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PROGRAM

INTERVIEW WITH COMMAND SERGEANT MAJOR (RETIRED)
CARL E. CHRISTIAN

Racine, Wisconsin

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I N T E R V I E W

SGM WATERHOUSE: Good morning. My name is Sergeant Major Brett Waterhouse of the United States Army Heritage and Education Center, and today I'm interviewing Command Sergeant Major-Retired Carl E. Christian for the Senior Noncommissioned Officer Oral History Program.

Today's date is April 17, 2018, and this interview is being conducted in Racine, Wisconsin.

Sergeant Major, could you please tell me your date of birth and where you were born?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: I was born 7 January 1956. I was born in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Sergeant Major, would you please talk a little bit about your childhood, maybe up through your high school years to include family life, places you lived, your hobbies, interests, et cetera?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Sure. I was basically fourth oldest of eight children. My mom and dad divorced when I was basically about fifth grade. So,

we went through a little bit of challenging times when I was a younger person, but that's not anything different than a lot of other families do. I was basically raised in Racine my whole life, born and raised here. We moved to a couple of different houses when I was here, but that's about it.

I went to grade school in a Catholic school, Saint Mary's, and basically all the way up through middle school. Then middle school, I went to a public school. Then as a senior, I moved from -- as a freshman, I did school in Racine, high school. Then as a sophomore, I moved to Janesville, Wisconsin and did that.

I actually met my wife while I was a sophomore and she was a freshman --

SGM WATERHOUSE: In high school?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: In high school. We dated the whole time and basically got married after she graduated out of high school. I started working as a paperboy about the age of twelve and basically have had some kind of job ever since.

I lost my left kidney about age thirteen in a baseball accident. I love sports. You talked about hobbies, I love sports. I love to play football. I love to do that. As a matter of fact, one of my childhood memories was starting a football game where myself, my oldest brother and my second oldest brother, all played on the same football team. We started the same game. I was sixth grade. He was seventh grade, and my oldest brother was in eighth grade at the time. My actually oldest, oldest brother passed away when he was only about two weeks old.

I grew up in a great family, even though, just like other families, it was a challenging time sometimes. Sometimes the adversity makes you a stronger person. So, I really learned a lot. I learned to become self-dependent and self-sufficient, not that I didn't have a great family environment, but sometimes with that many kids, and having only a single mom, you got to do certain things for yourself.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, Sergeant Major, when you

were growing up, you know, some people say, I'm going to be a pilot; I'm going to be a fireman. I thought I was going to be a Blue Angel pilot. Was there a certain career you thought of maybe when you were in high school? At that point, that's normally when we really start thinking about it for real. Was there anything you thought about pursuing as a career when you were in high school?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Actually well before high school, I always wanted to be in the Army. I really, really did. I mean, soldier, it was like in my blood. I just felt like it. My dad was in the Army in World War II. My grandfather was in World War I. It wasn't that it was glamorous. It was just something that I felt it was where I wanted to go. When I lost my kidney, I started being restricted from doing a lot of physical activities. I couldn't play football. Then basketball was taken away. I had an incident where I was doing cross country. So track and cross country were taken away. So, it was like you're not going to be able to do anything no more.

So, in high school, I kind of got the bug for architectural design, architectural drawing. The high school teachers basically in the summer time built houses. So, they were teachers in the school time and then they built houses during the summer time. I actually was given a project as a senior to design a house, which the teachers built in the summer time.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Nice.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: So, it was kind of interesting. That was kind of my desire to go and become an architect then. I actually started -- just before I graduated high school, I got a job as a rough carpenter. That's where I was kind of headed to before I got the bug to put my name in for the Army.

SGM WATERHOUSE: What inspired you to actually change from that route maybe working in the architectural business to join the Army?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: I got a recruiting letter from the Air Force. I got this letter in the mail that said, hey, the Air Force wants you. You're good

enough. We want you right now today. I was pissed. I said, well, if I'm good enough for the Air Force, why can't I go join the Army? So, I went down, and the recruiter was a family friend. I went down to see him and told him I wanted to join. He goes, well, what do you want to do? I says, I really don't care. I just want to do it. I told him about my --

SGM WATERHOUSE: That's a recruiter's dream, to say that.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Exactly, yeah. I went down to see him, and he said, well, with your medical history, you've got to get a doctor's approval to do this. So, I went and got a doctor's appointment and the doctor said there really is no reason you can't join the Army. He said there's certain things you won't be able to do like jump out of airplanes or something like that, but he says there's no reason you can't. So, I went back to Chet, the recruiter, and said, here it is. I raised my hand.

SGM WATERHOUSE: And this was in 1975.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: This was actually in --

yeah, '75 was when I joined.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, a couple of years after the volunteer Army is started.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Right. I mean, it was a time where Vietnam was winding down, yet we still had a lot of Vietnamisms in the civilian side. The military was not a big part of somebody's idea of what they wanted to do, but it was something - I came from a patriotic family and it still felt like the right thing to do.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, Sergeant Major, why did you specifically join the Army instead of the Air Force or the Marines, which are similar but different?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: I think it was more Dad and Mom. I did have one cousin who was in the Marines, but it was -- the Army has always felt right. I can't tell you any more than that. It just was what I wanted to do. The Air Force, if they had told me I could fly airplanes, I would have been there all day long.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, when you did join, you

ended up enlisting as an 11 Echo, which is an Armor Crewman. Today, you would be a 19 Key Load. How did you come to that decision?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Well, kind of like you said, a recruiter's dream. I got to the MEPS Station in Milwaukee, and going through the physical piece, and I'm going through all the rest of the stuff, and you go through a final interview, as we all know. The recruiter asked me what I wanted to do. I said I just want to be combat arms; I don't care. He goes, no, you got to tell me what you want to do. I said, I don't care. I just want to be combat arms. This kind of went back and forth for a few minutes and he says, well, he says, do you want to ride, or do you want to walk?

I said, Well, I'll ride. He goes, Okay, you're a tanker. That's how it became on recruitment.

SGM WATERHOUSE: When you joined the Army at that time, were you thinking about just doing an enlistment to check it out or try it out, or were you thinking about I'm going to make this a career and I

know that?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: I think like all of us, we're not sure if we're ever going to make it through everything, so you kind of think you might want to make it a career, but you're not sure you're good enough. That's kind of how I felt. I kind of wanted to make this a longer term than just a couple of years, but I also didn't know if the Army was going to like what I had to give, and I may be not be good enough for them. Like I said, I was missing a kidney. I was kind of guarded in my thought process of being able to stay in the Army if I wasn't physically capable of being in and doing what I had to do.

If I did stay in, my best case was, you know, I get to be in a Platoon for 20 years. That's kind of what I expected when I got in there. I knew it was going to be tough. Training was going to be tough, but I had an uncle who actually started out in the tank corps. He was in Vietnam, was blown up three different times in Vietnam. So, I kind of understood some of the challenges of being in a tank, but it

still was something that kind of felt that's what I wanted to do.

SGM WATERHOUSE: In October of 1975, you attended Basic Combat Training as a Private (E-1) at Fort Knox, Kentucky. What was your experience at Fort Knox in Basic Training like?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: It was the first time, basically, you're away from home. It's kind of like everybody else, I think, experienced. The Drill Sergeants got in your face a lot. We had three Drill Sergeants in Basic Training. One was just a flat out - - I mean he could fly. Drill Sergeant Fields was a guy who could -- literally he'd come through the door and he's be at the end of that bay in like 2.3 seconds and see everything that was going on and chew your butt before you even knew you had done something wrong.

I had Drill Sergeant Phillips, was another one of my Drill Sergeants who just - I mean, he was more of a Dudley Do right type of guy. He was always prim and proper, but he was finding every little thread that you had lost. We called them lost threads.

It was hanging out of your uniform and he would find that lost thread. He was just an attention to detail kind of guy. All three of those Drill Sergeants just kind of forced you into being a better soldier yourself or learning how to be a better soldier.

It was challenging. There was some really hard crap.

I mean, I tell people that my mess hall experience my first day in the Army, I spent five minutes in the mess hall. That's total time for breakfast, dinner and lunch. From the time you walked through the door, you got your tray and they slapped the food in it. You were eating before you hit the table. As soon as your butt hit the seat, someone tapped you on the shoulder, you were headed towards the door. You kept eating until you dropped your tray and moved out the door.

They were just trying to get you to understand go fast, hurry up. There's things that you've got to get done. You've got to prioritize what's important. I remember one day we walked out, and somebody did something bad. I don't even know what it was. The

Drill Sergeant was pissed. We had a concrete pad that we did formations on, but on the end of the concrete pad was the big railroad type gravel. It was some big chunks.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Like ballast?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Yeah. And they made us low crawl the length of the building in that rock. I literally shredded my uniform that I was wearing. It tore that uniform to pieces. I kept the boots. The boots actually tore some of the leather. I kept those boots for years after that as an experience of what tough could be like. So, unless you were in a situation like that, it really wasn't tough yet. It was kind of an eye opener in respect. I mean, I think we would send those Drill Sergeants to jail today if that happened, but it was a training environment in which they really tried to train you to be tough mentally, physically.

SGM WATERHOUSE: And back then this was just after our last Vietnam war ended officially as far as American involvement. Was that still kind of a

focus, you think, since virtually you could go to a Vietnam like place? Was that the kind of focus, you think?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Well, all your NCO's were Vietnam veterans. So, they all had combat experience. So, even though you knew you weren't going to Vietnam, there was always this - your job as a soldier is to be prepared to go to war and you had combat soldiers teaching you that this was something that was a possibility? I don't think there really was an urgency that somebody felt we were going out the door again right away. I didn't feel that, but the charge of quarters of CQ's had loaded .45's on our hips when they pulled CQ at night. Our Army was not the tranquil Army that we think of it today. Even though we think we are rowdy now, we had lots of alcoholism. We had lots of drug issues. We had lots of racial issues in that time in our country. Our CQ's actually wore loaded .45's at nighttime. So, it was a little different environment in that respect. You were a rough and ready kind of mentality all the

time, and that's kind of how you played. You played hard and you worked hard, kind of environment.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Sergeant Major, you must have done pretty well during Basic Training because you were promoted to Private E-2 during Basic Training. How did that come about?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: At that time, every training unit could promote one individual in that company to advance promotions. I had scored good enough on all my tests. I was pretty physically fit, even though I was missing a kidney. I didn't do things too bad. When I went through the military stakes portion, when you go through the end of the day combat training, I scored a perfect score in military stakes. So, I was very fortunate not to make a mistake at the wrong time. I did mistakes, but I made mistakes at the right time, I guess, if there is time. I was given opportunities -- I was given other additional duties while I was in Basic Training as well. You know, you've got -- to us, it's like an extra detail, you know.

You're responsible for the cleaning closet.

What

does that mean? Well, you've got to make sure the mops are clean. You've got to make sure the brooms don't have dust in them. It sounds like you're being punished, but in reality, that was a leadership task.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Teaching you how to be a leader.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: How you can manage all of these things going on at one time. I remember even getting the liquid wax and waxing the walls in my cleaning closet, so they shined. It was just to make that look that much cleaner, that much shiner, and it was teaching me little things that I didn't realize at the time. So, I was selected to get the advance promotion. I was blessed to be able to have that.

SGM WATERHOUSE: I don't think I asked you, but in that Basic Training, was it just 11 Echo, just Armor Crewmen, or was it a mix of folks that would be different MOS's?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: No, that Basic Training

was a mixture. It was at Fort Knox, Kentucky. So, it was primarily you were going to go do the armor or a scout, one of those two. It was not like a clerk typist or a medic, because they went to different Basic Training locations. At Fort Knox, Kentucky, at the time, Basic Training was primarily going to be armor or cavalry type individuals.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, Sergeant Major, in December of 1975, after graduating from basic combat training, you attended Advanced Individual Training or AIT for Armor Crewmen there at Fort Knox. What did you think of AIT compared to Basic Training?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: It was like graduating from kindergarten into junior high school. You got to go play on the big playset. You got to go out and do the right things. We finally were on the tanks. You were doing the things you thought you joined the Army to do, once you got done making that decision with the recruiters. You got to go fire up the engines and play with the rounds and learn how to take machine guns apart and stuff like that. It was kind of that

culmination of what you thought all that work in Basic Training got you to.

You kind of met the ability of being a physically fit soldier. Now, you got to start learning your duties, your jobs. And the other things was, in Basic Training you were very controlled. You know, you were always watched. You had a babysitter with you at all times, you know, a Basic Training Sergeant. You were never left alone. Where, at AIT, once we got to AIT, it basically was like a normal job. When duty hours were completed, if there was no nighttime assignment to go on to do something, you were on your own. You were allowed to do different things. Weekend passes were liberal. We could go off post to a restaurant and have Sunday brunch, if we wanted to go do that some Sundays. At a certain point, we were allowed to go get a car. If we had a car, we could bring a car back on post and have a car as an advanced student. You were treated more like a real line unit type soldier. You weren't treated like you're in a Basic Training type environment. That was

a double-edged sword. You saw a lot of the ones that didn't have maturity go out and get drunk a lot on the weekends. They only had to be back -- we weren't allowed to come back on the evening on Sunday. You had to be back by about one or two o'clock.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So you had curfews every night?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Yeah, but you had to be back on Sunday by about one or two o'clock.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So you could be gone all day Saturday?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Right. All day Saturday. Only about ten percent of the group could stay overnight and then the rest had to be there. As a matter of fact, I actually had an overnight pass when my daughter was born. I asked the Drill Sergeant could I go home and visit my --

SGM WATERHOUSE: I was going to ask you; did you have Drill Sergeants in AIT?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: We did. We had Drill Sergeants in AIT. I just asked my Drill Sergeant,

could I go home for the weekend and visit my wife. Long story short, he thought I only lived an hour and a half away. In reality, I lived about five hours away from Fort Knox, Kentucky. So, I got there, and I was getting ready to come back to Fort Knox and my wife went into labor with my daughter, which was our first child. I called the Drill Sergeant and I said, hey, my wife's in labor. What do I do? Can I stay here until she delivers? He goes, where are you? I said, well, I'm at home. He said, where is home. I told him I was in Wisconsin. He goes --

SGM WATERHOUSE: You're going to get me in trouble.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: That's exactly what he said. He says you're going to get me in trouble and I'm going to get fired. He said stand by, give me your phone number. First Sergeant is going to call you. So, the First Sergeant called me probably ten minutes later. I explained it again to him. The First Sergeant said, you do realize -- he said, your wife's in labor? I said, yes, First Sergeant, she is. He

said you realize if you miss more than two days of training, I'm going to have to recycle you.

SGM: Yeah, then you do it all over again.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: I said, First Sergeant, I understand that. He goes, okay. He says, take your time, hope everything goes good with your baby, don't worry about here. We'll get through that. You take care of your family. He was awesome in that respect. Long story short, my daughter was born on Super Bowl Sunday. So, that went well. Next morning I get up to go back to Fort Knox because everything was going good. I said I didn't want to get recycled. I told my wife, I said, I'm going to head back. At that time the nurse brought the baby by so she could feed the baby and I got to hold her. The nurse came back around about an hour later and my wife said something to me like give your daughter a kiss because you aren't going to see her for a while. The nurse looked at me like what are you doing, you SOB.

SGM WATERHOUSE: What are you doing? What kind of husband are you?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Are you abandoning these two? My wife saw the look and she's no, no, no. He's in the Army. He's got to get back to training. She goes oh, oh, well, then, I'll come back and get the baby later. It was like two hours later. I'm like I've got to get rid of this kid and get back, you know. She finally came back and got the baby, but then I had to ride back in a snow storm to get back to Fort Knox. I made it. I got back by 8:00 p.m. that Monday, did not get recycled, and it was a great environment. It really was.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Sergeant Major, any key takeaways from your time in AIT as far as things maybe you learned?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Yeah, AIT, what I really learned was that freedom was being able to be not under the watch of an NCO all the time, not having somebody show me that I had to be more responsible for myself. I think that was probably the biggest takeaway I had of all of it, was that I watched some of my compadres falter a little bit in that respect, not

that I was perfect. I got myself in trouble every now and then. I was one of the few married people at the time. I mean our Army was not necessarily married people joining it. It was more -- it wasn't until you an NCO before most of our force was getting married. So, I was an anomaly. I knew I had to kind of keep my nose to the grindstone to make sure I did take care of my family. So, that was a big reinforcement point to make coming out of AIT.

The other piece, I think, out of AIT was again, is I got there, and I started doing things. Drill Sergeants allowed me to do more things. They put me in charge of certain things, again, developing that little bit of leadership that they saw in me and I just thought it was normal. They obviously saw something. Then I was given the opportunity upon graduation, I was selected for PFC and was actually promoted, advanced promotion again to PFC coming out of AIT.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah, I was going to ask you that. With only about four months' time in service,

you went from E-1 to E-3, and that normally takes at least a year today. I'm not sure what the average time was back then, but it takes at least a year.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: It was a little over a year. You normally make PFC between twelve and eighteen months at that time in the Army. It was -- it was just one of those kind of things. I think looking back on being a Drill Sergeant later on in my career, I would tell you if I saw a young person who was trying to do their best, had the skills, mentally competent, and they were married when the rest of them weren't, I tried to give them a little bit more money in their paycheck too. So, I think it was a little bit of that, that they saw the opportunity to help me be a good soldier by not putting financial crisis and getting me that promotion gave me a little bit more money in my paycheck. I really believe that was part of it as well.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Sergeant Major, in February of 1976, after graduating from AIT, you were assigned to Mainz, Germany where you served with Bravo Company,

4th Battalion, 69th Armor Regiment, which was part of the 8th Infantry Division back then. And you served there for a couple of years. One, was this assignment something you knew about ahead of time? Was this in your initial contract or was it just where you were assigned after AIT?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: No, I contracted when I did my initial contract for Germany. I kind of wanted to go overseas. I have German background in my blood, Norwegian background in my blood. It was something that was kind of like you're raised, that you're part German, part Norwegian. I was kind of let's go see where the relatives live, for to say. I mean I didn't know any relatives over in Germany, but it was something I always wanted to do. I took German in high school for a language. So, it was a place that I always thought I wanted to go visit. The opportunity came during reenlistment to enlist for Europe and that's what I had enlisted for.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Sergeant Major, in unclassified terms, what was 4-69 Armor's primary

mission in Germany back then?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: At that point, Vietnam was done, but the Cold War was really cranked at that time. So, the 4-69's primary mission was to defend Europe and be part of the NATO Force that did that. At that time, as a young trooper, okay, I'm just here to do my little bit. You didn't realize the --

SGM WATERHOUSE: The strategics --

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: -- the little bit was little bit bit.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: But, you know, our tanks were loaded a hundred percent with main gun ammo.

SGM WATERHOUSE: What kind of tanks were these back then?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: These were M60 tanks, M60 A-1's, rather. They were M60 A-1's, but we had all service ammunition onboard, except for the machine gun ammo. Machine gun ammo was still locked up in an ASP site, but our main gun ammo was on board every tank. We were fully combat loaded.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Just like our tanks in Korea?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Exactly. Just like today Korea still has fully combat loaded vehicles. We were in that mindset. We spent about three hundred days a year in the field as average. It was on gunnery maneuvers reaction to no notice alerts and it was anywhere from we call it the Sands, which is right outside the motor pool by about a kilometer and a half away. We would go in the sands and just stage, as a tactical staging area, to actually deploying to Grafenwoehr/Vilsec on the roads and driving the actual roads.

