

28 March 2001

Interview by Dr. Charles Gross, Air National Guard (ANG) Historian, NGB-PAI-H
With Maj. Gen. Paul A. Weaver, Jr., Air National Guard (ANG) Director.

Subject: Overview of his tour as ANG Director.

DR. GROSS: Today's date is 28 March 2001. I am Dr. Charles J. Gross, the Air Guard Historian in the National Guard Bureau. I will be interviewing Maj. Gen. Paul A. Weaver Jr., the Director of the Air National Guard.

General Weaver, you and your senior staff here have repeatedly said that the Expeditionary Air [sic] Force, the EAF, is job one for the Air Guard. Why is it job one?

MAJ. GEN. WEAVER: Because that's what's going to justify our force structure, our involvement in the total force. It is our contribution to the war fighting capability of our total United States Air Force.

Secretary [of the Air Force F. Whitten] Peters, Gen. [Michael E.] Ryan [Air Force Chief of Staff] and the leadership put together the Expeditionary Aerospace Force comprised of 10 AEFs [i.e., Aerospace Expeditionary Forces] and instead of the old construct of two major theater wars, which we still need the ability to be able to do, but they addressed the day-to-day pers tempo of our people, the day-to-day op tempo and how we could control it and how we could get our arms around this where we could give a better life for all the members of our Air Force, to include the Air National Guard.

And we from the day one of that whole AEF concept, we were partners in it. I realized -- we realized that in order for us to be relevant for the future, we needed to be totally involved in the EAF, and what better way could we show our ability that we knew we had than to do real world stuff every day, day in and day out, not only in our aviation package but our support packages as well. And the AEF has been able to do that in the first cycle. We've shown everyone in the world what we can do.

DR. GROSS: What process did you go through or the senior leadership of the Air Guard go through in making this determination that EAF, this was it, this was something we had to be involved with seriously?

MAJ. GEN. WEAVER: Well, let me talk about -- you get things done in our business through relationships and creating relationships, good working relationships. When I went through Capstone

as the [ANG] Deputy Director, I met two individuals called Joe Wehrle and Chuck Wald. Chuck Wald was the commander over at Aviano [Air Base, Italy] at the time and Joe Wehrle was working here in the Pentagon for Gen. Handy.

We became very close over that period of the six weeks. We discussed a lot of the issues that were facing -- the challenges that were facing our Air Force. Over a lot of late night discussions, we were looking at how could we put together something that would alleviate the pers tempo of our force by including the reserve component in it as well, and what we could do to provide that relief.

So we got some of the initial bar napkins that a lot of this was drawn on. Both Waldo and Joe Wehrle turned to me and said, "How can you participate? If we put together something, how could the Guard participate?" And we went through a lot of different scenarios.

It got briefed as General Wald was very close to General Ryan, and General Ryan was frustrated in some ways, and I don't want to put words in his mouth but in how to downsize the personal turmoil in our Air Force. After Capstone, General Wald and General Wehrle went to Gen. Ryan with a proposal, and that was really the beginnings of the whole AEF.

DR. GROSS: Excuse me. What time period are we talking about here, sir?

MAJ. GEN. WEAVER: This was 1997.

DR. GROSS: '97.

MAJ. GEN. WEAVER: '97.

DR. GROSS: That was along time before they came out with the public announcement.

MAJ. GEN. WEAVER: That's true, yeah. But that's what we were looking at at that time. And I saw during this, and having been disinvited to the war fight, meaning the desert, since Desert Shield/Desert Storm, because we didn't have precision guided munitions, I viewed it as two things.

Number one, that we could be involved in real world, no kidding contingencies and help alleviate the pers tempo from the active duty force; and two, in so doing, being part of that, just maybe we could get funded and resourced properly even more so to make our fighting force a more capable force to where we don't get disinvited to the war fight.

And as you can tell, as we focused in on the AEF and sold it as job one, that is the most important

mission that they could be doing, the units could be doing, save a state emergency which is our responsibility being Guardsmen. It has turned out to be an incredible success and I couldn't be more pleased.

I mean, our pers tempo today equals that of what were doing at the peak of Desert Shield/Desert Storm. It is very doable because all of the units are participating, not only the aviation package but the support package as well.

Our traditional Guard men and women are going over there, doing real world work that they've been trained, you know, years to do but never really been allowed to do because we didn't have an opening to be able to do it. You know, we always groomed ourselves for our ORIs [i.e., operational readiness inspections] and going to annual training and some other base "X" whatever. And this has put us right in the forefront of total force.

DR. GROSS: Were there reservations in the states and units about that?

MAJ. GEN. WEAVER: Yes, absolutely.

DR. GROSS: Talk about that.

MAJ. GEN. WEAVER: When I had the Warrior broadcasts, and it was a dialogue where they would call in or fax in questions and we would talk about it. Again, we're the Guard. I'm not a commander. I'm the director. I manage the resources. I asked the states to believe in what we are attempting to do here with the AEF and tried to show them the benefits of how it would keep us in the forefront.

