

Lessons Learned From The Pentagon - Post September 11

Jennifer L. Castro

Marine Corps History and Museums Division

National Museum of the Marine Corps

Lessons Learned From The Pentagon - Post September 11

Background: Each of the DoD services has a responsibility to collect, preserve, and interpret the operational, technological, and cultural aspects of the development of their service, and with that came the mission of documenting the September 11th terrorist attack on the Pentagon.

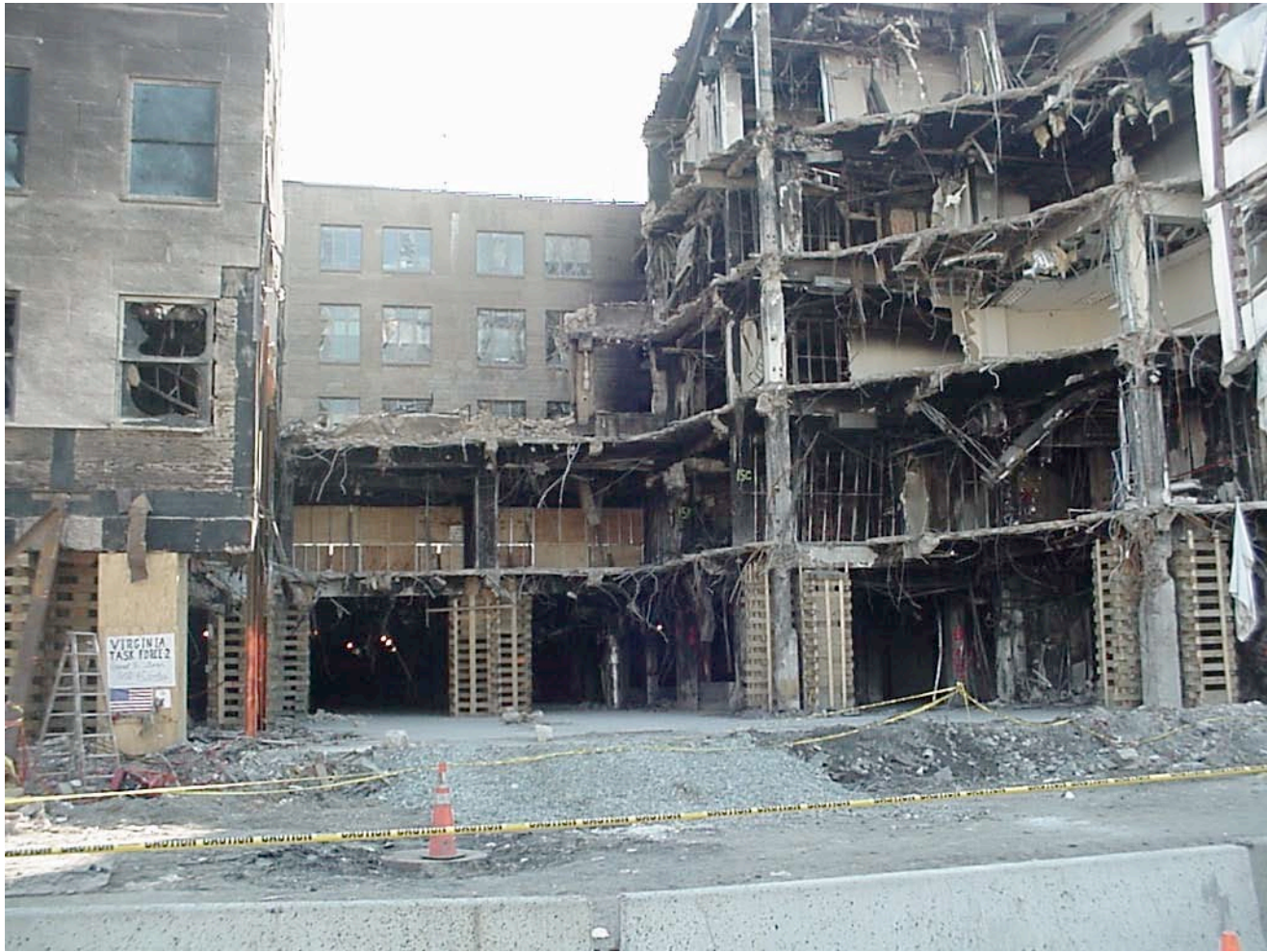
Objective/Mission

1. To account for and recover property loaned to the different offices at the Pentagon.
2. To document the attack on the Pentagon - the event, it's impact, and the aftermath.
3. Collecting guidelines developed based on what was known early in the operation. Collection efforts focused on:
 - a. Artifacts relating to the attack.
 - b. Artifacts related to the recovery from the attack.
 - c. Artifacts reflecting the relief effort for the recovery workers.
 - d. Artifacts reflecting the Memorial aspect of the site.
 - e. Artifacts related to the DoD services and America's response to the attack.
4. The Office of the Secretary of Defense designated the Naval Historical Center as the lead agency for documentation and recovery efforts.

Determining the Scope of Work

- Access and security
- We had to develop a relationship and work with:
 - Law enforcement (FBI, DPS, civilian police)
 - Construction and Pentagon Renovation crews
 - Armed services staff
- Staffing
 - We established a core staff of curators from each of the services











Crime Scene

- Pentagon site was treated as a Federal crime scene
- The Recovery Team needed to work closely with the law enforcement community and emergency services
- The Recovery Team was not able to access site until 27 September and actual access to secured areas of building was not granted until 3 October, 17 days after the attack





FBI
SEARCH
←

Equipment

- The Joint Recovery Team had no disaster recovery equipment on hand and no equipment for this scope of work
- We borrowed needed equipment from each service and the construction crews
- Were unable to use material handling equipment like carts and dollies



Safety

- Required to have a structural engineer present
- We were not allowed to move any furnishings or other items
- Had to be careful not to congregate all in one area of a room or hallway
- Personal protective gear was a must!







Hazards

- The building structure and environment had been severely compromised
- Equipment required:
 - Helmets
 - Safety shoes
 - Dust masks
 - Flashlights
 - Tyvek suits (required as of 3 October)
 - Gloves (rubber ones as of 3 October)
- Not all of the equipment needed was on hand











