Attack On America

Army Reserve responds to

U.S. Navy photo by Journalist 1st Class Mark Faram

(Clockwise) Military personnel move down highway I-395 after evacuating the Pentagon. The evacuation took place after a hijacked commercial airliner crashed into the southwest corner of the building during the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attack. The pentagon attack followed one on the twin towers of the New York World Trade Center in what is being called the worst terrorist attack in history. Lt. Col. Isabelle Slifer assists an unidentified Pentagon employee after the attack. Fire fighters struggle to contain spreading fire. A Pentagon employee scans the wreckage from a distance following the Tuesday morning attack.

By Lt. Col. Randy Pullen

Army Reservists have been on the front lines of "the first war of the 21st century" since the morning of September 11, 2001.

terrorist attacks

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U.S. Air Force photo by Tech. Sgt. Jim Varhegyi

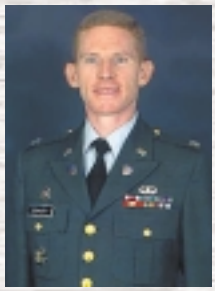
Although most of the Office of the Chief, Army Reserve (OCAR), is located a few blocks from the Pentagon, the office of the Chief, Deputy Chief and Command Sergeant Major of the Army Reserve is in the Pentagon. A number of OCAR staff members were in the Pentagon Tuesday morning for meetings and other business. There was also a meeting of the Army Reserve Forces Policy Council going on in the building, which brought together a number of Army Reserve general and senior officers from various commands. Finally, there were also Active Guard Reserve (AGR) soldiers assigned to other agencies in the Pentagon, as well as Army Reservists who hold civilian jobs in the Pentagon.

U.S. Army Photo by Sgt. Carmen L.Burgess

When American Airlines Flight 77 hit the west side of the Pentagon and a number of Army offices, AGR Lieutenant Colonels Victor Correa and Isabelle Slifer, both assigned to the Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel, Headquarters, Department of the Army, helped others escape the building. News accounts report that many survivors remember being guided by Correa's booming voice, guiding them to safety through the blinding smoke.

AGR Lt. Col. Sean Kelly and a co-worker, Capt. Darrell Oliver, lifted a desk off of a secretary. Oliver then put the woman on his back and carried her out of the Pentagon.

An AGR officer assigned to ODCSPER, Lt. Col. David Scales, was among the 125 Pentagon workers killed.



As the Pentagon evacuated following the attack, many Army Reservists moved to where they could help.

Col. Malcolm B. Westcott, Deputy Chief of the Army Reserve (DCAR), and Brig. Gen. John W. Weiss, Commanding General of the 330th Medical Brigade, Fort Sheridan, Ill., the latter at the Pentagon for the ARFPC meeting, moved to where an open-air emergency triage area had been set up on the grass near the Pentagon and started helping the injured. They knew they could help.

Westcott is a former medic who has earned the Expert Field Medical Badge and Weiss is a Clinical Assistant Professor in the Department of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine at the University of Wisconsin, as well as a Transfusion Medicine Physician. For a while, they ceased being two senior Army Reserve officers and did what came instinctively.

"I'm a medic first, I'm the DCAR second," Westcott later said.

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Also helping to treat the injured was Col. Ed Wakayama, an Army Reserve Medical Service Corps officer on a one-year tour of duty with the Director for Operational Test and Evaluation, Office of the Secretary of Defense. After exiting the building, he helped perform triage and administered IVs to those who were in shock and who had lost body fluids. He then turned to help the Red Cross in setting up blood draw operations.

More Army Reservists headed to the Pentagon from nearby Crystal City. Capt. Calvin Wineland from OCAR Operations, rushed from a computer class at the Presidential Plaza to check on his children at the Pentagon childcare center. He found them and his wife, Maj. Desiree Wineland, another AGR officer assigned to OCAR in the Public Affairs and Liaison Directorate. All were safe in the area where the children had been relocated after the plane hit. She had sprinted to the childcare center from OCAR's offices in Crystal City.

Before he could take his family home in their Sport Utility Vehicle, Wineland was stopped and asked to take a badly burned soldier to the hospital. Along with an Army major, an Air force technical sergeant and several Department of the Army civilians, Wineland unloaded the SUV and they put the soldier in the back. When their police escort hesitated to leave the area with all that was taking place at the Pentagon, a Navy sailor on a motorcycle came along and said that he would act as an escort to the hospital.