SGM WATERHOUSE: No driving on the railhead?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Not railhead.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Wow.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Just driving and go do that. Not all the time, but once in a while, we did do that.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Sergeant Major, if I looked at your bio correctly, you ended up serving as a tank

gunner over there. So, how did that end up coming about where you had to serve as an NCO position as a Private?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: It was pretty simple. There were no NCO's.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: At that time, Vietnam was already gone. The downsizing was still going on for our Force. Just like we wrestle with today, with today's military, what's the right number? Of course, coming out of any fight, everybody wants to get the Force apart because that's the quickest way to reduce dollars. In that battalion there were a lot of two men tank crews.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Wow. Instead of four.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Yeah, instead of four normally. So, I got assigned to a tank crew that just had me and one Sergeant E-5. That's all I had. Sergeant Ferguson was my guy who really gave me my first taste of what being a tank commander was really about, but as good as he was, as knowledgeable as he

was about the vehicle, as much as he taught me about being a good NCO, he was a dooper. He did drugs. Literally, the first day I got to unit, I left the replacement center of 8th Infantry Division, got on the bus about six o'clock in the morning. I was the last person off the bus and I didn't get off the bus until about six o'clock that night. It just went all over the division footprint, dropping off one here, two there, three there, and I was the last person on the bus, dropped me off at 4-69 that evening. I met my Platoon Sergeant. He talked to me while we had dinner together at the mess hall. There was going to be an alerted advance the next morning, which is a user alert. He said, here's your list of how to pack A, B, and C bag to make sure you know how to have everything put together. He said do you have any questions. I said no. He said, okay, I'll see you in the morning. He goes, it will be about a three o'clock in the morning for call. I says, I've got it.

So, he had just left the room. Basically my butt hit the bed, and I was like, whew, I've got to

start packing my bags. The door flew open and this little guy about five foot four busts through the door, got like a Fu Man Choo mustache. I mean it literally went down almost to his chin.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Not Army regulations.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Not Army regulation.

Hair was parted down the middle, and he looks at me. He's like looks around. He goes, hi, I'm Fergie. I'm your Tank Commander. Do you smoke dope? I go, no, Sergeant, I don't. He goes, ah, that's okay. I'll see you in the morning. And he busts out the door. So, that was my first introduction to my Tank Commander.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Wow. Not how can I help you get ready and welcome to the unit.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: No, it wasn't like what we read in NCO books about how you introduce yourself to your crew and how you take care of soldiers.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, who ended up being kind of your mentor or your main source of how to do things right in that unit?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Believe it or not, it was

Fergie, Sergeant Ferguson as well. I'll give you a -- you know, we go to the motor pool and do maintenance. An alert went on. Of course, you're one of the lost boys. You don't even know where the motor pool is. So, you're following everybody --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Did you even know what half that stuff in your bag was?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Actually, I was able to put that together halfway decent, but I'm dragging everything. I'm dragging my bags. They gave me a machine gun to carry down. I'm carrying my personal -- here's your .45. Well, it's not really your .45. We haven't sent it to you yet, but just wear this one here today.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Don't lose it.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Exactly. It was that kind of thing. Just follow everybody else because we're all going to the motor pool. He says, when you get to the motor pool, go to the third tank line. We're in that third tank line. I go, okay, got it. So, that's how I kind of got down there, but after all that was

all done though, we started back to normal routines, normal maintenance, and got to the first day. Sergeant Ferguson looks at me and says, do you know how to service a tank? I said, yes, sir, yes, Sergeant. He goes, okay, well, how do you do it? I told him how to do it. He said, what's the first thing you do. I said, you got to check the oil. He says, go check the oil.

So, I got out there and checked the oil. He goes, okay, what's next. I said, well, I've got to go do this. He says, go do that. So, I get there, and he goes, what's next. I started doing it. I said, well, you pull out your dash ten [-10 Technical Manual], the maintenance manual and you go through before, during and after checks. He goes, okay, go start doing it. All while I'm doing this, he crawls down in the driver's hatch and he's reading comic books. I'm like, okay, I got it. He's a Sergeant; I'm a Private. I'm going to do this.

SGM WATERHOUSE: But he's not supervising you.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Day two, same thing. Day

three, same thing. Next week, the same thing. Next week after that, we started doing the same thing. About second day, Tuesday or Wednesday on the maintenance, we get down to the motor pool and it's the same thing. Do you know how to start a tank? Yes, Sergeant. Go check the oil. Yes, Sergeant. Get up there. We got inside the turret. It was turret day. So, I'm opening the Ashtan and I get to the first one and I slam the book shut because he's down in the driver's hatch reading his comic books again. I slammed the book shut and I said, this is a bunch of bullshit. I said, this is crap. He folds the book up very quietly, puts it in a little box down the driver's hatch, crawls out of the driver's hatch, gets inside the turret with me, stands toe to toe with me, looks me in the eye and goes, that's your first lesson. If all you would have done was ask the question, can you help me, I would have been here helping you. So, if you use this muscle and he pointed to his brain, you don't have to use this muscle and he pointed at his arm. He says, now, what

do you want me to do. From that time on, it was everything we did, we did together. He taught me how to pull different systems apart, how to do the maintenance on radios, how to check the transmissions, how to do service --

SGM WATERHOUSE: The different positions in the tank.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Everything that we had to do, how to keep that tank running, how to do extra stuff on the tank that is normally not an Ashtan level stuff, but it's stuff that in a winter environment, in a moist environment like Germany, certain things can happen like your fuel filter can clog up on you. How do you take that out and clean it and dry it without having to have a mechanic come? Those are the kinds of things he really showed me. So, he really, really did show me how to do that. He respected that I did not do drugs. He never did drugs -- I shouldn't say never. He did do drugs one time on the tank while we're driving down the road.

We were going down this road at road march.
At that time we had a third guy on the crew.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Somebody was driving?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: He was driving. Sergeant Nelson was driving. I was in the Loader's hatch and I was reading the map, guiding where we had to go. So, he says, you know how to get there? I said, yeah, we've got to go right here. I showed him on the map. He goes, okay, take us there. I was leading that. He reaches over and pulls my PFC pin off my collar, finishes drinking a Coke, crushes the Coke can, pokes holes in the Coke can, opens a baggie out of his pocket, puts a bol of marijuana in there, lights it up and smoking marijuana while we're driving down the tank trail. That's the one time he did do dope while we're working, but that was the way the Army was back then. Unfortunately we had a lot of that. Sergeant Nelson who was driving the tank was a Vietnam tunnel rat, which is a -- he was a pretty small guy as well. He had to go down tunnels in 'Nam, just him and a .45.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: George came back out of Vietnam as an alcoholic and he still had alcoholic issues. He would not drink during duty hours, but on the weekends, he was basically in the sack the whole time. He was addicted to caffeine. I mean, literally, he would not get out of bed until he had popped a Coke and sucked it before he could get that. He'd reach over and find a pack of cigarettes and light a cigarette before he opened his eyes. He was just that kind of guy. That was my experience with the NCO corps when I first started out.

SGM WATERHOUSE: For those people that are reading this later that don't know what a Tank Gunner does because it's fairly similar for every type of tank, can you explain kind of what -- I know you did different positions, but as a gunner, what would be your basic responsibilities?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Yeah. A Gunner, basically, he has two pieces of equipment he can kind of look through. It's a periscope and a telescope, to find targets just like sighting through a rifle. If

you think about in terms of finding the target, you can point that. The difference between a rifle and a tank is at that time, the bullet coming out was 105 millimeters, a little bit bigger and can go a little bit faster than normal. Then the coaxially mounted or side by side mounted machine gun was a 7.62 machine gun at that time. So, that Gunner's responsibility is to acquire targets out there and engage them upon command from the Tank Commander.

SGM WATERHOUSE: In January of '77, about a year after you started working in Bravo Company, 4-69, you were promoted to Specialist or E-4 and as far as I could tell, from reading your bio, immediately laterally promoted to Corporal because you were in a Gunner position or NCO position. How did that selection for NCO come about so early in your career?

SGM CHRISTIAN: I was actually an acting Corporal even before that. They pinned on acting Corporal stripes at one point.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Is that just like an armband?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: No. They actually put the Corporal stripes on your color like you were an actual Corporal, but I just had acting Corporal orders that really there was no such thing. It was a unit type issue, but again we were so short NCO's that they pinned them on the acting Corporal. I guess I was that for about two months before I got this promotion. So, literally almost as soon as I got to the unit, I was given the Corporal stripe. But then we were on detail week and the First Sergeant took me aside and said, hey, you know, I don't have enough worker bees to do all these details. I'm going to put you on a detail. I said, I've got it. I understand.

So, when we actually were cleaning the commissary warehouse, cleaning stuff up, and First Sergeant said at noontime today, I'm going to promote you to -- we're going to promote you to Specialist today and make you a real Corporal. I said, pretty good.

SGM WATERHOUSE: And getting paid for it.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Exactly. Getting paid for

it. Like I said, I was pretty fired up. I lived off post. I was married, and I brought my wife over at my own expense. I lived off post.

SGM WATERHOUSE: And a newborn.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: And a newborn on top of that. So, basically, I got there, and I wore my good guard duty boots. I wore my pressed uniform to that detail and in that commissary detail, it was the dirtiest, grimeiest -- it was like cleaning a coal bin out. I literally got back about 11:30 from that detail. I ran home, and my wife looks at me and I'm filthy dirty. I took a quick -- you know, in the bathroom, washed up, changed uniform, didn't have the spit shine boots on no more, but cleaned them up the best I could, got to the formation at one o'clock for the promotion, got pinned on Specialist. Right away the First Sergeant just said, publish the second orders, and took off, didn't even put the clasp on the back of the Specialist pins, took the Specialist pins off, put the Corporal stripes right back on. So, I was able to be a Corporal at that point. Then the First

Sergeant looks at me and he said, I know this sucks, he says, but I still need you to do that detail this afternoon.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Did you go back and change uniforms?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: No, I didn't. I didn't have time. So, I screwed up two uniforms that day, but what was really funny about that was I kept telling my wife how a good NCO doesn't have to get dirty. A good NCO doesn't have -- you know, if they really utilize their troops the right way, the troops are the ones doing the tasks. NCO's, as you said earlier, should be supervising how they do things. So, that night I get home, and I am as filthy as I was at lunchtime. I am dirty. My wife had already made a pretty nice dinner because she knew I had got promoted, so she had made a nice, little celebratory dinner and had little cupcakes made for the little congratulation thing. I walked through the door. I looked like a pigpen again. She looks at me and she goes, well, I guess you must not be a good NCO. So, it hit me right there that an

NCO sometimes does have to get dirty. That was one of my biggest lessons I learned, believe it or not, was when she said that to me, how misinterpreted I had of what an NCO really was supposed to be doing. That when the time comes, they can be the leader, or they can be the doer. Sometimes the both are side by side.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Sergeant Major, they promoted you to Corporal. Did you have soldiers in the Platoon that you were responsible for at that point?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: No, not really. I mean, yeah, there were a couple of other soldiers in the formations, but really, I had no other person on my Tank, but at that time, if you got a repair part come in, it didn't matter what time of day it came in. You were called, and you went down to the motor pool and put the part on. You were ready to go to war in that mentality. A lot of times, a part would come in, and of course, parts always came in on Friday afternoon about four o'clock, as we all know. Of course, it's like we're

going to the motor pool. It's your tank, you're going to go, and we need two more volunteers. And there weren't that many soldiers in the first place, so you just volunteer to go down and get the job done and get it done so everybody can go home.

That's how I got to be on the Platoon

Sergeant's

tank, was I was down there one night. It was kind of drizzly rain, crappy. Specialist Mueller and myself were the two troops working on the vehicle. We had to split the pack and put the pack on and reset the -- put everything back together. Pack is the engine transmission system.

Then we had to put the knuckles back on for the drive, for the engine, for the piece of transmission. Mueller was a string bean. He was very, very smart, smart, smart, guy, but not really physically able to lift a lot of stuff. At some point we're struggling to get this knuckle on, to get this knuckle on. I finally just told him, get the hell of the way. I just grabbed the tanker bar, maneuvered

and just lifted that knuckle on and just told the two mechanics, put the bolts in, put the bolts in.

SGM WATERHOUSE: While you're hauling it up?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Well, I didn't know but the Platoon Sergeant was standing back at the front of the tank watching all this. After we got the knuckle on and I was restless, so if he came to me -- Sergeant Bo. His name was Sergeant Bojesko (sounds like), a Bohemian background and his nationality. He came to me and he says, you're going to be on my tank, God damn it, you're going to be on my tank. I says, no, Sergeant Bo, I can't be on your tank. God damn it, I said you're going to be on my tank. You're on my tank. Tomorrow you are on my tank. So, that's how I got to be on the Platoon Sergeant's tank, is I pushed another guy out of the way and put the knuckle on a transmission.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, Sergeant Major, 1977,
the same
year you were promoted, you were chosen to attend the
basic Noncommissioned Officer Course and were promoted

to the rank of Sergeant E-5. What led to you being -- was that called BNCOC back then?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: It was still called BNCOC, yeah, at that time. Actually, I went to BNCOC as a Corporal. Again, it was just on those things. The Army was still rebuilding basically at that point. There were a lot of good people there, but we were also still short a lot of people. I had leaders just like I just told you the story about Sergeant Bojesko. I guess I proved to them that I can do those things. I had a Sergeant Hollar, who reached in his pocket because I told him, I says, and he was the acting Platoon sergeant at the time. I says, Sergeant Hollar, I feel great about being selected if you want me to go to BNCOC, but I can't afford to. I've got a wife. I've got a daughter. I'm only E-4.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, this was you would have to go to Fort Knox?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: No. Actually it was in Germany.

SGM WATERHOUSE: It was in Germany.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: But still it was separate, and you lose part of your rations because now you're at school versus being home. I said, I just can't afford to do this, I says. He reached in his pocket and he pulled out money and he handed it to me. He said, if your wife needs more, you let me know.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Wow.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: He says, you can pay me back as you can. You read about things like that. You see things like that, but that truly was something that I saw right from the get-go. It's not about you personally. It's about the better of your soldiers and First Sergeant Hollar, he personally reached in his pocket and said, this is for the betterment of my soldier and you pay me back when you can. So, that allowed me to go to BNCOC as a Corporal, and then while at BNCOC, it was a great experience. I mean, I really got a chance to -- I really hadn't been a tank commander type deal. So, it exposed me to some tasks that I hadn't had to do. I was made to do a lot of those tasks as a young Corporal because like I said,

here's the map. When I was on the Platoon Sergeant's Tank, every time the Platoon moved somewhere, it was here's the map, take the Platoon.

SGM WATERHOUSE: You're kind of like the point man.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: So, I had to lead the Platoon. I had to do all this. We were attached to the Dutch one time in a joint maneuver. The Dutch Captain at the end of this road march called in all the broke down vehicles and all the rest of the stuff, and what was here, and the Dutch Commander complimented the Platoon sergeant at that time, Sergeant Hollar, and said, that was a great, very, very good job. Every cord was exactly where you said it was. We found every vehicle perfect. It was great. You did an awesome job. He goes, I didn't do that. He said, my Corporal did. I was given a lot of those kind of opportunities that again, when I got to BNCOC, I was able to not feel like it was the first time I saw this stuff. As a matter of fact, we were doing one of the training events. I had found the mistake on the evaluation

form.

SGM WATERHOUSE: At the school?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: At the school, and the cadre was like no, it's not wrong. I said, yeah, it's wrong, I'm sorry. Three-quarters of the group had already gone through. I pointed out to them and the one Staff Sergeant who was there said, are you willing to take a zero for the entire test if you're wrong? I said, sure. I said, I will. When they went back and reviewed it, it was incorrect. They come back and go, well, I guess, we give everybody a credit for that. I go, well, do I get a hundred percent for the rest of this. But it was that kind of thing. I was given the opportunity to learn before I had to go there. A lot of your questions had a lot to do with what did you learn, what did you learn, what did you learn>

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Truly the one thing about all schools that I learned is there are really almost just reinforcing what you should already know if you come from a good unit. They really do. The only other

thing is you get more senior in schooling, is that it just reblues you to the doctrine, because we kind of have a tendency of this is the way I've always done it. This is the way I like it, or this is the way I like to do it, instead of how doctrinally we've got to do it.

SGM WATERHOUSE: The way we're supposed to be doing it.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: What you don't realize as a young soldier is how important doctrine is. It's not that I can't do it those other different ways, but if I have to plug and play with different type organizations, if everybody is not playing with the same sheet of music, that song doesn't quite sound so well and the harmony is not quite there.

SGM WATERHOUSE: It sounds out of tune. I do have a question. That was the basic non-commissioned officer course. Did they have the primary non-commissioned officer course before that?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: They did. I was just waived from it.

SGM WATERHOUSE: You were waived for that?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Yeah. They still had the same requirement we had today, you know, the first level, second level, third level.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, this was a course to teach you how to be a Tank Commander basically?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: This was a Tank Commander course. Yeah.

SGM WATERHOUSE. Sergeant Major, shifting our focus back to your unit there in Germany, in looking back at that two years you served with Bravo Company, 4-69, which is again part of the 8th Infantry Division, what were some of the challenges you faced that you haven't mentioned and how did you overcome those?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: I think --

SGM WATERHOUSE: And/or lessons learned, however you want to say it.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: I think the really biggest challenge was, you know, being a married young soldier. In my company, I was the only married E-5 and below, or E-4 and below. There were a couple of

married E-5's.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Everybody else lived right there in the barracks?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Everybody else was in the barracks. If we had -- for instance, every time we came back from the field, of course, the barracks was not cleaned up. Nobody is released until we get the barracks cleaned up, but my barracks is at home, and so, I'd be stuck at the barracks until 8:30 or 9:00 at night the day after we get back from out in the field. I hadn't seen my wife probably for forty-five days and so, I used to get kind of upset that this is not my house, but I'm having to clean this house type deal. But it also re-enforced to me that it is not always about you. It's about the team. And it's not that I can make those guys better or worse by me being there. It's the fact that if it's broke, we've got to fix it. It ain't going to get fixed if I stand by with my hands in my pocket.

When I did live in the barracks, which I did for a short period before my wife came over, I shared

a room with three other guys. Basically when they went out on the weekend, I didn't feel -- number one, I couldn't afford it, more because my money was tight, but two, I didn't really want to. I had a wife and I wasn't ready to go. So, I would actually GI my room. I mean, I stripped the floor every Saturday. I stripped the floor. Every Sunday I put the old burn the wax and put it on the concrete floor and made it buffed up really shiny. It was just absolutely -- I mean, you could literally see yourself in the floor that way.

SGM WATERHOUSE: I'll bet your roommates loved you.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Oh, I was the best thing since Cheerios to those guys. But actually it got me out of trouble one time, because one weekend I just didn't feel good and I was a little pissed off at something. I said, screw it, if these guys can't help clean a room, then we're going to fail because Monday morning inspection, the First Sergeant always walks through. So, Monday morning inspection and we're

going to fail because I didn't clean a single thing.

SGM WATERHOUSE: And they thought you would do it.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: There were ashtrays that had crap in it. There were glasses half full of coffee and soda pop and stuff like that. The doors were all locked. So, the First Sergeant has got to go down with the keys and unlock the door, unlock the door, unlock the door. He started the opposite side of the hallway, went all the way around the billets and my door was the last door he came to. He literally got to my door --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Were you there at the time?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: No, I wasn't, but my Platoon Sergeant was. He literally got to the door, took the key, looked at the door and said, I don't even have to go in this room. Christian gets a day off because his room is the best room in the billets. That room would have got me the biggest butt chewing I would have had in a long time. So, it does pay to kind of at least try to be a good guy all the time.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Sergeant Major, in March of 1978, you were assigned to your second duty assignment, Fort Hood Texas, where you served with Charlie Troop, 1st Squadron, 9th Calvary Regiment or 1-9 CAV, for short, and you were there about fifteen months. So, what led to this assignment?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Basically it was a normal rotational assignment. As I said earlier, I was on a unaccompanied tour in Germany, which was only a two-year commitment versus a three-year company commitment. So, Fort Hood was just an assignment that popped up that said where you're going to go to.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, because you brought your wife and daughter over there at your own expense, it didn't count as a three-year assignment?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Exactly.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay. So, looking back at the 1-9 CAV back then, what would you say their mission was back in 1978?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Back then, they were actually a ready reaction force. They were set to be

able to react to anything across the world.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, kind of like the 82nd Airborne?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: A lot like the 82nd Airborne. We had a no-notice requirement. I mean literally the day I got there when I got to the reception depot, they looked at my shot records -- I got there on a Thursday and they said, oh, we've got to give you some shots tomorrow.

