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## Sept. 11 Revisited

By SUSAN H. MEISNER, OFFICE OF CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS

**The National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency** (NGA) celebrates 15 years of geospatial intelligence as the nation remembers 9/11. NGA—then the National Imagery and Mapping Agency (NIMA)—was a youthful organization in 2001, still developing its processes, procedures and culture. The events of Sept. 11 supercharged those changes and launched a new era for the Agency, for the Department of Defense and for the Intelligence Community.

Following are two of the stories from the October 2001 Edge, the precursor to today's Pathfinder magazine.

***A Horrible View from the Washington Navy Yard***  
BY PAUL HURLBURT, EDGE EDITOR (ABRIDGED VERSION FROM THE OCTOBER 2001 ISSUE OF THE EDGE)

Gail Betts-Anderson and her staff, Lyndell Walker and Barry Harrelson, have a commanding view from their 6th-floor offices in Building 213 at the Washington Navy Yard. In Betts-Anderson's office, the view is across a widening Potomac toward America's military center, the Pentagon.

As symbols of freedom and power, these buildings normally provide an inspiring and reassuring sight, but the morning of Sept. 11 the view across the river horrified NIMA employees. In the words of Betts-Anderson, Chief of the NIMA Research Division Washington operations (DSRW), what they saw was a sky full of "pitch black smoke."

Earlier that morning, Betts-Anderson was providing feedback to promotion applicants. Michael Betts, a division chief in the Imagery Analysis Office and her brother, had knocked on her door with the New York news.

"Terrorists have attacked the World Trade buildings. Keep your eyes open," she recalled him saying.

It wasn't long before Betts-Anderson's branch chief, Barry Harrelson, knocked. "Look out the window!" he exclaimed.

"Everything fell apart when the black smoke appeared," said Betts-Anderson. "I said, 'Oh, my, what's going on?' Somebody said, 'It looks like the Pentagon's been hit!'"

Almost immediately, Harrelson reappeared to report the news the Pentagon had been struck.

Minutes later, employees began evacuating the upper floors, as supervisors notified them. They regrouped on the windowless first two floors, but were soon told they could leave the building. None of Betts-Anderson's people did, she said, except for a worried employee located at a remote site in the Information Services Branch, Reggie Carver. His sister, Sharon Carver, worked at the Pentagon as an Army civilian. She was missing and later listed as a victim.

"They had the option to go, but we are a family," Betts-Anderson said. With responsibility for the NIMA Map Library at the Pentagon and providing support to imagery analysis operations

there, she and her staff were concerned about colleagues across the river. They also knew there was much work to be done. Contacting the Pentagon staff, of course, was top priority but keeping operations going, they knew, would be essential.

When Harrelson finally got through to the Pentagon Map Library senior team lead, David Armstead, about 4 p.m., he learned that all NIMA personnel were safe.

That afternoon Research Division staff led by Chief David Kraus, who also works at the Navy Yard, met with counterparts from Customer Operations, Imagery Analysis and other NIMA offices to formulate contingency operations. Immediately, the Research Division began a 24/7 schedule for NIMA East sites, with personnel from Bethesda and the Navy Yard supplementing the Pentagon Map Library. The next day Armstead resumed operations at his normal location in the Pentagon after Betts-Anderson determined that there was connectivity and no damage.

A normal workday Sept. 11 turned out to be their last on Earth for many. It turned out to be a long and traumatic day that lasted into the night for Research Division employees and staff. ✨

## ***NIMA Team at Pentagon Moves into Action***

BY PAUL HURLBURT, EDGE EDITOR (REPRINTED FROM THE OCTOBER 2001 ISSUE OF THE EDGE)

“NIMA personnel are located all over the Pentagon,” notes Air Force Lt. Col. Ted Barco, NIMA Liaison to the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy. As members of the NIMA Support Team Pentagon, led by Navy Cmdr. Roland de Jesus, these personnel provide on-the-scene support to the National Military Joint Intelligence Center (NMJIC), Joint Staff and Under Secretary of Defense for Policy.