I mean, looking at the challenges in the Army Guard versus our challenges, I mean, here we're being invited to be a part of the war fighting capability. But, we had some states that said "hey, we're not convinced." It took a lot -- I say a lot, but it took work to make sure that everybody was on board, and even once we started it and everybody had what AEF they were going to be a part of and whatnot, there were some reservations on both parts, active and the Guard part.

And there was some -- some, and I -- some horror stories out there where it didn't work that well and the fact of attitude, because of attitudes. "Oh, you're the Guard. You're only here for two weeks. Are you really capable, you know. Look at all the rank of those Guardsmen."

I mean, yeah, we had some of that. But thanks to the leadership of the Air Force and our own leadership in the Guard, we attacked each one of those unfortunate instances and it was just an education process. Again, the success of it is being measured in the fact that we don't hear about

those ugly stories very much any more, and we're only in the second cycle of the AEF.

DR. GROSS: What kind of specific objections or concerns did the states and units have about the EAF?

MAJ. GEN. WEAVER: Thinking that they were losing control. And, this is all about control. Some states wanted to determine where they would go do their training, where they would go, when they would go, and they didn't want to be told. And I understood that because remember our culture here. It is one of 54 air forces and of herding kittens and to make sure that everyone is on the same sheet of music and whatnot.

So it was more of a, you know, oh, here's the Bureau or the Air Force. They're trying to take over control. No, not really. It didn't even come close to that. But it was something new and any time you take an organization that is knee deep in tradition, such as the Air National Guard, and start changing it ever so slowly, you'll have individuals you know starting out state's rights and whatnot, which I support strong, extremely strongly; more so than anyone out there.

So I'm very sensitive to that, but I'm also sensitive to the fact that we need to be valuable to the total force. Or when we have the next round of base closures somebody is going to say well, we're spending all this money on the Air National Guard and they're not being part of what we need them to be part of. What good are they? So we have proven ourselves over and over, time and time again.

DR. GROSS: Well, that kind of brings me to the question, for the record, of our little in-brief with the GAO [i.e., General Accounting Office] representatives last week, I believe it was.

MAJ. GEN. WEAVER: Yeah.

DR. GROSS: You know, sort of how are things going? I mean, how --

MAJ. GEN. WEAVER: I was pretty excited about that meeting, because I went in there pumped because we have one of the greatest stories to tell in military history. How civilian airmen, soldiers, can do such a great job in the performance of their military duties and maintain a full-time job at home and most importantly, a full-time family.

It's just a great story to tell, and I want the GAO to know it because I think we've been getting some bad press both from the employer support and sometimes from the family support, and they needed to know the true story and backed up with facts and figures, retention rates, recruiting and morale. And that's why I think the meeting went so well.

DR. GROSS: That negative story wasn't really directed at the Air Guard specifically or the Air Force Reserve, for that matter, at all.

MAJ. GEN. WEAVER: That's true, yeah. And we all get painted with the same brush, and that's a challenge to keep -- hey, wait a minute. You know like there was an article in the Air Force Association magazine about have we stretched the limit too far with using the reserve component.

Well, just the title of it kind of connotes that we're stretching it too far, and it's not even the case. I wrote a rebuttal back to the Air Force Association magazine by saying -- and it was a good story.

DR. GROSS: Yeah, the title of the story was totally misleading.

MAJ. GEN. WEAVER: Yeah, and I mean, our -- even though our pers tempo is busier than ever, it's spread across all of our 54 air forces, our 54 states [and territories and the District of Columbia], and our pers tempo has become predictable and stable and very doable, very manageable.

The problem, as I told the GAO, is when we have states and commanders that [say] okay, we'll do the AEF but we also want to do this. Well, then I'm saying okay, if you want to do, you know, mission number two, mission number one is most important. But if you're aiming mission number two and possibly mission number three during the year, how much more are you willing to really stretch the rubber band here?

I've asked them only for a 15-day period of time in the AEFs that I need their expertise and do real world stuff. Anything over and above that is the decision brought by their state and their commander.

DR. GROSS: For the sake of the record, I mean, can you distinguish how the approach the Air Guard and the Air Force Reserve used differs from other approaches? Perhaps we could discuss that a little bit in general terms and why you think that that is significantly different and important to the success of the Air Force?

MAJ. GEN. WEAVER: Good question, because part of the GAO -- when you look at the Army Guard and Army Reserve, we're not the Army Guard. We are not the Army Reserve. We have a different culture. We have different -- we operate under different operational procedures and constraints. We operate under a construct that yes, we can do it under 15 days, under our annual training. We are resourced to the level that we need to be able to go to war at a moment's notice.

DR. GROSS: We don't have to spin-up for six months.

MAJ. GEN. WEAVER: There's no spin-up time. So there is a big difference. We don't go off for 180 days or 270, now 180, and hopefully that will get lower for the Army Guard, [and] Army Reserve.

Our part of the whole AEF was that hey, we'll give you everything we've got and we're doing that. Half of our force is deployed every two AEFs. That's more than any other reserve component. But we've got to do it under the 15-day construct.

You know, so then the argument will come. Well, then what we're doing, we're paying six to one. That's six Air Guardsmen for every Air Force [person]. No, that's not even close. It's a one-for-one swap, because for every Guardsman over there, I mean, there's an active duty kid back at home with their family. So I don't buy that argument at all. It's one-for-one.

