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Interview by Dr. Charles J. Gross, Air National Guard [ANG] Historian, NGB-PAI-H, and SMSgt Steve Stearns, ANG Senior Enlisted Historian, NGB-PAI-H, With MAJ Michael A. Webb, 124th Wing, Idaho ANG, at Boise, Idaho.

Subject: 124th Wing, Idaho Air National Guard, Involvement in Kosovo [i.e., Operation Allied Force] Focusing On ANG A-10 Operations.

DR. GROSS: It is 22 October 1999. I am Dr. Charles Gross, the Air National Guard historian. I am here at Boise at the 124th Wing, conducting interviews on the Wing's participation in Operation Allied Force.

If you could identify yourself, Major, and we will talk about Kosovo for awhile.

MAJ WEBB: My name is Michael A. Webb, call sign "Shooter," a major in the Idaho Air National Guard. I have been in the Guard ever since I joined back in 1984.

DR. GROSS: In 1984, okay. And you are a pilot, I understand?

MAJ WEBB: A pilot.

DR. GROSS: And you are a traditional Guardsman?

MAJ WEBB: Traditional.

DR. GROSS: You are not a full-timer. Could we talk about your experience in Kosovo? You were over there with the original package.

MAJ WEBB: Where do you want to start?

DR. GROSS: Well, we could start at the beginning with your first mission, or just some of your feelings and impressions about flying a typical mission, or a particularly memorable mission over there.

MAJ WEBB: Well, I think that historically this was the first time that this Guard unit has been presidentially activated since --

SMSGT STEARNS: Korean War?

MAJ WEBB: 1951. So it has been a long time. So it has been a huge significant

issue, when we got formally called up to go. And there is a lot of stuff that went along with that. I was involved in a lot of the meetings and decision making on the first wave, second wave, and third wave. And who would go when and where, and a lot of those kinds of things. I do not know if you want to go into that at all.

DR. GROSS: Well, we have talked about that a little bit, I guess. Is the implication of that that there might be rotating groups of people through there if this thing went on long enough?

MAJ WEBB: Well, we anticipated that the war would last up and through the winter. I fully anticipated that we would still be over there at this time.

DR. GROSS: Okay.

MAJ WEBB: And our unit was mentally prepared for that. The intel that we were briefed on, on Milosevic's army, that he was very sustainable, and that the tactics that he was using would allow him to do a long drawn out war. Specifically, with all of the politics that were involved on targeting, the target selection, those kinds of things. But you always want to try to go first, because you never know, there may never be a second or third wave in.

And actually, when we were ordered up and got in country, we were told that there would be no rotation, that we would be there for six months plus. And that was just the best guess at the time. So we fully anticipated being over there for six to nine months. We had orders cut for about 120 days --

DR. GROSS: 270 days?

MAJ WEBB: 270 days.

DR. GROSS: That is the standard under the PSRC [i.e., presidential selective reserve call-up] now.

MAJ WEBB: So those were pretty significant issues. The neat thing about Boise is that this was not our first time in the barrel. I mean this is my sixth time to a combat zone as a traditional Guardsman. We flew Wild Weasels. I went over four times to both [Operation] Southern Watch and [Operation] Northern Watch, and for Iraq. Earlier this year, I did a stint with Willow Grove [i.e., 111th Fighter Wing, Pennsylvania ANG] in Kuwait in A-10s. And then shortly after that, we were activated to go over to Kosovo. That is a little background on our unit and on me. I am not really sure where you want to go.

DR. GROSS: That is fine.

MAJ WEBB: Do you want to talk about how we got over there?

DR. GROSS: Talk about the deployment going off to Barnes [airport, Massachusetts] and then over.

MAJ WEBB: Well, the deployment was pretty standard. It takes a lot longer to get there in an A-10 than the F-4. We took off, and went to the East Coast, and hooked up with Barnes and Willow Grove (sic). We spent a day there going through a lot of intelligence briefings and a lot of required briefings that we needed to know, so we could show up in country and go to war, and generate aircraft as soon as we landed.

We had sent some advance people over to fly with Italy, at GDC [i.e., Gioia del Colle air base], to work with the active duty A-10s guys from Pope [AFB, North Carolina] that were stationed there. They got a couple of sorties, actual combat sorties. So they knew where we were going and what we were doing, kind of the radio drills in and out, how all of the flow was working with the hundreds and hundreds of airplanes that were over the Adriatic [Sea], and south and north of Kosovo.

