CANADIAN WAR MUSEUM

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT

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INTERVIEWEE: Ted F. Zuber

INTERVIEWER: Mai-yu Chan

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Ted F. Zuber

Interviewed 29 November 2004

By Mai-yu Chan

INTERVIEWER: Canadian War Museum Oral History Program Interview with Ted Zuber, [recorded on] November 29th, 2004 [at Lyndhurst, Ontario]. [Interviewed by Mai-yu Chan.]. Tape 1, Side 1.

We have both signed the Legal Release form, with an addition to number four. Is that correct?

ZUBER: Yes. That is correct.

INTERVIEWER: Tell us something about your early childhood and your artistic training.

ZUBER: I guess I was very fortunate. At about the age of six, Mum and some of her friends recognized my ability to colour books better than my buddies or something—I don't know. In any case, Mother enrolled me at École des Beaux-Arts in Montreal—a child's program—which gave me an introduction to how an artist would think and certain disciplines reference various mediums.

Later, in my teens, I was very fortunate to spend almost two years with a religious mural artist in Montreal—a Matthew Martirano. He instructed me in very strong disciplines and old world techniques. For example, we actually made our own oil paint. We did a series of paintings and some stained glass window work. The prime project we worked on was a series of Stations of the Cross that turned out to be fourteen paintings, instead of the usual fifteen images--but fourteen paintings -- for a cathedral in Ottawa. These were about ten or twelve feet long, in oil, about four feet high. It was a wonderful learning experience for me.

I continued my art study on my own. Later, I enrolled in an apprenticeship program in commercial photography. As an artist, it was wonderful support, because it gave a better understanding, I think, than the average artist had an opportunity of acquiring, in reference to light and colour. It was very good basic training. Then, I followed up—I did not stay very long—but I did some work at Queen's University, in the Fine Arts department there, as well. So, I've been with my art all my life.

The question on how I enlisted—let me see—I was doing—serving in Kingston, Ontario with my apprenticeship in commercial photography and I was laid off. My boss told me that there was going to be about sixty days—two months. He had a contract, at the time, to portray the graduates at Queen's University, but that wouldn't start until, I think it was late October. This was in late July. "Could I come back in approximately two months?"

So, I went back to Montreal where my family was, and discovered that my family was off in the Laurentian Mountains on vacation somewhere—some cottage. I had no idea where they were. Even all of the bedding and whatnot had been taken from the house. So, I thought, "Well, I'll go downtown." I knew where I could get a quart of beer—quite illegal, of course. But there was one bar where you could go in there. I remember there was sawdust on the floor.

On the streetcar going downtown, an old school chum—Bert Paxton—came on the streetcar and he looked at me and he recognized me and he came and sat with me. Of course, the first thing we asked was what each other was up to. It turned out he was going downtown to join the Army, because of the Korean War. And I said, "Oh, yes. I'd heard something. It only started a couple of months ago." He said, "Yes. It's a real war."

So, I remarked something—well, why would he join the Army--why not the Air Force? In my case, I would join the paratroopers, which is not the Air Force, of course, but at least they were somewhat involved. But I would not really be interested in joining. So, he suggested I come down to the Personnel Depot #4 and meet some other buddies, and at least we can get a free meal down there and if they think I'm going to enlist, I can get four dollars every afternoon at four o'clock. So, I went down to the PD4 on Sherbrooke Street, and I signed in. But I didn't sign a second paper which would actually cause me to start going out on these various examinations—mental examinations, physical exams, and what not.

So, I sat there while my new friends dashed around to different places. It took about three days to enlist. By the second day, I'm sitting amongst all these posters and I realized, "Why not join?" because it was the adventure aspect of it. Having grown up, I guess, during the Second World War—and don't misinterpret this—I don't mean that I was unhappy when the war ended. Of course, I was happy. But I didn't get my chance to be a man. And I grew up with that brainwashing, "A man was a soldier or a sailor or an airman." But in any case, you would be in the service. I was thirteen years old when the war ended—the Second World War.

Five years later, comes along the Korean War. I'm now seventeen and a half—not quite eighteen—and I saw an opportunity to have some adventure. My hero, when I was a boy, was a fellow in the school I was in, in both the grade school and high school. One of the fellows in the high school part of it helped me build model aircraft on weekends. He was much older than I was, but he liked the way I built them. He disappeared one day, only to find out that he joined the Airborne. He died going in on D-Day, as a Canadian paratrooper—the first people to go into Normandy that night, at about one o'clock in the morning. Well, here was my hero.

So, I thought, "To heck with it. I'm going to enlist. I don't have a job anyway--and the chance of adventure." And they accepted me, and I went into the Airborne.

INTERVIEWER: Where did you do your training before you left for Korea?

ZUBER: Initially, in those days, they had what they called the Infantry School, which was up in Camp Borden. So, all the people—unless you were going to the French regiment—that would be different—you'd then go to Valcartier. But to go to the French regiment, you would have to prove that you could speak French. In any case, I was interested in the Royal

Canadian Regiment, only because they would be the airborne people. We did not have the Airborne Regiment at that time. The 1st Canadian Parachute Battalion had been disbanded on return from the Second World War. But they had started to initiate an airborne structure, again, into the military forces.

In any case, we went to Camp Borden, and we took our basic training there at the Canadian School of Infantry. Then, I was kept on for a few extra months as part of the demonstration platoon. Our job, once I had graduated from the basic training, instead of going to my regiment, I was kept on so that the RMC cadets that came up from the Officers' School would have a platoon that they could learn from, guiding in the field. We would actually train these officers how to guide us in the field manoeuvres and field tactics.

I believe it was in February. I joined on the 4th of August. I enlisted in 1950. I think it was around February the 15th or something, I was finally allowed to leave Camp Borden. I got on an old train and took it down to Camp Petawawa. We actually had a coal burning stove in the coach. It took us to Petawawa, threw us in the back of a truck about—oh, I don't know—one o'clock in the morning-- forty below zero, I'm sure. [They] took us into the old Victoria barracks, and the first thing they did, of course, is have us—by us, I think there were about twenty men—had us strip and go into the laundry room and wash all our clothing. They would teach us how to dress. We were not permitted even to have breakfast that morning.

That was my initiation to the Royal Canadian Regiment. They had assumed, of course, or taken the position that all the training I had gone through meant nothing whatsoever. I stayed with the battalion there in Petawawa until the spring. I think it was in early May, I was sent to the Canadian Joint Air Transport—or, excuse me—what do they call it?—Canadian Joint Air Training Centre—CJATC—in Rivers, Manitoba, where the Parachute School was.

We had to take training in air portability training, which was mostly classroom—how to load and lash equipment in the aircraft—and also glider troops, who were trained in the CJ3 glider. Then, of course, the parachute jump course itself, where--I think it's still the same today--we had to make five parachute jumps—four daylight; one at night—with full combat equipment.

So, once this was completed and I had graduated and came back to the battalion in Petawawa, we waited until—I think it was the following March. The full battalion got on a troop train that was brought right in Camp Petawawa. They brought the train, literally, right into the base. The entire battalion—about nine hundred men—got on board the train and we headed out. We picked up some other troops in the Toronto area and then, right across Canada to the docks at Seattle.

We were actually a few hours late and the troop ship was waiting for us. The entire battalion jumped off the train, grabbed anybody's kit bag, across the highway and up the ramp onto the smiling Americans, watching these Canadians running on board the ship. It was quite something to see.

The ship that was waiting for us was affectionately referred to as a Kaiser's Coffin. The Kaiser Corporation—they're no longer here. I think they, years later, moved to Brazil. But they built these ships and they were called Liberty ships. They were used on Vladivostok's suicide runs, so to speak. None of this—they were all welded—no rivets on these ships, at

all. If they were ever hit, they just came apart, of course. They mothballed these, after the Second World War. They had--I don't know how many of these.

They took them and converted them into troop carriers. The Korean War wasn't as important as the Second World War, of course. Consequently, they were not in a position to commandeer the QUEEN MARY. So, a troop ship were the converted transport ships. So, they didn't even have life preserving for more than half of the troops on board. It was really quite something. Anyway, these Kaiser's Coffins, as they were called—Liberty ships—we had--I don't know--five or six thousand on board this thing. It was unbelievable.

For example, the fellows would start eating a breakfast at four o'clock in the morning. The last breakfast was served about ten-thirty, with just a continuous… You got up deck, I think it was two hours in every twenty four, you were only allowed two hours on the deck. There was no place to sit—never mind—you just literally had to stand, it was so crowded--and with twenty-three days on this bloody thing.

As I recall, the ship I went over on was the MARINE PHOENIX. The ship I came back on, which was also a Liberty boat, was the GENERAL W.M. BLACK. The MARINE PHOENIX, I was told, that this was its first trip. It got us to Korea and on the way back, it had so many problems, they pulled the plug on it and literally sank that ship on the way back across the Pacific, rather than try to save it. This is what they felt about these Liberty boats.

INTERVIEWER: What part did you play in the Korean War, as sniper/parachutist, and how were you wounded on New Year's Eve?

ZUBER: First off, the Canadian Airborne troops did not make a parachute jump in Korea. That was agreed that the Americans would not deploy us as airborne. They had had great difficulties evidently in parachuting troops in Korea. Part of it had to do with the mountainous terrain--that the radio communication was null and void once they landed. They couldn't communicate with each other. In any case, no airborne operations were conducted by Canadian paratroopers in Korea.

When I first went over, I went over as what they called an Intelligence Representative. I'd attempted to enlist in the sniper section before I went over, but they were filled. So, with my drawing ability, they decided, well, they'd use me in the Intelligence section. I could read maps and make maps, I suppose, and this type of thing. So, my first job, when I got to Korea—I felt like a bloody secretary because I was the IR rep up to D Company. I can remember Captain Bud Taylor was the Company Commander. I was like a secretary to him, in that I had to be there and take down all information, convert things to code to the Signaler, and when information came in, I had to make sure that the transcripts and all this, sort of, got to the Company Commander.

