

**Rough Transcript**  
**Maj (Ret'd) Joe Howard, KOCCR (18 June 2016)**

**Deployment(s):** Congo 1999, Bosnia, Sudan

**Interviewer/Transcriber:** LCol M.C. Vernon

***Note: Quotations are not 100% verbatim***

Timecode	Content
0:15	Prior to deployment? Context is everything. A reservist's is dual-faced. He was self-employed chartered accountant, and that can be tough. Joint Reserve Command and Staff Course in Toronto gave him insight into the norms of multinational operations, and getting his ass kicked by clients who wouldn't pay. He got the offer to deploy in 1999 from the brigade G3. "Does Howdy Doody have a wooden ass? I was out of there in a New York minute and never looked back." The Balkans had opened up in the mid-1990s. The Congo was not the Balkans. The Cold War had come and gone. He went to PSTC Kingston for military observer training. His motivation? This addresses "a primal function, power projection. My motivation was to project my power in a small fashion in a theatre of operations. The motivation was one of curiosity. Not much to go on for expectations." Kingston training was rudimentary, functional. Not much theatre-specific. Had he been Regular Force, the motivation would have been different. Go where you are told. His motivation was curiosity. His motivation for Bosnia was different. NATO operations in the Balkans were different. "Can I actually have an impact?" Curiosity, then impact. Third tour was Sudan, back to a UN model of peace operations. The first time he had a role to deliver something. Curiosity, any impact, then specific impact for the third deployment. All comes back to primal function of power projection.
6:40	He never tried to go to Balkans. Why? He doesn't know. "I was having too much fun being a chartered accountant." He got the Congo offer literally the same day a client said he was going to stiff him for \$23,000. Serendipity? Doors closing and opening, call it what you want.
7:15	Expectations? Expected to be a military observer. A huge differential. The standard in Kinshasa was dysfunctional. His expectations for the norm, as explained in Kingston, were naïve. Expected operational planning process model. It was not to be. This was Roto 1 for Canada's contribution. People's fragility struck him—in terms of their character. The grouping of nationals: French with French, Brits with Brits etc. Only two Canadians. He and his boss didn't hang around together. Two sets of expectations: personal—he had not expectations. The other set: how does UN mission perform? Fragility of character. National characters. Brits are a nation of warriors. The French have a history in

	Africa, as do Belgians. He befriended the only Belgian, a life lesson in itself. Belgians had Congo as a colony. He had served there for 15 years. He knew it backwards and forwards, and the people. He learned the importance of tribal politics in Africa. In Kingston, we think of nations, but in Africa that's not how the business is conducted. Clan politics trump everything in the Congo. Expectations were that UN would do collaborative work with military troop contributors and other agencies, but that wasn't the case. Level of dysfunctional side of UN civilian agencies was noteworthy. Military worked better together.
12:40	Example? Belgian introduced him to head of the information agency, a euphemism for the secret police. Later, he was put in jail for two months. Then released back to his former post, at whim of President Laurent Kabila. Why? It had to do with tribal politics. Kabila had to be seen to be doing something. Canadians would not tolerate this. One lesson to be identified. Belgians had particular insight no one else had. Speaks to Canada's international standing. As he was leaving Congo, he bumped into a Belgian security worker. "Kabila's a bit of a despot, but I've grown to like him." Belgian said Kabila would be gone in a month. Turns out Kabila was assassinated a month later. Rumours Ghaddafi wanted to head pan-Africa movement, and that assassin was Libyan. (But he was shot too.)
16:20	Living conditions? He lived in an apartment by himself, in part to practice his French. Workday started with a morning briefing. He was deputy G5 Plans, reporting to a Brit. They had a junior officer from Bangladesh, more interested in enjoying Congo life. Workday ended by noon, followed by two-hour nap due to the heat. Would recommence later in the day. A lot of plans related to bringing in troops from India, Pakistan, Nepal, and how to deploy them. About four battalions. The Brit was blasé, not intense. Did a very good job, but did not break his back. Nor did the other Brits. His Canadian boss as DCOS Ops, broke his back. Howard also worked hard, in part because it was his first mission. Pace was not as robust as in Bosnia. Did plans for battalions, emergency evacuation plan, refining the Law of Armed Conflict and applying rules of engagement. But he also spent a lot of time in the bars with his Belgian friend, learning about life in Kabila's Congo. Expectations? He couldn't have had them, because he just didn't know what life would be like. First day he got there, UN staff were confined to quarters due to strife. But his Belgian mentor insisted it was safe to go to the bar. Canadians are supposed to sit in their hotel and wait for the all-clear. Belgians see it differently. He was so naïve, he couldn't have constructed a formidable level of expectations.
21:30	How satisfying? "On a scale of one to ten, about fifty. I'd go back in a heartbeat. Did go back in 2008 to do an evaluation of the mission, and the divisions between military and civilians in UN had not changed."
22:20	"I had broken away from the Canadian paradigm. Life was not about