And we landed at Barnes, and took off and went to the Azores, and then flew into Trapani, Sicily, which is on the northwest coast of the island of Sicily. It was a bare bones base. I don't know if you have been told this.

DR. GROSS: Yes. We talked about that earlier.

MAJ WEBB: We didn't have a lot there. And we basically took over 800 people in there, and started from the ground up. There was extreme over-crowding in the operations facility. We had basically kind of an old barracks/operations building, probably designed to accommodate 10 or 12 people. And we put in over 100 people in there immediately. We were crawling all over each other.

We were ginning up combat missions, and we have got everything in one area. The building was very small. We had life support in our briefing rooms. We had weather in the operations area. We had operations, and command posts, and the com center, and weather. I mean, if they were attached to operations at all, we were all stuck in this one building. We would literally come in to our life support equipment racks and we had to wear civilian clothes to and from the hotel. And we would strip down right there, and put on our flight suit, and then walk just around the other side

to get our intelligence brief and our target plots, and all of this kind of stuff. And then go find a place where we could try to brief, and then go fly. So it was extremely overcrowded.

Maintenance and all of the maintenance support were in an Italian search and rescue helicopter squadron. It was a fairly big hangar, but they did not have any office space. So they basically built dividers and all of this kind of stuff, and hauled all of our equipment in and out. So that was kind of our operations set-up.

We did have a ramp where we could park all of the airplanes. [Inaudible.] So we finally liaised with them good enough to where we could work with their local procedures in and out. So it is kind of like what we did to hit the ground running.

They called us the "Killer Bees." That was a nickname. There were three units that start with Bs, our hometowns. I am kind of rambling. Feel free to ask me any questions.

DR. GROSS: That's fine. Can you tell me what was your first mission like, how did you feel like, how did it go, what were your emotions going through your first mission over there?

MAJ WEBB: I actually kind of kept a ledger of what I did. My first mission. [Looked at his ledger.] We had originally set up where we would go, the GDC, the Pope A-10s, would be the forward air controllers, AIR FACs [i.e., airborne forward air controllers] on our first flight in the country, to kind of give us an aerial orientation, and show us some targets. We would deploy our ordnance, in anticipation that we would take over the AIR FAC'ing roles.

They had the day broken up into seven kill engagement zones, which were associated with times during the day, for 24-hour ops. So we would have KEZ-1 through 7. And we would be assigned one or two of the KEZs during our time window. We would take off from where we were at, and fly all the way to the Adriatic. I have a map that shows that near the boot [of Italy] and everything.

DR. GROSS: I understand that is a pretty long flight before you even got close?

MAJ WEBB: Oh, yes, very long. Here is the boot. And it goes down here, and Sicily is over here. We would take off, and fly over this portion of the ocean, and come across Italy. The GDC, Gioia del Colle and the other A-10 units were here. So we would come across Brindizi, and then hit the refueling tracks up and down the Adriatic.

DR. GROSS: Okay.

MAJ WEBB: And down here. And we also had refueling tracks south of Kosovo. This is Kosovo here. We are looking at a map right now for tape purposes.

DR. GROSS: Sure.

MAJ WEBB: So we would tank, and then we would press up to Kosovo, do our missions, come back out, and tank again. Air refuel is what I mean by tank. And go back in. Sometimes we would triple pump, tank, and come back in.

DR. GROSS: Oh, okay.

MAJ WEBB: And then go back out, tank, and fly home.

DR. GROSS: Okay.

MAJ WEBB: The average mission duration was a minimum amount of six hours up to nine hour missions for A-10 guys, which is a long time, single seat. The country itself, as far as orientation, was pretty easy. I remember that there was bad weather on my first two missions. We had ceilings anywhere between 15,000 and 16,000 feet MSL [i.e., above mean sea level]. But every now and then, there would be a hole in the clouds. And you could look down and find targets or find tanks, or find military targets that we were assigned against.

The A-10s were primarily targeted against military targets. So it was pretty good for us. We got to stay out of a lot of the politics of target selection that had to do with political targets. So we would hit armor, APCs, AAA sites, SAM bunkers, anything to do with army. Traditionally, we stayed away from the towns and villages for collateral damages purposes. And we had tons of targets from different sources that would come in.

