

9/11:
Safety with Security

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As the first plane hit the World Trade Center in New York City, the Federal Aviation Administration was brought into a state of shock, just as millions of American citizens were on the same day. The September 11th, 2001 terrorist attacks on the World Trade Centers twin towers shaped the United States of America's history and aviation security. Immediately, changes to security protocol were being implemented across the United States of America. Airports stretching all across the United States of America, from the Los Angeles International Airport to the John F. Kennedy International Airport canceled their flights to cope with the terroristic scare. People around the globe sat in shock, their gaze locked on the local news channel. People were appalled by the massive loss of life and shocked that a terrorist was able to hijack an airplane and fly it into a world renowned United State piece of architecture. The United States Government decided we needed a change, so they took action. From the changing of the cockpit doors, to the formation of the Transportation Security Administration, and even the acceptance of handguns in the cockpit, the Federal Aviation Administration rolled out a large number of security measures to keep the passengers safe. The Federal Aviation Administration was determined to never let a terrorist or sadistic person into the fuselage of a passenger full airplane again.

One of the most important implementations into the newly secured airplanes was the cockpit doors. The cockpit doors were a feature added to airplanes with 20 seats or more.¹ The cockpit doors took a significant amount of time to implement as recalled by John Leshok,

¹ The Associated Press. "Bulletproof Cockpit Doors A Reality." CBSNews. 2003. Accessed October 30, 2016. <http://www.cbsnews.com/news/bulletproof-cockpit-doors-a-reality/>.

employee of the Federal Aviation Administration, “The cockpit doors, that took a little time because of manufacturing of the doors and implementation of those doors,” he stated, “So that

2

was a phased approach, and other things were also phased approached. Anything as it relates to aircraft modification would have been in phases.”² To get more specific, the implementation of these newly improved doors took about a year and a half.³ Now the new cockpit doors were massive in the means of airplane and pilot security. These new cockpit doors featured bulletproof technology and increased strength. According to Jim Prolux, “The new door withstands bullets and small explosives and can resist a force equivalent to an NFL linebacker hitting it at Olympic sprinter speed.”⁴ Now I would like to bring to your attention that the pilots of the American Airlines flight 11, John Ogonowski and Thomas McGuinness, were both killed in the hijacking of the plane.⁵ If these newly improved doors had been thought of and designed prior to the September 11th terrorist attacks, the pilots would have been safe and could have landed the plane and brought justice to the terrorists. However, the lack of technology cannot be blamed here. We as a nation simply did not fathom of such an event to occur. The cockpit doors allow the pilots to remain unaffected by any dangers occurring in the passenger section and safely put the plane on the ground to receive help. The cockpit doors were a massive improvement in the world of aviation security.

² Leshok, John. Telephone interview with the author. Norfolk, Virginia. October 16, 2016

³ The Associated Press. "Bulletproof Cockpit Doors A Reality." CBSNews. 2003. Accessed October 30, 2016. <http://www.cbsnews.com/news/bulletproof-cockpit-doors-a-reality/>.

⁴ The Associated Press. "Bulletproof Cockpit Doors A Reality." CBSNews. 2003. Accessed October 30, 2016. <http://www.cbsnews.com/news/bulletproof-cockpit-doors-a-reality/>.

⁵ Wikipedia. "American Airlines Flight 11." Wikipedia. October 26, 2016. Accessed November 06, 2016. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American_Airlines_Flight_11.

Another incredibly important alteration to increase airport security was the formation of the Transportation Security Administration. The TSA, short for the Transportation Security

3

Administration, was formed in November of 2001, shortly after the September 11th bombings.⁶ The TSA was formed as a part of the Aviation and Transportation Act.⁷ The TSA was a huge success in the post 9/11 recovery. The TSA opened up 47,000 jobs that were filled very quickly.⁸ The Transportation Security Administration is in control of what goes into the airport and plane. One of the roles of the TSA is in control of limiting the amount of fluids allowed onto a plane. The general rule put in post 9/11 is as long as it is smaller than 3.4 ounces, it will be allowed on a plane. According to John Leshok, "Yeah and the reason is because they have determined that anything beyond that size could be enough to make a bomb."⁹ So the Transportation Security Administration participates in airport security by strictly prohibiting items that could be marked or used as a weapon. Before 9/11 you were allowed to take a pocket knife onto an airplane. After the September 11th bombings, airport security and Transportation Security Administration no longer allows you to even have anything that represents a weapon. Without the TSA, planes could be a high threat to passenger safety. If people could bring weapons or anything that could pose a harm to people onto a plane, you never know what could happen. This is a huge advancement in the safety of passengers in the air.

