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Interview with Maj. Gen. Donald W. Shepperd, Director, Air National Guard (ANG), by Charles J. Gross, PhD, Chief, ANG History Program. Topics include: the ANG's role in air defense; post Cold War vision for the ANG; infrastructure, comparing headquarters overhead of the Air Force and the ANG; wing reorganization; changes in operations tempo and how the ANG supports the Air Force; overseas rotation of the 124th Fighter Group, Idaho ANG and their Wild Weasel aircraft; ANG deployments to Turkey [Northern Watch]; rainbow units and legal issues; space missions for the ANG; aircraft accidents; quality program; diversity; reorganization of the National Guard Bureau and the Air National Guard Readiness Center; counter drug program; and increased reliance on citizen soldiers and airmen following the Cold War.

Dr. Gross: Okay. The first thing that occurred to me as I've looked back over the last few years is in -- I believe in February 1993. General [Colin] Powell [Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff] issued a report saying we didn't need dedicated air defense anymore. Now that we look at the situation today, we call air defense air sovereignty, and the Air Guard has apparently the entire mission, including First Air Force. The question that occurred to me is, how did that change take place, from going to where we had the very real possibility of losing the whole ball of wax, to taking over the whole mission really?

General Shepperd: Okay. First of all, I think you see competing agendas here. One of them is the Air Force agenda, and the other is the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) agenda and General Powell's agenda. I think General Powell basically was following his agenda as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, which says we have to downsize the military, so let's get rid of the things that we don't need and keep the things that we do need. And his thinking was not much more complicated than that.

To a person, to any rational person who sees the threat having been diminished, with the communists gone away and us coming down off SIOP [i.e., Single Integrated Operational Plan] alert, the Soviet Union no longer having bombers on alert, a very logical conclusion is to say, since they've come down off alert we no longer need air defense alert. And I think that's a very compelling argument.

On the other hand, we have not had air defense for many years. We had real air defense in the 1960s, when we had a real bomber threat. We had, I forget the number, around 1,400 airplanes tied up on alert, depending on how you want to count them. We had a real robust radar system with the DEW LINE, what have you, and we had bombers on alert.

And therefore, we had a robust air defense establishment made up of both the Air National Guard and also the active duty [Air Force] establishment. As the reduction of the threat took place, the number of bombers came down. We reduced our air defense forces accordingly. We did away with the DEW LINE. We put the north warning line up there, made them remote radar sites and what have you.

Canada became a nation that basically was -- anything originating in Canada was by nature -- was by nature friendly, and therefore we didn't monitor the traffic within Canada with a mid-Canada line, or anything of that sort. That was removed. And so we reduced our air defense structure from 1,400 airplanes in the 1960s down to what it was at the time Colin Powell was talking about it -- was 150 airplanes. And by the time he was making his declarations, all of them were in the Air National Guard at that time.

So we greatly reduced our air defense posture. And all we had was a ring of locations from which you could say we have still -- have established air sovereignty over our borders, with interlocking rings that theoretically could intercept anything that came in those rings, the idea being that you weren't sitting there worried about a bomber threat.

But for a superpower nation to say we don't care about our borders -- we have nothing to watch our borders in the way of radar, and or no scramble mechanism of airplanes

to intercept anything crossing the borders. It's simply unacceptable, because what that does for people that are interested in running drugs, for people that are interested in running immigrants, illegal immigrants, that type of thing, just opens up your borders to where you have no control. That's unacceptable.

Since that time, we're going to be reducing our air defense forces even further, to the tune of around six units.

So we'll still have just a few locations on our borders, mainly on the coast, where we say that we can exercise sovereignty of our borders. But it is not air defense; however, from that small base, which is now all in the Guard, you can rapidly expand it to more active duty units on alert, if you have to, more Guard units on alert. You can bring back AWACS [i.e., Airborne Warning and Control System aircraft], you can substitute with the AWACS.

So you've got the foundation of radars, and the foundations of alert from which you can expand if anyone ever reestablishes bombers on alert. And of course the two nations, really, that could do that, would be the former Soviet Union, now a reemergent Russia, and also China. So it's not necessarily about air defense.

Now, what Colin Powell wanted to do was say, let's take all the air defense down and just have our regular general purpose forces there to do it. We have tried that

over the years, and the air sovereignty mission and the air-to-ground mission, general purpose mission, is too much for one set of airplanes to do; plus, what happens, you buy these general purpose airplanes so you fight wars in other people's lands. What happens when they go away to war? Then who is left to defend the United States? The answer is no one. So we have a small cadre of people and our lowest cost airplane, and our lowest cost service in a few locations to maintain the air sovereignty from which you can re-expand air defense if you need to. And it's small, and you don't have people double tasked, and you don't have people, you know, double tasked on books and that type of thing.

Now, how did it end up in the Air Guard, was basically, I think, this was all [General] Tony McPeak [the Air Force Chief of Staff] did this. He said, 'hey, as we get the organization right in the Air Force, all the reorganizing, downsizing, resizing, moving in that he did, this is defense of the homeland is a good Air Guard mission. So let's put it all in the Air Guard. That's not something that needs to be on active duty.' And so he did it, and he also was very mindful of the fact that, from a political standpoint, taking things out of the Air Guard is going to be very difficult to do. We're going to have to do that anyway, so this is kind of a quid pro quo, where you can lessen the impact of some of these drawdowns by putting a whole mission area. And that's basically how it got in there. Basically,

McPeak is the man that foresaw it as the way to go and the smart thing to do.

Dr. Gross: What role did you all play here in the Air Directorate [of the National Guard Bureau (NGB)] in this whole process?

General Shepperd: We were in it from the very beginning, with McPeak, talking about would it be a good idea, would it be smart, what were the problems with it. [Major] General [Phil] Killey [then ANG Director] was the main guy involved in getting it planned, getting it done and executing it, now that he's commander of First Air Force down there.