	driving up Crowchild Trail or putting up with clients who refused to pay. Or complying with rules of accountancy. It was about listening to victims of war or warriors." Life was exciting. You didn't know what was going to happen the next day—which you could say about every deployment. His boss didn't expect to see him till next day, whereas his boss in Bosnia saw more of him. "I went to places I shouldn't have gone to or talked to people I shouldn't have talked to. That's the fluidity of the UN mission." Wouldn't do that in Bosnia.
24:15	Coming home? "Absolutely depressing. Due to sense of normalcy and predictability. You know about commute, daily meals. No unfulfilled expectations. Had to bail my boss out of a jail in Lumumbashi. So we're walking down the street at two in the morning with two shopping bags of Congolese currency, not entirely sober. But it got him out of jail, for which he still owes me."
25:25	He was in jail because he's a loud mouthed Brit. He'd gone to South Africa on leave, came back and said some things he shouldn't have to a border official. He was a Brit cavalry officer, Hussar. Howard went to a local bar to exchange currency, US\$500 in exchange for two satchels of Congolese currency, which he took to a bank and wired to Lumumbashi.
27:00	The KOCR didn't care. He was invited to make a presentation at the Ranchmen's Club. No lasting impact. Just back to grind of going to Wainwright. The KOCR did not, at that time, recognize the impact or benefits of these tours. Maybe other units are better at this, incorporating it into their regimental culture. The KOCR are not noted for projecting their history, colour.
28:45	It was an eye-opener. Tribal politics, UN dysfunctionalities, the fragility of human nature, the fact some nations can operate with impunity and know the ground very well. What were Canada's national interests?
29:40	Bosnia. He got involved training with CIMIC after Congo. LCol Grant McLean was running a robust training program. Each rotation of Op PALLADIUM (Bosnia) had a rep. McLean nominated him for a deployment, in spite of Regular Force pushback. General Tabbernor told him, "You will not be welcomed." Went to Winnipeg to train with 2 PPCLI under LCol Mike Day. It's the rebel battalion and they did a very good job, including a company of reservists. The training was outstanding. He had unlimited money and 12 reservists working for him. Very well supported. Power projection: "What can I do?" Did a mission analysis and collected two sea container loads of working computers, much of it thanks to the McCain family in New Brunswick. This was equivalent to currency. But they still needed repairs to make them fully functional, which troops did after hours. Moving from Congo to Bosnia, his expectations were that he would have some impact on the peace rebuilding process. This was a NATO operation. He met with civilians from the Office of the High Representative. The motivations

	were actualized in Bosnia; he could have an impact.
34:45	During training in Winnipeg he could "build my street cred". Ken Sabachi of the CRIC did the same. The capabilities were virtually the same between Regs and Reservists, to his non-infantry eyes.
31:15	How satisfying? He was very happy because he knew what he'd accomplished. During handover, he was advised the next roto might not be as robust. Left Bosnia very satisfied, knowing how to project power in a minor fashion in an international theatre.
37:20	Memorable days? One of the last days, when LCol Day told him they finally were working in stride. He has a lot of respect for Day. That was probably his best day in Bosnia. "We are now working as a team. Mike Day is all about projecting power."
38:30	Transition? "Coming home on an airplane is one of the most depressing things I can do." He'd forsaken his accounting job by this time. Got to do some consulting work in Eastern Europe in civilian clothes. Interesting to see how US handled themselves. Earlier, he got some insight into how much leeway and power US officials have within NATO, and the Office of the HR. "It blew my mind in terms of the use of force: political, economic, diplomatic." Fascinating. During the third tour, met with a delegation from Ottawa including Robert Fowler and possibly Romeo Dallaire, "but Canada does not measure up to the US."
41:05	Motivation for Sudan was similar to that for Bosnia, projecting power. But not in battle group, but a UN mission. This was Roto 0 in Khartoum. UN mission was standing up. Visible animosity, some of it directed at him. He could not get along with his civilian counterpart, who even tried to have him fired. But his boss, General Greg Mitchell, "a diplomat par excellence", backed him up. "It was relatively brutal in Sudan." One instance of collaboration: following riots in Khartoum. The secretary-general ordered military and civilians to work together to come up with a rapid reaction plan. Then they heard about crisis in west of country. Shipped off a caseload of vaccine for yellow fever, and both sides collaborated to make this work.
44:15	After Sudan, he got picked up as an expert in international operations, getting out of Canada as a civilian to consult. He put in for a UN tour in the Middle East, but got a memo back from DComd LFWA that said he was unfit for an overseas tour. "That kind of horseshit is not on. That pissed me off big-time." It was a one-liner from General Kelly Woiden. "I'll kick his ass the next time I see him in the airport."
46:15	"I cry a lot. I hadn't cried before the Congo. But I can't tell you why. Did get mugged. Someone tried to kill me in Sudan. Maybe it was the fluidity. The lack of structure. The key change? Maybe this is what we have to be mindful of. Can you cope with a change in structure." Congo was life-altering. Bosnia was great, but not life-altering. Nor was Sudan. Nor will the next operation be.

47:45	He certainly saw a lot of unpleasant things in Congo. "It was brutal. People lying in the street, dead. You don't see this in the Calgary bubble."
48:30	"I can start crying just like that. Nearly cried on camera. Nearly cried in Bosnia during a briefing. I checked it. Had to take a break. May never know why. If I knew, I would tell you."
49:15	Other residual effects? "I go through life with as few expectations as possible. Don't want to be surprised. Be flexible." The impulse to cry for no reason is the only other effect.
50:15	Just a final comment for Reservists. They have a dual life. An operational tour gives one the opportunity to mature in a way you'll never get anywhere else. "Not to be confused with a warfighting tour. I'm not a fighter, I'm a lover. A diplomat. Military diplomacy is less stressful than warfighting. I encourage reservists to get outside the Calgary bubble, to gain a basis for comparison."
51:40	"I gave up opportunities to be CO in order to go on tours. Stick a needle in my eye, but don't take away my tours. You learn so much more than you do answering your brigade about why you're over-budget. Boring."
	<b>Additional visuals desired:</b>