

Attack on the Pentagon

The Medical Response to 9/11

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Foreword

“9/11”—a day that changed our lives and the world. The course of those several hours on the 11th of September 2001 affected individuals, institutions, and nations. Mary Ellen Condon-Rall tells the story of the medical response to the Pentagon as ground zero through the eyes of many of those individuals and, in so doing, paints a picture that no single view can capture. The quiet professionalism demonstrated that day, and so well described in this book, captures the values the Army, and all of our military services, have espoused: loyalty, duty, selfless service, honor, integrity, personal courage. Amid the chaos there was self-motivation; to the ever changing circumstances there was rapid adaptation and readaptation. As the immediate consequences were addressed, the longer-term response and recovery was being considered and steps taken to address future needs. This was the visible response—men and women of all ranks, military and civilian, caring for their coworkers shoulder to shoulder.

At the same time the work of the Pentagon moved from a peacetime to a war footing. From the determined workforce that reported back the next day, appreciating the importance of their roles in a dramatically changed world, to the most senior leaders of the Army who led recovery efforts with sensitivity and compassion while at the same time planning our military response to the heinous acts of that day, this is a story of great Americans galvanized to action and service to the nation. It is a tribute to personal intrepidity, to institutional resilience, and to the preparation and training that led not only to needed medical and organizational skills but also to the culture of service-above-self demonstrated in the instinctive behavior captured in this recounting. That infamous day began a decade of medical advances on the battlefield, across the evacuation chain, and in the recovery and rehabilitation of our wounded warriors. Many of those whose

actions are cataloged in this book have been an integral part of that remarkable story and many continue to make that history today.

JAMES B. PEAKE, MD
Lieutenant General (Ret), U.S. Army
6th Secretary of Veterans Affairs
Senior Vice President, CGI Federal
June 2011

Preface

No one medical service could have handled the response to 9/11 on its own. Therefore, I have placed the story in the context of the Army Medical Department's interaction with other medical responders: the US Navy, Air Force, and civilian medical facilities and organizations. Also, I did not limit the account to 9/11/2001, but continued it through the months and, in the case of the concluding chapter, years that followed. The narrative first focuses on the immediate medical response at the Pentagon, and the medical transition to recovery on the first day. The story then moves to Army Medical Department headquarters in Falls Church, Virginia, and San Antonio, Texas, where Army Medical Command (MEDCOM) personnel monitored the response. Accounts of the Army's involvement in the recovery of deceased attack victims at the Pentagon and the work of the Armed Forces Institute of Pathology in identifying human remains at Dover Air Force Base follow. The roles of military and civilian hospital staffs and of military environmental health and mental health specialists in taking care of attack victims and their families are also examined. Late in the volume I include a chapter on New York City because military medical forces also responded to ground zero. The telling of this story, mainly through the eyes of two MEDCOM officers detailed to New York to support National Guard troops guarding ground zero's perimeter, may provide valuable insights on how to respond to similar events in the future.

A theme that stands out in the telling of this story is that preparation and training paid off. When these attributes were weak or absent, responders encountered problems. In Washington, DC, and New York City, MEDCOM put into effect existing disaster response plans. As a result, military medical response needs, including supplies, were with few exceptions already in place. However, responders needed to learn how to use volunteers effectively and how to improve control of medical personnel, equipment, and supplies.

It would be impractical to list all of the people who have generously helped in producing this volume. However, I must give recognition and special thanks to the following. I am indebted to four historians who gave unstintingly of their time, skill, and energy to reviewing the manuscript: Major Lew Barger of the Office of

the Surgeon General's Office of Medical History; Robert JT Joy, MD, of the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences; William B Hammond, PhD, of the US Army Center of Military History; and John T Greenwood, PhD, Director, Office of Medical History. My understanding of the events benefited greatly from their perceptive comments and constructive suggestions.

Talented colleagues at the Office of Medical History were ready to lend a hand. Office director John T Greenwood and acting director (after John retired) Major Richard Prior provided me with counsel and encouragement. Archivists Debbie Gerlock and Lisa Wagner helped in finding materials, and administrative assistant Annita Ferencz in producing supportive graphics.

Many others are deserving of praise. Jan Herman, of the US Navy's Bureau of Medicine and Surgery, and Stephen Lofgren and Frank Shirer of the US Army Center of Military History helped me find relevant sources and answers to my many questions. The after-action reports, as well as countless e-mails, of Lieutenant Colonel Stephen Wallace and Colonel Robert M Gum, Army MEDCOM envoys to ground zero, made the New York City chapter possible. I must also thank then Lieutenant Colonel Patricia Horoho (today Lieutenant General and incoming US Army Surgeon General) and Malcolm Nance for their invaluable personal tour of the Pentagon crash site, including descriptions of medical responders' actions on 9/11.

This book would not have been possible without having at my disposal more than 200 interviews of medical responders and victims of the 9/11 attack. I am indebted to the oral history teams of the OTSG Office of Medical History (Major Debora R Cox, Major Robert Glisson, and John Greenwood); the US Navy Bureau of Medicine and Surgery (Lara Bronstein, Jan Herman, and Janice M Hores); the US Army's Center of Military History (Leo Hirrel, Specialist First Class Dennis Lopic, Master Sergeant Donna Majors, Lieutenant Colonel Robert Russo, Austin Shellenberger, and Frank Shirer); the US Air Force History Support Office (Perry Jamieson); and the Office of the Air Force Surgeon General (James S Nanney).

I gleaned insights and observations from a great many e-mail exchanges with medical responders to 9/11. Some outstandingly helpful e-mails came from Lieutenant Colonel Wallace; Colonel Gum; Lieutenant Colonel Horoho; Malcolm Nance; Major Lorrie A Brown; Lieutenant Colonel Edward B Lucci; Joe E Collins; Colonel Steven L Cardenas; Navy Captain Glenn Wagner; Marion H Jordan, MD; John J Resta; Colonel Elspeth C Ritchie; Bernard F Hebron; David Fallert; Daniel Hanfling, MD; Lieutenant Colonel Floyd Burgher; and Colonel Walter Rivera.

A number of organizations and individuals donated photographs, for which I am grateful. Among the organizations are US Army Center for Health Promotion and Preventive Medicine; DiLorenzo Tricare Health Clinic; Armed Forces Institute of Pathology; New York Army National Guard; Federal Emergency Management Agency; Walter Reed Army Medical Center; DeWitt Army Community Hospital; Georgetown University Hospital; Washington Hospital Center; Virginia Hospital Center, Arlington; Inova HealthPlex Emergency Care Center; Arlington

Urgent Care; and George Washington University Hospital. Individuals who donated photographs include Lieutenant Colonel Wallace, Colonel Gum, and Lisa Nelson-Firing (of Therapy Dogs).

Finally, Joan Redding of the Borden Institute edited the volume. Her meticulousness, literary skill, hard work, and attention to detail improved the flow of the narrative and the accuracy of the references. Her unflagging spirit and endless enthusiasm successfully steered the book through the publication process.

Many people gave willingly of their time, knowledge, and materials to support me in telling this amazing and poignant story. The book is a better product because of their kindness and generosity. For the conclusions, interpretations, and any errors of fact in the volume, I alone am responsible.

Mary Ellen Condon-Rall
June 2011