Dr. Gross: Okay. Some have argued that it's not really a viable mission.

General Shepperd: I think it's an extremely viable mission. Again, it needs to be small, and it's all about the sovereignty of your borders, just manning some type of mechanism so you don't say our borders are open, period. It's like, why do we have fences across the gulf -- I mean, between the United States and Mexico? Anybody can climb a fence, so does that make the fence useful? No, it's about sovereignty of your territory.

Why do we have border guards at the Canadian border crossings when, you know, clearly there's -- it's about maintaining the sovereignty of your territory, which is the right of any nation. And we've got it again in our very small -- few airplanes left in our cheapest force and cheapest airplane. And I think it's a smart way to do it. I think we should maintain it. I really, firmly believe that.

Dr. Gross: Is there any serious challenge to this mission?

General Shepperd: There will continue to be serious challenges on it. But to take it down, we don't need air defense. We don't need air defense. Nobody's got bombers. And again, that's only part of the issue.

Dr. Gross: Is that basically a budgetary question for the people who are challenging it?

General Shepperd: Sure. Absolutely. Absolutely.

Dr. Gross: Yes, okay. In the fall of 1992, when I attended my first senior Air Guard commanders' conference at Atlantic City, [New Jersey] yourself and Major General Killey unveiled, at least to my knowledge, a broad vision of what the future

of the Air Guard might look like. And at that time you talked about it would probably be smaller, maybe going down as far as 100,000 [personnel], fewer PAA [i.e., primary authorized aircraft] in units, rerolling units as much as possible out of the fighter mission, which I think you had characterized at one point as fighter pilots as an "endangered species" in the Air Guard.

General Shepperd: Yes.

Dr. Gross: Getting new missions wherever possible, bombers, space, whatever, preserving flags, which I took to mean flying units, and consolidating and closing units, flying units, only as a last resort.

General Shepperd: Right. Right.

Dr. Gross: Now, why and how was that particular approach to the future of the Guard developed? Because I'm sure, in some of the remarks I've heard, that you've voiced recently, that there are other people in the Air Force might say, 'well, why don't you keep larger units and fewer of them? It's more cost effective.

General Shepperd: Yes. Yes. Okay. That's the imperfect thing about visions, is that you are -- you have vision because you are making a guess about what the future is going to be like, and therefore you're making your best guess about what's the right thing to do at the present, because you think that's what the future is going to be like, realizing that you don't know what the future is going to be like, that there are many alternative futures out there.

And basically what has happened, since that vision, if you will, that was unveiled, is pretty much -- pretty much on track. We have maintained the number of flying units that we've had. We've gotten smaller. At that time we were at about 117,000 [personnel], we're now going to be programmed to about 106,000.

We will come down some more, toward 100,000, in my opinion. And we've come down in airplanes, at that time around 1500, down to around 1100, somewhere around in there. So we have indeed gotten smaller, and we are looking for ultimate missions in space. In fact, I just had a meeting, a very quick meeting this morning, on a space mission that we're about to get into.

But further, several other things have happened since that time that have made, I think, the future a little

bit clearer. It's becoming pretty clear to everybody that you're going to have a resurgent Russia. A resurgent Russia. I don't mean a Warsaw Pact Russia that's going to provide a threat to us, but they are going to be a factor to deal with in the future, and they're certainly going to be a factor in Eastern Europe and in the Balkans, places that we're very much concerned with.

Second, the budget problems are going to continue to be with us. The interest that we're paying on the national debt is going to drive the money available for defense. I think that, if I could say what the new vision is, it's a slow return to the militia concept caused by the wishes of the people, the international situation, the lack of a defined enemy, and our history and culture, and all driven by budgets.

It's going to say, if you are going to -- if you are going to maintain any kind of force structure, you're going to have to put a great deal more in your reserve forces, because money is going to force you to do that. You can't afford the active duty force that you would like to have. So along with that, as you get smaller, you have two choices. You can do what business does, which is consolidate into a few big locations, which is what you would do as a businessman, or you can downsize your overhead in many locations, realizing that there are still some inefficiencies left in that.

We've chosen to do the latter, because we think that the support for the military mission throughout America is very important, and therefore we want to stay in as many communities as possible but downsize infrastructure rather than close, because the Air Force is now down to 86 locations worldwide. Seventeen of those locations are overseas, so we are getting very, very small. Sixty-nine locations throughout the U.S., not many of them flying units.

So in a situation where most of the people that folks see flying, and most people that folks see in uniform are your Guard and Reserve forces -- and they are the only source of public support for the military mission for national defense. And we think it's very important to stay in those communities. It's a bedrock issue for us.

So we've chosen to downsize our infrastructure and try to stay in as many communities, also with the thought that when we come back from overseas -- and I think we're going to come back from Europe, and we come back from the Pacific. You pick the year, but we're going to come back. We're going to get kicked out of both those places. Then you can re-robust those units back up, rather than opening up closed Air Force bases, or rather than building new facilities on the ones that remain. You can re-robust those units up for pennies compared to what it costs on active duty force structure, and we're working on plans to do that.

Dr. Gross: What was the process that the senior leadership and the staff went through, you know, coming up with this idea, or this approach to it?

General Shepperd: Well, a lot of it comes from discussions with the [Air Force] Chief of Staff. A lot of it comes from discussions internally, with our own directors, and what's the way to go, internal planning, our long range planning process that we have, that you've attended over there, has made us feel, as we discussed -- and look at the alternatives out there -- that these are just smart things to do.

It's not about just preserving people's jobs and places, and stuff like that. It's what we think is the wave of the future. So it came from a lot of processes and a lot of internal soul searching, and a lot of fights in the programming here in the building, and a lot of dealing back and forth with the priorities handed to us by the President and the Secretary of Defense, and the [Air Force] Chief [of Staff] and Secretary of the Air Force. It all melds in this big, bubbling cauldron, if you will. It comes out, and okay, this is what we're going to do.