SGM WATERHOUSE: What?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: I says okay. They lost my shot records somewhere between the day I arrived and the day I've got to get shots.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So you had to get everything?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Every single shot, to include typhoid, and everything else you can think of for anywhere in the world, and they gave me every shot at the same time. I was sicker than a dog for like three days.

SGM WATERHOUSE: You probably couldn't walk.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: I couldn't walk. I was in the bed. I was terrible. It was a rapid deployment type unit.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay. And what kind of Platoons did you have? What type of equipment?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: It was an old H series type Platoon at that time, which means it was a mixed Platoon and a CAV. We had one 113 infantry track with an Infantry Squad, one M-106 mortar track with a mortar crew. We had three M-551 Sheridans with tank crews on it. We had five gun Jeeps, 151 A1 gun Jeeps, the old rat patrols type set up. Then we had one command Jeep, 151. We had two OH-58 helicopters and four Cobra attack helicopters.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Wow. That was a diverse unit.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: That was actually one Platoon. Everything was organic in that same unit, except for the helicopters which only went out with you at the actual execution point of mission.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, Sergeant Major, during

your fifteen months or so in Charlie Troop, you served time in several different duty positions to include Gunner, Lead Scout, Acting Platoon Sergeant. Can you talk a little bit about your time in those positions?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: I assigned there as a Gunner in a Sheridan.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Did you train all that at AIT?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: No. That was later on. You asked me about the challenges. That was the first challenge. As a matter of fact, when I got to the unit, my Platoon Sergeant met me. He says, have you ever been on a Sheridan. I said, I've seen a Sheridan three times. I said the first time it was on Vilseck on a tank range. I'm sorry. It was Grafenwoehr on a tank range and it was burning. The second time it was on Vilseck on a maneuver piece and it was burning. The third time it was in Balmhelder on the side of a tank trail and it was burning. They were on fire. They were on fire. They were just burning. And he goes, well, congratulations. You're on a Sheridan. So,

that was my introduction to the Sheridans.

The Gunner position was just like it was for any other tank, like you said earlier. His primary weapon sight is a periscope. You've got the main gun. On a Sheridan, it's a 152-millimeter cannon. The difference in a Sheridan at that time, we had a no casing ammo. So, the propellant itself was hard cased and you had to take off, we called it, elephant condom. There was a rubber bag on the outside of the ammo before you loaded it into the breech.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, it was kind of like the artillery. You put a shell in --

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: It was a lot like the artillery, except on the very end of it, though, it did have its Aft cap where the primer was already inside of it. So, the Aft cap would have had primer inside of it, but the actual gunpowder was surrounded. When a round went off, it actually went out the tube and all that came back was about a three-inch Aft cap came back into the turret when it actually opened it.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So totally different from an

M60.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Totally different.

Inside the breech, there was an actuator seal. It was a little metal ring that sealed the gun tube when the breech closed. It was an electrical breech where it kind of came over it and it came forward and sealed that breech. The reason it did that, because the actuary seal wasn't in there, when you let your round off, all that gun powder explodes, there was a little gap in the breech and that fire ring would come back into the turret.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Not good. Yeah.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Not good when you have all the rest of the ammunition that doesn't have a casing on it. It just has a rubber bag around it, is all it does. So, it was a little different vehicle to shoot.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Was that your first position in that unit?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: That was my first position in the unit. You could always tell a Sheridan

Gunner because they always had a scar across the top of their nose, because when you pulled the trigger on that cannon, the first three road wheels of five would come off.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Off the ground?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Off the ground and it would just literally hit your nose with the tops of part of your sight, the bottom part of your sight. Then it also had a shillelagh missile, which had an infrared tracker system in the back of the missile. So, when you fired the missile, it would come out, very accurate missile if you didn't try to fire the missile. You had to keep focus, because you would see the missile come out. If you paid attention where the missile was and that where your reticle wasn't a target, because the missile would come out and drop. A lot of gunners would try to raise that reticle up to bring the missile up and as soon as that missile saw it go up, it actually would fly. Those missiles were known to come up, if you jerked it too hard, up and actually land behind you or on the tank itself.

SGM WATERHOUSE: I've heard stories like that. So, that's why.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: So, you could literally kill yourself by shooting that missile if you jerk the handles the wrong way.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Because they were trying to see the missile instead of looking at the target.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Exactly. Stay focused on the target. So, that was one difference. The second difference, the biggest, as a gunner, the biggest difference I had to learn was in the M-160 series, when you bore sight, and you actually zero your tank, you've got one reticle to look at. It's just a cross haired mental and the computer is kind of doing the adjustments for you if you do this. On a Sheridan, it's got a choke sight. So, you've got to bore that cross at the very top. At the very top is the reticle that crosses. That's what you bore sight with, but when you pull around, you've got to choke in the target at twelve hundred meters. Old Tootsie (sounds like) gunner, the first time I zeroed my tank, I put

the bore sight cross in. I got the gun all set up right. I went to the zero panel to shoot my first round. I put the bore sight cross right on that panel. I pulled the trigger and put that round about two hundred meters in front of the tank.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Lesson learned.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Holy shit. I mean that was a significant emotion event.

SGM WATERHOUSE: A hundred fifty, two, that was probably a big boom.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: That was a big boom and a big dirt trail that went down the tank trail very well. It was like, okay, Christian, raise the gun tube up a little bit more, you know. So, those were the kinds of things I had to learn about a Sheridan. It wasn't dramatically hard. It was just your mind set has got to be focused on where you're at.

SGM WATERHOUSE: There wasn't a designated Sheridan course or anything back then?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: There was. There was a designated course, but again, it was primarily on the

Scout side because Sheridans were primarily thought about Scouts.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, the 19 Delta or whatever they were called.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Right. They were 19 Deltas at the time, but I had come from an Echo background. Well, actually the Sheridans were actually 19 Golf at the time. So, when I came to that unit, we didn't have the same kind of checks and balances you kind of sort of had later on in the Army. It was just kind of like, well, all these academies... is we can train ourselves. We can do this kind of mentality. That still was very relative across the force. It was just you're going to go to school 101. We're going to teach you how to be a good Sheridan gunner. So we did that.

How I got to be on the Scout side, was the configuration of the Platoon. The scouts would do the reconnoiter out forward, but we would never move the tanks forward with them. It was because tanks were just too big comparatively to what we were trying to

do, to sneak and peek. The Jeeps had no windshields on them. They were a very, very, very low profile vehicle. So, you literally went out there and just kind of snuck from bush to bush to go do the recon. Then one of the scouts would have to come back and pick up the tanks and then kind of lead them forward. The tanks and the infantry track would kind come forward and then the mortar track would come after. They were kind of covering positions. So, with all that kind of maneuver, it really made more sense to have one of the tankers to sort of go out with the scouts and do the reconnoiter with the scouts. Then a vehicle would come back, drop the tanker off. The scout would return to mission on the screen line, and then that tanker would lead the convoy out to get up back where the scouts were putting the screen line in.

So, I became that kind of scout screen and it ended up where I was actually doing more scouting than I was doing tanking. That's how I came to - and either a lead scout. It's a lead scout for the tanks, not a lead scout for the scouts.

SGM WATERHOUSE: I got you. Before we get to the Platoon earned stuff, as a gunner and lead scout, did you have soldiers under you in this particular unit?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: I had one Loader was underneath me, and later on, we got a driver in there as well. I did have a couple inside that tank to be able to do that. Palmalost (sounds like) was my Loader and a great guy, just absolutely super. I mean, a load has got to be very dexterous. He's got to be able to reach behind him, pull around, ready the rack, flip it over, put it inside it. In a Sheridan, the bag was always cut a little bit, so he could reach in the lip of that bag, rip the bag off, shove it all inside, hoping the round didn't break while you're doing all this. At the same time, if you had a simultaneous engagement where you had to engage with the main gun and also the machine gun, he had to make sure the machine gun was firing. The Army was switching from M-73 coaxial machine guns to M-219 coaxial machine guns. My tank still had an M-73. So,

it was an older machine, but it ran like a sewing machine. I mean, it was an awesome machine gun.

One gunner in that machine gun fired every single tank in the troop, that it was the only dependable machine gun that would fire, and it fired every tank without a stop.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Was this an American machine gun?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: American machine gun. It was a version before the M-219 machine gun, looked very, very similar. It was just a little different configuration on the outside. So, he was very, very good about being able to just hit everything at the right time in the right way. The other thing about Sheridan and a Loader is its hydraulic system. So, there is a little valve on the side that shows you how much hydraulic pressure is inside the vehicle to be able to maneuver this gun tube up and down. As you fired the tank, it will lose some of its hydraulic pressure. Then a Loader has got a little handle that he flips. He's got to pump this handle to get it back

up. Palmalost was very good about doing all these other things at the same time. He's making sure this machine gun is firing, pumping up this handle. So, he's like a jack of all trades, master of none type guy. He was really, really good at his position.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, as your first time kind of in charge as troopers, who did you look to above you to help you kind of lead and train soldiers for the first time?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Well, my tank commander, O'Brien, Staff Sergeant O'Brien, was one of the guys. Again, you watch what you do. A lot of times, it was more about my previous leaders, how they treated me. My previous leaders, how they walked me through certain situations.

SGM WATERHOUSE: The do's and don'ts' s of it.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: And I applied it to them. I kind of made myself a rule early on in my career that everybody can teach me something, but something is not always good. Everybody carries a good bag on

one side and a crappy bag on the other side. So, everybody that I meet, I try to always focus on what is the one great thing I can take away that they do that I want to make it part of my ethos. I also looked at that same exact person and I say, what's the one crappy thing they do that if I'm in the same situation, I never, ever want to make that same kind of decision that way, because even the best of us, or the worst of us have good days and bad days. The best leaders you can name had some pretty crappy decisions they made at some point in their careers.

So, you've just got to remember that, and hopefully, when the time comes in your career, you don't make the same disastrous mistake that they made because it's now your turn to make that decision.

SGM WATERHOUSE: You also served as the Acting Platoon Sergeant during your time with the 1-9 CAV. How did that come about?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: The unit received an individual augmenting type admission where basically almost all of our staff sergeants and above got taken

away to go do a training type mission much like we're doing right now with the leaders and some of the organizations, the MTT's. They were gone for almost five to six months doing something like that away from or -- actually they were working out of the country.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Doing mobile training teams for somebody?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Yeah, but they were doing it out of the country with somebody else at that point.

SGM WATERHOUSE: And you were left back?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: I was left back. The other three Platoons, well, actually, four Platoons counting headquarters, had staff sergeants. There was a staff sergeant left for each one of those. Our Platoon didn't have that. I was not the senior ranking sergeant in that Platoon. I was actually a third senior ranking sergeant in the Platoon, but I was told that I was going to be the Platoon Sergeant versus the other two. When the Platoon Sergeant took me aside, he basically said, you know, I don't trust

that guy because he goofs off too much. The other guy, I don't think, can deal with all the things that are going to hit as far as taking care of all the people all the time. You're the guy that's in charge.

SGM WATERHOUSE: And there were two staff sergeants?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: No. They were both sergeants. In that Platoon, they were both sergeants, but they both outranked me by time in grade.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, how did you approach that with those guys or did he do that for you?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: He actually did that for me in a lot of respects. He took me aside and said, kind of gave me a rundown on the Platoon. This is the guy you've got to watch out for. He's going to push your buttons. He's going to throw his chest out, challenge you. This is the guy that's always going to need to kind of have a little boot in his butt to keep him moving down the road. So, he kind of walked me through some of the challenges I was going to have. Then he said, at the very end of that whole little

thing, he says, be yourself. Do what you think is right and it will be okay. That was his guidance to me.

SGM WATERHOUSE: And you knew these guys though; right?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Oh, yeah.

SGM WATERHOUSE: You just didn't know - maybe there were other things that he could see that you couldn't see.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Exactly. I looked at them more as peers. Again, one was an infantry guy. One was a mortar guy. I was a tank guy. So, even though we were in the same Platoon, we were different branches, different backgrounds a little bit.

SGM WATERHOUSE: You didn't spend all day working with each other.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Exactly. So he did the same thing to those other guys, not necessarily the entire Platoon, but to those two individuals that outrank me in particular and said - and one of the guys was a mortar guy. He said, basically, you don't

know what we're doing anyway. He goes, no, I don't. So, he was pretty easy. He was one of those kind of guys that just kind of went with the flow and didn't worry about it. The other guy was the chest out, I'm going to challenge everything you do.

SGM WATERHOUSE: The other guy would probably want to be in charge.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Right. Exactly. So, his guys, the Platoon sergeant gave him was, don't challenge him because you ain't going to like what happens. That was all he said to him.

SGM WATERHOUSE: When Daddy comes home --

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Well, he just said, don't challenge me. You ain't going to like what happens and he left it like that. Truly, the guy did push a little bit at first, but then after a while it was not there, because --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Was the first sergeant still back?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: First Sergeant was still back. First Sergeant was still back. The commander was still back. We just lost all Platoon leaders.

SGM WATERHOUSE: It's not like you couldn't go to the first sergeant.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Exactly. Exactly. But I really, I never had to.

SGM WATERHOUSE: And you had what, six months?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: I had almost six months, yeah, of Platoon sergeant time.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, I guess I'd be remiss not to say, so what did you learn being a Platoon sergeant as a young E-5 at that time?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: It's great to be in charge. What was really funny, we went through -- do you remember the old IG inspections?

SGM WATERHOUSE: Um-huh.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Okay. It was an old IG.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Inspector General.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: It was basically, we were

having an IG inspection which checks everything. Kind of in the middle of this time I had being Platoon sergeant, IG inspection was going to be there. So, that was the focal point of the time these guys were gone. I had to worry about that.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Get ready for this inspection.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: But before that, try to set the conditions. Again, I kept relying back to how I was treated, how I was given the opportunities. The one thing that I always saw that I was given that many other people were never given is the opportunity to fail. You can be a great leader, but if nobody gives you the opportunity to show you that you're a great leader, they're never going to come forward.

So, my belief is I want to give these guys much opportunity to fail, but if it failed, it was on me. I knew that. So, one thing I did was, in your formations, you find -you know, here's your scouts; here's your tankers; here's your mortars; here's your -- scouts, mortars, tankers -- infantry.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Aviators.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Aviators didn't fall in with us. They were on the other side of the air field. So, every Monday and every Friday, I would have an almost like an old Guard mount. I would have you send me your best guy. The rules were your best guy gets to have the day off. I mean, he's got to make PT in the morning. First Work Call is where we did this. If he becomes the best select, he gets to get the day off, if he wants to. If he doesn't want to because -- I had a couple that were married. Mom's working. There's no sense. I'll stay here and help because we've got to get this thing done. It's your choice, but you've earned it. Okay. If you want to take it, good. I'm sorry. They only got a half day off, because, First Sergeant Rule. If it was a full day, his choice, half day, my choice.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Well, a half day on Fridays.

CSM: Make it a half day on Friday or a half day on Monday. They could take one of those two days. So, I was doing this. Pretty soon, it wasn't just my

work that it was going to happen. We were actually doing this. So, pretty soon the young soldiers saw, but the rules were internally. There were no deficiencies. So, MBC room had to be a hundred percent. Weapons had to be a hundred percent. The vehicles in the motor pool had to be a hundred percent. Our barracks had to be a hundred percent. Not that we're not going to have deficiencies, but it had to be cleaned, TI'd. We had to be a hundred percent with all our shots. I mean, everything had to be a hundred percent, or you didn't get days off.

Once we got to the hundred percent level of everything like that and guys started getting their days off, they're like "hell, he's serious. Well, shit, let's work harder." Then they were working harder, and pretty soon, as we got closer to this IG time, I'd just go, you young NCO, take the NBC room. You take the weapons role. You take this barracks; you take this. I would go to the motor pool and start working on my vehicle, because I was so busy, that was the only time I could do this, is at nighttime I would

go to the rear and fix my own vehicle when I was down there. We got so good at doing this, that it was like this Platoon is almost running on automatic.

So, IG inspection completes. The First Sergeant calls me in his office about a week after this. He called me in his office and says, you've got to stop giving guys days off. I go, First Sarge, it's your choice. You told me. I know. He's, I know, I know I told you, but he says, you've got to quit giving days off. I says, First Sergeant, what have I screwed up. What aren't we doing? I said, we just scored - I mean, literally we scored a hundred percent in our motor pool. I mean no deficiencies noted in our motor pool For Sheridan's, that's unheard of. We had very minor issues in the barracks. Everything else was just like tip top. I says, what have I done wrong. He goes, nothing. He says, that's the problem. He says, the other Platoons can't compete with you. I got pissed.

SGM WATERHOUSE: I would say they need to raise their bar.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Bingo. I got pissed. I said, first sergeant, sir, I am a sergeant. They are staff sergeants. If they can't fricking do this job, fire their ass.

SGM WATERHOUSE: It sounds like they need to have the talk, not me.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: You just said exactly the next sentence I gave to him. I says, why aren't you calling them in?

SGM WATERHOUSE: He says I've talked to them. I've tried to get them to do what you're doing. They can't do it. They don't know how to do it. Then I made the final mistake. I said, First Sergeant, that's your fault. That's when he said, conversation done. Stop what you're doing. I said, understand, First sergeant. And I understood what he was saying from his perspective, but it was very hard to go back to the Platoon now that it is showing that it can do all these things and put it back in the box a little bit, so to say. You really didn't take them out of the box. You just made their box bigger. In my mind,

that's the secret to a truly great leader, is allow the soldier to expand their box. Once they expand their box, your box expands. It all starts running almost on automatic, as long as you've got eyes on. That's the key.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, Sergeant Major, looking back at that fifteen months or so, like you said, you served as a Gunner. Yu did some time scouting for the tank Platoon and Platoon sergeant for a time. Were there any particular lessons learned you'd like to highlight looking back on that whole time period before we move to your next assignment?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Lessons were -- I guess the biggest thing I kind of got is what I was given the opportunity to do was reinforce tenfold as being Platoon Sergeant, because I was able to, I thought, put in place things that I interpreted my leaders gave me the opportunity to do, but I also understood a couple of things. One, I was a standard bearer. If I wasn't physically fit, then they weren't going to try to be physically fit. If I wasn't in the motor pool

working on my tank, they weren't going to feel they had to go down and work on their vehicles. If I wasn't checking the NBC room to make sure that they did a hundred percent TI's, then they were only going to do eighty-five percent TI. If I wasn't over in that barracks and actually doing the walkthroughs after duty hours and checking to see how they were living after nobody is supposed to be watching them, then I wouldn't know how they were doing.

So, that really gave me the opportunity to learn how to be kind of that next level manager of doing the behind the scenes things that we just take for granted as NCO's. We kind of thing we just all learn it by osmosis. Somebody showed you how to do it that way. You just can't remember exactly which one. And it really wasn't one. It probably was tens or tens of tens that actually showed you how to do it the right way.

