

**MEMORIAL TO THE VICTIMS OF SEPTEMBER 11, 2001**

Pentagon Reservation  
Arlington County, Virginia

Report to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

July 11, 2002

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***Abstract***

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has submitted a preferred location on the Pentagon Reservation for the Memorial to Victims of September 11<sup>th</sup>. On September 11, 2001, American Airlines Flight 77 was hijacked by terrorists and crashed into the Pentagon, killing 59 passengers and crewmembers aboard the aircraft and 125 military and service personnel in the Pentagon, and causing many injuries. The west façade of the building sustained major damage at the area of impact. Section 2864 of Public Law 107-107, the National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal year 2002, gave the Secretary of Defense the authority to establish a memorial on the grounds of the Pentagon to memorialize those innocent victims who lost their lives on September 11, 2001 at the Pentagon. The Corps conducted an analysis of ten potential memorial sites within close proximity to the Pentagon. The preferred site, Site D, is closest to the impact site, with unobstructed views to the west façade of the Pentagon.

The Corps has recently announced an open, two-stage design competition to select an artistic concept for the memorial. The first stage of the competition will be free and open to design professionals, as well as non-professionals. The competition jury will select five of the Stage One submissions to be developed in greater detail during Stage Two. The competition criteria are intended to be relatively broad to encourage artistic creativity. As the memorial design competition progresses, the Corps is encouraged to consider the height and mass of the future memorial so that it does not obstruct the west façade of the Pentagon, a National Historic Landmark.

***Authority***

Approval of site selection pursuant to Section 5 of the National Capital Planning Act of 1952, as amended (40 U.S.C. 71d).

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### *Commission Action*

The Commission:

- **Approves** Site “D,” as shown in the “Pentagon Memorial Site Selection Report” dated January 30, 2002, for the location of a Memorial to Victims of September 11<sup>th</sup> memorializing those who died as a result of the terrorist attack at the Pentagon, as shown on NCPC Map File No. 2105(73.10)41051
- **Recommends** that the Corps, in the preparation of the memorial design criteria and throughout the memorial competition process, consider the height and mass of the future memorial so that it preserves the visual integrity of the Pentagon and does not obstruct the west façade of the building where the terrorist attack occurred.

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### **BACKGROUND AND STAFF EVALUATION**

#### *DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL*

On September 11, 2001, American Airlines Flight 77 was hijacked and flown into the Pentagon in Arlington County, Virginia. The hijacked airline was one of four across the country that day, in what became the worst terrorist event on American soil. Shortly after the terrorist attacks, Congress passed Public Law 107-107, the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2002; Section 2864 gave the Secretary of Defense the authority to establish a memorial on the grounds of the Pentagon to memorialize the victims of the terrorist attack on the Pentagon. The Commission is reviewing the site selection for the Memorial to Victim’s of September 11<sup>th</sup> pursuant to Section 5 of the National Capital Planning Act of 1952. The memorial will be constructed on the grounds of the Pentagon Reservation and is not subject to the Commemorative Works Act of 1986.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Baltimore District, initiated the Pentagon memorial project in October of 2001. Within a month, a Focus Group and Family Steering Committee had been formed. The Focus Group is made up of representatives from the military services and the Pentagon offices, Arlington National Cemetery, approval agencies (NCPC and CFA) and a professional advisor. The Family Steering Committee includes approximately a dozen representatives of the victims’ families and is significantly involved in the memorial project. Throughout the fall of 2001 and into 2002, the Pentagon memorial group identified potential memorial sites and evaluated them according to a number of site location criteria. The preferred location of the Focus Group and the Family Steering Committee quickly became Site D, the site closest to the impact site. The Secretary of Defense has also authorized that the memorial be constructed at the preferred site location.

## Memorial Site Location Criteria

The “Pentagon Memorial Site Selection Report” of January 20, 2002, examined ten potential sites located on the Pentagon reservation or within close proximity. Each of these potential sites was evaluated in the context of the following criteria:

### *Family Acceptability*

- The site should be acceptable to family members of victims killed in the terrorist attack on the Pentagon.