Dr. Gross: Essentially, then, this was something that working with the Air Force -- that this came out of the Air Guard? Would that be a fair statement?

General Shepperd: Yes. It would be very accurate. It was not the Air Force's idea, necessarily. It has become okay as we go through the programming and planning, and the political processes, and as we testified in Congress.

Dr. Gross: Well, the reason I asked, in talking to my colleagues on the Air Force history side, they just think that the National Guard Bureau is the channel of communication. The Air Force says something, and we do it. I said, `guys, that's not what [happens].'

General Shepperd: Absolutely wrong! It's much more complicated than that, much more complicated.

Dr. Gross: Yes. Most of the interesting things haven't been that way at all, as far as I can tell.

General Shepperd: No. No, it's a compromise. It's a what do you think, what do we think, what can we get done. They tell you to do this, and you say, can't get that done, then

it's back and forth. In the end, everything is driven by politics on the Hill [i.e., Congress], over there, and they dictate what you're going to do with budgets in some language. But no, it's not a case of the Air Force coming up with this and saying this is what we're going to do. It's much more complicated.

Dr. Gross: How would you assess the implementation of that changing vision, at this point in time?

General Shepperd: I would say we are well on our way to implementing everything that we have fought for. It's being implemented. The locations are being maintained. We're being squeezed on money, so we'll have to continually find efficiencies, and it may be that down the line we'll be forced to close some locations out there from a budgetary standpoint. But essentially what we're trying to do is, we're trying to maintain that militia concept, and we're trying to maintain those locations. And it's working. And we're trying to find alternate missions rather than close things, and that's working, also.

Dr. Gross: Another element of this that you alluded to very briefly this spring when Lieutenant Colonel [Jim] Lightfoot and I were in here, is the wing realignment in the states, and the need to go out and look at the support structures

within the Guard that had grown up, where we were going to, as a Cold War thing, you know. Go operate a bare base in Norway.

General Shepperd: Come back in the summer and let me tell you what we're doing with infrastructure, because we're not there. We're not where I want to be on infrastructure. We're going to launch what I consider to be a major, further war on infrastructure, but I can tell you that our infrastructure costs are very low, and it's not infrastructure. Infrastructure to maintain an organization is one thing. The other thing is the support units required to maintain the Cold War force are just now being implemented. I'm talking about the combat communications, the TACS [i.e., Tactical Air Control System], that type of thing. It's being appropriately downsized.

And the philosophy, instead of hey, we're going to go to all these COBs [i.e., co-located operating bases] and we'll operate off of bare bases, that type of thing, all of that has gone away into two MRCs [i.e., major regional contingencies], where you don't know where you're going to fight. Some of it will be bare base, some of it will be from infrastructure. But the idea that you're going to fight from 40 or 50 COBs is just out the window entirely, and therefore, that force structure is being -- the support force structure is being -- is being reduced. If you look at both

the active [force] and the Guard, it will be reduced around 40 to 50 percent, with the Guard being reduced around 25 percent and the active duty more like 60 percent.

Dr. Gross: Okay. But that's still a kind of an ongoing issue, then.

General Shepperd: Yes. Now, again, that's different than infrastructure.

Dr. Gross: Okay.

General Shepperd: Infrastructure -- that's support structure. Infrastructure is basically the infrastructure of the unit that you have left, what can you find in the way of efficiencies and that type of thing to eliminate any infrastructure you don't need. And that will be -- we will be looking at centralizing some functions, CBPO [i.e., Consolidated Base Personnel Office] functions, that type of thing. My guess is, you're not talking about massive numbers, there. We're very efficient the way we are now, and I don't think we're to find a lot of gold to mine, there.

Dr. Gross: How do we compare to the active duty Air Force, in terms of our headquarters overhead?

General Shepperd: Very low. If you add up our joint staff, my staff, the [ANG] Readiness Center staff, all the 265 and 8021s, and you add the full time people at state headquarters and stuff in the field, you're going to find a staff-to-field ratio of about .7 percent, and that is very, very low. Most MAJCOMS have been 3.5 to 4 percent. They're trying to get down to 2 percent; they're not there, yet. They're finding it very difficult to get below 2.5 percent.

So again, we're very, very efficient, but not just because we're smart, or good, or wonderful. It's that the Air Force also does a lot of things for us. So you know, I don't mean to say that we're just sitting here, you know, better than everybody else. That's not what I'm trying to get across.

Dr. Gross: Okay. Okay. Can you talk anymore about the wing thing, or is that still kind of [sensitive]?

General Shepperd: Yes. No, the wing thing, basically -- I'll give you a separate briefing on that, but we still don't know exactly where we're going to go. I've gone out and made

the proposals for reorganizing. I've asked for ideas to come back to me, and they're starting to come back. And I'm going to get a big -- couple of bottles of whiskey, and prop my feet up and really think this thing over, over the holidays, to decide how I re-attack it now, with all of the ideas that I've gotten back. Because we have 100 percent consensus on one thing, and that is that we are screwed up with an organization that has not been looked at since 1947.

The wings no longer make any sense as designed. They cross state lines, which has never made sense, but they also cross [state ?] lines, and we've got to do something to realign ourselves. So I'm just not quite totally clear on where we're going to go, yet. But I've listened. I've given the briefings; I'm listening now to all of the ideas that have come back, and we'll see what -- where we go from here.

DR. Gross: Okay, another area. Historically the Guard has been a defensive force of mostly part-timers. It seems to have evolved, as you've stated many times, into a quasi-full time force with global responsibilities. We seem to be busier than ever, although I don't think we have a good way of measuring that, yet.

General Shepperd: Well, we're closing in on that, too.