On my birthday, the 7th of May, we'd been there now about a month. Of course, I had not been allowed to go out on patrol because of all this code knowledge I had. But after a while, I began to feel left out. No one had ever said anything to make me feel guilty at all. It wasn't that at all. It's just I wanted to go. So, on my birthday, I asked the sergeant who was taking a patrol out that night--because I knew, of course, about the patrol even before he did, being the IR rep. I asked him if he minded if I joined him on patrol. He looked at me, thought I was nuts, and said, "Sure. You'll be number two on the Bren gun."

So, that evening, at last light, we checked our weapons, got the information. We were to go out on a patrol and—a little footnote if I may—add a little touch to the story—the human aspect of this. We went out on the patrol. Our prime responsibility was to set up a line and watch about a hundred yards outside of a small village that no one lived in it, of course. But it was close enough that we were being hit once in a while with four inch mortars—or, excuse me, a two inch mortar.

Now, two inch mortars are so small you don't hear them when they're coming in. There's no swishing sound. They're an anti-personnel type thing. They're kind of scary. But because they're that small, they can only be launched from a short range. So, we were being hit by the two inch mortars. We knew the Chinese had gotten up very close. So, they're obviously flinging these things at us from this little village. The roofs were all gone.

Our job was to set up an ambush that night and listen. If we did hear anything, we would call in the configuration to the Artillery, who were waiting for us, and they would hit a heavy bombardment on this village and then, we'd run through it to pick up anybody--if we found any prisoners or wanted to bring data. If nothing happened, then we were to move on to a couple of other features to check out to see what the Chinese had done, if anything, on these couple of small hills. Then, the last thing we would do was move back into the Sami'chon Valley, which is where we were. This is between the positions of 186 and 266—187 and 266 – and lay an ambush until about 04:00, and before the light came up, move our way back into the battalion area.

As it turned out, there were no Chinese that night in that village. But as we lay in this ditch, I'm the last man in the group. I think there were about twelve of us, and there's about--oh, ten or fifteen feet apart. We're all camouflaged, of course, with black coveralls and black gook on our faces and whatnot. As I'm lying there, as the last man in the group, I hear something. There's a message coming down the line.

They're passing on some words to each other, and you could hear this little chitter-chatter coming down. As it came down, it said, "Happy birthday, Zuber. Pass it on." [laughter] I don't know, to this day, who the hell it was that knew it was my birthday, but that was the message. "Happy birthday, Zuber. Pass it on." [laughter] That's why I'll never forget that patrol.

As it turned out, nothing really happened that night. We got back fine. But ironically, on my return with the patrol, coming through our wire, they would report immediately to the command post bunker. They would get a first chance for their cigarette and they'd get a little shot of what they called Pusser Rum—a very strong, powerful rum. Well, my job, of course, was--I was the I Rep. I was to be in that bunker with my sketch or my writing pad and take down what the patrol leader described to the Company Commander, convert this into code, give it to the Signaler, and he would pass that on, through the 19 Set, down to brigade headquarters.

Well, I'm on this patrol. So, I've got to get down to my bunker, take all this makeup off, get my sketch pad, and run back up. I wouldn't necessarily have to apologize because they wouldn't describe the patrol the first minute. They would have their coffee first, or in this case, their rum. As I turned left to move down to my bunker, the rest of the fellows were

turning right to go into the command post, a voice came out of the darkness, directly in front of me. I didn't see this person. All I [heard was], "Where the hell are you going?"

I stopped and looked at him, and he said, "Zuber!" He recognized me. It turned out to be the Sergeant Major—the Company Sergeant Major. And he says, "Oh, you like going on patrols, do you?" Well, I was immediately kicked out of the I section, and taken on that same platoon as another rifleman. Then, they sent me out on patrols. Now, to this day, I've never understood the logic. Suddenly, I don't know how to do codes anymore!? But that was my punishment for volunteering to go on this patrol.

So, I stayed with the company until we moved out of that position, into a reserve area. [I] did some more training, and we were now going to move up on to the 355 or Little Gibraltar position. It turns out that the Vandoos, which would be to our left at the top end of the Sami'chon Valley—they were short of troops, because we all were, anyway. But the position was such that we would have to form an extra rifle company to accommodate to make up for where the French troops could not occupy a position. It was on a finger of the 355.

So they looked for truck drivers and anybody—clerks—and people, I guess, from the group that could be formed up into approximately a hundred and twenty five man Rifle Company to hold this one position. So, they formed E company—or Easy Company—or Echo—depending on the phonetic code. In any case, they took a number of other people that had front line experience, such as Johnny Chernezky and myself, and put us in to supplement these fellows in this E Company.

So, I became a Bren Gunner. Johnny was my number two on the Bren gun up on the 355 position. After approximately three months, as I say, we moved off of the 355 position into reserve area. They contacted me—they, being people in Headquarters Company—asked me if I was still interested in being a member of the sniper section. I said, "Yes, I was."

So, as Sergeant Prince—excuse me—I've forgotten his name for the moment. In any case, a sergeant was brought forward. He had been a sniper in the Second World War, in Holland, primarily. He said up a quick school. There were twelve of us brought in to take the sniper course. We completed that and then, moved up into the Hook Position. The Colonel had been told that the Chinese sniper activity was extremely active, up on the Hook Position and our sniper section that we'd had, before we went to Korea, had been basically wiped out. We didn't have them anymore.

The brigade had informed our Colonel—Peter Bingham—that he'd be very wise to have a counter-sniper section up there, because the Chinese were very active. As it turned out, it turned out to be quite true. But we were given credit by the Brigadier for having eliminated the Chinese sniper section within three weeks. So, we lost a few people. It was quite an experience. So, I certainly got the bloody excitement I was going after. I had more than I wanted.

You're asking me how I was wounded? Well, that was a pretty sad story, I suppose, in a way. It was on New Year's Eve. I was sleeping. I did most of my work during daylight. Being in a trench type of warfare, you couldn't move about very easily, of course, in daylight. You'd instantly be a target. So, it was a nighttime war. We slept during the day and then, at

night, went out on patrols and this type of thing. It was a very static war. Great battalion moves weren't—I think we only had one large company attack at one time.

So, it was patrols, all of the time. I slept during the night as a rule. In any case, this particular night, we were up on the Hook Position. We had gotten smart enough to use tunnels instead of bunkers because, of course, the bloody bunkers would collapse half the time. They weren't all that safe. In the tunnels--a good example of how wonderful a tunnel could be--the tunnels were not very high at all. Very seldom you could stand up in them, but they'd have sort of a pod. The tunnel would go in, maybe twenty five feet and it would have a few bends in it so that blasts or shrapnel couldn't travel very far. Then, we'd have sort of a pod, where three or four guys could sleep in that one little area—just, of course, on the ground, in our sleeping bags.

I was sleeping this particular night in the pod. One of the sergeants had sent some people in or one fellow in particular, to prime hand grenades. This meant, of course, taking the base plug off the grenades, inserting the fuse, and properly arming it with a spring. Tension is taken on with the striker and the pin is put in the handle. Somehow, he managed to set one of the bloody grenades off. Now, they have a four second fuse on them. So, all he had to do was, of course, take that grenade and throw it down the tunnel. But no, the bloody idiot dropped the grenade right beside—he was sitting just beyond me, and I had my back to him.

I was sleeping on my side in the sleeping bag. He was about two feet to my back. Between he and the end of the tunnel, which was only about five or six feet away, were two South Korean labourers extending the tunnel. They were under control of an Engineer, who sat there. I remember he was reading a book by one single candle—a book called The Perfumed Garden. A fellow by the name of Dougie Rainer, if I'm not mistaken. He was a Signaler. He had been allowed, by the Sergeant, to come into the tunnel to have a smoke. So, he was seated, evidently beside me, having his cigarette, when this fellow came in and sat down with these grenade bombs and was priming the grenades.

Well, the bloody fool left the grenade right there on the ground and ran. Well, the grenade went off. The engineer had his leg broken in two places. One of the South Koreans had the top of his head blown off. He was killed instantly. The other South Korean had his chest torn out, and Dougie Rainer had the back of his foot blown off. And of course, I got it all up my leg and in my buttocks. They tell me today, if I'd been about two inches closer, I'd be speaking with a high pitched voice—whatever that means.

A little footnote that's—am I? Ironically, sort of a follow up story—there's always a follow up story to everything, isn't there? In any case, that bloody idiot that did that with the grenade, as he was trying to put the pin in--obviously the pin wasn't fitting correctly. He had already taken the tension on the striker. He had the handle holding the striker in position. And as he attempted to put the pin in, he was wiggling the grenade in such a way that the handle flipped away and of course, the striker went down. And he just dropped the grenade right there. There's smoke coming out of it and this four second fuse. I'm sound asleep, of course. This is happening right behind me. The people that were killed—excuse me.

The so-called footnote is that that fellow that had set the grenade off had been a member of nine reinforcement men, who had been sent over to us only about—oh, roughly a week or ten days earlier. Ironically, last week, one of those same nine men killed himself doing exactly

the same thing down in Charley Company. He had been sent into an old bunker that was down there to prepare grenades and he killed himself. This fellow was part of that same group that just about killed us.

Well, many, many, many years later, I get a little five percent, I think it's called—a five percent pension—you can't get much less than that. I think I was getting something like nine or ten dollars a month. And I was sitting with a few fellows—one of the few times I was in the Legion, I believe it was—and this fellow came walking in—we're all older men now—all civilians, of course—bragging, holding a cheque in his hand for ten thousand dollars.

It turns out that he had broken a leg on a parachute jump up in Rivers, Manitoba in his training, and now, at his older age, he was experiencing some difficulty with his knee. The government had agreed that, if he agreed to drop everything, more or less, they would buy him out for ten thousand dollars. He was only too bloody happy to do it.

So, here I'm sitting there listening to this guy. I've got a bum full of shrapnel and I'm getting something like ten bucks a month, and this bugger had a broken leg and he gets ten thousand dollars. Well, I immediately went to the Department of Veterans Affairs, and said, "Hey. I want better pension." Well, they said, "Fine. You'll have to sue us." This type of thing. I said, "Well, I can't afford it." "No, no, no. It's all right. We'll appoint a lawyer." That's sort of like asking the fox to take care of the chickens, isn't it? In any case—"No, no, no," they said, "It's all proper and up." I said, "OK. Fine." I had nothing to lose.