SGM WATERHOUSE: In July of 1979, you were assigned to Fort Knox, Kentucky, where you served with Charlie Company, 5th Battalion, 33rd Armor Regiment and

you served as a Tank Commander there for about eight months or so. How did this assignment to Fort Knox come about? Was this something you put in for or was it just where the Army sent you?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: When I was at 1-9, I wanted to become a Drill Sergeant. So, when I was at Fort Hood, Texas, at 1-9 CAV, I wanted my next venue to be into a Drill Sergeant. My Troop Commander, Lieutenant Kalleti (sounds like) was very supportive of that. I was due to reenlist, but Drill Sergeant was not a reenlistment option. You couldn't just reenlist to become a Drill Sergeant.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, this is coming to the end of your first four years?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Exactly. So, he sat with me and tried to figure out how to meet my goal with the Army's goal of getting me to reenlist. So, it came up between him, the recruiter, myself, that if I went to Fort Knox, I had a better chance of being a volunteer to a Drill Sergeant than I would if I would try to volunteer from Fort Hood, Texas, especially it

being a rapid deployment type unit like I was in. So, I said, that's a great idea. Let's go to Fort Knox, Kentucky. So, that's why I went to Fort Knox, a reenlistment option with the intent of putting my paperwork in as soon as I get to Fort Knox itself.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, you got 5-33 Armor and you're still a Sergeant E-5, I believe, when you got there, but you ended up serving as a Tank Commander which was a Staff Sergeant position in that unit. What kind of tanks did you have in that company, and I guess, what was the mission of that company, too.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: The tanks were M-60 A-1's yet.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Still?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Still M-60 A-1's, so I'm back on a tank that I was trained on, was a tank commander basically because again NCO's not have a hundred percent. I also my NCDR's that came forward with me, you know, had NCR's as Platoon Sergeant already. So, it showed that I had the ability to accept more responsibility and so it was almost a no-

brainer for that unit to put me into a shortage position and fill that out. The unit itself -- the primary mission of that unit was to support the training base.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So this was a basic AIT related unit?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: That brigade or that battalion actually supported the Office Training Course and the NCO Training Courses. So, when an ANCOC course needed to borrow vehicles to go out and do the field training, that unit provided those vehicles to go train. Officer Course, Officer Basic Course, Officer Advanced Courses, when they got their vehicle requirement, our vehicles went out. Those vehicles were in the field all the time.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Would you be with those vehicles training those officers?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: We would just bring them out. You turn them over to the Cadre and you stand around in case something broke. Then you jump out and fix it. Then they would break it again and you'd fix

it again. So, the only time you really got a chance to be on your vehicles was if they were broke.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, you really didn't a change to do gunneries or anything like that?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: You still had to do a gunnery, but it was a very limited going to the officer courses and shooting the live fire and you put a couple of hours into prepping the tank and you go shoot a one-run here or there.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Mainly your job was support for the schools?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Almost always support and just with a little tangent of also you guys got to be ready to go. The secondary mission that unit had though was the gold vault there at Fort Knox. So, you had a Platoon - this was spread out throughout the battalion. You had a Platoon at any one time that was set with all the tanks right up next to the barracks. If something happened at the gold vault, those tanks with the infantry unit from another unit would come out and meet up at the tank vault and you'd post your

tanks around the gold vault.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Wow.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: So, we had a real world mission of that as well at the same time.

SGM WATERHOUSE: I've never heard that story before.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Yeah. I'll tell you it was weird because I mean, literally you couldn't go home.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Was it still fenced in back then?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: It was all fenced in. Basically, it didn't look very much than it does today, other than the road network is a little different today than what it was back then.

SGM WATERHOUSE: But your job was to like cordon off the area?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: If they called and said help, you went out there with your tanks. Literally they were loaded, not with main gun ammo, but they had the machine gun ammo on board already.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Wow. So, you served there about eight months before you went to Drill Sergeant school. So, before you went to Drill Sergeant school, is there anything in that experience, you know, that basically support role that you would like to highlight?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Getting to be a Drill Sergeant is not as easy as it sounds, sometimes, even though we have a hard time getting people to be Drill Sergeants.

SGM WATERHOUSE: I don't think you planned to be in there eight months. Right?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: I did not plan on being there eight months, but I tell you, as soon as I got there, you know, got into the mission, dropped my paperwork probably within a month of going there.

SGM WATERHOUSE: And they knew that you are coming in that that's what you were coming for.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Yeah, because I basically told the First Sergeant when I in processed that's what I wanted to do. Okay. Got it. Understand. Let's

go out and do these other things. We've got tons of more stuff to do. Well, the paperwork got put in and it went nowhere. Nowhere in the network. Where is my paperwork? Well, it's on the First Sergeant's desk. It's in the First Sergeant's desk. Okay. So, I go see the First Sergeant. This went back and forth for a few weeks. So, then it went off his desk and it goes to the Company Commander's desk and literally on the Company Commander's desk, I was at his door for over two and a half weeks every single night.

SGM WATERHOUSE: And you still hadn't gotten it done?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: I couldn't talk to him during duty hours. He thought that was the first thing that was going to shut me off. You know, I had to go see him after duty hours. So, the first day I went and knocked on his door, he goes, what do you need. I said, sir, I need to talk to you about my Drill Sergeant paperwork. He said, I haven't looked at it yet. Come back. So, the next night, he said, hey, I'm sorry. I haven't looked at it yet, come back. So, the

next night, oh, I've looked at it, but I really haven't thought about it too much. Come back. It was just stall, stall, stall. Finally, about two and a half weeks -- I mean literally, Friday night, released, everybody is going to the four winds. He thinks it's safe. I'm standing outside his door Friday nights and waiting for him to come out and go there. He goes, hey, I'm going home, I don't want to talk to you tonight. I said, Roger that, sir, go home.

About two and a half weeks later, literally, and he knew I was outside his office, because I've been doing this now for two and a half weeks. He literally hid. I tell people he hid because he hid. It was 7:30 at night before he came out of his office. He came out of his office. I was standing right there in the hallway. I come to position attention. He stops in front of me and goes, you're never going to leave me alone, are you? I go, no, sir. He goes, why do you want to do this. I says, because it's the right thing. I can affect this unit right here, but I can infect the Army with all the soldiers I can train

if I'm a Drill Sergeant. I said, that's the way I feel about it.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, he just didn't want you to leave.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: He didn't want me to leave. That is what he basically ended up saying. He says, you know, I don't want to lose you. I says, sir, you're not going to lose me. You're going to gain a hundred more soldiers like me if you allow me to be a Drill Sergeant. That's how I really believed it. He finally said, I'm not signing it tonight, but he says, come back tomorrow. I'll have the paperwork signed for you. I said, fair enough, sir, and I walked out the door. So, he signed it.

Well, it's dance around battalion for a while. Finally I asked permission to go see the Battalion Sergeant Major. And so, it was like I was in the motor pool a week later or something like that. I get the, hey, the Battalion Sergeant Major wants to see you now. So, I'm like double time over to his office, knocked on the door. He goes, what do you want

to see me for. And I told him the whole story about how I did. He goes, what. You've had your paperwork in how long. I mean it was weeks and weeks. Actually it was almost two and a half months my paperwork had been in already. He goes, what. He says, you come back to see me this afternoon. I go, roger that, Sergeant Major. So, I left, went down to the motor pool, dah, dah, dah. Two or three o'clock in the afternoon, I walked back, knocked on his door. He goes, get out of my office. I don't need to see you. You're going to Drill Sergeant School. Shut up.

So he saw what was going on. He said, now we can't do that. So he fixed the little problem. And that's how I got to be, you know - but, you know, the one lesson from all that, I guess, is if it's the right thing to do, you know, we all know what right feels like. If it's the right thing to do, stick to your guns.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, Sergeant Major, you did finally get to Drill Sergeant School in 1980. You

also did a basic Instructor Training Course. We can cover those separately, but after a while you did those two courses, and then you were assigned to Charlie Company, 3rd Battalion, First Brigade at Fort Knox, where you served until December 1983. You served time as a Drill Sergeant and a Senior Instructor. About Drill Sergeant School first, and I know some of it's probably the same and some of it's probably different. What was your experience like there? I've heard stories. I like to ask everybody whether it's in interview or just in passing, what was the hardest part of Drill Sergeant School for you and what did you learn from that experience?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: I think the hardest part was verbiage. It was do you say -- the, the, done -- you're out of there, you've failed, move out. If you went back and said something, correction, done, you're out. I mean, it had to be perfect every time you said something. I mean, to this day, I can tell you, xxx, name, explain, demonstrate, go back and practice size in (sounds like). So, it was just that preparatory

statements that you learned how to repeat and repeat and repeat, because it was that kind of repetition, that you had such a short time to train soldiers, they wanted to make sure that's how you approached that training piece.

That was hard to get away from, the way you like to lead as NCO, talk to your soldiers, guide them, coach them, mentor them. It was like no, you're instructing them as a Drill Sergeant.

SGM WATERHOUSE: There are no two-way conversations.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Well, it's a two-way conversation. You speak, and they listen. That's the two-way conversation as a Drill Sergeant. So, that's what probably the hardest thing was for me to get through. I mean, physical fitness was nothing really. I mean, they didn't focus on that or you wouldn't have been in school. They did focus on your appearance. Did you carry yourself? Did you understand how to articulate things? But I think the preciseness of verbiage was the hardest thing I had to really master.

SGM WATERHOUSE: About how long were you there? Do you remember how many weeks that was?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Drill Sergeant School? I want to say it was only like two weeks, two and a half weeks, maybe. It wasn't very long.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Fairly short?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Yeah.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Now, the Instructor's School, was that on the tail end of that or how did that --

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: It was actually almost -- it was two separate courses, but it was almost tied simultaneously because you had to be qualified to be --

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, it was part of the Drill Sergeant training?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: It was. Yeah. It was one of these you had to do this, you had to do this, type of things. An Instructor Training Course is simply -- in order to be on a platform, you had to be a certified instructor, even though you're a Drill

Sergeant. It didn't quite qualify the same way. You had to do two different things.

SGM WATERHOUSE: You were a Drill Sergeant for Charlie Company, 3rd Battalion, 1st Brigade. What were you a Drill Sergeant for? Was it Basic Training, AIT, and kind of what was that unit's mission?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: It was in Advanced Individual Training. So, the Basic Training was done. We picked them up from Basic Training and when they started doing the Advanced Individual Armor Training. What was really kind of cool about being in Charlie 3-1 is that was the same billets that I was a trainee in. So, when I would take the first day and bring my soldiers into that barracks and show them this bunk and that wall locker, you know, that was mine. So, I know how to keep it clean. So, you had better do the same thing. That was kind of an historical way of telling them, you know, I've been through what you've been through.

SGM WATERHOUSE: I think that's my wall locker.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: And so, don't screw this up. You know, you can do this, type stuff.

SGM WATERHOUSE: You were promoted to Staff Sergeant in September of '80. I'm not sure where that was in the time frame, but --

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Just after I became a Drill Sergeant.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, your duties and stuff were basically the same. You just now get paid.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: It really was. The only thing different was -- initially there is no difference. I was still a rookie Staff Sergeant paired up with a Sergeant First Class to be, so it was a primary drill for a Platoon, primarily an E-7. Then there was an E-5 or E-6 that was an Assistant Drill Sergeant to them. But as I became more senior, and in the Drill Sergeant program, as they always do, personnel fluctuates up and down. There was a cycle I actually pushed all by myself as a Staff Sergeant, but that was kind of -- I call it a cheater cycle.

You don't fill all of one days. You can fill

partly on Monday, partly on Tuesday, partly on Wednesday. So, instead of filling the Platoons - we had six Platoons. So, instead of filling one E-6, two E-6, three, E-6, we decided to fill First Platoon first, Second Platoon, so they could start their training already and not be held back until the end of the week to actually have the first week of training done. So, we filled First Platoon, Second Platoon, part of Third Platoon. We filled again Third Platoon, part of Fourth Platoon. Filled again Fourth Platoon, part of Fifth Platoon. I was the Sixth Platoon at that time. So, I said I'll take all the last guys, whatever they are. That way, all of you keep on going.

The best decision I ever made, literally, I had a graduate from the Citadel was in my Platoon as one of my trainees. He should have been an officer but got physically hurt in his junior year. His grades were good enough. They allowed him to stay and graduate but did not commission him. He came back about three

years later, to pass the Basic Training, or the T portion to physically meet the requirement and then petition to get his commission again, which at the end of the day he actually did graduate and was only one year behind his peer group in getting in as an officer.

I had four other college ROTC graduates that were in my Platoon. So, I received all five of these guys. It was like, what do I got to do. All I had to do was kind of, again like I did as a normal Platoon sergeant. I made them my leadership, my Citadel graduate my Platoon guide; my four ROTC graduates were my squad leaders. All I said was, you've got this responsibility. This is what your responsibility is, and as the barracks goes, instead of saying you all got covered down everything, the only one that had covered on everything was the Platoon Guide. The Squad Leader did like for billets inspections. That squad leader, First Squad did all the shoes. The squad leader for Second Squad did all the beds. The squad leader for Third Squad did all the wall lockers. So,

one eye was looking across the entire Platoon.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So even though you're the only Drill Sergeant, you had some more mature guys in there.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: I had assistant Drill Sergeants. I had five assistant Drill Sergeants in reality. So, I kind of got over on that one. They all thought I stacked the deck.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Now, sometime, at least according to your bio, you served as a Senior Instructor. How was that different from your duties as a Drill Sergeant?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: I completed my three years of Drill Sergeant time and I had just got promoted to Sergeant First Class. So, I literally came on Drill Sergeant duties as Sergeant E-5.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Which there were Sergeant E-5's back then.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: There were Sergeant E-5's, promoted to Staff Sergeant, been selected for Sergeant First Class while I was Drill Sergeant,

pinned on Sergeant First Class just before I took my hat off. About a month later, because I was now done with my Drill Sergeant three years, I could not extend beyond that. You do a two-year tour, can extend for a third, could not go beyond three.

SGM WATERHOUSE: And this was May of '83 you were promoted to Sergeant First Class.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Right.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So then you shifted into a -

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CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: I went down to the motor pool. So, the motor pool down there, they're classified instructor. So, your tank commanders in the motor pool teach them up, how to maintain the vehicle, how to start the engines, how to mount the machine guns. Then there's an E-7 Senior Tank, Senior Instructor, who monitors all that, makes sure the training area is prepped, stuff like that. So, I was just moved down. I had no orders. We were short an E-7 in the motor pool. So, I went down to motor pool and took that position.

SGM WATERHOUSE: About how long did you do that?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: It was not very long, probably only about maybe four months.

SGM WATERHOUSE: It was kind of a transition job.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: It was really a transition job. At that point, I was selected to go up to Brigade Headquarters and become a writer again.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Before we get to that, looking back at Drill Sergeant time and the little bit of time you served as the senior instructor, you mentioned some of the challenges. What would you say is some of the lessons learned from that experience?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Of Drill Sergeant? It was how influential I was, you know, the image that you hold. I mean, we all hold -- I don't think any of us do not remember who our Drill Sergeant was.

SGM WATERHOUSE: I remember mine.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: All of us could tell you their names. That's the impact you have on a young

person coming in. So, if you are going to have that significant an impact on their life, whether they succeed or whether they fail at being a soldier, they will never forget their Drill Sergeant. You have that significant impact on their life. I always related it to having a child in a lot of respects. Not to belittle any young person that comes in the military, but you watch having a child and the first three years is their formative years. They've learned eighty percent, I think, of what they end up being by what they get exposed to and how they get treated and how they get raised in that first three years of their life. That's kind of the same thing taking a soldier into finishing his training is a Drill Sergeant.

You're going to take him from a civilian and you're going to mold him into this creature that you call a soldier. And then you're going to shape him into this no kidding, steely eyed killer that you call a tanker or infantryman or a scout, whatever you want to make him at that point. You've decided that's what you're going to do with him. That's really probably

the most gratifying thing and the biggest impact that made on my career.

SGM WATERHOUSE: In January of '84, like you said, you were assigned to H & S Company, 1st Training Battalion, 1st Brigade there at Fort Knox, where you served as a Course Writer for about eleven months. For those that don't know, what does H & S stand for and what was the mission of the First Training Battalion.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: H & S is Headquarters and Support. It's kind of like a headquarters Headquarters company. It kind of has all the -- we call it ash trash. We know it's not ash trash, but it's what we -- the war fighters always say, aw, you're a bunch of ash trash. The Headquarters and Support was basically the same thing. That was where a lot of your pack people are involved. All the functions of the battalions --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Personnel, logistics, all that.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Personnel, logistics, all

that stuff. Now, each battalion still had a little piece of it, but that organization synchronized it because it basically was just so repetitive. You know, whether you're A Troop or First Squadron or First Battalion or A Troop of Second Battalion, or A Troop of Third Battalion, you're all going to go through the same gunnery range. You're all going to go through the same whatever. Your logistics are going to be exactly the same. That just took away a lot of those requirements from those battalions that had to fight with.

SGM WATERHOUSE: And the 1st Training Battalion, 1st Brigade, that was another one of the AIT units?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: It was actually a support unit. So, it was separate. It didn't have any trainees in it. It just had all these different support pieces in it and my section was part of the Headquarters section that actually worked for a civilian. He was a medically retired captain. Mel was a very, very smart guy. I found out how I got to

that place.

I had done a couple of other things. I had gone before different boards, been selected for different things while I was a Drill Sergeant and a Tank Commander. So, when it was time to put this piece together, they created this little lesson writing group. My name was put into the pot. Well, the Brigade Commander wanted me to go someplace else. Mel heard about me. So, Mel said, no, I need him down here to write for me. They got into this pissing contest. I found out I actually became a writer because Mel won three out of four racquet ball games. So, he won three out of four racquet ball games. Mel said, I get to pick him, he's mine. That's how I became a writer at 1st Brigade.

SGM WATERHOUSE: When we say Course Writer, can you explain what that is in laymen's terms or what you did every day, kind of what your job was?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Yeah. So, you think about going through Basic Training AIT, there are common lessons that get written, how to march, how to salute,

how to put a M219 machine gun into action. There are lesson plans on how to do those things. My job was to write those lesson plans. It wasn't that I was all focused on machine guns or I was all --it was whatever lesson plan was next. That was the one you got given. That's the one you had to work on. For a kid who hated English, I did not do -- I can't say I didn't do well in English, but I didn't like it. Therefore, if you don't like it, you're not going to excel in it.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, that would be one of your challenges in this position?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Yeah. I was going to say I could step into the challenge part. I was mentored a lot about how to write.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Did this guy have second thoughts about hiring you?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: No. Mel was a big man. Literally, again a Vietnam era guy, [got] hurt bad in Vietnam, so was a great leader in that respect and was a great coach as well. He would just kind of come up to you, wrap his arm around you, and all the while

he's talking to you, he keeps squeezing that arm a little tighter, a little tighter, a little tighter around your neck until you kind of said Chew Hoy (sounds like). I've got it. I'll fix this. I know how to do it now. So, he kind of walked you through that. But he was very patient and a good teacher in that respect. That was probably my biggest challenges. You know, you write the way you talk. I was writing the way I talk. I had to learn how to talk different too. So, that was probably the biggest challenge of that job.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So was this civilian -- I think you said Mel -- was he your mentor in that job?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: He really was. Mel was mentor and then we had a Sergeant Major that came in right towards -- the Sergeant Major had a spouse who had a disease. He was brought back from Europe early. Long story short, she passed away. There was another lady whose husband passed away about the same time going through the exact same problems his wife had gone through. They ended up dating, ended up getting

married. Literally, he retired. They got married. He retired and a week later he's dead.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Wow.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: And again, it was one of those kind of deals that you kind of say to yourself, why did he die. Well, it was just things. He kind of said, I don't have to do anything anymore and kind of let himself -- of course, he had a couple of physical issues in there, but the one thing that I -- I still say jokingly today, but I was jokingly serious when I first said it. I watched him, and I learned at that time that I think the average - they said the average retiree only drew like sixty-three paychecks or something like that. I'm like, sixty-three paychecks. That's crap. That's nothing.

SGM WATERHOUSE: A little over five years.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: A little over five years. And I says, you know, if that's going to happen, I said here's my goal. When I retire, I'm going to draw twice as many paychecks as I did when I was on active duty. So, when I get to sixty-two years of paychecks

retiree, you know, the man upstairs can call me. I'm happy.