Dr. Gross: Yes, and -- but we've got, with, you know, fewer PAA -- money starting to squeeze. We have the problems of volunteerism, reorganization, whatever. How far can this process of drawing more and more on this force with, I wouldn't say less and less, but with tighter resources, go? How far can we change the nature of the Guard?

General Shepperd: Well, let's look at how it's changed, and then we back up into how far -- how much further we can go. We've changed in several ways. Number one, we used to just stay at home and train for the big one, and we did that by participating in some exercises and deployments, a few a year. We still do that, but the exercises and deployments have also expanded because, with active duty forces drawn down, just to continue to do these things worldwide demands our participation and presence. So we have expanded presence over and above what we used to do in exercises and deployments.

Second, we are now, unlike before, needed immediately in every contingency. I mean -- and you need immediately your tankers and your airlifters, like that, all of them. At least half your tankers and all of your airlifters you need immediately, especially strategic airlift, and then you need medics and combat com[munications] as well. That's a change from before, because before we used to have a big enough active duty that they could handle all

small contingencies. They could have handled, in the 40 fighter wing day, they could have handled a Panama, a Haiti, a Mogadishu, even a Bosnia. But as the forces have drawn down they simply don't have the ability to do that without abandoning a theater. For instance, you could still do it if you took everything out of the Pacific whenever something happened and rushed it over to Europe, but you can't do those things. So we're needed immediately in every contingency. That's another change.

And then the third change is not only are we needed for contingencies, but we're needed to supplement them in day-to-day op tempo. Just the jobs that they're doing, they don't have enough to do. Right now, as I'm speaking, we have -- the Battlecreek, [Michigan] boys are deployed to [Operation] Deny Flight in Italy. We have airlift in Turkey, we have the Hawaii F-15s in Turkey, and we have all the radars down in the Amazon in the drug war.

But I'm convinced that we can do those things, and even more, I think we can double what we're doing right now if we decide to do it. And if we decide that we're going to plan out a year ahead of time where these folks are going, realizing you'll still have contingencies to -- but plan it out a year ahead so that you do your training essentially overseas, you get credit for your inspections while you're doing that, and you can manage the rotation of your people. That's the key to it, right there.

Airlift, we can use our tankers and that type of thing for airlift. They can do the training sorties while they're doing that. I think it's perfectly doable, and I -- we're closing in on a way to measure this op tempo. You can talk to [Colonel Paul] Kimmel. Stay close to him about that. For instance, I just saw in the Alaskan Air Command, they showed the op tempo of all their units up there, and the second and third highest op tempo were the Guard units up there. And some of their fighter squadrons were down, just deployed almost nowhere. But the Guard C-130 and tanker units were deployed all the time, almost as much as their active duty guys up there.

So I'm convinced that we -- when you say we've become a quasi-full time force, I don't mean it in the pejorative sense. I mean it in the sense that we are employed all the time. And we can still do that with part time people as long as we can plan and manage that rotation.

Dr. Gross: But how much further can this process go, in your view?

General Shepperd: I say I think we can double the level of activity we're doing now.

Dr. Gross: Double. Okay.

General Shepperd: Maybe even triple it. Now, the good news is, you don't pay for any of those people when they're not there. That's the savings.

Dr. Gross: Yes.

General Shepperd: Now, the other thing the U.S. has to do is, they've got to stop taking part in things that the American public is not interested in. The American public clearly does not care about Bosnia, Somalia and Haiti, and yet there we are in big numbers. And if you're going to get the active duty establishment any smaller, you're not going to have the forces to dip your toe in those puddles out there.

So I think we're going through a great period of unsettling. We're at the demobilization after the Cold War. As [General Ron] Fogleman [the new Air Force Chief of Staff] has described it, I think it's a very accurate description. I think we're going through the great uncertainties of the Warsaw Pact going away, and the Balkans, the realignment of things. And I think this will settle out to a fairly calm pattern, and I think the U.S. has already learned that they cannot stick their toe in every pond just because some kids

are starving in Africa, that if you do that there is a big cost to do it. You're going to get Americans killed, you're going to spend American money, and therefore you've got to make sure it's in America's interest before we do that. And I think that realization is settling in on the American people.

You combine that with our budget problems that we are going to have because of the deficits and what have you, and it becomes a self-correcting picture, I think, that we're going to a very high period of op tempo now, that will level out.

Dr. Gross: That whole thing about the support of the population and the Congress was pretty evident to me when I was cavorting with the [Navy] SEALs down in Cuba this summer. I mean, I'd follow the politics, and people just didn't -- they didn't care.

General Shepperd: In my opinion, one of the strongest reasons for maintaining the militia concept in this country is, you should not be allowed to take the people's money and their children and do not -- and do things that the people don't care about. When we kill our people's kids, there's reasons to get their kids killed in war, but it should be

something that's near and dear to the American people's heart before we kill their kids.

And when you have huge standing active duty forces that the President can order anywhere or do anything with, I think that's not in concert with our history and culture in this country. That's why this militia concept to me is so very, very important.

Dr. Gross: The next question I had concerns the 124th Fighter Group in Idaho. They've performed a couple, I guess, very heavy rotations.

General Shepperd: Yes, they're back over there again.

Dr. Gross: And what role did you all, here in the Air Directorate, have in setting up that whole -- that whole rotation over there? I mean, that's a -- that's quite a departure, except for some of the stuff down in Panama for the fighter community.

General Shepperd: It's a departure, but if you take it apart, it really isn't all that great of a departure. First of all, the unit is 40 percent full time, as opposed to 25 percent full time. Second, it's only 6 airplanes out of

their 24. The heavy load is that they continue to manage their schoolhouse, continue to take part in exercises and deployments. That's where the heavy load comes.