So, I get a phone call, a few weeks later, from a gentleman in Ottawa. He identified himself as the lawyer. He was going to be coming to Kingston and amongst other subjects they were going to discuss in a judicial way, there would be three men acting as judges, listening to these various cases. My case would be one of them, of course. But before we get into the details of how he was going to defend me, he had to ask me a few questions.

So, I said, "Go ahead." He said,"Was the name of the fellow that blew you up such-and-such?" I can't remember it now. And at that time, I said, "My God—yes! How the hell did you know that?" He said, "Well, just a minute. Was he part of a nine man reinforcement group that just got there?" I said, "Yes!" He said, "By God." He said, "I better defend you well." I said, "Why?" He said, "I'm the officer that trained those nine men. The last minute before I was to take them over, they realized I was a lawyer and sent me to Ottawa instead." He said, "As I followed the battle stories that came through, I discovered I had sent over a bunch of bloody hoodlums." So, in any case, to make a long story short, when he did defend me, I got my pension. I now draw twenty percent. [laughter]

INTERVIEWER: At what point in the war did you decide to start a "sketch" diary?

ZUBER: I don't mean to disappoint you. Everyone feels that having produced these paintings, as a veteran from that experience, that I had, obviously, a sketch pad. Strangely enough, I didn't have what you would refer to as a conventional artist's sketch pad, at all. Veterans can understand what I'm saying now, when I say that emotion was a luxury we just didn't have any more. For example, I don't mean to be crude, but I'm sure I didn't hear a dirty joke after ten days in Korea. There was just no—that part wasn't part of our lives any more. It just—nature was wonderful – how it just removed that aspect completely.

Emotion was a luxury we just couldn't afford. When something terrible happened to a companion, you regretted it, of course. Privately, you were glad it wasn't you that got hit. But you got along with the war. Well, the same thing happened to my sketches. A few times I did some sketches—yes—but I never really took it upon myself to carry a sketch pad with me and do a complete pictorial diary.

Part of it, I suppose, is the fact that they tell me I'm blessed with what they call a photographic memory. I can't remember birthdates. I can't remember numbers. But I can remember pictures—things I've seen. I have an uncanny way of recalling information. I guess I was unconsciously relying on that. Now, having said all of this, I did make sketches while I was there—perhaps as many as twenty, but that's not very many in a whole year.

In any case, when I was wounded up on the Hook position on that New Year's Eve thing, one of the Signalers up there was kind enough to take my personal effects. My chocolate bars and my cigarettes, of course, were all gone when I came back up to the line. My sketches were gone. Well, I learned through the grapevine that a gentleman—and this is his honest name—Harry Larry McClary was a Signaler attached to the battalion, and he had kept my drawings.

It was many, many years later that I decided to commit my memoirs to canvas. Part of the reason for it was that: one--on my return from Korea, I managed to do one small painting, which I still have, but it was a very private sort of a thing. A few years later, I decided to start to do some, and it was impossible for me to figure what I wanted to say. I had so many images going through my mind. I'd start to make a sketch, for example, thinking it would turn into a painting. Before I could throw it away, I had too many things to say in the one sketch. I had to reach what I choose to identify as a state of emotional maturity.

Then, I remember telling my lady friend, at the time—then, she became my lovely wife, Monica—I was telling her some story about an experience. I began to realize that I was beginning to forget some of the details. That is when I decided, "Hey! I'm going to commit this to my canvas." That was what I call my cheese period and the Kraft dinner period type of thing. For the next six or seven years, that's all I did was commit my memoirs to the canvas.

I contacted--through the grapevine, I found out where he was and I contacted Harry Larry McClary, in New Brunswick. He was running some kind of a station where campers and outfitters—he outfitted canoeists, and this type of thing. I contacted him and he said, "Yes, Ted. I have about eight of those drawings. You cannot have them. They're mine. But you can have copies." Which I felt was a nice sort of a salute. I took this as a compliment. All I wanted was a copy, because I wanted to refer to these drawings.

Well, he sent these to me, of course. Lo and behold, I couldn't get over them! I don't think I could make those drawings today. They were so emotion-free. There was no emotion in them at all. It was strange. There were details that did help me to some degree—how we hung our blankets to dry; the way we did this or the way we did that—a few things—little simple sketches. But the people in the drawings—not a single one of the soldiers in the drawing had a facial expression. They all looked exactly the same. They were like mannequins. There was no emotion whatsoever – the body language, the facial expressions—with just nothing. I have never seen such ghosts in drawings in all my life.

So, from that point of view, they served me no purpose at all. I had to rely completely on my memory. Once I started to do the paintings, then the memory came back and I remembered things I didn't even know I had forgotten, of course. Some of it was difficult. Some of it was very easy. Some of it was humorous. But those drawings that I did in Korea really served no real purpose at all because they were so starving, rake naked of any form of emotion.

INTERVIEWER: Did you remember the colours of the terrain, at that time, that you put in the Korean paintings and the medium you used? Could you comment on that?

ZUBER: The colour was very easy for me to recall. As I mentioned earlier, this so-called photographic memory I have—colour was incorporated in that ability. Perhaps a quick little story to dramatize just how lucky I am with this recollection business is that many years later, I was invited to join a celebration in Halifax—a Korean Veterans Reunion was being put together. This is going back about ten years ago—maybe fifteen. In any case, I was asked if I would bring my paintings to the reunion, and I said, "On the condition I can sell prints." Of course, that helped pay my mortgage, you know. They were only too happy to have me there. So, I've been very fortunate in selling the odd print to veterans.

In any case, while I was there, one of the fellows came up. It turned out he had been a Forward Observation Officer for the Artillery. He was the man up on the front lines that called in the shots for the Artillery by radio, who were behind us, of course. They have codenames for each of the features. The painting called *Korea—Land of the Morning Calm*—that was the first painting I did and that showed the Canadian soldiers rebuilding the fortifications in front of a typical bunker. It shows the lines. It shows the Sami'chon Valley. It shows the 166 enemy position and shows the Corsair aircraft, doing an air strike. So, this one was to help the civilian back home realize what Korea looked like—truly a beautiful country.

Now, I exercised perhaps what you might call artistic license. As I drew the positions on the hill as closely as I could recollect, I added a few extra hills to sort of balance it. When this Forward Observation Officer saw that painting, he instantly recognized, not only the hill, but all of the other hills, and gave me the code line. So, the hills I thought I had imagined actually existed. He said it was almost a poster perfect photographic recollection of the position, as he called it. And he gave me the code names of those various features.

So, I have no problem with the colour at all—never mind, other features. When it comes to emotion, I guess this is where an artist comes through, because what we're doing is sharing our emotions in a pictorial sense. These emotions are so heavily ingrained into the soldier that I'm sure, if we could all paint, we'd have millions of paintings.

But the medium itself—you asked me what medium I used. I worked with alkyd oil—alkyd is a bastardization of the terms acid alcohol. It's where Windsor-Newton, amongst other people, have taken a form of paint that was developed by the paint industry. You've heard of alkyd paints. If you paint your house with alkyd paints, it will last longer than the conventional oil paints, for example.

The Flemish artists, back in the Renaissance, for example, when they wanted to do what was called glazing—this is where they put a transparent colour over another colour to give it an

optical effect. This was quite common a practice during the Renaissance. It's coming back into vogue today. Well, they couldn't put that second filter colour over the first one using linseed oil, which is a common carrier for the pigments in oil painting; because linseed has a tendency to turn brown over a period of time and it also cracks. Well, what they found is, if they worked with resin, a resin will last theoretically for ever. It never yellows and never cracks. So, they would make the glazing—that is, the transparent coatings would be pigments mixed with resin.

Well, about 1927, the paint industry brought out a form of paint based on this principle where they changed the alcohol, through alcohol and acid treatments--the various drying characteristics of the various oils--and they brought out this material called, by Windsor-Newton, Liquin. But it's an alkyd resin. My paint is made with the alkyd resin, instead of straight linseed oil. It has a greater brilliance. The colour is very vivid. It's the same pigments but they're far more vivid. So, this is what I worked with.

So, you work as an oil artist, and I work on canvas. It's all done exactly the same way. I still work with turpentine and paint thinners and whatnot, but instead of linseed oil, I work with an alkyd resin. This is the paint I used on all of my work, whether—for the last—oh, thirty years – I've worked specifically with alkyd resin paints.

INTERVIEWER: How would you describe your style of painting?

ZUBER: That's almost impossible to answer, in the way that you would want me to, because it's like describing your accent to someone else. We don't hear it. I don't see it. I have to look at other painters' works to identify what my "style" is. My work has been identified as "Group of Seven" with a little bit more detail. Detail in itself, does not, in itself, make a good painting. Just because you can see all the hairs on the fox, doesn't mean it's a good painting. That's a wonderful example of draftsmanship, perhaps, but painting—the prime purpose in painting is to depict the emotion, not the detail.

In any case, I guess I'm fairly detailed. I'm a realistic painter. My prime aim is to illustrate emotion through atmospheric conditioning, aside from the conventional drawing of the form of the figure—the emotion. But I guess my work is quite realistic. I think I have a very happy colour spectrum to my work—what they generally refer to as the 'artist's palette.' I work with the various colours.

When I'm doing work of a serious nature.--for example, a lot of my military work where I have to be technically accurate, I don't have to show every rivet. But if I do put a rivet in, that one should exist, so I don't offend my viewer. But it is not my choice to give you every detail, but what detail I give you is correct. So, quite often, when I'm doing a large military work, I'll work in what is called the Grisaille manner. That's where you work with black and white.

I value—determine my composition, and by working with black and white, it gives me an idea of exactly where my lights and my darks are. In the world of—the terminology with an artist, value refers to lights and darks—a light value or a dark value. And I establish my composition this way. If it's too dark on one side, it would be saying too heavy on one side, I'll change that—put some darks on the other side. In any case, I'll establish my full painting

in black and white, and then, working with the alkyds, which dry in only twenty-four hours, what I paint today, I can glaze tomorrow.

Then, working with the transparent glazes—this is where the Liquin comes in very nicely—I then put the colour on top of what I've done. Now, with some cases, I have to use thicker and pastel paints. So, you sort of do the painting twice, really. But basically, you establish the entire composition in black and white and then, lay the colour in secondary on top of that. This was a common practice during the Renaissance. It's coming back into vogue.