But it has to stay under 15 days. Yes, some of our people want to do more. Some of our people want to stay longer. We're saying okay, if you want to command you must stay longer, and that's only right and just because you need to keep continuity. If you want to stay longer, we'll work the 15-day construct but if you want to do it longer, we will put that in later.

After we get everybody in there for their 15 days and we have openings for people who want to stay longer -- 30, 45, 90 days -- we'll plug them in as well. But to keep our agreement with the employers and most importantly, the families, we need to be able to stay with the 15 days.

DR. GROSS: Could you address volunteerism versus PSRC [i.e., Presidential Selective Reserve Call-up] or PRC [i.e., Presidential Reserve Call-up] question as well?

MAJ. GEN. WEAVER: Yeah. We in the Air Guard, and I think I can speak confidently about the Air Force Reserve, if we go to a PSRC, that is the act of last resort. We want to do everything we can under volunteerism. A PSRC cut for 180 days kills us because it sends an alarm bell that we don't need to have rung to the families and the employers, unless it is no kidding that we see a skirmish, a major operation underway.

DR. GROSS: A war?

MAJ. GEN. WEAVER: A war, for the sake of a better term. Yeah, the PSRC would be understandable. But I don't see us in the Fulda Gap [Germany] mode. I see us in a build-up phase. A build-up phase means that we can handle under volunteerism with the force structure that we have. But if we get to the point where we can't handle it, then we'll do a PSRC. That's last resort. Versus other services want a PSRC right away. The reserves and most notably the Air National

Guard are not of that thinking.

DR. GROSS: What impact do you think it would have on us if we switched our policy in that respect?

MAJ. GEN. WEAVER: That would leave an easy way out for leadership within the Air Force that every time they have a problem, do a PSRC, call up the Guard and Reserve. Now we've got them. That would have a severe, severe problem with retention, recruiting, and it's wrong. It's absolutely wrong. But there are individuals who again, not knowing our culture the way we operate, would jump right to a PSRC.

DR. GROSS: What are you seeing in terms of recruiting, retention and any issues about employer support as a result of this AEF involvement?

MAJ. GEN. WEAVER: I think the numbers speak for themselves. Our retention is pretty -- even over the years has been fairly -- between 90 and 92 percent. They're even getting better.

We lost more people last year than we anticipated only because I think there was a -- and I truly believe that there were a lot of individuals who had just reached the 20 year point. We were going into something new. Mother said "Hey, that's enough. You've given your 20 years. We want you to retire."

So we lost more people to retirements last year than we had anticipated. But having said that, this year recruiting is going very well. Retention is still very good. So I anticipate that we will do very well in the years to come. I think we really have turned around our recruiting challenges now that we're advertising and whatnot and letting people know that there's an opportunity here for you. There's an opportunity not only for you in a part-time way but to also pay for your education. I think it's really paying off.

DR. GROSS: On the equipment modernization front, how is that working, particularly for our fighter forces as a result of the AEFs and other factors?

MAJ. GEN. WEAVER: In the last three years we modernized our fighter force to where now they're as capable as our Air Force fighter force, meaning in our block 25s, 30s and 32s.

DR. GROSS: F-16s?

MAJ. GEN. WEAVER: The F-16s. We're carrying precision guided munitions. We're about halfway through our requirement, funding requirement. We need about another, I believe, 96

[targeting] pods. I'm not sure of the accurate number.

But night vision capability, situational awareness, data link, SADL, and we're extending the length of the F-16s. So we've modernized our combat air forces – and our F-15s as well -- to where we're sitting very good for anything that the Air Force would ask us to do or what we would need to do.

We put in extremely aggressive work on that and I feel very comfortable in where we sit today, but we still have more work to do.

DR. GROSS: What role did AEF on the one hand and working with Congress and the Pentagon play on the other?

MAJ. GEN. WEAVER: AEF helped tell our story. Hey, here's why we need to modernize our fighter fleet. We can't get there from here. We can't go to the AEF unless we have that precision capability. We need it. We need to be able to have night vision capability. We need to have all of the other stuff that we've been asking for.

The AEF is what helped us drive those funding requirements, because we didn't have everything the actives had. We just didn't. Now, I sat there in the Air Force Council room for so many years seeing that they were working their butt off on active duty. We had the capability, meaning the airplanes and the crews, but we didn't have the precision guided part of it, and it was very frustrating; extremely frustrating. And, I said if I can do anything to change that around, I will, and we did.

DR. GROSS: Were you able to do that within the Air Force or, I mean, how did that process go?

MAJ. GEN. WEAVER: We had a lot of help from our states and their state [National Guard Association] organizations. And then they formulated their requirements, meaning knowing what they had to do for the future in the AEF which we had outlined. They worked with the National Guard Association, [and] the Enlisted Association of the National Guard, worked within their own state organizations.

We had a tremendous support from the states themselves, along with what we testified as what we needed on the Hill as well when we were asked.

DR. GROSS: How much luck did you have as far as getting the Air Force to ante up more within its own processes?