If they could cancel everything else and just do that over there -- but you've got a high unemployment level in Idaho, so you've got a lot of people looking for jobs. As a matter of fact, as I've looked at those deployments over there I assumed that it would be heavy on their part timers, and the ratio was 70 to 30, 70 percent part time, 30 percent full time. People need planning time, and they can do it. They'll take their vacations, they'll take their time off school, and if you let the unit manage when it wants to rotate, and get the people, I'm convinced that we can do that type of thing essentially forever.

Dr. Gross: How did it come up in the first place? What was the . . . ?

General Shepperd: It came up in that we got only two Wild Weasel squadrons [in the total Air Force], and you can't keep one gone all the time, so they asked them to share the load. They said, 'yeah, we can do this,' and this is their third rotation. They're over there now for three months. They just happen to be in Turkey this time, instead of Saudi Arabia.

Dr. Gross: How have they done?

General Shepperd: Super. Absolutely super. It's great training for them. You send F-16s over there, they're loaded up with bombs, and it's lousy training, because you can't do anything. You can't drop the bombs, naturally. But the Weasels, that is exactly what they do. They ferret out signals, diagnose signals, decide whether or not these signals are serious, whether somebody is really locked onto them. And it's superb training. It's right up their alley.

Dr. Gross: In one aspect it might be a little frustrating in that -- I don't know, when was it, last year or something -- they blew up some sites [in Southern Iraq].

General Shepperd: Yes.

Dr. Gross: They just said Air Force airplanes. I mean, nobody ever mentioned or acknowledged to the media who it was.

General Shepperd: I think we're over that. I think that's okay with them. They understand that. The Saudis want us in Saudi Arabia, but they do not want us visible. You know,

that's the Islamic world, and they don't want a large U.S. presence over there that is known. They want a large presence, but they don't want it known. And so to go over and try to distinguish who did that, and make a big deal out of it, is something that probably would offend the Saudis as well as us, as well as the Air Force.

Dr. Gross: Okay. Okay.

General Shepperd: So you know, that all has an OSD [i.e., Office of the Secretary of Defense] flavor. They decide what spin to put on that thing in the OSD public affairs [office].

Dr. Gross: Well, I was curious about that, because I never really saw anything in print.

General Shepperd: The guys understand it perfectly.

Dr. Gross: Yes, okay.

General Shepperd: And quite frankly, I'm not sure you want everybody to know who blows up what.

Dr. Gross: Maybe not. Maybe not.

General Shepperd: In a terrorist world, I'd worry about it if my name was on the front pages, blowing up a Islamic radar site. I might be worried about who would read that, and who would come and get my family.

Dr. Gross: How does it compare to some of the other fighter rotations we have going on in Europe, now?

General Shepperd: They're all pretty much the same, it's just that Saudi is a lousy place to have a rotation, whereas Italy is a very good one. And Turkey is -- is -- although you're at -- God, where are we in Turkey?

Dr. Gross: Oh no, no, Incirlick!

General Shepperd: It's not in -- Incirlik. Incirlik.

Dr. Gross: Incirlik? Yes, okay.

General Shepperd: Yes, you're at Incirlik in Turkey, and that's a tent city over there. So they're living in tent city, so it's lousy. But the guys, the Guard guys don't care where they live, as long as it's different and exciting, and

dangerous, that's all they care about. The rest of it is, so what?

Dr. Gross: Do they have similar ratios of part timers to full-timers?

General Shepperd: I think it would vary from place to place, so I couldn't really tell you, but we have a big enough F-16 community we can spread it around. The A-10s are getting pounded on right now, because they've only got five units left in the Guard and one in the Reserve, so now they've been to Deny Flight twice. And they're asking them to go back to Saudi Arabia this coming summer, and that's -- that starts to become overbearing, so -- when you've only got a small number of units. That's when it really gets tight.

Dr. Gross: Small number. They've been working pretty well, in terms of the F-16?

General Shepperd: Yes. And the other thing is, they want them -- you know, if we had six airplanes we could probably do it. But if they're wanting 15 airplanes, that's a whole different story.

Dr. Gross: Well, a related question in the last [ANG] senior commanders' conference, the JAG used the term "rainbow units" for composite units.

General Shepperd: Yes.

Dr. Gross: What kind of problems, in terms of legal problems, and command and control, does that sort of situation create for the Guard?

General Shepperd: Well, as usual, once you get enough lawyers in, you're going to find a problem. And what we've done, is, we've found out that we have never had a -- once we do a -- when we are not mobilized, and we send anybody overseas, we have a legal problem in that you do not have a legally constituted unit authority to conduct justice, even though you're on title 10 orders. You're always chopped to somebody when you go over there.

But from the administration of justice standpoint, you don't have a legal chain of command. So our lawyers have told us what we need to do is we need to establish the Readiness Center as a provisional unit, as a standing unit, rather, and every time we do a deployment overseas, on paper we will create a provisional unit with a chain of command

designated by our readiness center headquarters. Therefore you have a legally designated unit, a legally designated commander, and a legally designated chain of command to carry out justice. And also, it makes you legal from the standpoint of status of forces agreement if anybody gets in trouble with a foreign nation's legal system.

Dr. Gross: Okay. Let me make sure I understand. Is this for any deployment, or just composite -- not just composite, but . . . ?

General Shepperd: Any deployment. And further, in the composite, where you've mixed Reserve and Guard, and maybe even active, then it makes it -- it also makes it clear. You have a clear chain of command, with a clear -- we'll probably even number the units. I don't know. And you've got a unit established, and a chain of command that's legal, that stands

Dr. Gross: Apparently there has been a great deal of resistance to the Guard getting involved in the space mission. What has been the history of that? Where are we on that?

General Shepperd: Okay. We're just about to take over the mobile ground station. We're in the -- in fact, I've just -- "Lurch" [i.e., Colonel Gorman] just came in and briefed me on that. We're just about to take over a mobile ground station, which is our first toe in the water. We're looking at another alternate command post mission. We're looking at a launch team that, you know, comes in when you've got a launch and then, essentially, goes away.