On other paintings, where I do "A la prima" or all at one time, as the Italian would say, or Plein Air, by the French, where I go out and do a painting in three hours, I'd stand in front of the subject and paint it right there and then. So, that's quite different from the compositional achievement of the Grisaille form of work. But most of my military work is done with the Grisaille and then, I lay the colour in on top of that. Colour, consequently, has a somewhat limited character, because the statement has already been made. Intellect is achieved or acquired through the application of the value—the lights and the darks and the line. That tells you what it is. It's the emotion [that] is acquired through the application of the colour.

INTERVIEWER: Your training as a photographer had a lot to do with that, doesn't it?

ZUBER: I think it had a wonderful—photography literally translated me into writing with light. So, one of the first things a photographer must study is light—how is it controlled? The optics come into it, too, which for example, the so-called standard lens on a camera sees basically the same as the human eye—the same perspectives. It doesn't see quite the same breadth from left to right. But what it does see is equal to the human eye.

If you look through a camera with a conventional lens on it—the so-called standard lens—each eye will see the same image. In other words, the background, reference the size of me sitting here in the background behind me, will look exactly the same through a conventional lens on a standard camera as the human eye does. It's when we get into telephoto and wide angles that these things change. So, one: that teaches the artist perspective—how to convey a feeling of distance through size; how to distort to achieve an end--but light is where it gives me.

If I had the opportunity to teach art students, I would teach them photography, before I taught them painting, I think. It reveals so much. And of course, for example, as I mentioned just a few moments ago, in Grisaille, the best example of Grisaille, in the world, is a black and white photograph. There are all your values. When I make students aware of this, quite often they'll go out and they'll change their film to black and white. This gives them far better reference for their paintings.

INTERVIEWER: [Canadian War Museum Oral History Program Interview with Ted Zuber.] End of [Tape 1,] Side 1.

END OF TAPE 1, SIDE 1

INTERVIEWER: Tape 1, Side 2. Canadian War Museum Oral History Program Interview with Ted Zuber.

Tell us about some of the paintings you have in the War Museum art collection that's going to be hung at the new War Museum. Maybe we could start with *The Hunters*.

ZUBER: Well, *The Hunters* is a painting that reflects not necessarily a given occasion or a given position. It reflects the emotion of what I was working as a sniper. You're always on your own. We worked in pairs. We had partners, but our partners were usually at a distance, primarily because of the terrain—the mountainous countryside. We would cover each other's sort of blind spots. In any case, the one called *The Hunters* is the hunting bird in the air--a hawk or a vulture.

The sniper himself—his body language would suggest that he had just determined the range and is setting that on the telescopic site of his rifle. He has found his target. But if one looks around him, to reflect the emotion of what you were going through at the time, you'll notice that the hills have a screaming face structure to the hills. Most people don't see that. But it's a hidden symbolism in the surround. He's hidden himself in a precarious position on the side of a cliff. Like, how the hell does he get out of there if he has to?

One of the things we learned is never go in unless you have two ways out--all these sorts of things. It didn't always work that way. In any case, this painting depicts, primarily, the emotions of working alone as a sniper, and the environment reflects the mood and the area in which you're conducting your activities.

INTERVIEWER: The next painting is entitled *Contact*.

ZUBER: This does depict an actual action that we lived through. It was October 23, 1952, up on the Kowang-san, or 355 position, which the Americans called Little Gibraltar. We'd been heavily bombarded over the last couple of weeks. We'd been bombarded on a day in, day out basis in all the time we were up there, but it became very, very heavy. The Chinese, for example, would send troops up into our wire and throw stones at us, hoping we'd throw, not grenades back, but open fire with our automatic weapons, so they could then mark on their maps exactly where our prime weapons were. So, we were under instructions, for example, to never use our weapons but to throw hand grenades, and never give the Chinese that information.

We knew something was coming because, not only was there a great deal of infiltration and more activity on the part of Chinese patrols into our area, but we were being bombarded, not only consistently, but by different guns. For example, they were bringing up a heavy piece and to sight that weapon, they'd probably fire four or five rounds in us. We could identify these different weapons by the sound they'd make as they came in and exploded. We'd say, "Ah-ha. They've got another Howitzer or another 4.5," or something like this—some heavy weapon." So, we knew we were being groomed for an attack.

Well, it came on October the 23rd. This is what this painting depicts, when the Chinese later that evening--they hit first about six o'clock, six fifteen. I remember it was a beautiful sunset, and then, suddenly, this heavy stuff came in. The painting depicts about ten-thirty that night when the Chinese literally overran the position. But they bombarded us so heavily that someone said—don't ask me who does this counting—but someone said that it was the heaviest artillery bombardment experienced by a Canadian unit since the First World War.

Something like eleven thousand rounds of heavy material came in on an area not much bigger than a football field.

It wiped out Baker Company. They were—I was right alongside in Easy Company position and I was sent over, with three other men, about—oh, I guess, about eight-thirty or nine o'clock that night, into the Baker Company area to find out what we could find. All we could see were some Chinese looting some of the destroyed bunkers and running about. We got this information back that all the radio communication was completely out. Telephones, of course, were history by this time. It was on the strength of this that the second-in-command of the battalion called in our Canadian artillery fire on our own Baker Company position, to try to push the Chinese off.

So, this painting depicts each man is doing his own job. The fellow on the left is re-arming his—changing the magazine on a Bren gun. The other fellows are throwing grenades—firing their little Sten guns. The officer is yelling. That one fellow in the foreground of the painting, walking around with his rifle, seems to be not included. And it was unbelievable. There were actually people, in the middle of heavy action that, having not been told exactly what to do, just wandered about. It was strange. This sort of shows that.

Of course, the officer is yelling at this guy to get down and pick up the radio. The Signaler is down. He's dead. The fellow that is laying there beside him, just looking at everything, has been wounded. And it was a strange thing. When you got wounded, you somehow emotionally isolated yourself. You became an observer. This fellow is just laying back now. He's watching the war go on about him. Each man is involved doing his own thing.

INTERVIEWER: Tell us about the story behind *First Kill—the Hook*.

ZUBER: Well, *First Kill* was actually my first kill as a sniper. It happened the very first afternoon I was sent up to the Hook position. Al Craig, my partner, and I were the first two snipers after graduation to be sent up to the position, to work as snipers, up on the Hook. We had elected to separate ourselves about two hundred yards. Al went to my left, at a lower altitude, down with Charlie Company. I can't remember if it was Alf or Dog Company, but in any case, the companies would change up there whenever we went up to the line of snipers.

We simply reported to whoever was in charge of the position at that time and got information from those people as to what data they could give us, reference Chinese activity—what things had gone on. We referred to aerial photographs and any reports that came back from patrols. So, we'd have a rough idea of where to look for enemy activity. Our prime responsibility, as snipers, was to stop the Chinese from killing our own people. So, we were riding shotgun for the battalion, if you will.

In any case, I got into this position, looked around and I asked the Platoon Commander up there if I could have one of his people to act as a sort of assistant--as a viewer for me. If I looked through the binoculars all day, my eyes would be shot when it came time to use the sniper scope. It was only a two and a half power telescopic site I had on a .303 Lee-Enfield. But I did have a twenty power spotting scope and I think they were ten by fifteen binoculars.

So, they gave me a fellow from the local platoon up there. They woke this poor bugger up, and said, "OK. You're going to assist." I had found a bombed out observation post that was no longer used. It was completely destroyed, but I crawled out and cleared a little space under it and used that as my observation position. This fellow--I can't remember his name now—was given to me [as] an observer.

We got into this position and we were only in there about two hours, when a fellow jumps out of a trench about two hundred and fifty, three hundred yards immediately to my front, on the Chinese position. He climbs out of a trench. This is about three o'clock in the afternoon—full broad daylight. It's in the winter. The sun didn't go down until about four-thirty. It's the same as Canada, as a matter of fact—weather wise.

This fellow boldly jumps out of the trench and starts to walk along the crest of this little hill that we called Razorback. It had a sharp edge to it. He was going about another fifty or seventy-five yards to take up his position. He had what looked like a very short weapon on him and a large pack on his side. It turns out this was a snooper-scope—an infrared beamed rifle—a carbine rifle with a forty thousand volt power pack. He was moving out to position.

This was indicative of how the Chinese had been literally running that whole bloody area with their sniper section. They weren't even afraid of walking up in daylight. I couldn't believe it. Well, I took an aim at this fellow. And of course, this fellow that was my observer was quite tense, so he's watching binoculars. And I suppose I shouldn't confess this, but I missed my first shot. It wasn't because I was so nervous. I was quite calm, because this is where I'd been living here for many, many months and this is what everybody did, sort of thing. So, there was no real problem with that. But I missed him.

He immediately ducked over the edge—as I say, we called it a Razorback. So, he had to go maybe three feet to his left and he would disappear from sight. He disappeared. Well, I remember looking at that fellow that was next to me. I never experienced such a horrible look of disgust in my life that that man gave me. Well, I just sort of gave him a weak smile and, "Oh, well." I couldn't believe it though--within three minutes, that sniper reappeared.

I realized immediately that my shot had missed him without striking the ground. All he had really heard was a rifle shot. And he's obviously assumed that somebody was just clearing a weapon. He got right back up, the bloody fool, and continued walking to where he was going to set up his high position to watch our patrols at night. Well, of course, I'm an old veteran now, and I did not miss my second shot. I was redeemed, of course.

A little follow up to this. Our patrols were asked, if they could, on their way back from wherever they had been that night coming, to do an intelligence search of the Chinese sniper and bring back any information they could find. His body slipped out of view, down the forward slope. He sort of slid down on the ice and snow down the forward slope toward us. The next night, a patrol came back with his snooper-scope—the rifle—and Corporal Gill's dog tags.

Now, Corporal Gill had been killed only a day earlier—a couple of days, actually, and he had been the batman to Colonel Peter Bingham, in Canada. Of course, when the officers went into the line, they gave up their valets. The batmen became members of the rifle companies.

Corporal Gill had been with Peter Bingham, I guess, long enough that he felt like a son to the Colonel.