MAJ. GEN. WEAVER: The Air Force -- that's another good story, too. I mean, it's a great story. Because, I mean, they realized, as we had briefed them, what we were able to do with our force

structure and modernized to such an extent that we were doing so well that we reached an agreement with the chief of staff of the Air Force, General Ryan and myself, that in one particular area, precision guided munitions, that no matter what they would buy, they'd give us 40 percent of the precision guided munitions, they would take 60, which was fair.

And I would do the same thing for anything that was given to us from Congress in the Guard/ Reserve Equipment Account, that I'd split it 60/40 with them. They'd get 60 and we would get 40. So it was an absolute -- an agreement that had never been tried before or done before, and the EAF had every bit to do with it.

DR. GROSS: Looking at -- well, now we're on weapons modernization. Looking at some of the other issues out there, I would like you to assess where we are on things including C-130J, KCX, the possibility of getting F-22s and Joint Strike Fighters? Where are we going and what are the prospects in the future with the new airframes coming on line?

MAJ. GEN. WEAVER: Good question. We are very dependent upon what the Air Force plans to do with these major weapons systems. I mean, it was on record that we never really supported the C-130J. We wanted the C-130H to be kept being built. We didn't want to go into the J because we were afraid of what the price would happen, and most of the units clamored for the H model because it's a great airplane.

The Air Force made a decision that they would go for the C-130J, and it just so happened that the Air National Guard then ended up with a lot of them. I'm not badmouthing the airplane at all, because it is a very good airplane. It's a lot more expensive than the H model.

Looking back on it, I would have still preferred to stay in the H model only because of the cost effectiveness and that we could have modernized our fleet at a faster, rapid rate because the J had really almost doubled in price.

So, I mean, if there was one thing that I would like to see redone, it would have been staying in the C-130H. Having said that, we've got the J's starting to be bought by the Air Force. We've got Quonset [State Airport, Rhode Island, home of the 143rd Airlift Wing] to fulfill, Harrisburg [International Airport, Pennsylvania, home of the 193rd Special Operations Wing] yet to be done [and] then Channel Island [Air National Guard Station, California, home of the 146th Airlift Wing]. So we need to be able to complete those. They'll have a great weapons system in the J model.

DR. GROSS: I guess Baltimore [Maryland, home of the 175th Wing] is the only one that --

MAJ. GEN. WEAVER: I'm sorry, Baltimore is already done, yeah, and they've done a great, great

job. We need a lot of support equipment to be purchased.

With all the other aircraft in the CAF [i.e., combat air forces] arena, we're really at the mercy of what the Air Force is going to help buy for them, whether Congress, you know -- the F-22, the Joint Strike Fighter. But we'll be well positioned in any event no matter where we are going to go in our CAF, combat air forces.

We've got F-16s that will last for the next 10 to 15 years, easy. We're getting rid of all of our A's. We'll have C models, albeit block 25, 30 and 32, but they'll be well equipped to do the AEF mission. The F-15As I think will eventually turn to F-15Cs. Our A models are in fairly decent shape. The A-10s need work as we try to put the CUPID mod in them as well, as we did with the F-16.

I'd like to be able to get an engine built for the A-10. I think the A-10 is going to be around a long time. It's a great airplane, but it needs a new engine to do -- to operate within the parameters of where they're operating now.

In the airlift fleet C-17s, C-17s, C-17s. You can't buy enough C-17s. It's a great airplane and I'm very -- looking very hopeful and confident about our C-17 conversion in Jackson, Mississippi. It'll go extremely well. I look at additional C-17s coming to other Air National Guard units as well.

The modernization of our tanker fleet is an absolute priority. It's an old airplane. It's getting older. I'd like to be able to somehow re-engine all of the remaining E models and be looking at a KC COTS, meaning a KCX commercial off-the-shelf derivative for the future. I think we can do that very easily.

DR. GROSS: Has the Air Force shown any interest in that concept?

MAJ. GEN. WEAVER: They're starting to look at it very closely because when the leadership realized that we've got almost a third of our tanker fleet in depot, we've got a problem, a major challenge. And, when you're looking at buying new tankers, commercial off-the-shelf derivatives, we can not only cut down the cost of operating these older machines but the cost of maintaining them in the way that they need to be maintained.

I mean, we are an Expeditionary Aerospace Force. We can't get there unless we use tanker capability to get our CAF forces to where we need to go. So we need a strong, capable, reliable, cost effective tanker fleet and we need to work to get there.

DR. GROSS: An interesting organizational change, at least from my perspective, is the F-15 training associate unit at Tyndall [Air Force Base (AFB), Florida]. I mean, this represents an

historic thing.

MAJ. GEN. WEAVER: Oh, big time.

DR. GROSS: For the Air Guard. We tried it once before, didn't like it with C-141s back in the '60s or early '70s.

MAJ. GEN. WEAVER: Yeah. I saw --

DR. GROSS: Tell me about that.

MAJ. GEN. WEAVER: Boy, there are still bumps on my head on that one. They've smoothed out a little bit. When we had a rated summit down at Langley [AFB, Virginia]. Gen. [Richard E.] Hawley was the Commander of the Air Combat Command (ACC) at the time. We were looking to help alleviate -- other ways to alleviate the pers tempo of our active duty pilots.