⁶ "Transportation Security Administration." Transportation Security Administration. Accessed October 31, 2016. <https://www.tsa.gov/>.

⁷ "Transportation Security Administration." Transportation Security Administration. Accessed October 31, 2016. <https://www.tsa.gov/>.

⁸ Wikipedia. "Transportation Security Administration." Wikipedia. November 3, 2016. Accessed November 06, 2016. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Transportation_Security_Administration.

⁹ Leshok, John. Telephone interview with the author. Norfolk, Virginia. October 16, 2016

The September 11th terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center also sparked the acceptance of handguns in the cockpit of an airliner. After 9/11, pilots now had the ability to

4

carry weapons in the cockpit of an airplane for self defence, as long as they have the proper certification. As recalled by John,

Yes, I don't believe they were carrying guns in the cockpit prior to 9/11 and if the pilot is a gun owner and has gone through all the proper training and the certificates have been issued they can carry guns in the cockpit.¹⁰

This allows for if anything to have happened along the flight, then at least your pilot is armed and can get the crew and passengers to safety. The acceptance of guns in the cockpit was passed as a part of the Federal Air Marshal Service to have trained professionals on the airplane in the situation of an emergency.¹¹ Even though the Federal Aviation Administration allows the pilot to have a gun in the cockpit, some people disagree with the rule entirely. Although some may see it as a needed precaution to keep passengers safe, others may see it as a threat to the safety of their lives. Some people could use the argument that the Transportation Security Administration is good enough that nothing could possibly happen but others would say that it is always good to have the extra safety. This act successfully allowed for safer and more secure flights post 9/11.

All of these acts allowed for the safest possible flights aboard an airplane. As stated by John Leshok,

¹⁰ Leshok, John. Telephone interview with the author. Norfolk, Virginia. October 16, 2016

¹¹ The Department of Homeland Security. "Training." Transportation Security Administration. Accessed October 31, 2016. <https://www.tsa.gov/for-industry/training>.

Yeah, I mean any change that increases security for passengers is a benefit. Now I mean of course sometimes some of the changes can be critiqued a little bit and modified a little bit to make them better. But I would say in all, yes. They have all been great.¹²

5

So with John and with what most people would agree with, all of the changes to airplane and airport security have been the best possible. Airplane and airport security has never been higher here in the United States of America. After the September 11th, 2001 terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center. The crew can now keep the passengers safe and be safer with brand new advancements to security. Now many American citizens can agree that they would feel more than safe, but even go to the point of saying that they would feel more safe flying in an airplane than driving their daily commute to work. Passengers can now travel in an airplane knowing that because of the Transportation Security Administration, no possible weapon could have been brought onto the airplane. Even more so, none of the necessary equipment to cause any sort of reaction or explosion could be carried onto an airplane. This allows for passengers to sleep comfortably on their long flights. Finally, the crew can rest assured that the pilots that are perfectly capable of keeping the airplane safe from any possible threat if one were to arise. Now that pilots have the ability to carry a weapon onto an aircraft and keep it in the cockpit, passengers know that they will have a protector in times of trouble. Also, the newly improved cockpit doors will allow for the pilot to get every single passenger on the ground safely because nobody would be able to bring down these new doors. From the implementation of almost impenetrable cockpit doors, to the formation of the Transportation Security Administration to regulate what goes into the airplane, and even the acceptance of weapons in the cockpit, all of the changes have been monumental for airplane security.

¹² Leshok, John. Telephone interview with the author. Norfolk, Virginia. October 16, 2016

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