The reality of it, we would get our tasking list and I just have some examples to show you, that show the imagery of the kind of stuff that we would get. And they would actually show them to us. But this stuff was dated. It would be anywhere from eight hours old to a day old. And they moved all of the time.

DR. GROSS: That was ancient history for you guys, right, basically.

MAJ WEBB: Because we were talking mobile targets for the most part.

DR. GROSS: Right, okay.

MAJ WEBB: So I would say that 90 percent of my tasking occurred airborne from sources in country, whether it be the Kosovo Liberation Army guy on some kind of cell phone linked up through somebody to somebody to somebody else.

SMSGT STEARNS: Actually get right to the guy [on the ground].

MAJ WEBB: Or if it was from an unmanned aerial vehicle that the Army was flying around with their sensor array on board, which included basically TV cameras, infrared cameras, and those kinds of things, where they could see, and feed the via link real time back to CAOC, the combat air operations center in Italy.

So now we are getting target updates that are only five or ten minutes old. And they would pass them to us as the AIR FACs or the close air support fighters, and we would go find them and try to destroy them.

DR. GROSS: All near real time?

MAJ WEBB: Near real time. It is the closest that I have seen or heard about in modern day air operations, as close to near real time as you can get with the 24- hour operation moving airplanes in and out. I mean, as you can see in this diagram, there are literally hundreds of airplanes airborne at any one time that would be transiting from all of the different bases that supported the war, and all of their different missions.

You have your NATO forces, your Air Force forces, and all the support assets, and tankers, all up and down. And now we are not even talking about up in the north where you get up into Hungary, and over in the northern part of Serbia, where there were missions up here also. Later on, remind me we did put A-10s up into Hungary, combat search and rescue.

DR. GROSS: Oh, the Taszar?

MAJ WEBB: Yes.

DR. GROSS: Okay.

MAJ WEBB: So it was one of the best well-orchestrated administrative get in and out command and control that I have ever seen. From my experience in the Weasels,

the Weasels were a great mission. We knew everything, because we had the APR-47 on board that picked up every sensor ready out there at that time. So at our experience level, we knew what was available and how it works. So I was very impressed in the A-10 that they were this organized.

It would not be uncommon to have 30 or 40 fighters just working the southern Kosovo area at one time, working with different geographic sections that we would have down there. We had horrendous amounts of frequency changes. It was a com nightmare. A-10 has three radios, and we would use all three radios all of the time, and switch from freq to freq to freq on uniform UHF in order to get in contact with the right people. And we had multiple AWACs and ABCCC airborne at any one time to handle their different sectors. So there were lots of people with lots of command and control in the sky.

But the neat thing about the A-10 is that as AIR FACs we were clearance authority to select and prosecute military targets within our theater of operations. If I found a target out there, and I determined it to be a valid target, I could clear either fighters, NATO fighters or whatever, to go across the theater. It was only when we got next to villages and towns that we needed higher headquarters approval. And there were many incidents where we bombed and shot in towns with precision guided munitions, and defensive reactions to SAMs or AAA being fired out of towns.

DR. GROSS: How dangerous was the SAM [and] AAA threat? I mean you guys were up higher than you would normally like to be?

MAJ WEBB: We flew higher. It was a constant decision by the air boss, GEN [John] Jumper [USAFE Commander], to keep us out of the AAA and the low altitude SAM environment. However, we employed in their environment when we would descend down to employ. As a forward air controller under the existing ROE, which changed several times while we were there, especially as the peace treaty broke, we would originally fly around the range of 20,000 feet MSL. We would descend down to about 10,000 MSL for weapons release. The FACs could go down to 5000 AGL [i.e., above ground level] in order to do positive target ID.

We do not even have targeting pods. We are using binoculars, ground stabilized binoculars, out the side of the canopy to verify the target, and try to assess if they have got civilians wrapped up around with guards on them, so we do not kill a bunch of civilians standing next to this big juicy target that sits out there.

Historically, these guys are very good at The remodeled the SA-6. They taught the Russians how to upgrade the SA-6. The Yugoslavians, we had very good intel

from our old Weasel sources that taught us about how good they were with the 6, if they wanted to be. It was a very real threat. Their man pads are 9 and 13s, and were a very high threat. And they shot them all of the time. The AAA, there wasn't a mission that I didn't see the AAA come up through the clouds at us.

DR. GROSS: Were you flying above that though?

MAJ WEBB: Flying above it and in it.