In any case, he was killed coming back as a last man on the patrol a couple of nights earlier. He had been shot right through the head. This particular Chinese sniper I had killed had Corporal Gill's dog tags. He was the one that had killed Corporal Gill. Well, the next morning, a runner came up from the jeep head, which is an area back of the lines where the vehicles come up as close. It's usually about three miles to the front line. This is where the Colonel would have his position. That's where he was staying.

The Colonel sent a runner up to me, up on the Hook position, with a brand new sandbag, with a bottle of Haig & Haig, from his own private stock, and it was a little note—excuse me—with a little note that I was to get lost for a day, and enjoy, and "Thank you." Well, of course, I didn't get anywhere. I was a hero for about half an hour. That bottle lasted maybe an hour in the tunnel, and I was a hero amongst my buddies for at least an hour—a day, perhaps. But that's a little follow up story that happened to that sniper and that's the painting called *First Kill*.

INTERVIEWER: Tell us about *Reverse Slope*.

ZUBER: *Reverse Slope*, for those who are not familiar with the term, it refers to the side of the hill that the enemy cannot see—the reverse slope—reverse of the front. This painting simply depicts a soft, quiet moment. The sun has come out. There's obviously enough water—the fellow can have a shave. We were on water rations so often.

I was actually forced one time, by the Colonel, as a matter of fact—personally. He did a quick inspection of, and he asked me if I had not shaved that morning. And I hadn't, but no one else had. We had just come off the positions on the forward slope, moved into the back slope and were having a bit of powdered eggs and coffee for breakfast. In any case, to set an example of how you will shave every day—that was a Canadian discipline—he made me use my coffee to shave with. That was the only coffee I had that bloody day, and a colonel made me shave with it.

But anyway, getting back to the *Reverse Slope*--it's a quiet moment. One fellow had been reading some letters from home and he's daydreaming about what has just been said in the letter, I guess. The other fellow is cleaning himself up. It's a quiet day that could almost be an English cottage scene, I suppose. It was strange how emotions change like that, from time to time. Sanity, in this case, would slip in and save you all somehow.

INTERVIEWER: And what is happening at *Daybreak, Gulf of Korea*?

ZUBER: This, of course, is a naval painting, obviously--as a Tribal class destroyer. They all basically had the same silhouette. So, this is one of the reasons I portrayed this ship at dawn, so that any sailor, who served in Korea, could identify that as being his ship, because they all had the same silhouette. So, if he was on the HAIDA or the NOOTKA or the ATHABASKAN—yes, that was his ship.

In any case, what the ship is doing is firing on a train. The train is making a beeline for a tunnel to hide themselves. There was an informal society that was formed, called the Train

Club. It was one thing to hit the train, but if you hit the locomotive, you now became a member of the Train Club. I believe the Canadians did exceptionally well. There's people better qualified than I [who] can tell you how many they got. But, we had at least three destroyers, of the nine that served there; acquire status in the Train Club.

This is on the coast of Korea, showing the early morning light on the mountainous structure, and the general feel of the land, as seen on a day in, day out basis, by our Canadian naval people, who did all forms of escort duty--bringing people in and out of unbelievably dangerous areas, up the rivers and in-between the islands, for bringing in saboteurs and espionage agents, rescuing people and conducting all kinds of strange, dark dagger sort of operations.

A little follow up story I'd love to share with you. Of course, when I started to do these Korean War paintings, they were based on my own personal memoirs or my own experiences--not that I was trying to promote myself, because I don't portray myself in these paintings, of course. But it was just to share the experiences I had. I think if there is any one word that the artist must learn to appreciate and work on, for the rest of his life or her life, is the term "share" because that's what artists do.

Well, I was invited to join a group of Korean veterans that were celebrating a get-together in Halifax. I was invited to go, and I did. I took my paintings with me, of course. I still owned them, at that time. I set them up on easels along the side of the drill hall, which was used as a dance floor after the dinner. Anyway, I sat down at this table and it turned out that I was seated at a naval table, and all of these—they all appeared to be admirals to me--captains and whatnot--on the one side of the table, and their lovely wives on this side. I sat amongst the wives.

No one was really speaking to me. After about ten minutes into the meal, this lovely lady next to me, she asked me if I was conscious of the fact that I was not being addressed or spoken to. I said, "Frankly, yes." I said, "I feel like I'm really being isolated." She said, "Well, it's your own damn fault." I asked her what that meant and she said, simply, and as she explained it to me, I looked at the faces of these naval officers and they were all glowering at me, in a way. She said, "You have the audacity to come to Halifax with your Korean memorial paintings and not depict a single ship. We were the first people to go to Korea and we were the last to leave. We were there constantly. We had all of these men that served in Korea, and women. And you chose to not acknowledge them."

I, of course, tried to quickly explain that these paintings were based on my own personal experiences and I had not been in the Navy, but that didn't do. I simply looked at these people, and I said, "I stand corrected. I give my word that I will commit myself to a naval painting immediately on my return to my studio," which is what I did.

INTERVIEWER: I think this is a very famous battle at Kapyong. Tell us about this painting.

ZUBER: This painting was not part of my initial plan, because as I said earlier, I was basically just attempting to paint what I had experienced myself. Well, that had been changed after my experience with the Canadian Navy, and in coming back to my studio and painting the Canadian destroyer firing on the train—on the coastal defences. I had broken that rule. Now I could paint other things that didn't relate directly to me.

Consequently, I chose to paint the Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry—the Special Force group that fought at the battle of Kapyong. This is where President Truman awarded the Presidential citation—first time to a Canadian unit. This was--I suppose it could be argued that it was, perhaps, the major battle experienced by Canadian soldiers in Korea. Each battle we were in was the major battle, of course. But from a historical overall point of view, I guess this was really it—the Battle of Kapyong.

I did my heavy duty research. The air panels that are painted on the ground were correct for that day. The boots that the men were wearing—they only got those nine days earlier--just fresh issue. The only license I did take was the patch that is on the shoulder of the soldiers. They did not receive that for a few months later, when the division—the Commonwealth Division--was formed. Then, they got that division. So, they didn't actually wear that, in this particular time. But I thought it was only correct to give them that stature.

In any case, that's the PIP Air Force Combat Support Group coming in, in response to the Colonel's—I believe, Colonel Stone had radioed in for supplies earlier that morning, and this is where they brought in four C-119 Flying Boxcars. It was one of those cases where only one of the hundred parachutes drifted off target. The parachutes indicate—the colours, of course, indicate food, ammunition, or medical supplies—with the colour coded chutes that the men went for. So, the painting depicts mid morning, about--I think it was around eight or ten o'clock, as I recall from the battalion's war diary, which I was able to read. Later that day, the Chinese pulled back. So, they've been given credit for help saving the city of Seoul, for the third or fourth time.

INTERVIEWER: In the painting *Incoming*, you are actually portraying yourself in the painting?

ZUBER: Yes. I did, because of course, it was a personal experience. This was the night of the battle of October 23, '52--Kowang-san, when the Chinese overran our position. They basically wiped out our Baker Company. We finally drove them back off about two o'clock in the morning. We had to call in artillery fire on our own position that night. Major Klinavic, who was in charge of the battalion, in that our Colonel was on leave—I believe in Japan at the time. But Major Klinavic had to call in the Canadian artillery on our own position to drive the Chinese off.

Well, what I was doing here is I painted the soldier looking forward right at you—the viewer—so, to give you a feeling of involvement—to get you bloody well into this thing with us. Each man, of course, is reaching over and looking for his responsibility—picking up his rifle or his radio set. We knew that this battle was coming. We'd been bombarded heavily and new guns had been set in on us and only would fire a few rounds just to get their zeroing in.

Then, this one evening, about six fifteen, we're sitting around this tank. There's a Sherman that we had these dug in as pill boxes. They really couldn't use tanks very well, so they dug them in. We were sitting around this, waiting to go out to the Vancouver outpost. I was part of the group that night to go out on listening night post, when this heavy stuff, as depicted in the painting, there was clrump, clrump, clrump—the shells came in. We all stood up. This

was heavy stuff—probably a hundred and twenty two millimeter stuff—and we knew that this was it.

It was the funniest thing. We all looked at each other, and quite involuntarily, we all said, at the same moment, "This is it." Just like a Hollywood movie. In any case, I think we all smiled at ourselves. But each man went to his responsibility. Of course, I didn't go out to the Vancouver outpost that night. We were pretty well stuck where we were. The bombardment we took was unbelievable.

Now, in the painting, there is various things that are shown in there. For example, the Corporal that is standing on top of the tank—he was awarded for bravery that night—while the Tank Sergeant is down in the bunker, to the lower right—you can just see a body in there. He was charged with cowardice, because he wouldn't show up. A little footnote that happened. And men are yelling at each other--giving instructions. But of course, unlike the movies, where everybody is yelling instructions--I often wonder, when I look at these movies, "Who the hell is listening to them?" And there's another thing that is one hundred percent absolutely missing in all the war experiences I had—I never once heard dramatic music.

As sort of a footnote to all of this--these paintings depict, not just my experiences, but the experiences of all my fellows that were there, of course. I guess we were all intrigued with the beauty of the landscape. I can remember looking out quite often. I'd be on an observation position, or something—especially when I was a sniper, because I was on my own and sometimes was in Chinese territory. I'd look about and I had to remind myself where I was--meaning it was the wartime--because I was so taken with the beauty of the landscape.

Doing the first painting--I remember, *Korea, Land of the Morning Calm*--that's the one where the Corsair aircraft is showing up. But, I mean, I painted it basically as a landscape. I was so delighted because I thought, "My God, Zuber. You've got yourself a bloody good painting here." Then, I put in the aircraft and the smoke, and of course, that destroyed my painting. It was actually disheartening. But that's the truth of war, I suppose.

The Korean people—it was unbelievable. We have no idea [of] the grief, the terror that these people experienced. Can you imagine this terror so bad that you don't feel any more? It becomes a way of life. Fear is a luxury you don't even feel any more. These people had to live through that. It was uncanny how they survived.

I had a magnificent experience, in that one of the fellows that was attached to us as an interpreter—a young man. I guess he was—oh, twelve—no--probably thirteen or fourteen. We called him Kim. I think everybody was called Kim, it seemed. But anyway, he was an attached interpreter, from the Intelligence section. I actually met this man, years later, walking up University Avenue in Toronto. The two of us stopped and looked at each other, and I said, "Kim?" And he said, "Zuber?" He actually remembered my name. We didn't quite embrace, but we almost did.