### *Proximity to the Impact Site*

- The site should be located physically as close as possible to the impact site.

### *View of the Impact Site*

- The site should provide for views of the impact site.

### *Public Accessibility*

- The site must be accessible to visitors arriving on foot, by Metro, car, bus or bicycle. It must also be handicapped accessible and be within proximity to parking facilities.

### *Site Availability*

- The site must be authorized for a memorial, and a portion of the site must be available for site preparation and construction beginning in the summer of 2002.

### *Security*

- The site must be capable of being secured, if and when appropriate.

### *Site Size*

- The memorial should not overwhelm the site and should accommodate associated landscaping, as well as provide space for gatherings and ceremonies. The site should be at least 1-2 acres.

### *Utilities and Geotechnical Factors*

- Underground utilities, soil stability, and other physical factors of the site should be accommodated in the development of the memorial.

### *Noise and Activity Level at the Site*

- The site should provide for a feeling of peace and tranquility.

### *Focal Point*

- The site should have physical characteristics suitable for the creation of a memorial that is the focal point of the space.

### *Visual and Physical Context of the Site*

- The site should be compatible with surrounding development, either existing or proposed. The site should provide a positive visual experience from a distance and on approach, both by pedestrians and from vehicles, and should allow for screening of undesirable views.

### Potential Memorial Site Locations

The following sites were identified as potential Pentagon memorial site locations:

#### ***Site A – Metro Entrance Facility (MEF)***

The new MEF on the southeast side of Pentagon replaces the previous location of the bus terminal and Metro access, which had a direct connection to the Pentagon and was deemed to be unsecure. The MEF was constructed to remove the direct access from Metro to the building, and to increase the distance between the buses and the buildings. The project includes a new entrance facility/visitors center, as well as landscaped berms around the new Metro escalators and between the building and the bus terminals. The Commission approved the MEF on March 1, 2001.

#### ***Site B – River Terrace***

The River Terrace is a designed landscape feature of the Pentagon reservation facing the Potomac River, with views of some of Washington's major monuments. It is the most remote frontage of the Pentagon, where formal ceremonies and informal athletic activities occur.

#### ***Site C – Remote Delivery Facility (RDF)***

The RDF is located in front of the north façade of the Pentagon. The RDF was constructed to provide improved physical security and a consolidated location for receiving and screening the thousands of items shipped to the Pentagon daily. The Commission approved the RDF on October 7, 1999. It is a natural extension of the main Pentagon Building, with an aboveground, landscaped promenade used as an urban park for Pentagon employees.

***Site D – Impact Area***

Site D is located on the west side of the Pentagon, close to the south parking lot in an area that is currently used for construction staging for the renovation of the Pentagon and for the replacement of the area destroyed during the terrorist attack. Prior to its use as a construction staging area, this side of the Pentagon was the largest open space area, with the heliport located approximately in the center of the space.

***Site E – South Parking Lot***

This site is located in the portion of the south parking lot closest to the Pentagon. The site area is currently barricaded due to security reasons.

***Site F – Traffic cloverleaf on the east side of Route 27***

This traffic circle is located between the south parking lot and Route 27 and has become the unofficial location for a clear view of the impact site. The cloverleaf is elevated, allowing for views over the construction fencing.

***Site G – Traffic cloverleaf on the west side of Route 27***

This cloverleaf is located across Route 27 to the west and is closest to the Arlington National Cemetery. The property is owned by the Virginia Department of Transportation. Like Site F, this site is also elevated and allows for views of the impact site.

***Site H – Traffic median on west side of Route 27***

Site H is located west of the cloverleaf, on the traffic median in front of the gas station. This is the location that was used by visitors and the press following the terrorist attack.

***Site I – Navy Annex***

The Navy Annex memorial site is located on the hill sloping down toward the road in front of Federal Building 2 (FB -2). This was the site where many visitors went after the attack and placed informal memorials. This is also the site of the proposed Air Force Memorial.

***Site J – Patton Circle***

Patton Circle is located in Arlington National Cemetery, where it is used for organizing funeral corteges several times a day. The impact site is visible from Patton Circle during the fall and winter months when the leaves are off the trees.