DR. GROSS: And in it.

MAJ WEBB: A lot of times. Like I said, we would go down to lower altitudes. Their army employed a tactic which did not make a lot of sense to us ex-Weasel drivers or ELINT [i.e., electronic intelligence] guys, the EW [i.e., electronic warfare] guys who know how the SAMs and all of that stuff worked. Because they employed tactics similar to how they did the shoot down Scott O'Grady. They would pick up airplanes coming in the area, and would slew the SA-6s that way. But they would never come on the radar. They would launch the missile stupid. We saw several SA-6s shot. During my flights, we had a lot of infrared air contrast SAM shots. And then again, tons of AAA.

So it was unusual that they employed that tactic. The only reason that I could figure out was that they were trying to save their radars, trying to save their radars that controlled the SA-6. They had lots of SA-6s, but not a lot of radars. So they wanted to protect those. They would move them every 6 to 12 hours. Even if it was only a half click [i.e., .5 kilometer], that is enough when you are trying to get somebody in there to find it. Especially when they are putting them into towns next to buildings.

They would even take their tanks. And as the sun would move through the sky, we would move the tank from the side of the building to the side of the building, and always stay in the shadows. We have pictures of them when they were doing that. That was interesting.

This is a 1 to 500 [scale map] of the area. And as you can see, we have all of these little squares are what they call initial points where we can talk a common language. We would typically enter Kosovo from either the southwest or the southeast, and move in all the way through into here. We would go into Serbia every now and then for targets over to the east. We had to be very cautious about engaging any targets next to friendly borders.

Most of my activity was Deringer in the south, which is the Pristina airport in the

south. Because there was tons of activity. Near the end of the war, you remember the KLA trying to make kind of a spearhead move up north towards the airport. And then they got trapped in the valley, and there was all kinds of fighting going on down there.

[Power loss in the building.]

The biggest threat, I mean it was extremely serious, that you were going to get shot down [inaudible]. So we were very cautious about that. We stayed high while we were looking for targets and/or trying to identify the targets that we were assigned to stay high. But when we went down to kill it, we would go down to the altitude to deploy the weapons that was required.

DR. GROSS: I mean what goes through your mind during one of those when you are actually going down? Are you totally focused [on the target]? Do you think about anything else?

MAJ WEBB: Actually, you are aware of the threat. But you are so focused on just doing your job. I mean I trained for 15 years to do this. For me, in my particular set of circumstances, I would think about it on the way home, but I didn't think about it while I was doing it. I mean I was conscious of it, and I would react to it, and do the proper procedures. I wouldn't hang it out. Nobody would consciously do anything stupid to get yourself killed.

Because it was a very real thing. When you sanitized before you walked out the door, no kidding, you have left everything behind. You took fifty bucks with you American money, if you good your blood chit, your ID, and your dog tag, and you stripped everything that could tie you to home period. I mean name tags and call signs. They stripped our bags. They stripped our helmets. They stripped the sides of the airplanes.

We already lost two airplanes, and we rescued those guys luckily. We knew if we went down, especially in some of these areas, that you could not get away. They were going to catch you. There was lots of army down there. And you didn't know how you were going to be treated.

DR. GROSS: How about the long missions, what impact did that have on you originally? I mean they were pretty long flights?

MAJ WEBB: You got used to it. It would take an hour and twenty minutes to get to the tanker. You would take 15 to 20 minutes to tank two to four airplanes. It would

take 15 minutes to get to the border. During that 15 minutes, you are checking all of your systems. It is daytime, you are setting up all of your switches, so they cannot pick you up. You are checking out all of your systems. You are getting your wingman ready. You are making sure that your weapons load is ready. You have checked all of your live weapons to make sure that they actually call up in a jet, and that you can employ them. And you go through a checklist criteria to make sure that you can step into the war.

So that is pretty hot and heavy. And then you go in, and you are totally focused once you are inside. You cannot let your guard down even for one second. And the guys that did, they would come out, for example, they would come out through the southeast, and then cut across this section, what they call the Donkey Dick. But if you were to cross that and not be being paying attention, they would shoot at you, because this is still bad guy land. And they controlled everything inside that border. And we had several guys lit up and shot at, that would just accidentally cruise by that too close without being prepared.

And then you would come out, and most likely we would come out and hit one of these tankers, Sunoco or Amoco tracks, gas up, get new targets, or new tasking from maybe ABCCC or AWACS, and then press back in. We did this night and day. You know, you try to do whatever you can do.