Anyway, he was leaving in a matter of weeks to go back to Korea. The President of Korea had given him permission to go to Canada to get his education, on the promise that he would come back. This young man was going to be appointed as Minister of Agriculture, on his

return to Korea. We actually met on University Avenue, in Toronto. It was a wonderful experience.

There's things that--I'm sure I'm speaking on behalf of every one of us that were there-- it never leaves you alone. I still do the odd painting--still creeps off the end of my arm, when I'm sitting in front of a canvas that deals with the Korean experience. It was a—it's funny—we took lives and it gave us such a life thereafter. How would my life have been had I never gone to Korea? I'll never know, of course.

INTERVIEWER: Switching gears, we're going on towards 1991 and Operation Friction. How were you recruited as an official war artist and what were the specifications of what you had to do?

ZUBER: I received a phone call about nine o'clock at night. I can't remember the day. I think it was a Friday. The woman identified herself as the Curator of the War Museum. Rikki Cameron was her name, as a matter of fact. She said, "Ted, I have a simple question to ask you." She said, "If you were elected to act as Canada's War Artist in the Gulf War, would you go?" So, I said, "Yes, sure." I didn't really take it seriously, of course. So, I said, "What's this all about?" "Oh," she said, "I can't tell you any more." She said, "Simply there's no point electing someone, only to find out he won't go. So, we just confirmed that you will go." She said, "That's fine. I'll get back to you," and left it at that.

So, I didn't really pay much attention to it. Well, about ten days later, she phoned me back. She said, "Ted, I thought you should know it's been brought down to about ten or twelve artists." She said, "You're still in the group." Good God, this thing is serious! So, I couldn't ask her any more questions. She wouldn't tell me anything. But it had been narrowed down; from how many artists in the first place, I don't know. They just don't tell you very much.

Well, about a week after that, I got the phone call, "Ted Zuber, you've been chosen to act as Canada's War Artist." Well, you know, I must confess--a cold chill went through me. All that bloody experience in Korea rushed right through me. It's a strange thing. I didn't know this, but a medical officer once explained this to me that it's one thing to recollect things. I ask you to remember something. So, you search your brain cells and you find some little deposit where you have these things collected.

But there's another part of our body that has memory—our body itself has memory. I still really don't quite understand it. But you may not remember these things in the conscious sense, but your body recalls it. And I actually shivered for a moment. And that was my body recalling some of the experiences I'd gone through in Korea as a young man. Hell, I was bulletproof in those days, but not now!

So, I thanked her for, obviously, a great honour. Fine. She said she'd have more information for me, and get back to me in a day or so, with contracts and this sort of thing. I said, "OK. OK." [I] hung up the phone, and then, I sat there nervous, and thought, "What the hell am I doing? I don't bloody well want to go back into that!" And then, a sudden realization went through me, and it was a refreshing, warm feeling that went, and it said something to the effect about, "Ted, you're not going as a combatant. You're not taking a rifle. You're taking a paintbrush." And foolishly, I suppose, I felt extremely safe. I felt perfectly OK. I said, "Whew! I can handle that."

Well, I went to Ottawa and they were working out this contract. Now, they did not have a war artist, at any time, commissioned for the Korean War. The only information these young people had—most of these people weren't even alive that were writing up this contract when the war ended—the First World War, Second World War. They had that to refer to. Well, the agreement was something very, very roughly, "The artist will be brought into the military from the public sector," so that the favour wasn't toward a military depiction. It was to--the primary purpose of a war artist is to depict what is happening to the Canadians, in this theatre--wherever it may be--for historical purposes, so that future generations can see what we did, how we did it, where we did it—maybe, even why.

In any case, what the artist did was [he was] brought into the military, shown how to wear his uniform. Basically, he would be attached to a unit for a whole year—could be the Navy, with the Air Force or the Army, up at the tanks or the artillery. He would spend approximately a year with these people, collecting all the information he could. His field sketches were his. They were his short notes. No artist wants to be judged by his field sketches. They're like shorthand. One war artist actually had it written into his contract, that no one had witness to his field drawings.

In any case, the artist was then brought either back home, or to England, and given up to two years to paint. All his supplies were paid. And of course, he's being paid, usually as an officer—a captain or a lieutenant. And he would draw this income salary and he would paint ten paintings—at least ten paintings. The military had the choice, or the government, of any six. The remaining four--the artist could do with them as he saw fit. But that was his commitment.

Well, when they brought me into Ottawa to discuss my being the War Artist for the Gulf War, they knew very well it wasn't going to last five years. There wasn't going to be time to send me away for a year and then, give me two years to do the paintings. Not only that, I was being awarded the rank of Honourary Captain, but without pay, because budget was such, they couldn't pay me to go to the Gulf War. So, I really went for nothing.

In any case, I looked on this as my 6/49 ticket. If I did go, I would be the only qualified artist in the world that could paint Canadian happenings in the Gulf War. Perhaps, if I played my cards right, I might be able to sell some paintings after I came home. But I could do nothing if I didn't go. So, I was happy to go. But they worked out this business about the ten paintings. So, they finally got it down to ten, but they still couldn't figure out the details. Then, finally it was suggested to them, "Well, why don't we have him do drawings. We can't support him for two years after he gets back to paint. But what if we ask him to do drawings?"

Now, this was unusual, because no war artist had ever been asked to submit drawings. This was, as a matter of fact, a recommendation of Rikki Cameron. She had seen some of my drawings, and people tell me I draw well and I draw quickly. I hope that's true. In any case, they said, "Would you do drawings?" I said, "Yes, but understand that some of these drawings will be very spontaneous type of things. They'll have a very quick characteristic about them." They said, "Well, that could be good." "But," she said, "That's our problem. If we like or don't like the drawings, is our problem—not yours." So, I said, "Fine."

Well, they drew up the contract, and believe it or not, they actually contracted me to make ten drawings. Well, of course, I could do that in an hour! [laughter] In any case, I understood the principle—the purpose of it all--and accepted the commission. Then, they wired the Commander in the Canadian field, in Saudi Arabia, or actually, in Bosnia—I think it was Bosnia, where the Canadian Headquarters were—to get permission, because even the Prime Minister couldn't go in without permission of the Commander. They didn't get a reply. They tried a second and third time, and finally it was suggested by someone that, "Why don't you let the Commander know that this man served in the Korean War, and that he has paintings in the Canadian War Museum."

When they sent that telegram, within fifteen minutes, it came back that they would have a limousine waiting for me at the airport, at Doha. In any case, I guess they were a little afraid of what this artist would do, and what he'd be like, or they just didn't know what to expect. Artists, sometimes, have allowed ourselves to be portrayed in strange manners, I suppose. It was quite a fantastic experience.

When I asked if there was any suggestion as to what they wanted me to depict, they put their hands and said, "Oh my God, no! We're not going to tell you at all what to do. What you do is up to you. If peace breaks out, paint it or draw it. If war breaks out, portray it." But my prime responsibility was to portray what Canadians were up to in the Gulf. I had a total free hand. I didn't have to report to anyone. I stayed there--I was contracted for a month, but I chose to stay an extra two weeks, so I could stay there during--when the actual ground war broke out. So, I spent six weeks in the field and I sketched what every—wherever Canadians served. I probably saw more of the Gulf than anyone else. The support I had was absolutely uncanny.

INTERVIEWER: Did you actually see any action—fighting, missiles, oil well fires?

ZUBER: Yes and no. By no, Canadians were not—the Canadian troops were not front line soldiers. Our primary responsibility was ground defence around the Canada Dry 1 and Canada Dry 2—these two code names. The Canada Dry 2 was the actual airport at Doha, in Qatar. We also had ground troops stationed up at Al Manama, Bahrain where we had our headquarters. And then, of course, we had our naval people.

Now, the Canadian Navy probably saw more continuous action than anyone else. We actually stopped and searched more ships than any other navy in the Gulf War. Canadians don't know this. Our ground troops did the ground support to protect us, not from enemy Iraqi soldiers—that war was quite a few miles away—it was the terrorists we had to be concerned with. Night patrols continuously, because we were a prime target for terrorists.

Then, of course, our Air Force—our Air Force did escort duty—our F-86 –excuse me, I'm dating myself again—our jet fighter aircraft escorted the Americans. Then, we actually elected to do some ground strikes and actual ground support. So, a great deal of action was seen by many Canadians. In my particular case, I experienced--I think it was eleven missile attacks I went through. One of my paintings depicts that---to the first missile attack. We were afraid, at that time, for the gas. So, we had these special gas masks and all this sort of thing we had to put on, because we were afraid of the bacteriological weaponry he may be using.

After the very first missile attack, I had to do that painting the very next day. It's called *High Topp One*. These were code words referring to the state of dress. If it was High Topp One, that meant you put everything on—including the boots, the gloves, the gas mask—this type of thing. In this particular painting I did, I had gotten into the shelter, which was a long concrete tunnel type of thing to prevent blasts from hurting you. I was the first one in there. I had my gas mask on. You had so many seconds to get that on. I had that on.

I was attempting to put on the overalls. They had shown us a trick where you put a plastic garbage bag over your boots, and that made it easier to slip your boot down the leg of the trousers. Well, I had a hell of a time, because I'd lost the garbage bags on my way across the compound to the shelter. As I'm trying like crazy to put this boot of mine down the leg, I found myself panting. I think I was experiencing a little bit of—whatever it is—because of the gas mask It just trapped me. I suddenly realized that I was trying to push my boot down the arm of the coveralls. [laughter] Anyway, I got that straightened out, finally got myself dressed and then suddenly, six or seven other people came in.

One fellow immediately reached over my shoulder and flipped on a battery operated light of a bright yellow colour. It immediately reflected off the lenses of all the men standing around, or women—because there were women there also, of course. But his yellow light reflected off the goggles of the gas mask, and I was immediately surrounded by a Walt Disney horror scene. And I knew this was my painting. So, I did that the very next day. That's called *High Topp One*. But later, strange, after I'd gone through nine or ten of these things, we didn't even put the gas mask on.