**Preferred Site Description**

The irregular, pie-shaped memorial site (Site D) encompasses approximately 2 acres and is located roughly 165 feet from the face of the Pentagon. The site is currently used as a

construction staging area. After the construction equipment is removed, the site will be regraded to slope gently downward from west to east in a bowl-like pattern. The site is adjacent to the access road onto Route 27 northbound. The Pentagon Renovation Office is in the early phases of designing a new access and service road paralleling Route 27 that would remove the two cloverleaves east of Route 27 and reconfigure access to the remote delivery facility. The new road configuration could result in additional area adjacent to the memorial site.

### Memorial Design Competition

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has recently announced an international design competition for a Memorial to Victims of September 11, 2001, at the preferred location on the Pentagon reservation. The Corps has stressed that the major theme of the memorial should be a “dignified and moving testament to the sacrifice” of those killed in the Pentagon terrorist attack.

The open competition will take place in two stages. The tentative competition schedule is listed below:

- September 11, 2002 – Stage One submission deadline.
- September 30 to October 2, 2002 – Jury reviews Stage One submissions.
- October 10, 2002 – Stage One finalists notified.
- December 11, 2002 – Stage Two submission deadline.
- December 13, 2002 – Jury reviews Stage Two submissions.
- December 20, 2002 – Selected design winner notified.

Stage One will be free and open to the public. The jury, made up of professionals, government representatives and a victim’s family member, will select five of the Stage One designs to go forward to the next stage. The five finalists will receive a stipend to complete more detailed design drawings. The competition criteria have not yet been finalized; however, the Corps intends for the memorial criteria to be broad, with no specific requirements governing the size, form or material of the memorial. The criteria will outline certain features that should not be included in the memorial program, including: fully enclosed rooms, internal elevators, escalators, or ancillary memorial functions such as a museum, interpretive center, theatre, or restrooms. There are also necessary security features that must be considered as the memorial is designed, including a secure buffer between the memorial site and the Pentagon, and between the memorial and the helipad to the north (although it may, in the future, be removed).

### *EVALUATION*

Shortly after the tragic events of September 11, 2001 it became clear that a memorial to the victims of the terrorist attack at the Pentagon was crucial. The Corps quickly initiated the Pentagon memorial project and the process of establishing the memorial – the site selection is the first step in that process.

The Corps “Pentagon Memorial Site Selection Report” identifies ten potential memorial sites and evaluates them within the context of locational criteria. All of the sites have both negative and positive characteristics. Sites with serious obstacles were quickly dismissed, and the desires of

the family members were carefully considered. Several of the sites have limited potential for a memorial, and ultimately Site D became a clear choice.

Some of the sites, including Site A, the Metro entrance facility, and Site B, River Terrace, did not provide views to the impact site. Site A, although ideally located adjacent to Metro, was not selected because of excessive pedestrian and bus activity that would likely take away from the desired serenity at the memorial. In addition, there was limited visitor parking within close proximity to Site A. The River Terrace (Site B), while a serene setting, provides some challenges. The ceremonies that take place at the River Terrace use the central panels and, as a result, would make the memorial secondary to the site's main uses. In addition, the memorial would be inaccessible during ceremonies at the River Terrace. Other issues related to Site B are its remoteness from the impact site and the likelihood that it will be affected by the future realignment of Route 110.

Site C, the remote delivery facility (RDF), has a rooftop plaza that would be an excellent urban space that could easily accommodate a memorial. However, this site has one major downfall in that it is a secure site not open to the public. Given the purpose of the RDF, the memorial site could never be publicly accessible because it would compromise the integrity of the secure facility.

Site D is the preferred location, largely because of its proximity to the impact site. The site quickly became a preferred location, especially by family members, one of whom stated, "the site was selected on September 11<sup>th</sup>." The site also provides excellent, unobstructed views to the impact site. There are other practical benefits to this site – the site is located within close proximity to parking, and is within walking distance from the Pentagon Metro station.

