that the DEFCON level was changed via chat log messaging.

Conclusion:

Marr was presented with a transcript of the Commission's NORAD hearing.

Marr noted that the Dictaphone DAT times are off, and this led to a misconception with the time frame. He commented that NORAD asked for details to prove that they did not shoot down UAL 93 shortly after 9/11. He noted that Col. Speicher and Col. Khom worked towards putting the initial information together. But because of the damage that occurred to the tapes during the transcription process they did not re-examine the tapes until very recently.

Commission staff presented Marr with a timeline that was created by NORAD. Marr speculated that some of the discrepancies on this timeline were because of inaccurate computer timing.

Commission staff presented Marr with three facts that point towards an accurate NEADS transcript.

Commission staff made a reference to UAL 175 and the 8:43 AM call to NEADS from the FAA to report a hijack that is clearly AA 11, not UAL 175. Commission staff noted that UAL 175 was hijacked at approximately 8:46 AM, and thus the NORAD timeframe for a report on the hijack of UAL 175 was clearly inaccurate.

Marr noted that he does not believe his staff took part in the NORAD commission briefing.

Marr noted to Commission inquiry that he has reviewed the MCC Op 2 transcript.

Marr reviewed his notes with Commission staff. Marr noted that link 16, a tactical data link with the fighters, has now been established and is in use. He also noted that he has tried to establish various data links. Marr noted that the ANG units have less authorizations needed to clear for duty than the coordination needed for Active Duty missions.

Marr noted that his purpose in inputting times for actions on 9/11 was to display to the public the scenarios to which NORAD and NEADS responded.

Marr noted that he decided to scramble in response to a variety of events that occurred. Marr explained that even though the operations floor represented to

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Commission staff that it was for a threat from AA 11, Marr scrambled to protect the NCA.

Marr was emphatic that the mistakes in the data points were specifically made to show that they did not shoot down flight 93.

Marr conceded that the NORAD presentation to the public of the events of 9/11 does not meet the fidelity of the Commission investigation.

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