But the closest I came to seeing some action was I managed to get up with the fuel tanker aircraft. About four o'clock one morning, we went up. We flew at about nineteen thousand feet—the constant altitude – in a circle over an island off the coast of Kuwait. We refueled all aircraft that went in on target – no matter where they took off from, had to refuel before they actually went in on target. This was, of course, in case they were chased and had to take a route through Egypt or something. They'd have to have enough fuel to get back. So, we refueled these.

I asked one of the attendants that was in the aircraft why we didn't have radio communication with these aircraft that were fueling off our wingtips, because one, in particular, was having difficulty. The cocoon-shaped region on the end of the hose wasn't connecting properly. It was the reception tube alongside this cockpit. The operator told me that the reason that we didn't have radio communication with these people is because the enemy could immediately zero in with triangulation on our radio source, and we were consequently identified as a 'missile sponge'. That was the emotional term for it. We would be a prime target. So, I was quite appreciative that there was no radio communication.

But, from an action point of view, I didn't see people being shot. No. I saw a great number of the fires, especially when I went with two or three other people, across Saudi Arabia, up to Al Qaysumah, where the 1st Canadian Field Hospital from Petawawa was stationed with the British 32nd. The British were taking care of their own wounded and all the Iraqi wounded were being sent to the Canadians to take in there.

We were under a constant drizzle of rain from the black—really terrible black/brown smoke of the oil fires. And it was drizzling, actually, oil on us. And I can remember going for lunch

and we had to use flashlights at noon. It was so dark. It was unbelievable. But the action was—it sort of came to you in the sense of the missiles—going through these missile attacks. They were kind of spooky.

INTERVIEWER: Please tell us about the interplay between the male and female soldiers.

ZUBER: Well, first off, I'm going to disallow the term 'interplay'. [laughter] There wasn't any – that I should see. But I will say this, having the experience as I did as a young soldier in Korea, I didn't see any women over there, to speak of, that I can associate with—certainly, no Canadian. Now, I'm going to stand corrected because I've been corrected on this point—that Canadian nurses served in Korea, as I'm sure they did. But I didn't witness them--even when I was in the Canadian hospital I was taken that night. I was wounded. I was taken down to the Imjim hospital—the Norwegian Imjim—that's where they took the shrapnel out of me. Then, I was taken to the 25th Canadian Field Dressing Station. I spent—oh, I think six days there. That's where they patched me up. And then, down to Inchon for a few days recuperation. I never saw a single Canadian nurse, but they were there.

Well, in the Gulf, something I noticed was that men weren't walking around like a bunch of macho idiots with, you know, pearl handled pistols on their hip and this type of thing. There was none of this macho stuff because the women would have laughed them down. I think it was because there was such a natural quality about the area in that male and female were sharing. There was a calmness about things. The men acted like gentlemen and the women, of course, acted like ladies.

It was a wonderful calming sort of thing. It would take, I suppose, an old bugger like me to see this difference. If I had mentioned this, I'm sure people wouldn't know what I was referring to. But there was a calm, natural quality to the air because women were there amongst us. It was really quite refreshing. I felt it was wonderful. And there was no difference whatsoever between the men and the women in their actions--their capabilities--at all.

I learned one thing. I had made a slight mistake. I had made some comment when I was asked this very question by some news photographer. I made some comment about how Canada had sent all the pretty women over here. Well! That was one of the worst things I could say. I was a womanizer now, and all kinds of terrible things.

But one thing I did learn, if I used the word 'troops'--that was all inclusive. So, the Canadian troops were excellent and I was a very, very proud Canadian to be over there and to be respected by all of the other countries. You know, it's wonderful how Canadian troops are respected overseas. If all other Canadians could see this, I think there'd be that much more pride expressed in our day-to-day actions in this country.

INTERVIEWER: Can you tell us something about this painting called *0500 Al Qaysumah*?

ZUBER: Yes. This reflects—I was now with the Canadian 1st Field Hospital, up in—outside of, actually, Al Qaysumah, in the middle of the desert. They had bulldozed a mound around the tent area to protect us from incoming blasts. But we were literally in the middle of nowhere in the desert, all living in tents--totally self-supportive.

An Iraqi prisoner-of-war had been found by the Brits. They had stopped their forward advance for a little while and sent people back to see if there was anyone still alive behind them, as they'd gone through an enemy position and blown up some bunkers and tunnels and whatnot. They found this one Iraqi, unconscious, basically stripped naked. Obviously, his comrades that had survived this overrunning position had taken his clothing, thinking—hopefully—that they thought he was dead. But anyway, they took his clothing from him. He was still breathing.

So, they put him on a helicopter and shipped him right back to the Canadians. The British took care of their own wounded, but any Iraqis, they gave to the Canadians to work on. This fellow came in--it would be about five o'clock that evening. He was unconscious and they had him sort of somewhat seated up in a chair. I made a quick sketch of him. I asked the medical people what was going to happen. They said they were going to have to take him into the operating room and they were going to have to—they had to do some brain surgery and do some work on the rest of his body. I asked them, in that I was sleeping in a tent with a few other doctors, would they let me know, so that I could get into the operating room to make my sketches. They said, "Yes."

Well, I was in that operating room at five o'clock in the morning. This was outside of the area Al Qaysumah. That's, consequently, the title—*0500 Al Qaysumah*. Now, they worked for nine and a half hours on that Iraqi. They literally took the top of his skull off and did brain surgery in a tent. They keep the tent about a hundred degrees Fahrenheit so that the body's organs are not exposed to bad temperature change. They keep the air pressure a little bit higher. They have air pumps, so that it's physically impossible for dust to get into the operating room.

A little footnote—in the painting, there's a female surgeon seated. You can see her on the other side of the Iraqi's body. She had been given the responsibility by the Chief Surgeon to do whatever she possibly could to save his arm. This brought tears to my eyes as I stood there. I'm medically covered in masks and clothing like everyone else, of course. They would pull me up right to the edge of the table to make sure I got close. But I'm watching this woman.

It turns out that, in that part of the world, if you cannot eat with the right hand, you're an outcast, because the right hand is used for food. The left hand is for body cleansing. You never eat with the left hand. His right arm was almost demolished. As the surgeon told me later, "Without hesitation, back in Canada, we would have amputated." "But," he said, "Not in this part of the world." So, he gave the responsibility to that surgeon and that woman worked for seven hours and she thinks she saved his arm.

INTERVIEWER: End of Side 2, Tape 1.

END OF TAPE 1, SIDE 2

INTERVIEWER: Canadian War Museum Oral History Program Interview with Ted Zuber. Tape 2, Side 1.

You did a lot of portraits in the Gulf War.

ZUBER: I wanted to portray fellow Canadians as much as I could. I'm not really all that interested in the depiction of a tank or an armoured personnel carrier or a ship or an airplane, although they're part of the scene, of course. They're the stage proppings. But the stage wouldn't mean anything without the actors, and the actors are my fellow Canadians—our Canadian soldiers—men and women—the troops, as I'd learned to call them.

I found it was very important that I try to bring home pictures of people—the close-ups—the facial expressions, including their hands, where I could. I was successful in having these people sign these pictures because that somehow made them really official. They really do exist. The signature was on the sketch. But I learned, as an artist must learn, all kinds of things.

Painting is the easiest part. How to exist as an artist is one of the most difficult things and no school teaches you that. For example, it didn't take me very long to realize that people felt very good when I asked them to pose for a sketch, because they knew that these drawings would end up forever in the Canadian War Museum, as part of Canada's collection, and it made them feel proud to be part of it. Well, once I learned this, I then, no matter where I went, I'd find out who was in charge and do their portrait. I could have anything I wanted.

I'll never forget a lovely woman who was the Chief Cook at Canada Dry One, in Qatar, outside of Doha. I went in and I did her sketch and of course, she had Xeroxed copies run off and sent them all to her sisters and brothers and mother and dad, I suppose. But every time, which is about five times, that I showed up at her kitchen, I got a steak. It could be three o'clock in the afternoon. So, everywhere I went, I would draw who was in charge and I got all of the support I could possibly have.

Well, I had one very happy experience. I was drawing the Commander at the Headquarters in Bahrain, at Al Manama. We had rented a sort of a warehouse structure right on the coast, on the harbour area. I had just completed his portrait and of course, it was only correct that I do his two secretaries. The first secretary was very pleased. When I went to do the second secretary, she was panic stricken because she was on a diet and she hadn't had much success as yet. So, I quickly told her I had special pencils that would accommodate her. She wasn't quite sure what I meant but she reluctantly posed for me and I took about fifteen pounds off of that lady and she thinks I'm the greatest artist in the world!

So, it was a great experience. But it got me in touch with the Canadians who there and what they were doing. And of course, I'd have an opportunity to discuss a few things with them and find out how they felt. This would help me to understand what I should probably more portray while I'm here—what kind of equipment; what kind of detail; what kind of atmosphere. For example, the night time work was kind of spooky, because terrorists were prevalent throughout the full area.

So, I made a point of doing work. I did one where I went out with the Royal 22nd Regiment—our Canadian French-Canadians – in an armoured personnel carrier, where they had to check the wire every night. But they made a point of not checking it at the same hour, so as not to give their actions away in advance. They were looking for breaks in the wire. This was a spooky sort of an experience for them because they'd have to get out of that APC

and walk around in the dark, in that desert, exposing themselves to those. There were lots of things like this. By dealing with the people directly and doing their portraits, it gave me a better understanding of how I could perhaps portray what our fellow Canadians were up to.

INTERVIEWER: Were you on the plane in this painting *Pit Stop to Target*?

ZUBER: Yes. I inquired with the Air Force if I could go up to do some drawings in the refueling aircraft, and they agreed to let me come aboard. News photographers and people like that were not allowed that sort of access, but as a war artist, I had access to wherever I wanted to go, and I had support everywhere I went. In any case, we left about four o'clock in the morning from Doha Airport, and we set up our position about eighteen or twenty thousand feet over a small island off the coast of Kuwait.

This is where we refueled aircraft. I think we refueled about fourteen or fifteen aircraft that morning. It was quite beautiful because as the dawn broke and the sun came out, we're flying in a circle, about three hundred miles an hour I guess, and these aircraft—these fighters—would pull up alongside us, one off each wingtip. We could refuel two at a time. It took about twelve minutes—between ten and twelve minutes—to refuel an aircraft.