DR. GROSS: How did you acquire targets at night?

MAJ WEBB: How do you acquire them at night?

DR. GROSS: Yes.

MAJ WEBB: In the A-10, well we wear NVGs [i.e., night vision goggles], and we had the infrared Maverick, the D and G model Mavericks. So we would take the Maverick, which has got some magnification power on it [inaudible] and you could very easily find targets. We found a lot of targets that way. I found 20-some tanks one night hiding in a ravine, because of how the Maverick can tell the difference between hot and cold. And it actually picked them out and looked at them. You could tell that they were camouflaged. And we plotted them out, and talked to higher headquarters, and then went in and dropped CG on them. Then you have all of the secondary explosives going off, so you know you have got a valid target.

Now we have laser pointers. On the A-10, we do not have a targeting pod yet. We hope to have it in the future. But, we basically carried a laser strapped to our hand. We would stick it forward to the canopy rails, and shoot a beam down on it.

Everybody wearing NVGs could see it. So as an AIR FAC, once I found a target, I would put the laser on it or above it, orbit above it. And we are it all lights up. You cannot even see these other guys. I mean you can with the goggles. You can see the glow of their engines, or you can have them turn on their NVG lighting systems, and sometimes see them. But for the most part, [inaudible] procedures.

You could see the ground. It was like daytime. We would shoot infrared rockets out and light it up, so we could see down to the ground in pitch black, no moon, just stars. But we put the laser on, and I would just start clearing people in hot to drop bombs or shut the gun [or use the] Maverick.

DR. GROSS: What about bad weather? I understand there was a lot of rain and fog.

MAJ WEBB: We had a lot of bad weather, like I said, at the beginning. But I still got my ordnance off every flight. I found either a primary target or a tertiary target to get them off on. In fact, my first mission, I did not realize it, but we had bad weather all down in this area. And I stuck my nose below a cloud, and I could not see. But I had the Maverick on, and I was searching around. I came back to look at the film, and we found three columns of tanks on the move. They would never move when there wasn't weather, because we could find them day or night, either through satellites, UAVs [i.e., unmanned aerial vehicles], people on the ground, or airplanes overhead. So we found them and reported them. [Inaudible.] They had moved quite a bit, but we found them. They were making a push down into this area.

What other questions?

DR. GROSS: Those are my biggest questions. What was it like after you guys stood down from the bombing, what did you do once the peace was declared? I know you were flying missions for awhile until they got out of Dodge.

MAJ WEBB: Well, it was hard for everybody. Everybody had to go through their own mental readjustment. Here, you are taking 45 Guardsmen, whether they come from a traditional status, an active duty to Guardsmen, or whatever. They call us up, and send us to war, and we went into war. Everyone of us was out there getting shot at, and knowingly killing military targets and/or people. And then all of a sudden, say it is over. So there were some readjustments that the Air Force does not provide anything for anybody to do, at least not where we were at.

In my police world, when we have an officer involved in an officer involved shooting, we have critical stress debriefing, and we have got counseling. And it takes a while to come through that. We had been doing this for 40 to 50 days. So I

mean it becomes a lifestyle. So guys had to readjust. It usually involved excessive drinking, and being together as a group, a lot of socialization and telling stories, and get over it.

As far as the Killer Bees in our unit, we were not ready for it to be over. We felt like we were getting fine tuned, and had the operation going efficiently. We were damned lucky that we did not get anybody shot down. When we went into this as a group of pilots, we figured we would lose two pilots statistically, just by the number of SAMs and AAA, and stuff that they were shooting, and how the war was going. I mean that is what we were telling ourselves when we did analyze. We thought that we would lose three airplanes. We didn't lose any. It was just amazing.

DR. GROSS: How was the blending together of the personalities or whatever and the cultures of the three different A-10 units? I mean was that a bit of a challenge?

MAJ WEBB: Oh sure, it was a challenge. Everybody was professional. When you have a task at hand, you go out and do it. When you are on your off time, everybody made friends with everybody in the other units, and good long lasting ties and relationships. You are still part of your unit. But I hardly flew with the guys from Boise. I flew with guys from Barnes and Battle Creek almost on every mission. So I mean we were mixed. We were just a whole bunch of pilots in a group, and they would just task us 24 hours a day to see how it would go.

