

## In the Vicinity Before Impact

### 2. At the Pentagon crash site

**Due to a White House-scheduled event, the Secret Service was at the Pentagon crash site area prior to impact. Due to that prescheduled event a fire crew was already on the scene.**

"Anniversary of Agony," by Ryan Alessi and M.E. Sprengelmeyer, Scripps Howard News Service, September 11, 2002 (excerpt):

**The morning of Sept. 11** was crystal clear in Washington, still summer warm. It would be easy to relax on a morning like that, but outside the Pentagon, firefighter Alan Wallace and the safety crew at the Pentagon's heliport pad already were too busy.

**President Bush was scheduled to fly from Florida that afternoon, and his helicopter, Marine One, would carry him to the Pentagon. Secret Service was everywhere and their cars blocked the driveway.**

So the meticulous **Wallace moved his fire truck out of the way, parking it about 15 feet from the Pentagon.** That's when Wallace got a call from his chief at nearby Fort Myer telling him of the attacks in New York and to be on alert.

**Minutes later, Wallace and his buddy Mark Skipper looked up and saw the gleam of a silver jetliner.** But it was flying too low. Maybe less than 25 feet off the ground. **And it was heading right at them.**

William Yeingst, September 11 Collecting Curator, Museum Specialist, Division of Social History of the National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution:

**Just prior to the impact there were three firemen on the helipad at the Pentagon. The president was supposed to land at the helipad two hours after the impact, and so they had just pulled the foam truck out of the firehouse and were standing there when they looked up and saw the plane coming over the Navy Annex building.**

**. . . They were knocked to the ground by the concussion . . .**

They got out and looked, and **the whole back of the fire truck had melted.** So they turned their attention to trying to rescue people from the building and went over and helped people escape from the building.

This transcript can be found at the Smithsonian Institution's website at:  
<http://americanhistory.si.edu/september11/collection/transcript.asp?ID=6>