He would come up and a probe—a pipe—would stand up, outside the cockpit and he'd fly this indirectly into a—I think they call it a bird--shaped type of configuration around the end of the hose. It had the aerodynamics where it kept the hose at a very steady position, so it didn't wave back and forth. The pilot, once he got a hook into this position, he automatically refueled. Once in a while, they'd have a little difficulty. You'd see the fuel spray out as a mist right past the aircraft. But most of them; it was very quick.

As we rotated, the sun would strike in a beautiful golden colour as the dawn struck the aircraft and then, our shadow would go across. Then, as we'd turn around in a circle, suddenly that aircraft—the fighter—was now in the shadow of our aircraft, as we did the circle. So, in the painting, I depicted where the fighter aircraft—the nose of it is in the shadow of our air ship, and the rest of his aircraft is bathed in the early morning light.

Way down below is a Canadian destroyer that you can see it moving alongside one of the oil gas outlets in the bottom of the Gulf. You can see the flame down below. The observers—there's one on each side of the aircraft and he keeps total of who it is--the numbers and whatnot off the aircraft—who got fuel. All of the fuel in the Gulf War was paid for by Saudi Arabia, but they did want a receipt. Consequently, all refuel was counted. These two observers forwarded information up to the engineer who was out of eyesight at the front of the aircraft, and he actually conducted the flow of fuel to these fighters that were being fueled.

But I wanted to somehow get a human aspect—just this guy sitting in a window didn't say much for me. There was one little human touch—one of the fellows had put a paper bag over the light bulb that--where he'd read certain paperwork he kept. That was sort of a human touch. So, I incorporated that into the painting. But as I watched, I kept waiting for something that would give me an indication of what was going on.

Well, it turns out that one particular American aircraft was in and he was having difficulty. And of course, the observer was not allowed radio communication to assist—ask them to fly

a little faster or a little bit slower or something—something to help the fellow. I guess his visual references out there in the fighter aircraft must have been quite strange. In any case, without realizing it, this observer involuntarily raised his hand and grasped the window with his fingertips. It was his way of emotionally reaching out to assist the pilot. There was my painting.

INTERVIEWER: Back to the painting *0500 Al Qaysumah*.

ZUBER: The officer that's in the centre of the group of doctors is our Major that blew the whistle on the treatment—the terrible treatment of that young black boy that was murdered by Canadian troops in Somalia. He's in that particular painting. We didn't know this was going to happen at that time, of course. But they were so busy. It was so hectic--this pace. They're running back and forth. For reasons I'll never understand, they did not have a light box.

So, to look at the x-rays, they had to hold it up against the fluorescent lights hanging from the ceiling. Every few minutes, this doctor, amongst the others, would run back and forth to take another look at the x-ray and run back, because they hadn't had time to sit down and contemplate and have great discussions in advance, as they could back here in Canada. It was on the spot. A la prima, as the quick artist would call this.

So, I chose to take a little license there and I portrayed that same doctor – that Major—twice in the same painting. He's working on the brain of this Iraqi prisoner-of-war and he's also looking at an x-ray off to the side. He was running back and forth to double check before he made every cut.

INTERVIEWER: Are you aware of any other official war artists in the Gulf War from any other country?

ZUBER: Sort of yes and no. First and foremost, Canada was the only country that actually had an official war artist on station. We only had the one artist—myself. I was the only actual war artist that was there during the full events of the war—never mind the air war, but I was there, of course, for the ground war, which lasted a very short period of time. Britain had chosen a war artist—a young artist from London, England—and this man was to be sent as soon as the ground war broke out.

What happened [is] he, when the ground war did break out, I was onboard the Canadian ship, PROTECTOR, out in the Gulf, and they immediately allowed me to helicopter into Bahrain. The next morning, I drove up into Saudi Arabia and I joined the 1st Canadian Field Hospital, just off the—a few miles from the border of Kuwait. In any case, the British war artist was immediately put on an airplane and he got as close as Cyprus, and the bloody war was over. [laughter]

So, now—I want to qualify this. I'm the only official war artist that was in the Gulf. Canada was the only people to have [one] there. But the Americans have military artists within their units, and they had artists on station, of course. For example, there's no such thing, in the United States as a national war museum. They do not have one. If want to see the war art, then you have to go to the Marine base and see what the Marines have. If you want to see

what the Air Force did, you must go to the Air Force. You must go to the naval base, to see what the Navy did. They do not have a national or federal war museum in the United States.

I had an opportunity of speaking to some people at the University of Toronto, a few years ago, with the young artist that had gone to Somalia on behalf of Canada, and these two Americans—one from the Navy and one from the Marines—that had served with the units—the Americans—in the Gulf War. They were quite stunned to discover that Canada would elect an artist from the public sector and send these poor people into a war zone without back up—all kinds of military training. They couldn't quite understand it. But they began to, when I pointed out that the prime purpose of this was that the artist was drawn from the public sector so as to depict the public point of view. This is for historical purposes; not military recording. And they sort of understood that, to a degree. But they thought it was very dangerous to send civilians—dumb civilians—into war zones.

INTERVIEWER: Please give us your comments on the CAFCAP program.

ZUBER: I was contacted once by a reporter, a few years ago, from Ottawa—a correspondent from the CBC. He asked me that very same question, and when I gave him the answer, he was so taken aback that they did not broadcast the interview. My reasonings for understanding why he chose not to—I guess he didn't want to rock the boat, as they say.

In any case, I'm happy and unhappy with this so-called CAFCAP. It used to be called Canadian Armed Forces Civilian Artist Program. It's been changed a little bit now, but it means basically the same thing. This was first developed under the Trudeau government control and it was to, supposedly, give young artists that were shown that they were serious, i.e. they were just graduated—not students—but they to have been graduated. They had to be working as artists themselves. But it would give them an opportunity of going into an area where they normally would not have access.

They would be supported for a week, two weeks maximum in these areas and they'd portray what they saw. When they came back, they would show their thanks by producing some art work and donating that, as a gesture of their thanks for being allowed in, in the first place. No financial compensation—no moneys would ever change hands. But one restriction was that these young artists would never be sent into a danger area—not as war artists at all. That was an entirely different program. As a war artist, you're brought into the military. You're actually part of the military. You wear dog tags. If you're taken prisoner-of-war, you are a soldier.

So, the CAFCAP thing is good in the sense that it shows the government's recognition of the value of art, and we have a means of portraying. It's good in that sense. What I don't like is why the hell is it they don't want to pay the artist? If you wanted to bring a lawyer in, or a doctor, or an engineer, do you think, for one moment, you'd get these people to practice their profession for nothing? I don't know what it is about artists—people feel that because we enjoy what we're doing, we therefore should not be rewarded.

So, I don't like CAFCAP for that reason. I'm disgusted, as a matter of fact. It embarrasses me as a Canadian artist to know that my own government will not pay me. When I went to the Gulf War, I was not paid to go. Now, mind you, I did manage to sell some paintings after the fact when I came home. It worked out a pretty good war for me, but that's not the point.

The fact is I had to agree to go for nothing, as all other artists have done. So, CAFCAP doesn't really relate to war artists. It relates to artists being sent into areas of relative safety. Now, they could go overseas or they could be going to a camp right here in Canada. But why can't we pay for our own artists?

I was invited, with three other artists, to attend a boardroom meeting in Ottawa, at National Defence Headquarters, about a year and a half ago. The concept was very admirable. They wanted to send these four artists—one was actually a photographer and the other three were painters—into the same area. These four artists would be portrayed by a backup camera crew shooting video. This would later be released to the general public, to show how Canada utilized the arts in the military sense. I thought this was very admirable.

These four artists would not be instructed at all. What they would do would be left completely up to their own artistic interpretation. We would come back to Canada and we would portray, in our own choice of medium and our own manner, what we saw and witnessed there. This would then be brought together, perhaps in a published book, showing how these four Canadians from four different ways of life—or walks of life—had depicted a Canadian occurrence. But without pay!

So, I strongly objected. I felt that if they wanted to respect me—I had been an artist all my life. It was to my ability as an artist that was being recognized by these people, and it served their purpose to have me do work for them. But they wanted me to do this for nothing! I was to go to Afghanistan—perhaps, the Golan Heights—and then, Somalia. I'd be gone for at least six weeks, and I would not be compensated. And I'm to produce a series of paintings and not get paid for them! I strongly objected to it.

As it turned out, the other artists had never had this experience before. They were quite excited about it, and I realized that I would have been, too, had it been my first opportunity. And I realized—so, I immediately identified these comments—negatives that they were—were my own, and not to reflect the interests of my fellow artists. So, that sort of brought a smile about the table. I was redeemed, if you will.

In any case, it never did come to happen because, in the meantime, they did not know how they could possibly insure us against any hurt or damage or wounding. For example, if the artist lost his arm over there, there was no compensation, and nationally, of course, our Canadian health program does not protect you in a state of war, overseas. It just doesn't work for you that way. They never did send any of us to any of these countries because it took a year, and they just couldn't do it.

They managed to send me down to Sherbrooke, Quebec where the Royal 22nd Regiment was using the city as a practice ground, to make their mistakes there, rather than Afghanistan. They've since been to Afghanistan and served their term and come home proudly. While I was in Sherbrooke, Quebec, I did a series of drawings and I shared these with the regiment. Our expenses were covered for that.

We were not paid for this, but that was all right because we were there on an exploratory, by our own choice, to meet the soldiers and allow them to meet us. So, that worked out very well. But in the final analysis, they were not able to send any of us to any of these countries, simply because they could not find a way of insuring us against being wounded or killed.

INTERVIEWER: Well, thank you very much for talking to us.

ZUBER: I'd just like to share a feeling you people have given me, when I see how earnest you are and sincere, in recording this, and the purpose of gain—that word I use as an artist. The most important part of my vocabulary is--what I act on is--sharing, and this is what you're doing. This is all meant to share with future generations—old people like myself--[laughs] why we did what we did, how we did it, and all this other business.

I think it's absolutely wonderful that the Canadian War Museum, [with] the support of the Canadian government, and people like yourself are taking the time and the trouble and the expense to put something like this together for future Canadians. I'm so proud to be part of it. Thank you very, very much.

INTERVIEWER: End of Interview [with Ted Zuber].

TRANSCRIPT ENDS