DR. GROSS: Were you involved in the Taszar thing? You mentioned that earlier.

MAJ WEBB: Yes, I was involved in the initial cadre that went up, and flew airplanes up there, and set up a little combat search and rescue (CSAR) detachment of A-10s in Taszar, anticipating a big push up in the north, and being able to provide what they called SANDY 1s, 2s, 3s, and 4s. That is the call sign for combat search and rescue airplanes, which A-10s are a very good platform for. It would provide rapid access to anywhere in the Serbia, Yugoslavia, all the Kosovo area where if anybody would get down, we would be airborne immediately and go in and start working rescue efforts.

It was a big secret us going up there. As soon as we landed on the ground, they moved three SA-6s and a couple of 2s right up against the border. And they knew we were there right before we hit the ground almost. We had some Marines that were flying out of Taszar with us, and they were just getting their butt shot at, as soon as we landed there. Because they knew that the A-10s were up there. And they knew that we were the guys who were search and rescue.

DR. GROSS: How long was that detachment maintained up there?

MAJ WEBB: I think that it was about three weeks. I was up there about nine days.

DR. GROSS: Was the Guard maintaining it this whole three week time?

MAJ WEBB: Yes.

DR. GROSS: Why did they stop, the war was just over?

MAJ WEBB: The war was over, and we stopped flying missions in country. So we went back to running CSAR out of GDC, Gioia del Colle with the Pope guys.

DR. GROSS: Can you describe the trip back once everything was over, when you packed up and were ready to go?

MAJ WEBB: The trip back, since I flew one over, we had 13 pilots from our unit that went. So we split up. We flew over so the guys who flew over rode back for the most part, and the other guys flew the airplanes back. For me flying back, it was a pretty quick shot. It was a L-1011, and we jumped on that. And we stopped twice. We stopped in the Azores, Shannon Island, and all the way to Boise. Actually, we stopped in Bangor to run Customs. And then flew back to Boise.

There was a great patriotic reception here. I was very impressed. The employer support group for me was outstanding that showed up. The Guard, the bands, the dignitaries, and the receiving line. It was deserved, and was very nice to see when we got off the airplane.

DR. GROSS: Talking to your fellow pilots, how did their experience in Kosovo affect them in terms of their plans as far as staying the Guard, with their employers and all?

MAJ WEBB: All of the guys who went, they were all excited as heck that they went. It hasn't affected their employment at all. I know of one guy, he is an accountant for a large food chain. He was quite disappointed to have to go back to that kind of job [laughter] after being in the war for that long. For me, I mean I kind of live on the edge on both sides. I have been a police officer for 20 years. So I was a cop for five years before I joined the Guard. I run a SWAT team, and involved in all of our tactical operations at the city level.

So for me, it is just kind of stepping back. It is not a big shift for me. My two jobs

marry over so well as far as the type of people, and the same type of work ethic, and the same kind of risks. So it is not a big transition for me.

But there are a lot of good stories of things that happened out there. I shot a tank right in the middle of a city one day that was blowing stuff up. I went down, and they were shooting 56mm at me, blowing up right beside my jet. But I got them blocked up and shot it.

DR. GROSS: What did you shoot it with?

MAJ WEBB: A Maverick.

DR. GROSS: With a Maverick. What altitude did you release from?

MAJ WEBB: Oh, probably around 10,000.

DR. GROSS: What was the daylight or night time at that time?

MAJ WEBB: This was right at dusk.

DR. GROSS: Right at dusk.

MAJ WEBB: The sun was setting in the west and blinding. It was too early for NVGs, and dark enough that it was hard to make out stuff out on the ground.

A PARTICIPANT: The tank have targets on the ground that it was firing on?

MAJ WEBB: The tank was in a subdivision driving down a street shooting stuff. And there were some F-14s over head that didn't have any Mavericks on board. They had received a target from some source. We had a lot of sources that we were never privy to. You know, you hear of human sources, what does that mean?

DR. GROSS: Some guy with a cell phone.

MAJ WEBB: Yeah. But anyway, they wanted this tank destroyed. And they had already cleared it through higher headquarters. I called them and confirmed. I had to make a recce pass to ID and describe it to them, so they had the natural targeting pod on it because they were worried about collateral damage with all the innocents and all the buildings in the town. So after I described it to them, they said be careful, you could get shot down. So I hit it from a different attack axis, found it again, and shot it. It was like shooting at a tank in downtown Boise. It was just like coming out of

foothills, just like that.