We looked at a bunch of different proposals. One of the proposals was putting in a Guard associate, not Air Force Reserve, a Guard associate at some states, Tyndall being one of them. We floated the proposal through Gen. Hawley, in front of Gen. Hawley and Gen. Ryan. Hawley really liked it.

So we set up a Guard associate program at Tyndall and it has been nothing but a great success. But when I first volunteered to do that, there was a window of opportunity that I had to take. Some Adjutant Generals -- again, they're my bosses -- did not care that I leaned forward to start an associate business in basically a UE [i.e., unit equipped] equipped reserve component force. And, my reply back to them, I said I'd rather have you criticize me if I fail to take a window of opportunity than to criticize me for taking a window of opportunity, because we can always back out.

Well, there was some pretty tough times there because I didn't come to get their permission at first, but I committed to them that I would not do any more of this until we find out how we did down in Florida at Tyndall. Well, history will show that we did an incredible job down at Tyndall.

We did change some things as far as our historical construct, and now I'm getting Adjutant Generals saying "gee, can we do more of this in my state." So I feel very good about volunteering, what we volunteered to do. It wasn't in lieu of UE equipped units, it was in addition to. And I felt extremely good in the success of what we've been able to accomplish, and I look forward to more associate units in the Air National Guard as well. Again, that's in addition to, not in lieu of.

DR. GROSS: There's some sense that the unit at Tyndall may be a steppingstone to F-22s for the Guard because they'll be training F-22 pilots down there, I understand.

MAJ. GEN. WEAVER: Yeah.

DR. GROSS: What's your assessment of that?

MAJ. GEN. WEAVER: I think it's a good assessment. I'm enjoying the thought of it. I just only regret that I won't be one of them.

If the F-22 totally comes on line, and I have no doubt -- I don't have any doubt through all the political wranglings. Tyndall has already been announced as an F-22 training base. We've got a Guard associate unit down there. So I don't see that weapons system being restricted to only active duty.

DR. GROSS: It doesn't look like rocket science.

MAJ. GEN. WEAVER: No. No, it doesn't. It would really set a bad taste in everyone's mouth as okay, you can fly the F-15 but you can't fly the F-22. That would be tough.

DR. GROSS: The logic doesn't seem to be there.

MAJ. GEN. WEAVER: No. No.

DR. GROSS: Okay, moving on to something a little closer to home. Three-star ranks for chiefs of reserve components, including the Air Guard. Where did that legislation come from and why? What do you know and when did you know it?

MAJ. GEN. WEAVER: When did I find out? I pretty much stayed out of that whole discussion. That discussion was led by many -- a few people in Congress, a few people within the reserve component force. I was neither asked -- I was not asked my opinion on that during the whole thing. And in reality, it was nothing that I saw on my watch. You know, there were rumors about that for years. Well, lo and behold, the National Defense Authorization Act of last year, you know, put it in there. I mean, I knew there was an argument about the headspace, you know, are they going to take it out of the Air Force headspace. The Air Force said "you give us the head space, we'll promote them tomorrow to three stars." They thought well-deserved one.

So finally they gave them somewhat of the headspace for the three star, and now they are in the process of submitting the incumbents, except for one.

DR. GROSS: Except for one? [Laughter.]

MAJ. GEN. WEAVER: For the three star rank. I was asked if I would stay on for the three star rank and after a lot of long consideration from my wife, Cathylee and myself, we set out a plan when I became the director to get so much accomplished and then to wrap up after four years as the director, which is about 35 years of commissioned service, about 29 years on active duty.

And to stay on for a three star retirement just for the sake of staying on for a three star retirement was not -- was, in my mind, a bit egregious and greedy and I thought it was wrong to do that.

And my priority has been always to get what I wanted to be able to get accomplished in the four years, my vision, and I think we've done a fairly decent job. And having said all of that, we agreed that the right thing to do would be retire on time, so I'll be retiring on time.

DR. GROSS: Well, stepping back for a moment from your vision, what you wanted to accomplish here, what impact do you think that this change in rank is going to have on the way the Air Guard grooms and prepares its future leadership?

MAJ. GEN. WEAVER: Oh, there's going to be a lot more interest in the position. The nice thing about it, it's a presidential appointment. It really elevates the selection of this job. That in itself is extremely important because it tells the active duty force, "hey, this is an extremely important position, so important that it's selected by and approved by the President of the United States." That's one heck of a message.

As we went through -- as we tried to explain to the Air Force what this legislation really means, it was an eye-opening experience for them to realize that they didn't have control over this. They have input to it, but they don't have control over the selection of the directors, both the Air Force and the Army.

So the third star will help greatly at the table because we're part of the Air Staff. I just happen to have the largest single command of the entire United States Air Force, but I'm not a commander. Again, it's a director. But no one has a command as large as I do. In fact, my budget equals that of USAFE, Air Force Europe and PACAF, Air Force Pacific, combined. So it's a pretty formidable force and worthy, worthy of a three star position.

DR. GROSS: Inasmuch, though, that the deputy director has only one star under the legislation --

MAJ. GEN. WEAVER: That's got to be changed.

DR. GROSS: Yeah. How are we going to get directors [inaudible]?