SGM WATERHOUSE: While you were there in the H & S Company, 1st Training Battalion, you attended the Advanced Noncommissioned Officer Course or ANCOC. What did you think of the training and education you received there and where was that course?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: It was right there at Fort Knox. It was really -- it was a flux. I'm going to kind of, I think, jump ahead of one of your questions right here, because I was again a course writer. I had to go up to the Brigade Headquarters for something, to pick something up or drop something off. I happened to go by the S-1 door and he hollers at me, and he says, Chris, come here. He's on the phone. He says, I've got Branch on here. You're being assigned. You're getting assignment orders to Germany. I said, great. When am I going to ANCOC? At that time, if you received orders and you went overseas, you could not come back for school, so I would have spent my entire three years in Europe and not received

ANCOC because I had not been to ANCOC yet. I've been an E-7 now for over a year.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Which means you weren't eligible for Master Sergeant.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Bingo. I would not have been able to promote and all the rest of the stuff. So, he asks, well, stand by, and puts me on the phone. I'm talking to this female on the phone and she goes, but you're an E-7. I go, yeah, I know. Well, you've been E-7 for over a year. I said, yes, I know. I said, I've been waiting for a school date. But you're at Fort Knox, Kentucky. I said, yes, I know. She goes, well, we think you have already been to school. I says, I haven't. She goes, oh, my God. She says, stand by. She comes back like a minute later and she says, can you be at school next week. I go, yeah, I can.

I said, yeah, I can. I said I live right her, so no big deal. Bottom line was that's when I went back to Mel, my boss. If you want to picture Mel, think of Jabba the Hut on Star Wars. Mel was Mel the Hut. Great guy, but he was just that kind of --

SGM WATERHOUSE: He allowed you to go to a school.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: He says, well, I don't have a choice. I said, Mel, I'm sure you can call the Brigade Commander and probably push this off, but if you do, this is what happens. He goes, no, I got you. He said, I'm not fighting this. He says, what do I need to do. I says, just let me go. I said, I got this one lesson I should have done today or tomorrow, but I says, other than that -- he goes, don't worry about that lesson. He took it off my desk. He says, you just go get ready for school.

SGM WATERHOUSE: How did school go itself?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: School itself ws very good. Again, an era of different ways of doing things. Even though I lived at Fort Knox, Kentucky, I had a house off post at Fort Knox, Kentucky. I had to live in the barracks as a Sergeant First Class. So, no matter if you came from off post or you were on post, you had to move into the BEQ and live in the barracks.

SGM WATERHOUSE: All the students lived

together?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Yeah. And it's old World War II wood. It's not the fancy stuff and that's okay, but it was like, why are we doing this. It was that era of you've got to be together. You can't learn if you're not together. So, that part was, I thought, as we've in the future changed it, but that was, you were treated still as we can't trust you. We're going to lock step you through everything you've got to do. We're here to make you drink through the straw so you've know how to learn the right way.

SGM WATERHOUSE: March you to and from class.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Exactly.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Did you do that too?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Well, we did too.

Whoever the senior guy was, he had to march you to and from class and all the res to the stuff. So that part was a little kindergartenish, but I tell you the piece, the basic, if you come from a good unit, there's not a lot that they should be able to teach you that you shouldn't already be able to do. You may

not be a rocket scientist at it, but you should be able to be proficient or you shouldn't be in the school in the first place, but there are other things that you don't get to practice and rehearse a lot of times. Platoon maneuver is a great one. You don't get a chance to Platoon maneuver that much. You know, you shoot gunneries, but you don't get to Platoon maneuver a lot.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, you guys did that in the field more.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: We did it in the field a lot. We did it on the boards a lot. We called for fire. We got to use the call (SOUNDS LIKE) systems at the time that were relatively new.

SGM WATERHOUSE: That was the digital call fire trainers.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Yeah, the digital call fire trainers and stuff like that. It was a good part right there that you couldn't do. So, that part really helped me out. Then the reports, your block reports, your red reports, things the TACSOP [Tactical

Standard Operating Procedure] type stuff that you had to think about. You didn't do all those things in your unit. You had three or four that you pulled out all the time, but not like you had to do in school. That was a good, again, rebluing back to doctrine type mentality that was good for me.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Before we get to your unit in Germany you mentioned, looking back at your time at H & S Company, 1st Training Battalion, 1st Brigade, what were some of the key lessons learned you took from that assignment?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Well, basically we kind of talked about, you know, keeping your life straight. When the Sergeant Major passed away as unexpectedly as he did, it was a wake-up call to you to say, you know, every day is not a given. Tomorrow is promised to no one. So, tell your wife you say you love her every day. Make sure that you keep your house straight as much as you can so the person that's got to pick up behind you doesn't have to do a lot of work. I learned a lot about behind the scenes stuff. It's not

glamorous to be a writer. Its not glamorous to do a lot of the stuff, but without those folks doing that, we can't have things called doctrine. We can't do the things that make us the great Army we are. So, you know, even though we make jokes about those kind of people hiding, I mean a lot of them aren't hiding. A lot of them are trying to break contact and get back to the fight, but at the same time, there are some real no kidding great individuals, civilians as well as noncommissioned officers and officers doing those kind of jobs. That was probably the biggest thing I took away from that.

SGM WATERHOUSE: In December of 1984, you were assigned to Kitzingen, Germany where you served with Delta Company, 1st Battalion, 64th Armor Regiment for a couple of years. How did that particular assignment to Germany come about? I know you had mentioned a little bit about it before.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Yeah. That was the assignment that was given to me on the phone. You're going here. Get ready to go. ANCOG was put in place.

Actually, my assignment then was backed off by about six weeks of reporting to make sure I synchronized the school date in there, which the unit in Germany was happy to do because, number one, it was coming in. When I got to Kitzingen in -- I'm trying to think, Kitzingen now.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Were you filling like a key vacancy and that's why Branch wanted you over there. Hey, we need you to fill this Platoon's sergeant slot. How did they tell you? I don't know how that phone call went, but obviously they needed you there for something.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Yeah. It was just normal rotation. I had my Drill Sergeant time there. I was again well over a year after Drill Sergeant time, so I had been at Fort Knox for over four years. It was my turn to go to Europe. It was overseas assignment for me to get to Kitzingen.

SGM WATERHOUSE: I know when I went to Germany a few years after that, you didn't necessarily get a pinpoint assignment.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: And you normally didn't, but I think I ended up with a pinpoint assignment basically because of that delay for school. I think the delay for school gave me the opportunity to put me on track for that, to get that assignment there. So, I can't say that I was special. I just say that I probably was special. They said, this guy needs help, so put him where you can watch him a lot.

SGM WATERHOUSE: I know you got there and you spent time obviously as a Platoon sergeant and then sometime as an acting Platoon leader. We can get to the Platoon leader thing. You can kind of explain that as we go, but as a Platoon sergeant in Delta Company 164, again this is in Germany. From what you can say, what was 164 Armor's mission back then, and as a Platoon sergeant in that particular company, however the makeup was of that company, what were your basic duties and responsibilities?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Well, the unit was a typical armor unit. It was pure tank, nothing fancy about that. The unit mission was still basically what

it was early when I was first assignment Europe. It still supported NATO and was still a deterrent for things that happened in Europe, Germany. We weren't quite as aggressive as far as alerts, stuff like that. The tanks were not loaded with ammo no more. So, things had backed off at that point. My Platoon sergeant time was very limited literally. I showed up to the unit and a guy I had gone through Basic Training with was a Platoon sergeant in the same unit, but he was in a different Platoon in Basic Training. We knew each other, but that's how we were back together again.

How I found out I got pinpointed was I was repped to go into this battalion somewhere, and Mike Reeves saw the first Sergeant and said, hey, I saw Carl's name. This is the guy you want. Go get him. Don't let him go nowhere else. We want him over here. So, that's how I got in that unit, into Delta.

But the officers were doing a TEWT, a Tactical Exercise Without Troops, where they were out doing some rehearsals as officers would do with the

Company Commander and Platoon Leaders excel and they were kind of doing - if we were here doing this, what would you do. They were out in the field doing that, and the rest of the unit had gone out and were in Wildflicker getting ready to go do a mini-gunnery. So, the unit was already out in the field. I was coming in. Mike was my sponsor coming in. So he was back and greeted me. When I found out the unit was in the field, I said, well, we're done in processing. Let's get my TA-50. We're going to the field. Oh, you can't do that. Of course, it's not Mike telling me this. It's the in processing NCO saying, you can't do that. I says, well, I says, I can take your shit and we can get to the field, or you can get me my stuff and we'll get to the field together. Mike, all he did was look at the guy, he goes, get him his TA-50. We're leaving tomorrow for the field. Literally, three days after I arrive in Germany, I'm in the field with the unit in Wildflecking.

GSM WATERHOUSE: Was that pretty far away or pretty close?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Wildflecking was only about a two and a half hour drive to get there. So, we're in the field and of course, there's no officers there, met the First Sergeant in the field, met my Platoon, NCO's and soldiers, met my Platoon. Still hadn't really seen the tanks because they didn't put all the tanks. Each Platoon had put like two tanks.

GSM WATERHOUSE: These are still M-60's?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: These are still M-60, A-1, right.

They had put two tanks in this ring, so everybody didn't have a tank out there per se that it was your tank.

GSM WATERHOUSE: Shotgunning tanks.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: It was shotgunning it. It was just hotseating it, back and forth, because they were just getting cruise qualified, position qualified to go shoot the regular gunnery. I get there and literally it's kind of like it is weather here now. It's snowing a little bit. It's crappy weather, but these guys have been in the field. They did some

maneuvers. Now, they're into the gunnery portion. They're tired. They're run down. Every Platoon sergeant that was there was sniffly, taking cough medicine -

GSM WATERHOUSE: Getting sick.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: They were in bad shape. So, bottom line, I'm not qualified. I'm not certified yet. I'm just out there. So, they didn't shoot anything during the day because it snowed too hard. We had a couple of tanks prepped to shoot nighttime. We're up in the tower now. I'm sitting in the tower with the Platoon sergeants and two of the Platoon sergeants are going to run the tower with the German operator. They get the first tank started. Snow moves in. We go to a short halt. These guys are all like - - I mean they're out. They're cold. They're sniffley. I told them, I says, go in the back of the tower here. Go to sleep.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Get some sleep.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: When it gets hot, I'll wake you up.

We'll shoot the tanks. It was midnight, close, after midnight before the snow broke up enough. I get on the radio and I call the first tank and says, are you up. Roger, okay. Can you identify left flank? Roger. Can you identify right flank? Roger. I looked at the German and says, are you ready. Ready. I broke my book out, the TAR (sounds like) book out, and I said, Delta one-one, this is Charlie 6, potential enemy grid, dah, dah, dah, dah. Stand by. Give me Recon 1. That kind of stuff we got up there. The bottom line was I ran eight tank crews through with the German operator. Ran eight tanks crews through shooting their night runs and it was all stationary. It was simply crew off, crew on, crew off, crew on, type thing.

SGM WATERHOUSE: And you were kind of the only guy awake?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: But I was the only guy awake. So I was just running this whole time. I'm not certified, only been in country three days now.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, the First Sergeant was

asleep somewhere, he didn't know?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: The First Sergeant was down in the barracks. He was down in the barracks which was probably about three hundred meters away and that was where he was. He was down there with the troops.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Oh, you can hear tanks fire. It's not like he didn't know.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Yeah, tanks were firing. He's like okay, they're shooting. I've got Platoon Sergeants up in the tower. I'm good to go. So, long story short, we finished all that. The German has got a smile on his face. He goes yeah, we did this. I wake up and there are three Platoon Sergeants down there. I says, hey, let's go back. He says, oh, weather has got - I go, no, we're all done shooting. He goes, what. That was my first field night with the troop and so, then the next day is when the troop kind of came back with all the Platoon Leaders. I met my Platoon Leader, Carl Carlson, smart, smart, smart man. Five languages he could speak, but dumber than a box

of rocks when it came to putting his hands on the top of his head and pat his tummy at the same time. Just couldn't get the basic stuff done, but was an over intelligent man. Long story short, we get to Grafenwoehr now. I get the chance to look at all four tanks and they are in terrible maintenance shape. The crew drills are bad.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Were there any NCO's in the Platoon when you got there?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: There were NCO's in the Platoon. There were a couple of staff sergeants, one staff sergeant. All tanks had at least one sergeant, if not two sergeants.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, the staff sergeant was trying to run the Platoon.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Run the Platoon, it was just different things. Long story short, we go through the first couple of days of gunnery and we get weathered out most ranges. At that time, it didn't matter. If you were on this range and you were supposed to be off the range tomorrow, you're off the

range, whether you shot or didn't shoot. We were lead company going through. We did not shoot - I was the lead tank and I did not shoot a single round for four days in a row.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Wow. That's got to be frustrating.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: We missed four complete train-ups. We missed all our stationary training days. So, we got to the live fire. Platoon fire was actually the first live fire day we could shoot. So, we are going through the day fire, and it was terrible.

SGM WATERHOUSE: This was just the qualification.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: This was qualificaton, Table 12. It was terrible, and my buddy, Mike Reeves, comes over the radio and puts it on the troop net, company net, puts sixteen coffins. You've heard sixteen candles sung. He comes across, sixteen coffins. It was that bad of a run. So, night run comes up and even if we shot a perfect night run,

we're still not going to be a qualified Platoon. We are so screwed up.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Sixteen coffins is in the sixteen people in the Platoon.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Yeah, sixteen people in the Platoon, right. So, anyway, we go the night run. My tank, literally as soon as we start, the crazy L's inside the sights are dancing. So, there's no way we can pull the trigger.

SGM WATERHOUSE: This is the thermal --

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: The thermal imagery sight.

SGM WATERHOUSE: It's all messed up?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: It's all messed up. The crazy L's are going everywhere inside there. So, my tank is zeroed out from shooting main gun. I could still look down range. I can see when a target pops up, but I can't tell you what range it is. I can't tell you, but I can at least say, target up in somebody's sector type stuff. My wingman had something else go wrong in his vehicle. He couldn't fire a main

gun round.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Oh, no.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: The Platoon leaders tank, everytime he pulled the trigger, he ws doubtful left, doubtful right, doubtful left, doubtful right. So, something was wrong in his circuit. The only tank that was actually firing and hitting targets was the Platoon Leader's wingman.

SGM WATERHOUSE: On the far right side.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: On the far left side. So, we get all the way down on the end and I call the tower. I says, am I allowed to do controlled halt ammo redistribution and they go yes. I says, roger. I'm going to dismount and do MOUS mission (sounds like). There was not enough time. I just had the Platoon leader take all his rounds that left and give it to his wing man who technically can shoot. I said, we're going to keep on firing. So, you know, I had more back up again. D-d-d-d-dah. B-b-b-b-bum. He is hitting targets. He's doing a great job down there. But all these targets that come up on this sector.

They're up and they're down. So we're getting zero, zero, zero on this side.

SGM WATERHOUSE: You're not even able to see them from over there. Right?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Yeah, he can probably see them, but he is out of his range fan.

SGM WATERHOUSE: He can't fire that far.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Yeah. He's out of his range fan in that way. So, anyway, we're all done. It's a frosted disaster on top of the day's disaster. I'm getting ready to clear this range. We get the control tower...Red, which is the Platoon's call sign. Red, this is the tower, or this is black, clear and elevate. Give me Red Con 1. I just happen to look up my cupola periscope side. I see the Platoon leader's wing man, somebody come off the top of the vehicle, over the front slope and start walking in front of the tank. I go, cease fire - freeze; cease fire - freeze; cease fire - freeze. I call Red-3. I said Red-3, this is Red-4. I'm sorry, Red-2. Red-2, this is Red-4. No answer. Red-2, this is Red-4. No answer. God damn

it, Red-2, this is Red-4. Answer the fucking radio.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Somebody in that tank is hearing you.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: So, all of a sudden, this is Red-2 Gulf.

SGM WATERHOUSE: It's the gunner.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: So, it's the gunner. I says, is that your tank commander on the ground. Roger. Is everything okay? Roger. Call him and get him on the radio. I'm talking just as quietly, just like that. I says, is he good. I see a little head pop up and I see this guy turn around. I see him walk back. I see him mount from the back of the vehicle, get on the hop, he gets in here, puts his CBC helmet back on and he says, Red-4, this is Red-2. I says, this is Red-4. Is everything okay. Yes. Is there anything wrong with the vehicle? No. Is there anything safety wise that we've got to worry about that you had to dismount? No. Then why in the fuck are you -- and I just went off for like five minutes and I'm chewing his butt, you know. When it was all

done, I just said, Red, this is Red-4. Clear and elevate all weapons; keep gun tubes up and down range; turn vehicles around, give me a Red Con-1 when you're prepared to move. I watched everybody d-d-d-d turrets, stay down. Everybody turns around. I got Red-2 up, Red-3 up, my Platoon Leader even calls up, Red-1 up. I go, roger. I said Red-1, this is Red-4, Red prepared to move at this time now, out. He goes okay, we're all moving. Now we're moving back and the tower comes on and Thriller 6 is the Battalion Commander. His name is literally Michael Jackson. He is coming over the radio, Red-1, this is 6. This is Thunderbolt 6. Yeah, Thunder 6.

SGM WATERHOUSE: But he went by Thriller.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: But we called him Thriller. He didn't call him Thriller. No. He probably knew he was being called Thriller 6 but he was -- I mean he literally was Thriller. I mean he was a fireball. So, he called, this is Thunder 6. Yeah. God dang. He was such a happy go lucky guy all the time. This is Thriller 6, or Thunder 6. He says,

report to the tower when you come by. I'm going, fuck. So, I told my driver, I says, we're going to stay on line, but his blind was right next to the tower. I had to come over about a hundred and fifty meters. I said, as soon as we turn that lane, you need to floor it because I've got to go up in the tower with him. Then I'm looking at my gunner, and I said, be prepared to be the Tank Commander because this is the shortest Platoon Sergeant time in this history.

SGM WATERHOUSE: The Platoon leader is probably about to get fired.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: I said, is he getting ready to get fired, which means I get fired at the same time. I says, it's the way it works. So, Oscar was his first name. Oscar Carlson. Oscar was at the very top step of the tower by the time I caught up to him, and we walked through the door together. Boom, boom. We stopped, entered, and the Battalion Commander is sitting right her, and the Company Commander and the XO [Executive Officer] are sitting off to the side, just like, aw, shit. So, we both

salute and the Battalion Commander, Colonel Jackson, doesn't even look at me. He looks at -- and he says, Oscar, you didn't do too well today, did you. Well, you know, sir, it just -- no, no, we didn't do very well. He just talked like that. I'm like, holy shit. I'm like, God damn. I've only been with this guy like ten days.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Had you ever met the Battalion Commander at this point?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: I had never met the Battalion Commander before. Before I walked in the tower, I couldn't tell you what he looked like. So, we walk in there, and he goes, well, no, he didn't do very good. He says, here's what's going to happen. He says, you're supposed to go to Services, because we were supposed to leave the day after next. He said, when you get back, you're supposed to go to Services. He goes, yes, sir, we are. He goes, good. He said, while you're in Services, I want you to inventory your Platoon, because you're going to come up and work for me. Okay, sir, sounds good to me. I mean, now he

wasn't paying attention. He's getting fired from his job.

SGM WATERHOUSE: He didn't even put two and two together.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: So, I'm like aw, shit. I'm like waiting for my - what is he going to do. Where is he going to put me because he's just got me. He looks at me and he looks back at Lieutenant Carlson and he goes, Oscar, you're going to inventory the Platoon and you're going to sign everything over to Sergeant Christian. He said, Sergeant Christian, it will be your Platoon next week. You got any questions. I goes, no, sir. He says, then get the hell out of here. Roger.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So you became the Platoon Leader?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: I became the Platoon Leader ten days after I arrived at Batallion. So my Platoon Sergeant time was very limited as a actual Platoon Sergeant.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, really you spent the two

years over there as a Platoon Leader?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: When I left Germany, I had never received a Lieutenant in there. We changed our Battalion Commanders. I never received a Lieutenant. I was the second rankinest Platoon Leader by time and position in the Battalion and the only one that was more senior was my Third Platoon. Lieutenant Flynn was --

SGM WATERHOUSE: But you received credit as a Platoon Sergeant?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: I did. I got an NCR --

SGM WATERHOUSE: As Platoon Sergeant.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: -- as Platoon Sergeant, but I was also -- all my bullets were basically -

SGM WATERHOUSE: You met your stuff.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: -- excelled beyond the point to where he ran the Platoon as an officer. As a matter of fact, the next Colonel that came in, which was about halfway through that time, they had NCO DP's. We would always go to the NCO DP's with the Squadron Sergeant Major, Battalion Sergeant Major, and

when Colonel Jackson called for ODP's for the officers to go to, I would never go to those things. I'm not an officer. I wouldn't do that.