I think the reluctance has been that the space guys were always the stovepipe outside of the active duty Air Force that just didn't have anything to do. We're trying to normalize space, now, like every other mission area, put major portions in the reserve force, just like other mission area, and we've got major portions of the right missions that will fit there. And space is being forced to do it because of budgets as well, just like everybody else.

They've always been -- kind of had a, not a blank check, but certainly more money, and it was a growth industry. Now it's going the other way, so they're looking at it. That's going very well, and we're just about to establish ourselves, our first space unit there.

Dr. Gross: What kind of future do you see in space for the Guard?

General Shepperd: I see a role of maybe 20, 30 percent of the space mission, the support areas and stuff like that. There's a lot of things that we just don't make any sense, you know. If it's a day-to-day, full time mission, it doesn't make a lot of sense to put that in the Guard and Reserve. But a lot of the areas, like this mobile -- mobile ground station, this is the one that basically talks when Cheyenne Mountain gets blown away. It talks to the satellites. Well, that's a perfect thing for reserve forces. Perfect.

Dr. Gross: Right. Sure. What kind of arguments have been used against Guard participation?

General Shepperd: I don't think there were any arguments. It's just there's never been any real catalyst to get it done, and now the budget is a big catalyst. And normalizing space, like every other mission area, is also a big catalyst.

Dr. Gross: I understand that was a big emphasis under General Horner, when he was CINC [i.e., commander-in-chief] [of U.S. Space Command]?

General Shepperd: Yes, it was. He's the guy that started putting the big push, and I think you'll see that under Fogleman, as well, continue.

Dr. Gross: Okay. My next topic, aircraft accidents. The last few years we've had a lot of aircraft accidents, until recently.

General Shepperd: Yes.

Dr. Gross: Why so many?

General Shepperd: Okay. We're in our second safest string right now, knock, knock, of safety. We've gone about 160 -- about 170 days, now. Our record, all-time record, is 240 days without an accident, and our previous long-time record was 125 days. So we're well on our way to, you know, at least our second longest stretch without an accident.

The reasons that we've had tough accidents in the past two to three years is no secret, turmoil. We've been in a high conversion period, where we've converted from old airplanes to the newer model F-16s and F-15s. Any time you do that, and you're low time in the airplane, you're going to have accidents, because people don't know the new systems well, they're not comfortable with them, and you've got a lot of work-arounds and stuff going on in the unit. We're now getting to the end of that period where people -- your most

dangerous period is not the year you convert, but the year after, and we've been in that period, now, for three years. And now we're coming to the end of that period.

I also think we've put a major emphasis on accountability, especially peer accountability, and I think that is working. I think that what we did with our "safety focus" in the fall is a major contributor to the safety that we're enjoying right now. The fact that you're -- basically everybody -- you're holding everybody accountable, from the guy that turns the wrench all the way up to the guy that has got his hand on the stick, I think this is a very, very powerful theme that we've introduced as a result of that safety focus, is working very well.

And the other thing is, we're the major owner of the F-16, and that's where you're going to have most of your accidents. It's a single engine fighter, it's the most dangerous mission, and secondly, it's got all the bad motors. You add those three things together, and that's where our accident rate is coming from. All of the accidents last year were fighter accidents, most of them F-16s.

Now, the other thing is, for our accident rate to be below 2.0, our F-16 rate has to be below 2.5. The Air Force has never had a rate below 2.5 in the F-16. We've had it three years, so we're capable of getting it down there. It's that, you know, it's tough to do.

Dr. Gross: On several occasions, you've also talked about unit culture being a factor in this.

General Shepperd: Big time! Big time!

Dr. Gross: Would you explain your thinking on that?

General Shepperd: The culture that is produced by the leadership in the unit is the thing that makes all things possible or impossible in the unit. It means whether guys are going to put up with people that are bad pilots and guys that screw around and flaunt the regulations and don't fly professionally, or whether they drum guys like that out of their unit. What I'm after is guys that drum those kind of guys out of their unit.

And I think that the leadership within a unit provides the culture in that unit. It's just like the culture of sexual harassment. It's totally unacceptable, you know, and yet, you will find organizations where derisive comments about women, jokes and that type of thing, are allowed to exist because the leadership of the organization has not said: there will be no more of that in this organization. No woman needs to fear.

You need the same thing in a flying organization. You say nobody -- this is our unit, and nobody is going to screw this unit up, and nobody in this organization is going to be allowed to fly unprofessionally, and we're all responsible to make that happen. It starts with leadership, and then it permeates the organization, and you hire people that share your values, and make sure they share your values. And over that -- over a period of time you will change the culture from a good-old-boy network to guys that look out after each other, what have you, to one of a bunch of professional aviators.

Dr. Gross: What have you all been able to do from this level, through "safety focus" and other mechanisms, to make these changes?

General Shepperd: Decide on the message, which is this idea of accountability. And I have told the unit commanders that I will hold them accountable from this chair. Accountability starts here, that if our safety record does not get under control, I deserve to be removed, and if theirs doesn't get under control, I will remove them. And when I say remove them, I'm not talking about from having necessarily accidents. I'm talking about I hold them personally responsible if anybody in their organization has an accident

in which a person flies unprofessionally, intentionally violates regulations, or just is egregiously stupid. That is the responsibility of the commander, not to have people like that in his organization.

People will make mistakes, and I'll stand behind anybody that makes mistakes. I don't have any problem with that, but we've made it very clear that everybody, everybody is responsible for this, including me. And I think we've made great headway in that.

Dr. Gross: Okay, good.

General Shepperd: And that's a big change.

Dr. Gross: Well, I know there was a lot of jokes about lawn darts and stuff.

General Shepperd: Exactly.