When the hijacked airliner crashed into the Pentagon on Sept. 11, the NIMA Support Team immediately moved to a crisis mode, while the tragedy unfolded around them. “Commander de Jesus remained in the building and began calling in personnel [to meet the crisis],” said Andrew Mason, Chief of the NIMA Support Team Pentagon Operations Desk. The NIMA Support Team is made up of the Pentagon Imagery Center (PIC) and the Pentagon Support Center (PSC).

Mason said he deployed with elements of the J2 (Joint Chiefs of Staff, Intelligence) to an alternate facility, as a contingency measure, as did NIMA Technical Representative Jerry Hiller and Imagery Liaison Officers Brent Guernsey and Lyle Schrupf. The Director, J2 and Director of the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) remained at the Pentagon.



Photo by John Iler

Gail Betts-Anderson and her staff Lyndell Walker, left, and Barry Harrelson saw a horrible scene from the 6th floor of Building 213 on Sept. 11.

Says Barco, “The Ops Desk in the NMJIC is one of the best examples of NIMA personnel working together to get the information edge to the customer”—evident in the Pentagon’s response to the terrorists. “This outstanding teamwork and support includes NIMA’s Pentagon Map Library, Remote Replication Service and tech reps and imagery analysts” assigned elsewhere in the Pentagon, Barco added. “We are a big closely interrelated team here.”

The NMJIC is the central body for the management of national military intelligence operations. With ties to DIA, the NMJIC supports the intelligence needs of the Joint Staff and unified commanders, focusing on global indications and warning, operational intelligence and national targeting support. ✨

### Sept. 11 Revisited

Following are updates from Paul Hurlburt, who wrote these stories back in 2001 and retired from NGA in 2007; Ted Barco, on duty at the Pentagon on Sept. 11 and now with NGA’s Inspector General’s Office; and Gail Betts-Anderson, then chief of the NIMA Research Division at the Washington Navy Yard and now senior staff officer to the Enterprise Operations Directorate technical executive. They reflect 10 years later on events of the day and changes since.

**Paul Hurlburt, editor of the NIMA Edge magazine in 2001:** “Arriving at the Pentagon two weeks after it was struck, I discovered our map library operating 24/7 to meet the demand for our products from an ‘insatiable military community.’ This was just one example of how our agency scrambled to meet the demands of our customers fighting back in the ensuing global war on terrorism, as it was then called. In the next six years as editor, I had the thrill of helping to track and share with readers breakthrough advances from every corner of the agency. So, it was no surprise when I read in the national media of the key role NGA played in the capture and killing of Osama bin Laden. While we can never forget what happened on Sept. 11, 2001, 10 years later we can say we have come a long way.”

**Air Force Lt. Col. Ted Barco, NIMA liaison to the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy in 2001:** “9/11 provided us a wealth of opportunities to confront assumptions we understood to be examples of common sense wisdom, which in reality often worked against our national, organizational and/or personnel

interests. As a result 9/11 changed how I saw the world, reignited my intellectual curiosity and renewed the strength of character I needed to comprehend and challenge the Gordian Knot (intractable problem) of assumptions within my own profession.

“Though the agency has also significantly changed, in many ways it has come full circle. Leading up to 9/11 we were piloting the design of a narrow class of very contextually rich geospatial intelligence products for senior Office of the Secretary of Defense decision makers. By Sept. 11, working with P (Analysis and Production Directorate), we had proactively developed almost 30 such products, which enabled the nation’s policymakers to quickly respond to emerging developments in a post-9/11 world.

“Fast forward 10 years and today the agency has got it about right; only by broadening and deepening analytic expertise can we hope to put GEOINT in the hands of the user when and where it is required. At the heart of this calculus lies profound questions relative to how we hire, develop, certify and posture our workforce with the insights and technical acumen needed to address today’s challenges and tomorrow’s opportunities.”

