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

DR. GROSS: Well, General Weaver, why don't we talk about the events of 11 September [2001]-- where you were, what you were doing, and then how you reacted?

MAJ. GEN. WEAVER: There was one part in the last interview that we followed up with on the B-1 issue. There was something that caused our interview to stop, something.

DR. GROSS: I think you had another meeting, or something like that.

MAJ. GEN. WEAVER: . . . The 11th of September, as I sat here in this office and watched the events unfold, working between what was happening on the TV that I was monitoring, what was happening with my conversations with the staff, plus dealing with rumors and what not, certainly changed my life personally. It changed all of our lives in this country. Every one of us was affected in one way, if not personally, if not emotionally.

So it was a day that proved, again, about our 360-year history or how ever -- or how old ever we are -- that the Guard is truly there to protect community, state, and nation, which we did. I can't go into the details of what the D.C. Air National Guard did for protecting this nation's capital because -- but I can tell you that the D.C. Air National Guard did what needed to be done to protect the nation's capital that day. And as history will show, all of our Guard units and all of our input to doing what we needed to do to protect our homeland, because this was truly an attack on the United States. It was an attack on our people, our innocent people, and it truly caused us to do a lot of introspection, because we always thought the threat was from the outside. Well, it just so happens the threat was from the inside and we were caught short. But I feel confident that that will never happen again.

But the Guard, again, proved its worth, proved its capability, and I couldn't be more proud of them. I mean, certainly to end up a career of 35 years, which is difficult for me at this time because I'm sending kids out to combat and yet I'm retiring. But then, again, I follow along the lines with those four-stars, General Ryan's retiring, I know General Robertson, CINC TRANSCOM, General [Shelton] -- the chairman of the joint chiefs is retiring, with General Myers assuming that post. So it's difficult from that point of view, but I feel very good that where the Guard is positioned today and

what we are contributing to the national defense of this nation, and what we're involved in, not only in the national defense, or what we call homeland defense, but we are involved in the world, and our Air Force does not even think twice about calling us up, whether we're capable, whether we've got the right equipment. It is truly becoming, if not almost there, a seamless force.

DR. GROSS: If you want to talk specifics, we could go classified if you want.

MAJ. GEN. WEAVER: What I'd like to have you do is -- I think what you need to do is see the briefing. You need to see the briefing of the first few hours, and that will get you into the better detail of which I'm --

DR. GROSS: I've got some of those briefings and I talked to [Brigadier] General Wherle and Major Cane out at the 113 [the Fighter Wing, DC ANG].

MAJ. GEN. WEAVER: Yeah. But from my perspective, I couldn't have been more proud. From this window here on the 12th floor, after hearing the crash at the Pentagon and then watching all the smoke and everything filter -- because the wind was blowing this way -- the smoke was so thick over here I thought National Airport -- there were airplanes that had been blown up at National Airport. I was truly awaiting, knowing that we had five aircraft [i.e., commercial aircraft] unaccounted for in the air -- anticipating a plane going into the Capitol Building. I truly thought that that was going to happen.

But we're not through with this yet, and this is going to be a long-term involvement by each and every one of us, not only our military people, but our citizens as well.

DR. GROSS: What implications has this had as far as roles, missions, equipment for the Guard?

MAJ. GEN. WEAVER: Good question, Doc. I believe the real QDR [i.e., Quadrennial Defense Review] started on the 11th of September. We worked so hard on putting together a document prior to the 11th of September that I was concerned about where the Guard may end up in this new QDR. It's got some good stuff in it, but after the attacks on our country on the 11th of September, we will be rewriting the next QDR -- we will be writing the next QDR as we speak that will have more meaningful changes in our defense posture. And I can guarantee you it will include the Guard much more so than the first one -- not saying that we're excluded. But there were issues in there that looked at possibly taking down 1st Air Force; issues of possibly taking down the air defense sites, the seven, because there was some talk, well, we don't need them. Even people over on the [Capitol] Hill said we don't need

them. Where's the threat? Are the Bears [i.e., Russian long-range bombers] coming down off the North Atlantic and what not?

DR. GROSS: That's over.

MAJ. GEN. WEAVER: That's over with. So 11 September began a new QDR in earnest.

DR. GROSS: Another question I have related to events since then. As I understand it, the policy of the Guard is that we like to rely on volunteerism wherever possible.

MAJ.GEN. WEAVER: That's true.

DR. GROSS: Along with this mobilization authority, use that when you can't fill it through volunteerism. How and why was that decision arrived at? I realize it's a pattern we've been following for years.