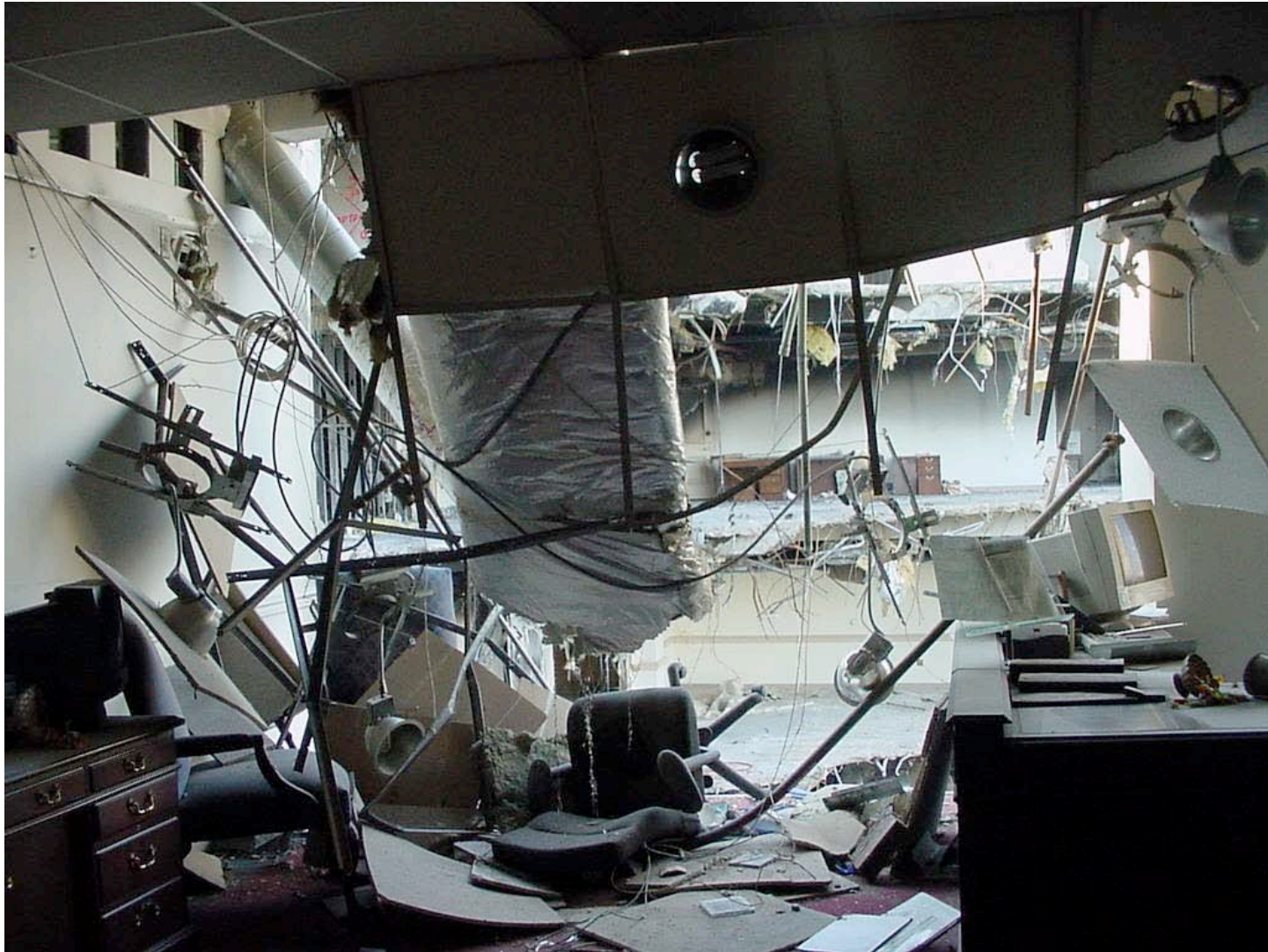
Communication

- Recovery team had no communication equipment
- Personal cell phones were used (and worked only outside the building)
- Hand held radios or cell phones would have enabled us to cover more areas and we would have accomplished more in the time allotted

Removal and Staging of Historic Property

- Adapted and improvised along the way
- A structural engineer had to be present at all times
- Required to wear safety equipment due to contamination issues
- No staging area was available









Results

- Recovered almost all of the loaned art and artifacts
- Documented the attack by obtaining historically significant items from the Pentagon
- Obtained personal and official accounts from Pentagon workers of the attack and its aftermath







THE ART LOSS REGISTER Object ID



14 5:54 PM

NOTICE
This document is for use only with the Art Loss Register.
Unauthorized distribution, reproduction, or use of this document is prohibited. For more information, please contact the Art Loss Register at 100, 10th Street, New York, NY 10003.



Lessons Learned- Pentagon Experience

- Crime scene and chains of command were a challenge
- Physical hazards
- Outside documentation and collection efforts sometimes conflicted
- DoD service historical offices were not staffed well enough
- Recording the event as a team meant having good communications
- We were not equipped to deal with the scope of this event

Lessons Learned

- Take stewardship issues seriously
- Chains of command need to be clear and support timely action
- Think out of the box
- Be prepared! Have a disaster recovery team that is properly equipped, trained, and supported by your Museum
- Have copies of ALL collection databases, images and negatives of artwork digitized and stored at a separate and secure location from the Museum itself