MAJ. GEN. WEAVER: Yeah, I know. Well, here's what we're looking to do. We are bringing on a two-star or bringing on a deputy who is a one-star for a two year period of time to get him through a couple of budget cycles -- you need to go through a couple budget cycles here in the building [i.e., the Pentagon] just to understand what's going on, or you get eaten alive.

I mean, it's nice to be in these positions but you also have to have your ducks lined up and knowing who's on first and what's on second and whatnot. So you need to have a good game plan here. You need to have that knowledge of how the system works.

You also need to know, and a requirement of the language is jointness, and there are plenty Chairman's [of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS)] 10 positions out there that are two-star active duty. So you could take a person who is say in the director's job for a year or two years -- or I am sorry, the deputy director's position for two years. Then put that individual out into a joint job, which would be a two-star position. And then he would be -- he or she would be in line then to be the Director of the Air National Guard as well.

So there's lots of ways of doing it. They're still working it out, this language is still being digested in how we can do -- or, you know, they could make the individual, the deputy a two-star position. I don't -- but they need jointness right now the way the language reads, except for the incumbents.

DR. GROSS: Right, so how does that impact on people who, say, are TAGs; does that count?

MAJ. GEN. WEAVER: The jointness?

DR. GROSS: Yeah.

MAJ. GEN. WEAVER: They're trying to get it to count because of their work. We'll have to wait and see where that goes. I would certainly strongly support that theory that they do a joint -- that a TAG is definitely a joint tour.

DR. GROSS: But they're not exactly involved in the Pentagon budget process.

MAJ. GEN. WEAVER: No that's true, not directly. Indirectly they are.

DR. GROSS: Indirectly. Okay.

MAJ. GEN. WEAVER: But then you have to -- is that one's definition of jointness is just because you've been through a budget process or is jointness whereas if you're out there in a, you know,

either Joint Forces Command or somewhere else and you're not so much involved in the budget process as you are in the forces themselves. And an Adjutant General, say, with 18,000 -- anywhere between 10,000 and 18,000 men and women, both Army and Air. I mean, that can get pretty joint.

So I think they should be given an opportunity to compete as a the joint -- they get more joint on them than some people over on the Joint Staff.

DR. GROSS: But it's yet to be determined, really?

MAJ. GEN. WEAVER: Yet to be determined, that's correct.

DR. GROSS: Okay. Moving on to the vision thing.

MAJ. GEN. WEAVER: Vision.

DR. GROSS: The vision thing, to quote someone. What was your vision for the Air National Guard when you became director and where are we?

MAJ. GEN. WEAVER: One nice thing, and it goes back to the last question. I got to serve four years in the building --

[End side A, tape 1.]

DR. GROSS: Okay, there we go.

MAJ. GEN. WEAVER: I saw things that are so esoterical, I guess you could use the term, nice to have things to be able to get done and I looked at issues that were important to our Air National Guard that I thought needed to be addressed. Quality of life issues, support issues, issues that I had some control over and the ability to be able to make things happen within the confines of my own job.

And so that's why I set out the different themes in the different years, because I needed the field on board with me. I needed the field to be a participant and part of the vision or I knew it would fall flat on its face.

The first year was just getting an organization together and how we would operate and getting the field used to operating with the Bureau and trusting the Bureau in what we needed to do, and putting people in Bureau positions that were relatively sympathetic to what the challenges were in the field, putting people on in the MAJCOMs [i.e., major commands] that knew that what we needed to do

was be involved at every corner and in every area.

So that first year was just getting our act together, what I call getting our act together and getting it to where I felt comfortable the way we would be operating, and I've enjoyed it ever since then of having the Core Leadership Team, of having the Committee of Advisors out there from the field telling me what is going on out there without being filtered through a staff. And then listening, most importantly, to the Adjutant Generals.

Getting all that and then looking at areas that we needed to really attack, the Year of the Enlisted. We had not been taking care of our enlisted folks. We just hadn't.

DR. GROSS: In what respect?

MAJ. GEN. WEAVER: Acknowledgement of what they were able to do, capable of doing, and putting rank into the field where it needed to be and not being afraid of what the Air Force is going to say about it, because we did have the more experienced people in the Air National Guard and they needed to be appropriately recognized for that capability by stripes on their sleeves.

That was, you know, that was big in some areas. I mean, we had people out in the same job for 18 years and not being able to get promoted because there wasn't a slot. Well, we had to make slots available. And did we hurt anybody or did we hurt the total force at all? Not even close. But we were able to really turn some things around that needed to be turned around. Other issues as well within the Year of the Enlisted.

The Year of the Family, highlighting challenges that -- we had a family support program but it was basically Army structured. We're not the Army Guard. We're the Air National Guard. I had people accuse me, saying, "Hey, you're attacking soft issues." Well, excuse me, if the family -- if our enlisted force and the family and our employers are soft issues, then maybe you're not the Air National Guard that I see and am a part of.

I'm also attacking modernization fiercely. In fact, we had the best modernization of our Air National Guard forces than we've ever had in the history of the Air National Guard in such a short period of time, over a three-year period, and will continue this year.