MAJ. GEN. WEAVER: Yeah. And it doesn't work for all the other reserve components, but it works great for the Air Force Reserve and the Air National Guard. What we ask the authorities to do is give us the number that we can mobilize. Let us manage it. Meaning, let the Reserves and Air National Guard manage our call-up. General Jumper and Secretary Roach had no problem with that whatsoever.

I've been through, I think, about seven call-ups. This was one that went fairly smooth. The administration -- the President and the Secretary of Defense was very cognizant of notifying members of Congress and the governors of what units might be called up. What might be called up. So they, in a preliminary way, as the requirements came down, identified states and units and told the Congressmen and the Senators from those districts and those states, to include the governor, that their units have got a likelihood of being called up. That took a lot of pressure off of us as far as notifying the governor because -- and it came from the top versus, you know, me telling the adjutant general and then having him tell the governor, and having to work around the classification, in a nightmare that we'd having to work around in previous call-ups.

The challenge came in prosecuting the war was managing to a false ceiling. When I say false ceiling, an artificial ceiling. We were told that there was a cap out there. The original mobilization, partial mobilization, came down with the authority for the President to mobilize up to a million. But they were going to piecemeal them out. And our first take on that was 13,000 for the Air -- 25,000 overall, 13,000 for the Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve combined. Well, with all the requirements on

there, just for Noble Eagle -- that's our air defense sites -- we blew right by that. But, in reality, we did volunteerism first. And, again, our philosophy was saying, hey, we'll stay with volunteerism until we no longer can withstand the pain, meaning, the employers are going to scream because here the kids with volunteerism are volunteering. Well, if they're volunteering, then they should be able to have time back at work. So we had enough volunteerism to go on where we didn't have to mobilize them, even though we notified the states and the units and Congressmen and Senators and the governors.

So we had a combination of partial mobilization and volunteerism. And it was working until we got to the cap. And then getting through the cap, because the ones that were under volunteerism were counted towards the cap. And we tried to say don't count those. Don't count those. Count those just exactly what are being called up, the individuals that were being called up. The negative part of that was, well, then how can you justify a higher cap when you have very few that you mobilized? Well, then, we said don't count the ones that are volunteering.

DR. GROSS: Yeah. Okay. That makes sense to me.

MAJ. GEN. WEAVER: It makes sense to you and I, but not to some of the people who were a part of the bureaucracy. So that was frustrating. But we're through that. And as we've told everybody, and as the President has told the nation, we're in this for the long run and we're totally committed in supporting our nation's objectives, and we are doing that.

So the compliments and the great words by the Secretary of the Air Force and the Chief [of Staff] for our involvement, in not only in Noble Eagle, but yet keeping up the AEF [i.e., Aerospace Expeditionary Force] rotations, as we are, nothing sort of phenomenal. You know, here we are, not only busier than we've ever been. The largest call-up, I believe, in the history of the Air National Guard, you might want to check that, we'll be approaching almost 25,000.

DR. GROSS: I have over 45[000] for Korea.

MAJ. GEN. WEAVER: We had 45 [000] for Korea. Okay.

DR. GROSS: That was 80 percent of the force then.

MAJ. GEN. WEAVER: That was 80 percent of the force at that time?

DR. GROSS: Yeah.

MAJ. GEN. WEAVER: All right. Good point. I was not sure.

DR. GROSS: It was big.

MAJ. GEN. WEAVER: I was not sure of that number. Okay, the second largest call-up. Check that.

DR. GROSS: I'll check that.

MAJ. GEN. WEAVER: We have the capability, I think, going up to a good number.

DR. GROSS: But we're still doing primarily volunteerism?

MAJ. GEN. WEAVER: We're still doing volunteerism. We're getting close to really calling more up, though, because we're stretching that rubber band pretty tight. But it's been a very smooth, for the most part, call-up. That talks to the depth and breadth of the leadership and experience levels of all of our people. So we're doing well. That's not just aircrew members, that's across the board.

DR. GROSS: Is there any distinction between the Noble Eagle part of the air defense of CONUS and the -- I don't know what they're calling the war --

MAJ. GEN. WEAVER: Enduring Freedom.

DR. GROSS: Enduring Freedom.

MAJ. GEN. WEAVER: Yeah. They're two separate and distinct efforts, but yet, they're combined at the hip, and the same thing with the AEF. So you've got Enduring Freedom, you've got Noble Eagle, and you've got the AEF. This is the Air Force total force. We're involved in all three. So we're busy, and we're managing the force in a way that we're meeting all of our requirements and obligations.

DR. GROSS: We're still, primarily, doing the volunteerism emphasis?

MAJ. GEN. WEAVER: That is correct. . . .