The new Colonel came in, and like a day after he had his first ODP, I'm down in the motor pool. I get a call saying hey, Colonel wants to see you in his office. I'm like, what did I do. I'm trying to think. I'm not thinking what I did. I'm trying to think what one of my guys did or what's broke or what do you got to go see the Battallion Commander for. So, I get up there and he looks at me. I knocked on the door, and he says, get in here. I report. He goes, where were you last night. I'm thinking.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Where was I?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Okay, what the hell. What broke? Well, sir, I was in my quarters last night. No, no, why weren't you at my ODP last night?

SGT WATERHOUSE: The Officer Development Program or Course?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Yeah, exactly. I says, sir, I'm a Sergeant.

SGM WATERHOUSE: I'm not an officer.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: He goes, you're my God damn Platoon Leader. He said, I expect you at every fricking function I held my lieutenants to be at. You will be at that function. Do you have any questions about that? I go, no, sir, not at all. He goes, now, get the hell out of here and get back to the motor pool. Roger that. So, that last year I was there, I mean literally I was at all the NCO DP's with the Sergeant Major and all the ODP's with the Colonel. If it was both at the same time simultaneously, Colonel trumped the Sergeant Major. I was at his ODP's all the time. I was given the opportunity really, no shit, to be the Platoon Leader that two years.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Do you think that, looking back -- I don't know if it is lessons learned. But looked back at that time, do you think that helped you later on in your career of working with officers the higher up you went?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Very much so. I mean, number one, you get to be one of them in a way. I mean, we all have a great relationship with most of our counterparts, but you're inside the group and you're behind the closed doors when they take the bars off and it's more Bill and Bob type stuff. You get to really learn some of the tricks of the trade.

The other thing I got to do was I had to brief differently. You know, when you brief a Sergeant Major or you brief a First Sergeant on certain things, you do it one way. When you are briefing a Colonel or you're briefing a Captain, you brief it a different way. In that Platoon Leader position, when I go to maintenance, I literally had to brief it in process and out process to the Battalion Commander, you know, what do I expect before I went in there, how do I supposed to do it. You know, as an NCO, you say, well, we're going in to fix the shit, and we walk back out. As an officer, you can't just say it that way. You walk in and walk out.

So, we actually had a border mission with the Troop Commander one time, and I was in charge of the camp. The Company Commander had to go somewhere and do something. So, I was in charge of the camp. We were trying to paint the tanks at the same time we were doing border duty. It was one of these managed programs. You could take one tank out of cycle and then paint it and then put it back in cycle and take the other one out.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Put new camo on them.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Put new camo on them and all the rest of that stuff. It was a carc paint at the time.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Carcinogenic?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Yeah.

SGM WATERHOUSE: I've been on those details.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Yeah. So, you know what I'm talking about. So, anyway, I had made the decision because something had happened and I couldn't -- the cycle we had decided to do, something couldn't work, so I changed the priority of work and took a

different vehicle to do something with, because of some other thing. Well, the Company Commander comes back the next day, and he is fired up. I mean, I'm in the cantina having lunch, and he walks in the cantina door, and he looks and says, I want to see you outside now. I'm like, roger. I was with the XO. As a matter of fact, I was with the XO. And I was with one of our Platoon Sergeants, I think. So, I got up and I walked out the door, and he's standing in this little courtyard. He starts going off on me about who gave you the authority - who did you do - dah, dah, dah, dah, dah. And I just went off. I mean, I says, let me fucking tell you this. I was right back in his face and I was just blasting away. Finally I kind of like - - and it was probably thirty seconds. It felt like ten minutes, but it was probably thirty seconds. I said, you've already crossed the line ten times over. I locked up. I just stood in position of attention. He kept on ranting for about another ten seconds, fifteen seconds. He shut up, and I said, first of all, I apologize. I should have never lost my bearing.

Second of all, if you want to press charges, I will not argue it. I will sign the paperwork today.

Third, if I am allowed to, can I explain? Of course, by this time, when I said number one, number two, he kind of got at least one breath in. He kind of said, okay, tell me what's going on. And I told him why we had to change the priority work. He looks at me and goes, God damn it, it was the right thing to fucking do, but, God damn it, if I let you do that, all these Lieutenants are going to think they can do that too and they're not smart enough to do that shit. So, God damn it, talk to me next time before you do that. I go, roger that, sir, I got it.

SGM WATERHOUSE: That's what I was going to ask you, because if the other Lieutenants had that authority to do that, you were serving as a Platoon Leader just like that, but that wasn't the case.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: It really wasn't. I mean, as an NCO, you see a problem, you take it and you grab the bull by the horns and you make it happen. You fix it. As an officer, you're kind of trained not

to make those decisions until the boss tells you you can. He was circumvented by one of his Platoon Leaders per se and so, what was a lesson learned. I really learned from that position was, I really had the opportunity to walk in their shoes, if you want to call it that. I learned there are a lot more limitations on Junior Officers in particular than there are on Junior NCO's and even mid-level NCO's. We have a lot shorter latitude to go out and do things our way than an officer does without it being a career destroyer.

SGM WATERHOUSE: We have more latitude.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Exactly. You know, the other thing was, I was in that unit, the Audie Murphy Morales Club. Morales is over in Europe. I was selected, along with one of the Staff Sergeants in our same company to go up for Morales. I didn't want to do it, but got told you are going to do this thing. So, I went up through the Board --

SGM WATERHOUSE: It's a competition Board for people that don't know.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Oh, yeah. For people that don't know, it's a leadership competition Board that goes all the way up to -- basically it's core level. It's supposed to be the final decision point. My final Board actually had thirteen Sergeant Majors on it.

SGM WATERHOUSE: That's who's asking the questions.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: It was. Unfortunately the core Sergeant Major when he made the call just put an ollie, ollie, oxen free, instead of saying I want five of you thirteen. All thirteen showed up. So, instead of letting eight of them go, he said, no, you are all going to sit the Board.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, you're getting grilled with questions up from thirteen.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: And what it was, where you normally would have five do it, well, the one over here would start talking to you about one topic, three people later -- something you said to this Sergeant Major here, three people later would have the same

exact topic but trip you up with something you said to this first Sergeant Major. So, it was like, well, you just told him that, but what do you mean by doing. It was like a no crap murder Board type process. The very last Sergeant Major, because I was waiting for someone to ask me the exact type of question you just asked, why should we let you be a Morales, a Sergeant, award type program if you want to be an officer, if you are an officer. Right?

So nobody asked me that until the very last Sergeant Major sitting there. He said, why should we recommend you for Morales if you are an officer. I said, well, first of all, I'm a noncommissioned officer, acting as a Platoon Leader. Second of all, I think I've gained more perspective of what it means to be a Platoon Sergeant because I was able to be a Platoon Leader too and I realize my responsibilities more to train the young Lieutenant than I ever have in the past. I says, so, if that disqualifies me from being a Morales, I understand and I'll salute the flag. Of

course, he gets a big smile on his face and goes, you made it, get out of here. I was the last one. I was an E-7. I was the last one of the Board. They had a couple of E-5's in there, E-6's. I was the only E-7, and I was the last one on board.

I got there at like eight o'clock in the morning and going for the Board at like 4:30 in the afternoon.

SGM WATERHOUSE: You had been sitting there all day.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: I was ready to get out of there, no matter what they told me. So, that was what I did there.

SGM WATERHOUSE: After your time in Germany was up, which was a couple of years, in January of 1987, you were assigned to Fort Bliss, Texas, where you went to the United States Army Sergeants Major Academy and attended the Sergeants Major Course there. I'm sorry. You served as a Training Support Writer there for about three years. How did this assignment to Bliss to the Academy come about?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: I was a by name select for an EO assignment to Fort Hood, Texas.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Equal opportunity?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Yeah, equal opportunity. I was told I was going to be selected to become an EO Sergeant, Equal Opportunity Sergeant at Brigade Level. Just like being a Drill Sergeant, most people, I don't want to do it. I want to be with troops. I want to get out here and keep getting dirty.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Had you been to the Equal Opportunity Course?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: No, I had not. I was just one of these, you are by name select. You're the guy going, no questions asked. So, I called DA and said, I don't want to do this. They said, you don't have a choice. You're a by name select. I says -- you know, I kind of got pissed. I says, you know, I kind of ran down my little itinerary. I've been here. I've been doing this now. I'm in a Platoon Leader position. I've been doing all this. I'm a Morales guy. He goes, what, you're Morales. I go, yeah, I'm a Morales guy.

Stand by. So, he gets back on the phone. He goes, what do you think about being a Writer at the Sergeant Majors Academy. I go, no, I want to be - I says, send me somewhere with troops, Combat Arms. That's all I want to do. He goes, you don't understand. You can go to Fort Hood, Texas as an EO or you can go to Fort Bliss, Texas as a Course Writer.

SGM WATERHOUSE: And you've already been to -

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Which one do you want to do? I says, well, I definitely don't want to be an EO. I says, so, I'll go to Fort Bliss, Texas and I'll be a Course Writer. So, that's how I got assigned to the Sergeant Majors Academy.

SGT WATERHOUSE: For there, I think your duty title was Training Support Writer. How was that different or similar to your previous time as a Writer?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: The base thing is at Fort Knox, Kentucky as a Writer, I did the common lessons for armor. At the USASMA, the Sergeant Majors Academy, they did a common core lessons for

leadership, for primary leadership course, basic leadership course, and advanced leadership course.

SGM WATERHOUSE: It was different courses.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Instead of the courses themselves, the proponent for the course -- so armor proponent for ANCOC would write the ANCOC lessons or the Armored lessons for ANCOC, but USASMA wrote the common leadership training. I was responsible for the common leadership training.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Common stuff, yeah. And applied it to all those different levels.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Right. My first focus was on the primary leadership training. So, I actually started out as PLDC [Primary Leadership Development Course] as my primary responsibility to write the lessons for.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Which today would be the basic leader course.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Right, which today would be the basic leader course. I was given the opportunity - USASMA had done a couple foreign

Sergeant Majors, 1 or 2's here or there, but they were getting ready to do a group of foreign Sergeant Majors come into the course. So, they had to rewrite -- they put together a pre-course for these -- let me see -- there were seven Sergeant Majors, Turkey, Germany, Italy, Africa and I forgot the other ones -- Greece was another one. So, they were putting together this pre-course to kind of give them a here's how we do U.S. stuff before they put them into the Sergeant Majors Academy.

SGM WATERHOUSE: They just show up a month or two before; right?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Exactly. And so, they asked me -- I was the only combat arms person in this whole area from -- and there's probably twelve E-9's in this area, seven or eight Master Sergeant's and only one Sergeant First Class.

SGM WATERHOUSE: You?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Me. And so, they said, we need you to write these lessons for -- the military lessons for this pre-course. I go, I can do that. So,

I got on these things and I started writing these lessons, and literally some of the lessons were like how does the Department of Defense work. That was a lesson I had to write.

SGM WATERHOUSE: I was going to ask you, was this something you were ready to do or was this something that was above what you --

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Well, when they said write military lessons, I thought military lessons, I thought, okay.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Stuff you did as a Drill Sergeant.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Yeah, like, how do you go shoot somebody. One of the lessons I had was how does the Department of Defense work. I'm like how the hell should I know. I don't know. So, I literally had -- I spent, just for that one lesson, I think I spent two and a half weeks in our library in USASMA just researching Department of Defense, of how it works.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, in this assignment, who did you go to when you had a question like where do I

go with it?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: There was nobody.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Nobody, huh.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: When I got done writing the lesson, I basically sent it to my initial Sergeant Major that had the responsibility for and he just looked at it and goes, eh, okay. And Larry was a great guy. He's actually a Navy Seal who was actually at the United States Army Sergeant Major Academy. Larry was a Navy Seal and he was just an awesome guy, but he looked shit in the fact. If he can't break it in half, it ain't worth his time to mess with it, but again, very smart, intellectual guy, just looked at it and said, I think it's okay, send it to our editor. Again, it's one of these. He looked at it more for grammar and text and stuff like this. There really wasn't anybody who looked at it for content.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Or content, yeah.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: You know.

SGM WATERHOUSE: They asked you to get it when the students got it; right?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Well, there were a couple of other Sergeant Majors in there that I call them big brain people, because they are smart guys. They'd look it over and go, yeah, it makes sense to me.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So you did have some QAQ's to look at it.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Exactly. Yeah. There were three other Sergeant Majors that were doing the other portions of that course that were getting my lessons as well. I wouldn't get any of theirs but they would get mine. They would review them and say, ohay, this kind of makes sense to me, and, okay, we're good to go.

Then they said you're done with it. About a week later, they came to me, and said, we don't have anybody that knows how to teach this. Can you teach this course? I'm going okay. So, now I'm an E-7 getting ready to teach E-9's of foreign countries in our pre-course for the Sergeant Majors.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, you did both this time, all this time, every class, you did it.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Yep. No. Just the first class that we did this with. So, then the first class comes in and I did the military portion. It was really -- for me, it was an awesome experience, because I got really -- I mean I had interacted with Germans before, but I hadn't interacted with a lot of other countries. Definitely as an E-7, mentoring, coaching and teaching E-9's is not something you are normally doing, but it was a great experience and then watching them learn our processes. It got to the point like it is in our schools. The USASMA is more about time than it is about standard. It's I want to teach you the standards, but it's got to be the time. We're not worried about you actually getting to that standard unless you run out of time. So, it's that kind of mentality.

So, I got to the Department of Defense lesson and it was like, how am I going to explain all of this. There's the civilian side and there's the military side.

SGM WATERHOUSE: How in depth do you do?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Yeah, when I don't even understand how half this shit works. What it really boiled down to, I just drove two big square in the board. I put a little square on both sides. I says, you see this military side. Yep. There's a little office called Civilian Liason. Do you see this civilian side? Yep. There is a little office called Military Liason. I said, whatever this side works on, it goes to this office. This office send it to this office. This office takes it to these guys and they work on it. When they get it done, it goes back to this office. This office goes to this office. This office works and goes over here. That's the Department of Defense. That's basically how it works for us in the military. Ah, okay. That to me was how our -- it was very quick, but that's basically a generalization of how our Department of Defense works. So then I said, what am I going to do now. I've got forty-five minutes to burn.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, this was like an hour long course?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: It was an hour. Yeah. Each lesson is about an hour. So, I basically said, okay, let me show you how to do the TLO's, ELO's, the Terminal Learning Objective and the Enabling Learning Objectives, how to find in the text, how to highlight that. That's where your questions are going to come from. You've got to understand a little bit discussion wise, generality, but that's the focus for the tests. So, we focused on that. I mean, that was one of the first lessons up front.

SGM WATERHOUSE: You've got to teach them how the course is going to go.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Exactly. So, that was a great opportunity to sit with those guys and watch them glow. It helped me as a Senior NCO make more better decisions later on in my career as a First Sergeant and Sergeant Major, when you start remembering how to talk to young soldiers because they're just like those foreign suits. They kind of understand the words, but they don't quite understand what the meaning of the words are. So, you had to get

down there.

SGT WATERHOUSE: You did this job for about almost three years. Did your duties and responsibilities kind of morph during that time line or did you pretty much keep writing new lessons or tweaking them every year?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Mostly it was characteristically about the same thing, but I did morph from just primary leader to the BNCOC level, the mid-level leader. I just talked about it. I was asked to do the lessons for the Sergeant Majors Academy and brought that into play, but for the most part, it was just write lessons, keep the common core going, TRADOC [Training and Doctrine Command] reviews the common course all the time. So, there was always a rewrite that had to be done somewhere, for somebody, for something. So, it wasn't like it was simple.

Then the other thing that was hard was most of the Sergeant Majors in that organization, most of the people in that organization are still in uniform on their final hoorah. That's their last pension of

going home type thing. They're not going to go back out to the Force. They've done great things out there.

SGT WATERHOUSE: Are you talking about the ones working there?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Yeah. The ones that are working there. I mean, I'm talking about in that staff environment back there. I'm a young gun. I'm still anxious to get back to the fight and I don't want to lose that edge. So, I would come in, in the morning, about 5:30 in the morning I'd be on Fort Bliss. I'd park my car by the gym. I'd get out and run two and a half miles down to the prison at the end of the road, tap the prison fence, run two and a half miles back. By the time I get back, the gym's open. I go shower. I go in the mess hall. I have a small breakfast. I go from the mess hall into work, and I'm still at work about an hour before anybody else shows up.

At noon, the Senior Sergeant Major says we're going to play basketball. We all link up and we go to the gym. We start a basketball game about 12:30,

and about 3:00 we get back to work. At 3:30, it's kind of like, well, let's wrap it up and start locking things up for the day.

SGM WATERHOUSE: You work like three hours?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Exactly. Part of that time, that was your work schedule, and it was like, this is killing me. I actually got called in by one of the Sergeant Majors who was the DOTD Director, that said, you're working too hard. You've got to slow down. I told him, I said, Sergeant Major, I appreciate what you're saying. I realize what you're saying, but, I says, here's the difference. I pointed out a couple others. They don't have to compete for nothing else. I still got to continue to compete.

SGT WATERHOUSE: And you were a Sergeant First Class?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Yeah. I was a Sergeant First Class still. I says, I want to get back to the Force, and when I do, I want to be prepared to do that. When he understood what I wanted, he was very good about supporting that. He says, I got you. And I

think I dug my own hole, because then he started giving me even more work. It was like, well, we're going to start doing this more. Again, more so, the job was a great job. I learned a lot about writing, the techniques of writing, awareness of writing. I'm the kind of guy that gets the comma shaker out and sprinkles it on the paper after I write it. I learned how to organize my papers better. That was a very good plus for me which paid off well into my career for that piece.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Any other particular lessons learned before I move on to the next assignment?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Idle hands create problems, you know.

SGM WATERHOUSE: You learned more not what to do?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: It was easy to get in trouble there, if you -- as an older guy, you knew better. As a young guy, you could get in trouble really easy. There were some junior soldiers that were

assigned there and the clerks and typists and stuff like this, but we had one young female who had three children, not married, all by three different fathers, while she worked at USAMA. So, those kind of things are things that could have happened there, and again, as personally, you had to look at that and go, how can I not put myself in there, or how can I make sure my soldiers don't do that when it's my turn to be in charge.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Speaking of in charge, in October of 1989, you were promoted to the rank of Master Sergeant and in December of 1989, you were assigned to the 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment or ACR there at Fort Bliss where you served for a little over three years. Your first assignment in the 3rd ACR was Echo Troop, 2nd Squadron where you served as the First Sergeant for about a year.

Looking back at that first assignment as the First Sergeant for Echo Troop, 2nd of the 3rd ACR, what was Echo Troop or 2nd Squadron's mission when you arrived there in 1989?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Well, 3rd Regiment was the reconnaissance organization for the 3rd Corps at Fort Hood, Texas, so 2nd Squadron was just part of that mission set. We were an organization that basically is a Squadron. Each Troop had a little bit of a mixture. It wasn't quite the same as the old H series was, but we still had mortars inside the organization. We still had infantry inside the organization, and we had cavalry inside the organization. So, you still had different parts that were working together, but in a lot less specified mission sets than we had in the old 8 series. That was the biggest difference.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, all those worked together for one mission guys?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Exactly. They lived together. They worked together. Then as you went out and operated, you literally did everything together. So, one person knew that if you said click, you were going to the left, and if you said clock, you were going to the right.