Dr. Gross: It's different, now. My next question has to do with quality. Long before I came here, the Guard had acquired, I think, a deserved reputation, as a model reserve

program over the years. With that in mind, why did we need to embark on an extensive quality journey?

General Shepperd: Okay. Well, first of all, quality just -- pursuit of quality just makes sense. Anybody that isn't after quality is just nuts. But what you don't need to do is you don't need to do what we usually do, which is get tied up in all the trappings of a special program, which is what TQM [i.e., total quality management] was. People got tied up so tightly in total quality management and having their councils, and keeping track of their council minutes, and doing this and doing it in a certain way. You had a menu for success.

And very quickly, just like zero defects, just like quality circles, all of that got a bad name. And yet, to me, I've said our quality program is the continuous pursuit of an effective world-class organization. That's what it's about, and that is about customer orientation. It makes sense, doing what your customer wants, to include the American people, a continuous improvement. Nobody can argue with that. Empowerment of people, nobody can argue with that.

And measurement; decide what it is you want to measure, and measure it, and watch it, and it will get better. And so those four aspects of customer orientation, continuous improvement, empowerment of people, and

measurement, it's just common sense of any organization. You can call it quality, you can call it anything you want, but we're going to do that.

And so launching on that is not something we're going to launch on. It's basically that's what we're going to focus on, which is just running our business correctly by watching the right things with empowered people, and focus on the customer. That just makes sense to me. So it's not like we're creating any mysterious new program. But I do not want to get tied up in how many times the quality council meets, who is your quality advisor, let me see your council minutes, and all that type of thing.

Dr. Gross: Where do you -- where are we, as far as on this journey? What's our progress?

General Shepperd: I'm very pleased with where we are as an organization in that in our way each one of the states has their own particular methodology. We are not driving it, but we are providing the -- through the Quality Center [of the NGB] out there [at Tysons Corners, Virginia], we are basically providing the courses they need to educate people on senior leader awareness, on individual quality, what the individual quality -- what it needs, what individuals need in the way of quality awareness.

We're training the trainer courses, we're providing facilitator courses, we're providing long range strategic planning courses, as well. And all of that, over time, adds up to a journey that just makes sense, providing people what they need to run their organizations, which is what quality is about. So I'm very satisfied with where we are, because we don't have a lot of smoke in the air and big, thick books like we started off with, this thick, telling us how to do it, and all the waterfall diagrams and all that.

Dr. Gross: Another area of concern: my impression is, over the last couple of years, in reading stuff and going to meetings, talking to people, is that there had been relatively little progress in the past 10 years or so in recruiting women and minorities into operational and other fields that will put them on a career path to senior leadership of the Guard someday. Is this an accurate perception? If so, why?

General Shepperd: It's absolutely accurate. Despite our good hearts and good intentions, nothing has happened in the last 10 years. We've done good at recruiting women; we have not done good at getting women to high positions. And the reason is, the only way they're going to get high positions is to get into operations as pilots and be commanders, and that's the way to get it.

Now, we're still relatively new in that journey, as you know, Air Force-wide, as well. But the only way you're going to find women general officers is for them to become commanders, and that's what we've got to -- that's what we've got to work on. And we are -- we are working on that.

But minorities, we have not made good progress, and we really need to. And that's why I've said at this round of senior commanders' conferences [that] I'm going to provide measurements out there to show who is doing the job and who isn't. And we really have to make some progress there because our minority statistics are just -- just not changed.

I mean, we're sitting there at the 4, 5, 6 percent level overall in minority -- in real minorities.

Women, we're doing okay, around 12, 14 percent. We need to do a little bit better, there. But the key is to get them in, keep them in, and then have them progress to high levels. If you looked at our minority statistics in general officers, you would be very pleased. We're much better than the Air Force in general officers, and we're much better than the Air Force in women, but that belies the fact if you look deeper into what are you across the board. The foundation is not there.

So that's one of my major challenges, is to get this moving through measurement. And that relates right back

to the quality organization. We don't have standard metrics, and everybody is watching, saying, oh, yeah, I'm really terrible at this compared to -- you know. And we need to do that.

Dr. Gross: Why do you think it has been so difficult to move off the dime on some of these things?

General Shepperd: Because I think we've taken a 10 year hiatus on social progress in this nation. I think during the Reagan years, right or wrong, you found social progress stopping, no emphasis on civil rights and that type of thing, and there was not a big push, and -- and you see that across the service lines. Now, you throw that, in addition to downsizing, where people are not recruiting but they are trying to maintain and protect the people they've got on board, you throw all that together, and you can see why you're not making any progress for the last couple, three years. You're going to at best hold even.

Dr. Gross: What are our prospects, do you think, in the future on that?

General Shepperd: I think while I'm here I'll make good progress, and you'll just have to ask the next guy. But I'm

going to push it big time. I think we can make big progress in getting minorities into the cockpits. I'm convinced of that. Increasing our overall statistics is very difficult. We need to increase them especially in the Hispanic area, because that's where the nation is going.

It's going to be a heavily Hispanic nation by the year 2025, and that's the hardest recruiting. Hispanics for some reason are just not attuned toward military service, and we're better off in our black community, African-American community, than we are Hispanics.

Dr. Gross: Okay. Historically, the Air Force Reserve used to be almost entirely support aircraft while we were entirely combat, mostly fighter aircraft. Recently, you know, that force structure has -- the distinctions have blurred, and as that blurring may or may not continue in the budget reductions, pressures intensify. Do you see any rebirth of the periodic drive to merge the two components?

General Shepperd: No. No, I don't. You'll hear people talking about it, but every -- it's been tried, I think, five times, and every time it comes up, people say the same thing. The main efficiency -- you get a little bit of efficiency by combining the headquarters, but the main efficiency is the dollar savings by closing units. So rather than take on two

political headaches, which is combining the two organizations, take on one and close the units. I don't think they will be successful. I think the politics of getting that done are just too hard; however, if it happens, the surviving entity has got to be the Guard side because of the state mission and the state/federal balance, which is becoming a big thing in federal government.