Led by the sailor motorcyclist, they made a mad dash for the hospital, running over sidewalks, medians, and going against traffic to get the wounded soldier there. When they arrived at the hospital, the motorcyclist admitted that he had never been to Georgetown's Medstar Hospital but somehow he led them directly there.

Other Army Reservists also did what they could to help. Command Sgt. Maj. of the Army Reserve Alex Ray Lackey and his Executive Assistant, Sgt. First Class Paul Mantha, formed a litter team, which included an Army lieutenant general and a colonel.

Photo by Master Sgt. Jacqueline Gopie

The fire from the burning airplane and reports of other airplanes approaching the Pentagon kept the litter teams back. They found other ways to support an army of firefighters and other rescue personnel that now descended on the Pentagon.

Retired Army Reserve Col. William Croom, Assistant Deputy, and AGR Lt. Col. Douglas Thomson, the Executive Officer and Assistant for Army Reserve Logistics, were both in their Pentagon offices when the attack occurred.

The force of the impact was so great that it flung people against the wall or out of their chairs. Croom and Thomson went into action immediately. Their concern was to get people evacuated and to secure the area.

For seven hours after exiting the building, Croom and Thomson assisted medical personnel as litter bearers moving injured people to a safe place, setting up triage sites, and also acting as comforters to soothe distraught victims.

Maj. Michael Coughlin of the OCAR Legal Counsel's Office, became the senior Army representative at the on-site FBI Command Post, helping to coordinate information. He later helped set up the temporary morgue.

His final act of the day, after midnight, was to coordinate with the Arlington County (Va.) Fire Department to have the first American flag, contributed by the U.S. Marines at Quantico, flown at the impact site.

While all this was taking place at the Pentagon, there was an even greater tragedy unfolding in New York City. Army Reservists were at "Ground Zero," too. Included in the thousands of people in the World Trade Center and the hundreds of firefighters and rescue workers lost while trying to rescue them were a number of Army Reserve soldiers.

"Among the hundreds of firefighters who lost their lives when the twin towers collapsed are at least five of our own — Army Reserve soldiers carrying out their civilian jobs to help their fellow citizens, " said Lt. Gen. Thomas J. Plewes, Chief, Army Reserve, one week after the attacks. "We are still learning of others who are missing."

Many of the first to respond came from the South Manhattan District fire battalion. The fire battalion commander is Bill Blaich, an Army Reserve colonel who is an Individual Mobilization Augmentee with the Military Traffic Management Command.

Days later, he was able to get to a computer and send out an email, explaining to his superiors at MTMC that he was

Photos by Sgt. 1st Class Christina Steiner

(l-r) A view of "ground zero" near the former World Trade Center five days after the terrorist attack. Lt. Gen. Thomas J. Plewes, Chief, Army Reserve and 77th Regional Support Command commander Brig. Gen. Richard Colt confer.

unable to be activated for Reserve duty. He had been on the Staten Island Ferry moving to the World Trade Center when Tower 1 collapsed.

"This week has been a horror," he wrote. "Lower Manhattan collapsed. I can't answer your request for 72-hour activation at this time. As soon as the situation stabilizes I will gladly toss my name into the ring.

"Regards to all and thanks for keeping me in your thoughts. A little prayer for the missing wouldn't hurt either. We're looking for over 350 firefighters alone."

His firefighter son was on the 25th floor of Tower 1 when it collapsed. Blaich called his wife when he found out he had been found alive and gave her the one-word answer that meant their son was okay: "Yes!"

Blaich is a Vietnam veteran. An Army Reservist since 1972, he was called up for duty during the Gulf War and later for Haiti. Now he is a veteran of a new war.

Other Army Reservists saw the tragedy as it came towards them. Army Reservist Thomas Sullivan was on the 95th floor of the World Trade Center when he looked out the window and saw the first airliner headed right toward him. It hit higher up and he was able to escape the building.

Roshan Singh had just finished Army Reserve training earlier this year. He felt he had an obligation to his country while also pursuing his career goals to become an engineer. He and his sister, Khamla, both worked at the Windows on the World restaurant atop the north tower. Both have been missing since September 11.

Retired Army Reserve Col. Rick Rescorla was security chief for Morgan Stanley Dean Witter at the World Trade Center. He was a combat veteran of Vietnam and a hero during the 1993 World Trade Center bombing. Survivors report that he was a hero this time, too, helping people to evacuate the building. Among the missing, it seems this time his luck ran out.