Site E, the south parking lot, had some advantages, but it lacks the essential visual access to the impact site. It was also felt that visitors would likely bypass the memorial and continue on to view the actual impact site. Furthermore, the Pentagon has indicated consideration of more development in this area.

The traffic medians and cloverleaves, Sites F, G, and H, provide a host of challenges. First, the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) owns some of the land. Second, the access to Route 27 is likely to change in the future, at least the portion on the Pentagon Reservation, to accommodate safer access to the RDF. Third, traffic noise and congestion is not generally compatible with a memorial of this type. Finally, safety and the lack of parking are other negatives associated with these sites.

Site I, the Navy Annex, does provide good visual access to the impact site, however it is a partially secured site, making public access difficult. Furthermore, the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2002, which also gave the Secretary of Defense the authority to establish a memorial to victims of September 11<sup>th</sup>, authorized this site for the future Air Force Memorial.

Finally, Site J, Patton Circle in Arlington National Cemetery, was not chosen as the future memorial site due to a number of variables. First, the property is not located on the Pentagon Reservation, requiring congressional action to permit the memorial to be built there. Second, the site is used several times a day in preparation for funerals, limiting the availability of the site for a memorial use. Third, although family members initially preferred the site, it was ultimately discouraged because visitors could not drive to the site, but would have to walk approximately ½ mile to reach the site. A group marker for the September 11<sup>th</sup> victims will also be located near this site, making the memorial potentially redundant.

Staff concurs with the preferred memorial site recommended by the Army Corps of Engineers in consultation with the project team – the Focus Group and Family Steering Committee – and the Secretary of Defense. Site D is the closest to the impact site, provides unobstructed visual links to the area where 184 innocent victims were killed, and provides adequate room for such practical considerations such as parking and pedestrian access. Perhaps most importantly, the family members of the victims who lost their lives at the Pentagon on September 11, 2001, and “paid the ultimate price,” prefer the site.

The memorial competition criteria are in the process are being drafted by the Corps and will be available to the public within a short time. The Corps intends for the memorial competition process to be open, and hopes to receive entries from a wide variety of participants, from untrained individuals to experienced design professionals. The draft competition criteria are broad to encourage the highest degree of artistic creativity as possible. Staff has reviewed the draft criteria and finds them generally acceptable. As the guidelines are developed, and as the competition progresses, staff encourages the Corps to consider the height and mass of the future memorial and its visual impact on the Pentagon, a National Historic Landmark. The Corps should ensure that the future memorial will not obstruct the west façade of the Pentagon where the terrorist attack took place, either from within the site or from nearby sites such as Arlington National Cemetery, the Navy Annex, or Route 27. The Pentagon should remain the dominant element of the landscape.

## COORDINATION

### Commission of Fine Arts

The Commission of Fine Arts approved the memorial site location at its meeting on June 20, 2002.

## CONFORMANCE

### National Historic Preservation Act

The Pentagon is a National Historic Landmark listed in the National Register of Historic Places for its continuing nationally significant role as the headquarters of the Department of Defense since World War II. The Army Corps of Engineers has consulted with the Virginia State Historic Preservation Office (VA SHPO) throughout the site selection phase, and will continue to consult

with the VA SHPO as the memorial design progresses. The VA SHPO has indicated that the memorial likely *would not adversely affect* the architectural and historic qualities of the building and its setting that qualify the Pentagon for listing in the National Register.

#### National Environmental Policy Act

Pursuant to the regulations implementing the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the responsible officials of the Pentagon have reviewed the project site selection and location in accordance with the provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

The project is categorically excluded pursuant to Department of the Army Regulation, AR 200-2, Appendix A, when no extraordinary circumstances exist.

#### Comprehensive Plan

The Pentagon is a national landmark and is designated for national defense facilities in the Federal Facilities Element of the Comprehensive Plan. As the proposed memorial site is located outside the Monumental Core, the Comprehensive Plan contains no specific policies that would apply to the placement of a memorial at this location. For this reason, it is simply determined that the proposed site is not inconsistent with the Comprehensive Plan. However, the site location is unquestionably consistent with the general intent of Comprehensive Plan policies for the placement of memorials at fitting locations that commemorate great events or national tragedies.