And as far as the mix changing on the -- in the support airplanes and small airplanes -- we started out in small airplanes because we were at small locations. And now to change to big airplanes costs a lot of money in MILCON [i.e., military construction] and that type of thing. I think you're going to see a self-correcting -- I mean, it isn't easy to just change fighter forces into big airplanes. You're talking \$30 to \$50 million at any location to do that, so it's not easy to do. You've seen us convert about 14 or 15 units, and my guess is that's about all you're going to see converted.

Dr. Gross: I see.

General Shepperd: And it's also because of the big cut that's taken place in fighters. You had a 50 percent in fighter airplanes, and about a -- you know, 62 percent cut in total airplanes. And so as you cut, and you come out of

fighters and a mainly fighter force, then if you wanted to maintain the unit, you had to put them in big airplanes. And that's why it happened, to keep from closing units.

Dr. Gross: Looking a little closer to home, why did you find it necessary to look at reorganizing the headquarters here [in the NGB] and in the [Air Guard] Readiness Center? Again, it seems a sort of a déjà vu thing, almost.

General Shepperd: Yes, well, we tried the new way, which is, you plan and program here, and you execute out there. We got into the 'we-and-they syndrome,' where one end didn't know what the other end was doing. And it just makes sense to have people that are -- you know, a one-stop shopping from planning and programming to execution, having all the people responsible sitting together rather than duplicating directorates on both sides of the river. There's manpower savings and common sense savings, and it just -- we tried the other way and it just didn't work, set up a set of problems that I wasn't satisfied with. So I'm going to put it back together.

Dr. Gross: How long is this process going to take, to put it back together?

General Shepperd: Probably two years.

Dr. Gross: Two years? Are we going to be

General Shepperd: And it's going to be timed with moving out of the building [i.e., the Pentagon], so we don't disrupt too many things.

Dr. Gross: Okay.

General Shepperd: You're tied into communications, secure com[munications], you're tied into cables that go into the Air Force mainframe computers that you -- have to be moved, and that type of thing. So you've got to do that when you move out of the building.

Dr. Gross: Okay. How does the transition from General McPeak to General Fogleman affect the Air Guard, or will it affect the Air Guard?

General Shepperd: It is transparent from the standpoint of functionality, but I think Fogleman is very popular with the Air Guard because he -- as a former history professor at the Air Force Academy, he understands the militia concept, the

background, the reason, the strengths we bring. He loves the Guard and Reserve. He could not have done his job without them at Air Mobility Command. So it's going to be -- he's going to be a very popular leader from a Guard and reserve standpoint. Plus the things that he's doing to introduce himself throughout the Air Force are just so smart and so good, he's going to have a real good ride with us.

Tony McPeak, by the way, was really good to the Guard and Reserve, very, very good. He understood, again, the good things about them, so this is not criticism of him in any way.

Dr. Gross: No.

General Shepperd: Just that Fogleman is going to enjoy a very good relationship with us.

Dr. Gross: But in terms of policy and structure and the way we do . . . ?

General Shepperd: You're not -- it's going to be transparent.

Dr. Gross: Okay. Okay. Are you satisfied now with the metrics, that you're getting the right metrics to make fact-based decisions?

General Shepperd: No. No. Again, I want to put a major push on that after the first of the year, on what we're going to watch. But a lot of it is tied into the reorganization as well, who is responsible for watching it, and I'm going to be working on metrics hard.

Dr. Gross: Okay. Counter drugs. Where is the counter drug program going in the Guard, and how well does it fit our mission?

General Shepperd: It's going to be separately funded. I think it fits our mission very well in that we are uniquely structured and able to assist law enforcement agencies because of the posse comitatus laws, and all of that. As long as there is a separate budget, I think we'll do well, and we'll be on the forefront. My fear is that in the long term, somebody is going to declare victory in the drug war, and it will all be over, and budgets will vanish for whatever reason, whether it's politics or real budget realities. So I think we can help, but the shift in the administration's policy to demand [reduction] as opposed to interdiction and . . .

Dr. Gross: Just sort of destroying it.

General Shepperd: . . . processing, yes, processing or whatever is . . . Demand is the long term pole in the tent. Unfortunately, you can't do without all the pieces of the pole in the tent if you're going to keep the pinups. You've got to work on demand, you've got to interdict. You can't give the free hand to the smugglers out there, and at the production end you've also got to attack that. So I think you've got to stay in that. The only one that we make sense in, is in the drug demand, and also little pieces of the interdiction as a result of our federal mission, federal war-fighting mission. Then we can use the things that we have, such as night vision goggles and all this type of thing, to help in that.

Dr. Gross: Finally, how far do you think America will return towards a primary reliance on a citizen-soldier as the bedrock of its military?

General Shepperd: It won't do it at all unless it is forced to do it. But in my opinion it is the wave of the future. As long as the world stays more peaceful, and I think it will be more peaceful with the communists gone away, and it won't reemerge into a significant threat until China reemerges, and

then they'll be very significant. And I don't know whether they'll be a threat or not, but it will certainly be something we have to consider.

I think budgets are going to drive us that way, and budgets will be the major factor driving us that way, not the -- you're not going to get a chance to debate this with the American people, or lay it out, that type of thing. It just makes a lot of sense, because it's so consistent. It solves a lot of political problems that exist if you try to close units and stuff, and then it's consistent with cheaper budgets out there. So we will move in that direction slowly.

Where it will settle out, gosh, I don't have a crystal ball, but I clearly think it's the wave of the future. I firmly believe that.

Dr. Gross: Okay. Are there any other areas or questions?

General Shepperd: No, I think we've hit it all. I'm tired of talking.