**Gail Betts-Anderson, chief of the NIMA Research Division Washington operations in 2001:** “My children at the time were ages nine and three; my daughter is now entering her last year of college and my son is entering high school this fall. Sept. 11 changed their lives forever. They are now part of the world where passengers are lined up—taking off their belts and shoes so strangers can run their hands around their waists. Signs warn them to report any suspicious activity. Dealing rationally with the risks of terrorism is hard; catastrophes are not supposed to happen to us (Americans). For the first time we have this fear factor in our lives. This is one of the reasons I volunteered to support my country—leaving my family for six months to support our troops in Afghanistan. I had life experiences there I will never forget, including visiting the hospital and seeing personnel severely wounded from a suicide bomber. We need to be proactive and use a more rational approach to protect ourselves from terrorism, as well as use our technology and intelligence to outsmart the bad guys.” ✨

## 9/11 Remembered by NGA Employees Who Lived to Tell the Tale

BY KATHI GHANNAM, CONTRACTOR, OFFICE OF CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS

**At 9:37 a.m. on Tuesday, Sept. 11, 2001, as** people inside the Pentagon watched the news and saw an airplane hit the second twin tower in New York City—American Airlines flight 77, a Boeing 757 airliner, struck the southwest portion of the Pentagon’s E-ring.

Cindy Wright, then Deputy Chief of the National Imagery and Mapping Agency (NIMA) Analysis and Production Operations Center (NOC-P), and colleague Amy Joe Bizub were traversing the bridge that spans Route 110 from the Pentagon to the North parking lot when the plane hit. Luggage in hand, they were supposed to be on their way to St. Louis.

“We didn’t see anything at first,” said Wright, now deputy director of the Office of Americas. “We just heard two loud thumps, like the sound of tractor trailers hitting metallic plates on the highway. Moments later we saw smoke and smelled the sweet-sour odor of burning jet fuel.”

Wright recalled that after several seconds of silence, alarms rang out and floods of people came running from the building yelling, “Get out of here and don’t go back in the building.” Said Wright, “Some appeared to be in shock, others were crying and still others wore looks of sheer fear. Everyone knew at this point we were at war.”

One of the most memorable and moving moments for Wright was witnessing the evacuation of the Pentagon’s Day Care Center; the magnitude of what was happening really hit home when she saw the staff rush the children out of the area at break-neck speed.

Until all air traffic was grounded shortly after 10 a.m., there were thought to be as many as six to eight additional planes aloft and ferrying suicidal hijackers. With the fear of additional strikes looming, Pentagon security forces directed the crowds amassed at their rallying points to move further away, almost to the Potomac’s waterline.

At about 1 p.m., as Wright, Bizub and another NOC-P colleague, Army Sgt. Joelle Jackson, approached the building hoping to retrieve their car keys, security representatives asked if they would aid in search and recovery efforts. They returned to the burning building and stayed until 10:30 p.m., laying out body bags delivered to the center courtyard and waiting to assist with recovery of the dead or injured.

During the initial chaos, taking accountability for all NOC-P personnel proved a great challenge; it took the staff four hours to determine everyone was fine. As they located each other, employees embraced and gave thanks for being alive.

Once fire and rescue personnel gave the “all clear,” Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld declared the terrorists were not going to close down the Pentagon. He was determined the building be reoccupied the next day. It was.

On that bright, beautiful fall morning, incoming NIMA Director retired Air Force Lt. Gen. James R. Clapper Jr. (now the Director of National Intelligence) arrived in Bethesda for his second day of transition to his new job. By Friday of that week, Clapper was squarely at the helm—reorganizing the agency to more effectively address the clear and present threat.

Three women from NOC-P experienced a day they will always remember, a defining moment for both them and the nation. ✨



NGA Photo by Rob Cox

Cindy Wright