

Security and Safety

Securing the Capitol after the Attacks

Personal account of how the Capitol was secured after the attacks on September 11th.

James Varey, Chief, U.S. Capitol Police

Interview recorded May 18, 2011

I stayed there in the office, and on through the night, and I would go back in to my office, you know, for an hour here or an hour there, to catnap in the chair, and just wait, you know, for further developments. I didn't actually go home until, oh, oh, it was almost midnight, of the following day before I got out, got out of the Capitol. We were, we were constantly on the telephones with the Washington field office, the agent in charge of the Washington field office, monitoring the situations there in the Washington-area. We were on the telephone with the FBI Command and Control Center, there at FBI Headquarters. We were talking to the FBI officials. We were talking to FAA authorities, you know, continually during the course of the afternoon, and the evening, and, you know, the following days of the situation, to assess, you know, what had transpired and, you know, what had happened. And they were, I might add, very good in terms of feeding us the intelligence that they had. It was a very extensive, collaborative effort, on the part of, of all of the agencies involved. We, as I recall also, established, enhanced our command and control center there at police headquarters. We brought in people from other agencies, and set them up with stations there at our command and control center. We had the Metropolitan Police there, we had the Capitol—excuse me, we had the FBI representation there. We had Secret Service representation there. It just went on, and on, and on. FAA had people there, and so forth. So that we didn't have to get on the phone ourselves and wait. We could just reach out to the people that were working with us, in our command center, and ask them to track this rumor down, or track that rumor down, or can you give us an update on, on what you have relative to this intelligence, or that intelligence. So, as the days wore on, the number of people that we had in our command center increased, and of course they were working 12-hour shifts too.