So it wasn't only what they considered soft issues. To me they were hard core issues because we were starting to lose support from our families. We were starting to lose our enlisted people walking out the door because there was no other way -- there was no move, no movement, no move up.

DR. GROSS: No career progression?

MAJ. GEN. WEAVER: No career progression. And our families just had basically had enough. We needed to be inclusive instead of exclusive as we headed into the Year of the Employer, I mean, we don't have the employer challenges that our other reserve components do, but we do have them, and we needed to include them as part of our Air National Guard family.

And most importantly, as we head into the Year of Diversity, which I'll actually be retired by that time, it was to me extremely important to put that last because, as we have gone to the field and educated our members about being an inclusive Guard family instead of exclusive, to wear their heart on their sleeve to show that, you know, we are extremely important, that all of us are extremely important to this Guard family. And we needed to open up our horizons and include all of God's children in our Guard family. I think we've been able to begin that process and, as we focus in on the Year of Diversity coming up, we will be able to look back and say "hey, we have changed," and I truly believe that we have.

Because, if we're not an inclusive organization, all that other stuff that we do is not going to make any difference at all in the future of our Guard. And I have a feeling that we could be a failure in the future, but we won't be. We're not going to let that happen.

DR. GROSS: Staff integration is still somewhat controversial in some quarters within the staff.

MAJ. GEN. WEAVER: Still is. Yes.

DR. GROSS: What's your assessment of why we're doing it and how well it's working?

MAJ. GEN. WEAVER: It's working. It's working. Is it working as well as I had hoped? No.

DR. GROSS: How well had you hoped?

MAJ. GEN. WEAVER: I had hoped that every time the stars would turn around in the MAJCOMs they would see an Air Guard person in their face at all levels, and that would bring on the proponents of the active duty force, naturally. It's been an uphill battle. We're not there, but we're getting there.

But I'm also restricted by the types of funding that we've got for those positions and how many I can actually fill. We're more involved in the MAJCOMs than we ever have been, and that is good. I think there's a lot of issues out there in the MAJCOMs that get worked at the MAJCOMs before it ever gets to the Air Staff, and it'll have the right Guard twist on it or input. So in that way it's been a really good success.

But we're doing a lot of Air Force work out there as well, and as we were doing the Air Force work, I'm also finding out that the Air Force is not -- every time we've had one person leave, an active duty person in the Guard Bureau leave, the Air Force is not filling their requirements to put another active duty person in there, and that's hurt. They've got a requirement to do that and they need to do that.

But every time they don't fill the slot that means the person that I was going to put out there, staff integration, into the MAJCOMs, would have to stay here at the Bureau. All of the headquarters are getting stretched tightly and MAJCOMs are looking for us to pick up the slack in every area, and we can't do it.

DR. GROSS: About how many people do we have out there now in staff integration business?

MAJ. GEN. WEAVER: I believe we've got about 85, where before we used to be down around the single digits. So it's -- we've got a lot more people out there.

DR. GROSS: In general, what kinds of issues have they been successful in and what kinds not successful?

MAJ. GEN. WEAVER: Well, it's hard to measure it because we don't know how much stuff that they had been a part of that, you know, an idea gets floated up and you have a group of active duty people saying, "hey, this is a great idea, we can take the Guard dah, dah, dah," and they work it all the way up and by the time it gets up to my level, I'm fighting this thing all the way back down again. How much of that is being, you know, stopped right there at the staffer level? I can't tell you.

But I can also tell you by just the feedback that I have from our staff integrators that they're involved and they're doing great work.

DR. GROSS: You told the GAO folks last week that, you know, your biggest job, your main job is to get the resources --

MAJ. GEN. WEAVER: That's correct.

DR. GROSS: -- for the Air Guard that they need to do their mission as part of the total air force. How do you do that job?

MAJ. GEN. WEAVER: I beg, borrow and steal. You need to be involved at every level of the resourcing part of it from the beginning of the budgets, the FYDP [i.e., Future Year Defense Program]. You need to create your own programs to be able to make resourcing freed up so we can

do other things that are more meaningful and more relative to our requirements, like our re-engineering, our whole re-engineering program where [we said] let us do away with the things that we're not really -- that are not really important that we don't really need to do and let's re-engineer these units to things that are relative to the AEF and our future. That has been very painful because again, you take an organization and it hates to change. It gets pretty comfortable in what they're doing.

But you throw out the caveat that hey, look no one is going to lose their job. They may need to retrain or go into another career field, but we're not going to lose anybody. You know, that helps a little bit. But people can justify any position they want. But, from our perspective you've got to keep it relative to real world AEF.

DR. GROSS: Schoolhouse. Back when Gen.[Merrill A.] McPeak was [Air Force] Chief of Staff, there was a move to take all the schoolhouses and put them back in the active force.

MAJ. GEN. WEAVER: Really bad mistake.

DR. GROSS: Now we seem to be heading back the other way.

MAJ. GEN. WEAVER: Absolutely.

DR. GROSS: What happened there, particularly Springfield [Ohio] and San Antonio [Texas] in the training business now?

MAJ. GEN. WEAVER: Well, we had the best F-16 schoolhouse at McConnell [AFB, Kansas]. You know, and for whatever reason it was decided that we should no longer be in training, the Guard. And that was really, to me, an error; a tragic error.