SGM WATERHOUSE: What would you say, in

looking back with Echo Troop in that first unit, what do you think were your primary roles and responsibilities as the Echo Troop First Sergeant?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: The primary responsibility is always to take care of the soldiers. You've got to make sure they're doing the right things, that they're taken care of the right way. Their families are being watched out for. One of the first things I had -- I mean literally when I got there, I gave a ninety day notice, that we're going to do a PT test in ninety days. Sixty days later, or three days later, in sixty days we're having a PT test. In thirty days, we're having a PT test. In three weeks, we're having a PT test, two weeks, next week is PT test. How we did the PT test is, no PT tests on Mondays and Fridays, bad days to do PT tests. So, Tuesday, the Platoon Leaders and Platoon Sergeants gave the PT test. I'm sorry. The Troop Commander and myself gave the Platoon Leaders and Platoon Sergeants their PT test on Tuesday.

On Wednesday, Platoon Leaders and Platoon

Sergeants gave the PT test to Section Sergeants and Squad Leaders. The Troop Commander and myself evaluated the Platoon Leader and the Platoon Sergeant administering PT tests. On Thursday, the troops took the PT test administered by the Squad Leaders and Second Sergeants, evaluated by the Platoon Sergeant and Platoon Leaders, and me and the Troop Commander took the PT test with the troops.

So, everybody was being evaluated as how to be an evaluator. So, we were making all those kind of tasks happen.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Train the trainer kind of stuff.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: But when I did the first PT test, the Platoon Leaders and Platoon Sergeants, out of five Platoon Sergeants, three of them failed the PT test.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Um. Not good.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: So, the first thing you do when you've got PT test, is you flag everybody. So, I flagged all of them. The second thing you do is

you evaluate them. So, I evaluated all of them. One had a double hernia. One had a dislocated back, and one had some other physical issue that --

SGM WATERHOUSE: They just went ahead and took the PT test anyway --

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Well, back then, it was, if I get a profile, I'm never going to get promoted. So, we hid problems. We had so many leaders that were not taking care of themselves because we would -- the perception was - I never really saw it ever happen, but the perception was, I would not be able to get promoted if I have a profile.

So, they were hiding problems. I mean serious, serious problems. So, lift the flags off of them, get them medical checked and all the rest of the stuff. I had one of those three individuals. It took me over a year to get his flag off. He was probably of the three, the best of the three. Because of that flag, he was passed over on two different selection boards for promotion.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Two Master Sergeant.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: And so, I had an IG, an
Inspector

General's inspection again where I was later on in 10
years of Echo Troop. On the back of the door of every
First Sergeant office time, you had, here's your
profiles. Here's your chapter cases. Here is what
USMJ is actually going to happen.

SGM WATERHOUSE: before we had computers.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: before we had a lot of
computers. You're right. So, on the back of that
door, this evaluator is looking at my books and so
like that, he says, how many PT failures do you have.
I showed him on the back of the Board there. I said,
whatever it ws, three or four.

He said, how many flags do you have. I go,
zero. He goes, what. I mean, it was like - and I told
him the story about losing, having a really great
Platoon Sergeant who probably should have been a First
Sergeant, not have the opportunity because the system
failed him. I says, as long as I am a leader, I will
never again put a flag on an individual until I

completely find out is it medical or is it just the guy who screwed up. At the end of the day, he says, you know, that's a deficiency which ain't going to make it on my paper because I agree with you. So, it was a good lesson learned, in that respect.

The other thing about Echo Troop, when I took over, I don't think there was a single door that locked, and I'm not talking because the lock was broken, but because the door was busted.

SGM WATERHOUSE: In the personnel, in the soldier's room?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN In the soldier's room, in the barracks to hold their --

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, they couldn't secure their stuff?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Doors were kicked in. I mean, doors were splintered. There was not a single dresser that was not, had drawn fronts pulled off.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Were these old buildings or new?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: These were basically the

same billets you see right there and now, but they were not that old of a barracks. It wasn't like World War II wood. These were the old hammerhead type stuff. Type concrete and the rest of it.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Probably from the sixties or seventies.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: When I went, the bunks, they were held together, the top bunk to the bottom bunk, with lacing wire, or hundred mile an hour tape. I'm like, what is going on here. So, basically, fortunately, two things happened. I called the Squadron Sergeant Major, Guy Swann, and I said, I need some help. Can I get a bomb squad over here? The bomb squad, the billets maintenance folks that come through and kind of do a TI, technical inspection, and they kind of say, okay, we're going to fix this heater and this water fountain and all the rest of the stuff. The bomb squad came over and started going through my barracks.

They helped me replace every door that was splintered. I got a brand new Supply Sergeant, whom I

knew from a previous assignment, and I said, you're my man. You've got thirty days to get me some new furniture. He went to the Post reclamation site, and did a one for one swap, bad for good, and it was rebuilt furniture, but it was just like brand new. Literally, within a week, probably two of getting the barracks back up to liveable standards where soldiers could lock a room, could have keys to their rooms, that they actually had dressers that had drawers that could open and close, and all the bunks were now safe bunks to sleep under just like this. We had just completed PT. I was sitting in my office and this young trooper came down the hallways looking for his Platoon Sergeant. Outside my door, this trooper told his Platoon Sergeant, I locked my keys in my room and I can't get in. I won't be able to make the formation in time. The Platoon Sergeant told him, just go kick your door in and get your -- I came flying out of that chair.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Now you know how that stuff happened in the first place.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Exactly. I went around that corner, and I said, stop. If you bust that door in -- I looked at the Platoon Sergeant, I said, you will buy that door. I said, this is bullshit. I kind of went on a little bit of a rant and I looked at the young man and I says, you go to CQ desk, and you call this number. I gave him the number to call to get the guy over here to open the door for him. I looked at the Platoon Sergeant and I said, you may lose your soldier for a couple of hours until that guy can show up and get this done. Then I told him, get in my office, and then again, for about the next twenty minutes, just property accountability, taking care of soldiers, not destroying Government -- it was unbelievable, the mentality that organization had. It's a pig sty. Let's live like pigs. That was the two biggest things I had to worry about.

SGM WATERHOUSE: When you got there, was there a First Sergeant in place?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: There was a First Sergeant in place, but it was the stereotype.

Remember, we used to have the stereotype of the First Sergeant. They're all ha, ha, ha and he'd go to his office and open the bottom drawer and his whiskey bottle in the bottom. That was the First Sergeant I replaced. I'm not saying he was an alcoholic, but if you're hiding a bottle of whiskey in the middle of the day, you're an alcoholic. What that told me also was he is not down in the motor pool. He's not out with his troops. He's not doing --soldiers do what leaders check.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, a First Sergeant on paper basically.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: First Sergeant on paper, basically. I was marking time because this was my last assignment. So, there were some challenges there, but once we kind of got that taken care of, we were good to go.

I got my Platoon Leaders, probably the first couple of weeks I was there, we were doing some small arms shooting, oh, and this range, but we came in for the

weekend. So I came out on a Saturday. It was Saturday or Sunday, Saturday. I came in on a Saturday and here's this two and a half ton truck parked behind the Troop. I'm like, okay, it's normal. The tarp over some stuff in the back, I raise the tarp up. It's all small arms ammunition. I'm like -

SGM WATERHOUSE: Unfired?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: There's not a great deal, but there's enough -- yeah, it's all live. It's all just sitting under a tarp in a truck.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Nobody is watching it?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Nobody is watching it. It's not guarded, nothing.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, I went to CQ. I says, I want you to call all the Platoon Leaders in. I says, call them all in and tell them I'm sitting in my office. I expect them here within an hour. Of course, you know how that goes over. The First Sergeant calling all these Lieutenants in. Here is where that experience of being a Platoon Leader kind of pays off a little bit, because I know what their responsibility

was for that range type stuff. So, I waited.

Of course, the Senior of the Platoon Leaders come in, Lieutenant Dyson, he comes in and he's smoking. He's got smoke from both ears. What the hell is a First Sergeant doing? I outrank you. I do all that. I says, Sir, I got it. Well, what do you want? I said, Sir, are all the other Platoon Leaders here? No. Well, we've still got about twenty-three minutes. We'll wait for them to show up. Now, he's even smoking more.

So, I basically waited. All of them showed up. By this time, Dyson has gotten all of them fired up. So, I went to their little area and I said, I'm just going to give you two little things. The first thing is that ammo in the back is your responsibility as an officer, not my responsibility as a noncommissioned officer. I said the second thing is, I says, you all gave the report to the Troop Commander that everything was secured and ready to go for the weekend, not the Platoon Sergeant, you gave that Troop Commander that. I says, it's unsecured. I says, here

is the bad thing about it, because it's only small arms, you could have put it in this room in that wall locker which is twelve gauge steel, locked that with a 200 series lock, closed your door, locked it, had the CQ sit right there in the hallway and watch your door, and it would have been okay.

You would have met the requirements for safety, but you failed to even take that notice. I says, because of that, you put your Troop Commander at risk. Of course, they're like, you don't have a right. I says, I'll tell you what, Sir. I just talked. I says, I'll tell you what, Sir. There's my office. There's my phone. You can call the Troop Commander, your choice. I says, I will wait for the Troop Commander too. I said, but you are welcome to go call the Troop Commander and you can use my phone right there, Sir. God -- fucking -- and he went up there, and those Lieutenants with him took the stuff out of that wall locker, secured the stuff, and he locked the wall locker, but to this day, I still talk to that Lieutenant who is now retired, you know, Lieutenant

Colonel, but I still talk to him. You gain that relationship. You gain that experience. That's what we as NCO's do. Did the Troop Commander find out about it? Of course, he did, but it was after the fact. It was like, hey, sir, don't go shooting nobody. They did the right thing. They didn't like it, but they did the right thing.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah, yeah, yeah. I'm sure you gave an award though because you know at least one of them are going to cry to the Commander.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Oh, absolutely. Or what happens if next time something happens. You know, the Troop Commander has got to understand that if that Lieutenant does something stupid like that again, now it becomes a pattern, and he has got to be able to take care of it. Just like we always have, we've got to keep our bosses informed, but they don't necessarily need to get involved.

SGM WATERHOUSE: You got there and so, now we're into 1990. In August of 1990, Saddam Hussein and the Iraqi Army at the time invaded Kuwait. How did

that initially affect your unit once that Operation Desert Shield came into being?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: The hard part was the rumors was there, but the execution wasn't. So, we were kind of sort of knew we were going to go. Families knew we were going to go, but we didn't have any official word we were going to go. That was almost a back breaker, because literally the Squadron Commander was -- the Regimental Commander was in the theater briefing families and told them point blank, I do not know that we have orders to do anything.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Oh, like one of the movie theaters on post?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Exactly. And he literally told them that. When he walked off stage and everybody was leaving, he got handed a note that said, you are now on orders.

SGM WATERHOUSE: The whole 3rd ACR?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: The whole 3rd ACR. So, that started the whole rumor mill that we don't trust families; we aren't telling the truth of anything.

That was really a back breaker that we had to wrestle with for everything little thing we did. Did we need our husbands in there at three o'clock in the morning? Did we need to keep them longer on weekends? Did we need to do whatever we were doing? It was always these calls coming into the CQ desk. Is my husband really working, type thing, or are they out doing something else, type stuff, you know. So, that was one of the bigger challenges we had because of that notification.

The other thing though was, is that leading up to that, even though we didn't have official orders, it was PCI, PCI, PCI, Pre-Combat Inspections, Pre-Combat Inspections, Pre-Combat Inspections, check, double check, re-check. We knew we were going to get the mission.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, the focus came pre-deployment?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: The focus came. The soldier had it. We knew it. Even the families knew we were going to do it. The just didn't have that

official word. The way it happened with the Regimental Commander saying we don't have it, and literally, as they were walking out the door, he gets it, but he can't call everybody back in. He called the Squadron Commanders right away and said, hey, we got orders.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Was this August or September? Do you remember?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: I want to say it was late August.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay. So, about a week, maybe, after the invasion of Kuwait?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Yeah, yeah, about a week after that. So, that's kind of what stirred it. But then we knew kind of everything was going to happen when the invasion got -- so we were leaning well forward. The problem is without orders, there's no dollars, and because there's no dollars, all the repair parts you knew you needed to put on the vehicles to get them ready for shipment out was not there.

SGM WATERHOUSE: When you knew you had to

take your own vehicles.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: We knew we had to take our own vehicles. We were prepping all that. The question we had was at that time, the Transportation Command wasn't sure they could get bullets to us in time. So, what do we do with bullets? How do we take bullets? How we don't take bullets? You can't just - do you now get an ammunitions ship, plus a container ship, plus other things.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Are you talking about the tank and Bradley bullets?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Exactly, tank and Bradley bullets, because everything else is going to be loaded up on the vehicles. I mean, literally, everything was. Well, the decision was made that we were going to load our Squadron with the main gun bullets for the tanks. The M-1 is a combustible round. So, there's no steel casing on it, but it has a plastic coating on the outside, so it's not like the old Sheridan type stuff. So, we loaded all the rounds up. They all went overseas. The problem was in that

decision is that the rounds swelled in the honeycombs.

SGM WATERHOUSE: These were M-1, A-1's?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: These were M-1, A-1
tanks.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Not M-60's.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Yeah. I'm sorry. Yeah.
These were are M-1, A-1's and that's it.

SGM WATERHOUSE: And M-2 and M-3 Bradleys, I
think.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: M-2's, we had M-2's.

SGM WATERHOUSE: M-2's?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Yeah. We had M-2's and M-
3's.

SGM WATERHOUSE: In the Troop?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Yeah. We had a couple of
M-3's. Yeah. So, you got that kind of mixed match
bag of stuff like that going on. You're in this kind
of what the hell we doing more all the time. When we
got to Theater, of course, you're in the Port of
Jibal, and you're staging and you're waiting, and
you're waiting, and you're waiting. You did your re-

con. We did our re-con's out to the first staging area. We already did that. We had mission rehearsals on the maps and all the rest of the stuff.

It was the second to last day. It was, yeah, second to last day, before we moved out. The officers were having a football game on the dock, and they needed one more player to play. So, the old First Sergeant says, oh, shit, I can play with you young guys.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, this is at Jibal?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: This is at Jibal.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Right before you're going to move to the first positions in Kuwait? Was it in Kuwait?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: It was in Kuwait, yeah. And so, I got out there playing with them. It was like even, even, even, even, even, and finally, they said, hey, it's time to quit. Next score wins. So, this Lieutenant was quarterbacking. You know, I'm an old guy out in the field now. So, I'm playing end -

SGM WATERHOUSE: As what, thirty something?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Yeah. I was twenty-eight, probably. So, I was out there, and I said, I'm open, I'm open. They didn't cover me at all. We come back and then we missed a pass, whatever. We come back, I told them, look, they're not watching me at all. I'm no threat whatsoever. So, I go out and I'm running, and I do a little feint inside. I plant the left foot to go to the outside, and (makes popping sound), I mean that loud. There was another Lieutenant probably ten feet away from me, heard the pop of my Achilles.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Oh, crap.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: I mean, it brought me to my knees and literally, I blew my Achilles out right there.

SGM WATERHOUSE: That's not a fast recovery.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: No. Long story short, they had a Fleet Hospital right there in Jabal. They took me to the hospital. By this time, I'm numb from halfway down my calf all the way into to my foot. I walked into the emergency area. I had the PA with me. They went and got the PA. He checked it out and says,

yeah, I think you tore your Achilles. They took this HUMVEE down to the hospital. I walk in limping, but I waslk into the emergency area. They told me to get up on the gurney. The nurse walks over and says, what's wrong. I said, the doc told me I tore my Achilles. He says, ah, you didn't tear an Achilles; you couldn't walk if you did.

So, long story short, doc comes in about ten minutes later, fifteen minutes later, checks my leg and says, ah you tore your Achilles. The nurse goes, oh, shit. So, I was in there --

SGM WATERHOUSE: You tore it from the bottom.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Yeah. I tore it right in the middle, right there.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Right at the base of the ankle.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Needless to say, the unit deployed out. I'm in the hospital. I got operated on the morning they were deloying out. I got operated on that morning. I was told if I got the surgery - the doc was one year younger than I was. He said if you

get cut this way, you have a short cast. If you get cut this way, you've got to have a long cast. If you've got a long cast, you cannot stay in Theater.

I said, that's simple. This way, short cast. I'm not leaving. Needless to say, if you can't recover within a certain amount of days, you're automatically medivaced backwards and that's where I hit. So, I retrograded back, after I spent about ten days in the hospital there. I retrograded back to Germany, spent a few days there, retrograded back to -
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SGM WATERHOUSE: Bliss?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: No. I went to Philaelpia or somewhere on the east coast first and spent a couple of days there, and then to Bliss.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Were these different evaluations or just stops.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Every time you get on a plane, you're casted. Okay? I had to have my cast, but when you get on a plane, they had to cut the cast because the plane swells, your leg swells. So they

had to cut the cast so it would swell. I land, and then they wheel you in, they do an x-ray to make sure nothing is screwed up, recast it. The cast has got to set for a few days so it dries hard enough, so they can cut it and put you on another plane. So, that's really where I got -- what was good about that though, is every time I went back -- you're supposed to keep your foot angled down as far as you can for the Achilles to heal up.

SGM WATERHOUSE: And to keep pressure off of it.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: And to keep pressure off that Achilles. So what was happening was, every time they took the cast off, I was able to move my leg up and down a little bit. Every time they re-casted it, I cast it a little bit higher, a little bit higher, a little bit higher. So, by the time I was done casting, I already had my foot bent a little bit, and that helped me recover faster. Probably not the right thing to do.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Was that in the doctor's

orders?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Yeah, it was probably not. There was a lot more to what it took to get back in the fight.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, you had to come back, and then they put you in charge of the - the 38's (sounds like) here put you in charge of Rear Detachment. Was that for the Squadron or the Regiment?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: It was for the Regiment.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay. So, which is like the Brigade for Units that don't have a Regiment.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Right. Yeah, a Brigade is just roughly about twenty-five hundred people. A Regiment is about five thousand, but the structure is exactly the same.

SGM WATERHOUSE: A Colonel 0-6 --

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Colonel 0-6 Commander. Then you've got the same basic number of Squadrons as you do Battalions and support Squadrons, and support Battalions, same thing. But when I got back there,

there was actually an E-9 female that was actually back there as the NCOIC. Didn't know who she was, never seen her before, but the first thing -- well, I got back. I had thirty days convalescent leave to recover before I reported back to work.

So, I reported back to work thirty days after I got back to Bliss. When I got back there, I met this Female Staff Sergeant Major and I didn't know who she was, but she was not impressive, put it that way kindly to her. The Regimental area looked like crap. It looked like nobody had done nothing to it.

SGM WATERHOUSE: The headquarters?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: The whole area.

SGM WATERHOUSE: The whole area, motor pool and everything?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: The old Squadron area, grass was just almost eighteen inches tall. I mean, there was trash everywhere. There were abandoned cars on streets. There was just -- I mean you name it, it was crap.

SGM WATERHOUSE: When was this, March or April?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: This would have been --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Was it earlier than that?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: September, probably about March, about mid-March maybe. So, literally I'm there now on the second day, third day, the third day, this would have been on Wednesday. I walk in. I don't know where the Sergeant Major is at, haven't seen him, but the first day I saw some problems, I tried to find out how we're working things, who's doing what, didn't get a whole lot of nothing. The second day I kind of started organizing some folks and said, hey, I want a grass cutting detail around the Regimental Headquarters, you know. We'll work out from here.