Three days after the attacks, on September 14, President George W. Bush ordered a partial mobilization of up to 50,000 reservists (10,000 from the Army Reserve Components).

"This indicates just how serious these attacks were for America," said the Chief of the Army Reserve. "During the Gulf War, we had a Presidential Selected Reserve Call-up less than three weeks after Iraq invaded Kuwait, but a partial mobilization did not occur until five and a half months later."

As in 1990, however, the Army Reserve was already engaged before the partial mobilization order was ordered. Ten days after the attacks, the Army Reserve had seven units, one installation, six facilities and around 2300 personnel involved in support of operations.

Among the first to respond was the 77th Regional Support Command (RSC), which is headquartered in Flushing, N.Y. Key to the 77th's quick reaction were a trained and functioning Emergency Operations Center and responsive units. Hundreds of support items were appropriated and delivered in short order to assist in the disaster recovery effort. A laundry and bath unit quickly set up to support the mortuary operation.

Eighty-five soldiers of the 311th Quartermaster Company (Mortuary Affairs), 65th RSC, from Puerto Rico, left home on Friday, September 14. The next day, they were getting settled at Fort Myer, Va. By Monday, 17 September, they were at work on the grim task of recovering remains from the Pentagon attack and preparing them for shipment to Dover Air Force Base in Delaware for identification.

For some of the 311th's soldiers, that Friday was their first drill with the unit since graduating from Advanced Individual Training at Fort Lee, Va., a few weeks earlier. Keeping a close eye on them as they perform this difficult

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Photo by Pedro Silva

(left) Sgt Jean Paul Villanueva hugging his son Jean Carlo as he gets ready to depart for the airport. (below) The Honorable Anibal Acevedo-vila (below), Congressional representative and Resident Commissioner for the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the Hon. Anibal Acevedo-Vila (left), jokes with 1st Lt. Hector Martinez, Commander of the 311th Quartermaster Company as Brig. Gen Collis Phillips, Commander of the 65th Regional Support Command shakes hands with one of the unit's youngest members, Spc. Juan Mendez.

Photo by Master Sgt. Vicki Washington

mission will be a strong core of experienced leaders. Several of their NCOs were with the company when it deployed to the Persian Gulf and know first-hand the sort of work they are required to perform in the area next to the Pentagon.

Plewes envisioned calling up a limited number of units for as short a period as possible as Army Reserve call-ups began under the partial mobilization on Sept. 22. Some continued or replenished recovery operations, because many of the Army Reserve soldiers supporting Army missions and assisting with disaster recovery are on a long-term mission. Other units are augmenting force protection activities at installations and other sites. Still others may be called to prepare for and support new operations.

Additionally, a large number of volunteers and inactive Army Reserve soldiers have stepped forward and offered to serve.

Since the first minutes of the attacks, Army Reserve citizen-soldiers have performed in the highest traditions of courage and self-sacrifice. The men and women of the Army Reserve are ready to do what the National Command Authority demands and what the Nations expects of them. **(Lt. Col. Pullen is with the Public Affairs and Liaison Directorate, Office of the Chief, Army Reserve, Washington DC)**

A will to live

By Staff Sgt. Patricia Ruth

After all that she had just gone through, she managed to place that usual smile on her face when she saw her fellow soldiers entering her hospital room. Sgt. Janice Jackson, former soldier in the 9th Theater Support Command (TSC), was one of the survivors in the Pentagon tragedy. She suffered third degree burns over parts of her body, but is in good spirits. She was at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in the burn unit.

Sgt. Jackson, the single mother of two girls— Sherica and Jasmine, assumed that Tuesday morning would be just like any other morning. After getting to work and hearing about the planes crashing into the World Trade Center, she and her co-workers began talking about the incident.

A short time later, Sgt. Jackson recalls that she heard a loud crash and before she knew it, debris was everywhere. "My main focus was getting out of there." stated Sgt Jackson and she began looking for an exit. She noticed a big hole in the wall and proceeded to exit through it with her co-workers. Raquel Kelley, one of Jackson's co-workers, got stuck coming out and yelled for Jackson to help her.

She returned to help her co-worker through the hole and immediately afterwards realized that she was on fire. Jackson said she literally crawled on her hands and knees through the fire, suffering burns to her head, neck, back,