We're pretty capable. We have a very capable and solid work force, capable and stable. We get pretty good at what we do because we do it for so long, so much. And, I mean, we trained across the board: active, Guard, Reserve. And it was decided that, you know, Guard shouldn't be in training.

Bad mistake, but we've recovered. We're back in training. We're building ourselves back up because it's the right thing to do. Did it happen overnight and for the right reasons? No, not really. It happened because the actives couldn't put enough Guard pilots and Reserve pilots through the actives school so we had to start a couple of schools, Kelly and Springfield, in the F-16 business.

And, you know, I mean, we reinvented the wheel again. And they'll be two great schoolhouses because of our stable, capable work force.

DR. GROSS: We have a lot of F-16 units. Why those particular two?

MAJ. GEN. WEAVER: When we evaluated all of the F-16 units and where best to put them, and to also put them where the states wanted them. I mean, I'm not going to put anything into a state where the state doesn't want them to have happen. I've told the AGs [i.e., Adjutants General] that. I'll fight for your right to refuse, but it had better be -- it's got to be a good reason. You can't just because, you know, your fighter pilots like their play toys. It's got to be to where it's relative to the AEF total force.

DR. GROSS: Okay.

MAJ. GEN. WEAVER: And Kelly and Springfield stepped up to the plate. We looked at all of [inaudible], weather, everything. And we made two good choices.

DR. GROSS: In looking at the reports from DP [i.e., The Directorate of Personnel and Training of the Air Directorate, National Guard Bureau (NGB)], they say there's been a persistent shortfall of about what 400 pilots in the Air Guard for some time.

MAJ. GEN. WEAVER: Yeah.

DR. GROSS: What accounts for that and where is that going?

MAJ. GEN. WEAVER: A lot of those pilots served in overhead positions. We're getting better, and it's been for the most part the same, you know, same numbers all throughout. And it has not really affected us to any great degree. We're going to be able to have some active duty pilots come and fly with us here in the not too distant future as the Air Force associate program comes into being in the Air National Guard, so that will help make up some of the slack.

But when you're looking at 400 pilots out of 5,000, it's been pretty much that as a flux. Sometimes we've gone less, sometimes we've gone a little bit more. But we've been pretty much steady there.

DR. GROSS: Is there any sense that we've lost people or haven't been able to attract people because you know our ops tempo is greater than it used to be?

MAJ. GEN. WEAVER: I think that --

DR. GROSS: And they got off active duty for that reason and they don't --

MAJ. GEN. WEAVER: I believe we have, but I couldn't equate the number to it from all the surveys that I've seen. But what I can tell you is that's an individual decision for wanting to get out of the Guard, whether it be an aviator or maintenance person.

And since we are a volunteer organization, then some of them just say my family wants me home on weekends and when I get back from my airline job and I fly with the Guard and I go do annual training, there's not enough time to be spent with the family and I can't do this .

So it is challenging to keep their lives balanced, but yet again that's a personal decision on their part. And in some ways the busier we are in those units, the retention rate is better than in other units, especially the ones that are always leaning forward. They're just -- when you look at it it's just some very interesting statistics. Those units that are very busy, but manageable busy, meaning they can manage their personnel, they've got a great attitude, great morale, great retention.

DR. GROSS: What do you consider your greatest disappointment here as director, if any?

MAJ. GEN. WEAVER: Good question. I'd have to think about that more --

DR. GROSS: Okay.

MAJ. GEN. WEAVER: -- in the next days. Right now I can't think of any disappointments. If there was one, but it was only momentary, and that was our ability to get our own family support program moving in the right direction without everyone getting their feathers in a tuff thinking that we were trying to take over or something. I thought that was very disappointing. And we weren't. We just wanted to let everybody else had. If there was one area that I thought we could have done better, explaining what we were trying to do, but it was such an emotional hot topic.

DR. GROSS: Why was that a hot topic?

MAJ. GEN. WEAVER: It was a hot topic because we either failed to explain our desires accurately and our needs accurately. Again, remember, dealing with a bureaucracy here. Years of tradition unhampered by progress.

DR. GROSS: Oh, I thought that was the Navy.

MAJ. GEN. WEAVER: Yeah. No we -- but after it got explained, we weren't in competition with anybody, we just -- we went out to get our own resources to make things better for our families, the commanders all of a sudden started realizing this. Again, it was just change. It was change.

And that change in family support went over the line to the Army Guard as well, and that met with

great resistance. But, we're all the better for it. I can't say it's a regret, because I'd do the same thing over again except I'd be even more aggressive, much more aggressive. And it's proven, sad to say, time and time again when we needed our family support organizations where they've come through because of tragedy.

But the modernization piece, keeping ourselves relevant, taking care of our force, those are all to me just great successes by a lot of people and I feel extremely good about where we're going.

But again, the most important is, in my mind, is the diversity part, the diversity challenge of keeping everyone inclusive in place of exclusive. And that will be measured in years to come, well beyond my time.

DR. GROSS: Well, those are all the questions I had this time, unless there's any other comments or areas you'd like to go into.

MAJ. GEN. WEAVER: Good. No.

[The interview was concluded.]