DR. GROSS: Right in the middle of everything.

MAJ WEBB: It was huge. And this was a big town.

DR. GROSS: Was that the most dangerous mission you were on?

MAJ WEBB: No. I also got to shoot the last the war, or at least what I think to be the last bullets because we were airborne after they signed the peace treaty. Of course, no one had passed it up through higher headquarters or to command and control, to all the players who were airborne, that the peace treaty had been signed.

Well, I knew something was up. We had been up in the area, this is at night, and we had been getting shot at heavily by AAA sites along the foothills here, there is river road crossing down from this IP [i.e., initial point]. We were engaging AAA sites up on the hillsides here. We went back to get gas. And as we were coming back up, Kooks, this little town right here, it looked like they were shooting at the guys in front of me. They were shooting gobs of AAAs, aimed AAAs straight up in the air.

So we offset it. We called it in. They said avoid that area. And we went back in country. These guys were shooting rockets down to identify some AAA pits. Not only were they shooting at us, but they were shooting across the border at the refugee camps.

DR. GROSS: Oh, lovely.

A PARTICIPANT: With AAA?

MAJ WEBB: Ground to ground. They would shoot like mortars.

DR. GROSS: Artillery and stuff like that.

MAJ WEBB: Artillery instead of anti-aircraft artillery. So we could see that at night. [With] NVGs on, you can see everything. So anyway, these couple of gunners on the side of the hill, my wing man was going down on a Maverick pass further up in a little town where they were burning the village and shooting SAMs out of it. Well, as he was going by one of the hillsides, this AAA site opened up on him. And I rolled in with a gun, and suppressed them, marked it. We had four other A-10s up there, put the laser on them, and we just went in and pounded them.

While we were pounding them, the AWACS and ABCCC was trying to get us to stop. They said climb up. I think they had just figured out or the fact that the CAOC somebody had got on the red phone and called and said hey, we need to stop attacking these guys. This was four hours after the treaty was signed that we were doing this. Well, obviously, their guys didn't know, and we didn't know.

So then the missions that followed after that were the same six to eight hour missions, but we just flew support for all of the NATO and Army troops that were going in on with the helicopters. And if they were to come across any skirmishes or come under fire, then we would come in and assist them.

DR. GROSS: Did you ever have to assist them?

MAJ WEBB: No. There were a couple of times where we got ready based on a few calls, but they never called us in.

DR. GROSS: Do you have any concluding remarks or principal impressions of this?

MAJ WEBB: Well, it was an honor as a Guardsman who never was active duty to get a chance to go to another combat zone. Out of the 6 times I've been, I have got 93 combat missions. I hope to get 100 next July there in Kuwait. That is a goal for me. But these combat missions were the real deal. You don't know if you are going home to mom and kids when you fly in this country. It was strictly won by air power. That is amazing historically.

DR. GROSS: Unique, I would think.

MAJ WEBB: Why they gave up, I don't know.

DR. GROSS: I don't think that anybody really knows.

MAJ WEBB: It didn't make sense to us as pilots. We were very frustrated. We had destroyed their will to fight, and we had interrupted their cycles. Bombs were going off 24 hours a day. The air boss, GEN Jumper, his intent was very successful, because we just kept pounding them and pounding them. And there wasn't an hour gone by during the 24 hour cycle that a 500 pound bomb wasn't going off someplace in country, and ringing through the valleys to where all of the troops were hiding out in the trees.

They used a lot of decoy tactics. They put up a lot of decoys. They were hiding in the tree lines. We had to get very good at using binoculars to look down and find

trees that had fallen over, and then follow back into the tree lines, and then study it from those kind of altitudes to figure out if this was a canopy that was covering up some tanks or whatever.

A PARTICIPANT: It was a very valuable experience.

MAJ WEBB: Oh, yeah. What helped our unit from Boise was our recce experience. When we were recce drivers, we learned how to look for things on the ground. Then the Weasel experience. Now we know all about SAMs and how they run their integrated air defense systems. Well, now we are in A-10s. So we have got a pretty play with the close air support AIR FAC'ing.

So as a Guardsman, it has been great to experience all three of those missions during my career. And then go support the state and the country in a presidential activation.

DR. GROSS: Thank you very much.

MAJ WEBB: You bet.

[The interview was concluded.]