The grass cutting detail did some of that stuff. Got the Headquarters itself going, policed up. She went somewhere that afternoon, don't know where. The next morning I came to work, she wasn't around there. I hear this at ease being hollered at about

nine o'clock in the morning. I'm like, okay, I'm thinking, who the hell just walked in the door. So, I'm on the crutches. I walk out and here's the Post Sergeant Major, who in the hell is in charge of this fricking - I knew exactly what he was doing, and I just kind of -- you know, parade rest on crutches is a really kind of interesting way to stand, but I kind of stood there at modified parade rest a little bit, and said, Sergeant Major, I know it's a piece of shit. I got it. I am pissed about my Regiment, but if you will just give me a week, I says, I'll fix some of this stuff, but I says, I can't fix it tonight. I can't fix it overnight. I said, give me a little bit of time, and I says, I'll get a handle on this. I promise. He goes, roger. He says, you got one fricking week. I said, roger that, Sergeant Major.

So, then, you know, I basically went and seen - the Major was a Real Detachment Commander. I said, Sir, I've got to get a couple more people to help fix this. I kind of told the Sergeant Major, the Post Sergeant Major, I don't know where this other

Sergeant Major is --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Who is supposed to be charge.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: I says, I really don't care. She's a pogue (sounds like) as far as I'm concerned. I don't need her around. I never saw her again. I don't know where she was or where she wasn't or what she -- but I never saw that Sergeant Major again.

SGM WATERHOUSE: She was retiring or why she was back there?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: I think the Post Sergeant Major helped her move along a little bit. But anyway, long story short, we got things together, details out, I got the maintenance guys with a wrecker to pull all these vehicles off the road.

SGM WATERHOUSE: About how many soldiers did you have back there?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: At that time, we probably had about thirty-five, thirty-four, thirty-five.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Not many.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Not really many. I mean, really, it was a pretty skeleton crew for a Regiment. But it was mostly PAC personnel, G-1, S-1, type stuff. You had a few maintainers that were responsible to watch the vehicles in the motor pools.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Most of the barracks and everything was locked up?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Most of the barracks were all locked up. There was nobody reoccupying billets and there were no inventories of stuff. It was all full of the soldiers' stuff yet, something like that.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, it was mostly just getting all the outside stuff.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: It was getting primarily outside stuff done. Then, after we got that under control, then we started going through the barracks, making sure there was no toilets that were running all the time, or no windows that were broken out.

SGM WATERHOUSE: AC's running everywhere.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Exactly. So, Post Sergeant Major calls me about a week later, calls me

and says, hey, don't bother coming to see me. He says, I like what you're doing. He says, call me if you need help. I says, roger that, Sergeant Major. So, he wanted to help. It's just he wanted you to help yourself first in that type deal. So, Fort Bliss was a very supportive installation to include the Sergeant Majors Academy. They had leaders over there that were, every now and then, would show up on the doorstep and say -

SGM WATERHOUSE: I was going to ask you, so when you got in that situation and the Sergeant Major was nowhere to be found, you just got there at the Regiment for the first time, how did you figure out who to go to? Did you go to MWR, DHR or whoever you needed to?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Just like any other NCO, you just jump in with both feet and say, hang on. When in charge, be in charge. So, I didn't care who I went to see.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, the supplies and everything you needed were there; it just wasn't being

used?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: I called basically the NCO core together that I had. I had mostly Sergeants of NCO's. A couple of Staff Sergeants were there. I had one pretty good staff sergeant that worked in the S-1 section, or S-3 section over. So, I said, you're my scrounge. Here's what I want. Boom, boom, boom, boom, boom. I looked at - you know who we got who are the best thieves in the world. Mechanics. So, I said, okay, hey, guys, here's what your job is.

SGM WATERHOUSE: That's called acquiring.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: There you go. Acquiring. So, I gave them the mission of going through the entire footprint and police the cars up. He goes, well, I'm not allowed to take them off the road. I says, here's the number. That's the MP Station. You can call the MP and you can have the MP sit right next to you. You are the MP's tow. If he tells you to go to the next block, you go to the next block with him. You follow that MP any place he tells you to go.

SGM WATERHOUSE: You can figure out whose

cars they were; right?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: We already knew that for the most part. We had pretty good Rear-D records of whose was what. They were all supposed to park their vehicles in a designated motor pool in each Squadron's footprint.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, some kids just left them anywhere.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: It was either that or they left it at somebody's house, who that person either may have received orders to go somewhere or just decided, I broke the car or it ran out of gas. I'll leave it right here. It ain't my worry anyway. But a lot of these vehicles that were left on the roads were just then stripped. There were people taking parts off of them and stuff like that. That's what got the Post Sergeant Major pissed off, was it was starting to look like a salvage yard on these roads. So, we ended up pulling all that stuff into the motor pools and got that under control. Then we started, again, like you always do. What would I want

somebody to do to my stuff? Maintainers, I want you to go through and start doing the vehicle checks. Are there oil leaks? Are there something that we can -- are there tires that have gone flat that we need to keep pumped up so we don't get the rubber -- you know, little things like that. Then on the S-3 side, you know, okay, let's start thinking about how we did a cycle of cutting grass. Where do I get the extra parts for lawnmowers if we break one? Can we coordinate with the Brigade that's across the street that didn't deploy, type thing? It was just organization. As a matter of fact, I still have the organizational chart that we re-organized in my AAR from the -

SGM WATERHOUSE: You learned to work with other units, I guess, at this time; right?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Absolutely. Well, actually, it was really good, because we had Air Defense Brigade that was on the other side of the post.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Networking is the word I was

looking for.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Yeah. And the Post Sergeant Major was very good about telling that Sergeant Major, just help him when you can. And to the benefit of not just that Brigade Level Sergeant Major, but all the way down to the First Sergeants in Air Defense, they knew we were struggling. So, if there was something that was close to their place, their area, they just reached over and took charge of it.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Because back then you had air defense schools and regular deployable units that both ranked.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Exactly. Right. Right.

SGM WATERHOUSE: The school house guys would obviously be there.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Yes. The school house guys, the AIT students, something like that. They were very good about helping out.

SGM WATERHOUSE: If you needed supplies or whatever, those guys could help out.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: I did. Yeah. It was easy to do that.

SGM WATERHOUSE: When you got word that the Regiment was coming back, did the focus change, or how did that process work?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Well, actually, I got healed up enough to where I actually got allowed to deploy again. The day I got a doctor's appointment to go back, the cast is off. I'm not allowed to run at all. I'm not allowed. I could go to the swimming pool, but I couldn't run on the road yet. I was not cleared to do that yet. So, every day at lunchtime, during work day, I was over at the pool, because if you went and swam between 9:00 and 11:00, you had to pay -- between 1300 and 1600, you had to pay. Anytime after 1600 was free, or any time between lunch hour was free for the soldiers. So, I'd go over at lunchtime and swim two miles a day in the pool. That was my PT. That was my exercise billet.

When I had the cast on yet, I was running in my cast in the Headquarters. I would go to the far

end of the Headquarters. I'd do three flights up, three flights down, three flights up, three flights down. I busted the shit out of an unbreakable cast twice. Doc wants to know what I was doing. I said, Doc, it just falls apart. I don't know. You are trying to stay physically fit doing that kind of stuff. I got to the doc. The cast is off, ready to go, and he finally checks me out and he goes, what day did you get this happen. And he types in a calculator. What day did you get -- types in a calculator. What day did this -- types in a calculator.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Especially it's like what, a six to nine month recovery.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Well, exactly the point. I'm like what the hell are you doing with a calculator. I says, my leg's here. He goes -- he's not even -- basically he checked it and he's over there on a calculator. Then he leaves. He comes back and he goes, same thing. What date did it happen? What date was surgery? What day did you do this? And he goes out again and comes back. He goes and sits at the

table and he punches more numbers in. He goes, well, if you're wondering what it is, there's a minimum recovery period for every surgery. He says, today is your minimum recovery period. He is a Captain. I cannot legally release you -

SGM WATERHOUSE: This is a Physician's Assistant?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Right. No, no. This is a regular doc.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Regular doctor.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: He's an orthopedic doc. He says, I cannot release you until tomorrow. I said, Doc, that ain't going to work because I got -- there was a classified mission going out. If I was cleared, I could put myself -- I was the manifest guy.

SGM WATERHOUSE: To fly out with the ammunition.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: I could put myself as the NCOIC manifest overwatching that mission and get back in the Theater. I said, Doc, I got to do it by tonight.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Or sign it tonight at midnight.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Or I can't get on this manifest. He goes, (makes tapping noise) stand by. He walks out, comes back. He says, come here, come here, come here. I'm getting ready to put my boot on. He goes, no, no, no. Come like that. I'm walking out and there's this full Colonel about halfway down this little hallway. I mean he's a little shit. I'm literally looking at the top of his head; he's that small. And he looks at me. I've got my First Sergeant stripes on yet. I hadn't taken my First Sergeant stripes off. He snatches the paperwork out of my hand. Oh, no. He says, stand on your toes. So I stood on my toes. He goes, does that hurt? I go, no, Sir. He goes, go down to your feet. Does that hurt? No, Sir.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Did you like do a squat or something?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Just up on your toes, just down. Up on your toes, down. I go, no, Sir. He

snatches the paperwork out of my hands. I mean literally, just snatches it out of my hands. Looks at the paperwork. I go, but, Sir, I haven't ran yet. He said, did I fucking ask any of this. It's in the middle of a hospital hallway. This is a full Colonel. He said, did I fucking ask you if you ran yet. I go, no, Sir. Then he goes, shut the fuck up. Yes, Sir. He's sitting there looking at the paperwork. He goes, why do you want to get back over there. I said, because my Troop's over there. That's where my soldiers are at. That's where I belong. He paused. He signs the paperwork, throws it back in my hands, and he goes, don't you fuck it up. Get out of my face. I go, roger that, Sir. I turn around and the Captain has got a smile from ear to ear, you know, because he's an Airborne guy. Even though he's a doc, he's an Airborne doc, you know. So, he gets back over there and he's filling the rest of the release out so I can get released to full duty, and he's like, ah, this is great. So, he goes back, on this form, released to full duty, Airborne all the way, the 18th Corps motto.

Airborne all the way. So, I take it back and give it to the Major, so I can manifest myself that night. He goes, don't believe you. He says, there's no doctor that's going to write Airborne all the way. He said, one of your buddies wrote this for you. I'm not accepting this piece of paper.

I'm like shit. I go, come on, Sir. He says, no, no. So, I'm right back over to the hospital. I go see the doc. I says, doc, you got to rewrite this profile. I said, I got to get - don't put this on here. He goes, what. He goes, no. So, he did it. He did the paperwork all over again for me, took it back to the Major. The Major says, I'll see you for PT tomorrow morning. He knew that I hadn't run yet. So, long story short, next morning we ran two miles and I basically smoked his ass. I mean, the first couple of steps, you're like running on a flat tire. It's like, oh, crap, but then it worked itself out and I just started cooking. Everything else was good because I had been doing swimming every lunchtime, so, got down there and came back. I mean, I

was slowing down for him, and then taking off. Slowing down for him and taking off. Got all done. He didn't say shit. I said, come on, sir, I got to get released. He goes, ah, we'll get to it, okay. At the end of the day, I says, Sir, this is it. I've got to manifest. I said I've held it off too long already, but I says, I says I got to manifest now. He goes, I knew if you had to crawl you were going to make that two mile run this morning, but I had to watch you all day to see if you favored your leg. Then he says, you didn't. So, he says, I'm going to let you go back. That's how I got back from being a Rear Detachment. I got back as a last flight out of Fort Bliss as a replacement flight. It was really a classified mission carrying some other product that we were putting over there.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Oh, I thought you said Class-5. Classified. Oh.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Classified, I'm sorry. Yeah. It was classified.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Not ammo. Classified.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: No, no.

SGM WATERHOUSE: I thought you said Class-5.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Well, it was ammo, but it was a special kind of ammo.

SGM WATERHOUSE: When you got over there, what was going on?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Well, basically get back, of course, there is a basically staging base before you go back. On the flight, that's when all the missile strikes hit. All these bad things are happening in Theater, and what's happening. The shit has moved forward now, and now I'm kind of playing catch up to the Regiment. So, I'm told they're moving right now, squat and hold, be back here.

Well, now, I'm back in this little mini fob, the RSS area, Regimental Support Squadron Area. We kind are off to the corner as bits and pieces of different people from different squadrons trying to get back to their Regiment.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Had the Regiment already moved west and this was --

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Yep.

SGM WATERHOUSE: -- right below Iraq?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: This was right below Iraq and the Regiment is already moving. So, like I said, I was kind of caught in a limbo point at that point. I had actually gone back over there -- there was another Sergeant Major who was carrying some classified documents. They came and picked him up and brought him back forward with the Regiment, but they wouldn't take me. I'm like, frick. So, he went back forward. I'm back here at this rear area now and I'm like, okay. The first thing that bothers me, that seems me, is I looked around and literally there are Staff Sergeants with their ass hanging out of their pants. I'm like, what in the hell. So, I told the guy, I says, go get that fricking fixed now.

SGM WATERHOUSE: All that their nomix (sounds like) was broken

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: It was just regular BDU, ACU type stuff. It was BDU's back then, DCU's. It was their desert cams, but his ass is hanging out. I'm

like, go change your pants. So, he just roger that. I was still First Sergeant. I had my - roger that, First Sergeant. I'm back and I've got uniforms on and I'm clean, you know, and all the rest of this stuff. I see the guy just before evening chow and his ass is hanging out. I say, come here, get over here. What did I tell you? He goes, First Sergeant, this is the only pair of pants I have. I go, what. So, all these guys in this camp, a lot of them, they retrograded them back to get something taken care of, either something with their eye and had to stay back for a while.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Oh, sure, their Squadron sent them back.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Just little bits and pieces stuff.

There was almost nothing back in that area for those guys to take care of themselves. I says, holy shit. So, the first thing I did was, I called the Senior guys in and I said, we're going to do a uniform layout. I dumped my bag in the middle of the floor.

I kept the uniform I had on and I kept one Nomex. (sounds like) I said, everything else I got here, I had two more pair of boots with me. I put all of this other shit in the middle of the floor. I says, who is our Junior soldier or who is the soldier that most needs this. That pair of pants goes to him. That shirt goes to him. This goes over here. This underwear goes out. We split that up. I says, okay, you're next. Dump your bag. We went that way and that way and that way until we took care of as much as we could for that, but that's how we had to take care of those guys in the rear. There was no -

SGM WATERHOUSE: There was no supply?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: There were no supply actions back there, which was really kind of crappy. I mean, you're sitting here going, we're the best Army in the world, and these guys are walking around like rag tags, just trying to get shit fixed. Even when a lot of the troops when they finally retrograded back - well, I'm kind of jumping ahead, but that was there. When the movement stopped and the war is done now, we

were the first unit told to get the hell out of the country. So, the Regimental Sergeant Major shows back up, and he sees me. Oh, sorry. Yeah. The Regimental Sergeant Major shows up. I got First Sergeant stripe on. I see him looking at my stripe, and he goes - I say, that's right, Sergeant Major. I'm not done playing. I want a Troop back, because Eagle Troop was given to -

SGM WATERHOUSE: Was it one of the Platoon Sergeants?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: No, it was another - it was an E-7 promotable. He was promotable but from Golf Troop, I think it was, over to take over Eagle. Mac McFowler. No, not McFowler. Max, Max. I forget what it is. Anyway, he got Eagle Troop. So it's his Troop, got it. So, I said I'm not done playing. He said, you'll get a troop as soon as we get back. I go, roger that, because he knew that Perales was leaving.

So, I got there, and he says, have your bags packed and meet me back here in 15 minutes. I go,

roger that. We linked up in 15 minutes. We drove all night back to the rear staging area and it was just a piece of dirt. That's all it was. He says, your job is to get this organized into a RSA, so that we can retrograde the Regiment out of here. So, I had to set the camp up and this is where the wash rack was. This is where the mess tents is going to be. This is where the sleeping tents are going to be. XXX. I did all that right there. I basically ran that whole RSA operation for the entire time I was there.

Then we were in the last -- we had got the whole Regiment done. There was a hundred and some folks left, which was one planeload left to get out of there. The Regimental Commander, Colonel Sharp at the time, said he had made a mistake or something like that. No, it wasn't Sharp.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Swan?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Swan, Guy Swan was a Squadron Sargent Major. Regimental Commander -

SGM WATERHOUSE: Starry?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Star. Yep.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Star?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Regimental Commander Colonel Star as the time said he screwed something up. He lost the plane and we had to spend two more days in country, but he said because of that, everybody got three days off when they get home. You guys are going to get four days off. And you guys all get to have an AAM.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Army Achievement Medal?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN Army Achievement Medal, supposedly. But what happened with the Army Achievement Medal in combat? It doesn't exist. It goes away. The MSM moves down and you put the - the Bronze Star comes in. So, the RCOM goes AAM, MSM goes to RCOM and the Bronze Star goes in, or the President's type thought process. So, Colonel Star walks off the platform, walks out, and I'm sitting there on the gate as they are all dressed to come out on this little field. I'm hearing this. They're all saying, ah, we got a new Army award. The Army Apology Medal, because they all knew you weren't authorized to

have that ribbon.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Peacetime.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: That little story I tell you, because later on we come back and I was writing up awards for actions done by certain people I had responsibility for. I had three Staff Sergeants that really, no shit, deserved more than just an RCOM type award. I wrote them all up for MSM's, put them in for all MSM's. Everyone of them got downgraded. I went to see the Regimental Sergeant Major and says, this is not right. What do I need to do to make it -- I'll write it stronger. What are you looking for?

SGM WATERHOUSE: I think every soldier had an RCOM. Right?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Basically, you're right. It was just like RCOM automatically. I said this is wrong. So I went back and wrote it again and gave it back to them. It was denied again. I finally walked in to see him again. I said, Sergeant Major, this is bullshit. These guys deserve -- one guy actually did three shifts in a row, you know, twelve hour shifts,

three shifts in a row to keep that Regiment moving to get out of there in time. Fell over a heater one night trying to keep himself warm and burned the shit out of his arm. Still never left the field and got it wrapped up by the medics and just stayed out there and did his job. It was that kind of dedication. Finally the Sergeant Major looks at me and he says, are you willing to give up your award for them to get theirs. I said, absolutely. So, the only award I received out of that deployment was an AAM. So, I wear that AAM on my uniform. To this day it's still on there. And I do that for a reason. I have orders. Yeah, it's legal by the book. Nobody is going to be able to really look at it different, but that little story was the foundation of how I looked at awards for the rest of my career. You can do good things or you can do really stupid things. As a leader, you've got the choice. Again, we talked about promotions. Awards are really a process that we've done very, very well, but it's easy to get out of whack. We can abuse the process, but I think the process, the way it's written, if we execute it by

the way it's written, is a pretty darn good process.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Sergeant Major, looking back at your time there in Echo Troop, 2nd Squadron and the time you spent on rear attachment and forward, what were some of the lessons you took from your time in those two positions?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Basically a couple of things is that we can sit here and say this specific desk, specific, but it really boils down to the things I learned as a young trooper and what my leaders gave to me, instilling those same values the way my leadership was instilled into me so that later on as they become senior leaders themselves that they can make the better choices. The way I was raised as a young trooper that they were allowed to be raised the same way so instilling the values into them, and then letting them see a way to do it by my example and try to live the way you talk. Empower them with the ability to have the choice to make decisions for themselves, uphold the standards and set the standards for the soldiers to follow, be physically fit and lead

from the front and lead from the front doesn't just mean that you are outrunning the fastest PT score. Lead from the front means that you're out there actually doing the things you talk about, right way, honestly, the Army values so that's I guess the best thing I really got a chance to do there is reflect upon what I thought I was doing by watching the reactions and the performance of my soldiers.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Sergeant Major, once you got done with Echo Troop, like I think you had talked to your branch about, we talked earlier about, I'm sorry it was Regiment Sergeant Major like "Hey, I'm not done with my first hard time, so you got a chance in May of 1991 and you were actually assigned to Fox Troop, 2nd Squadron, 3rd ACR and you served there as a troop first sergeant for about 20 months or so, a little less than two years. That gave you, I think, about three years altogether. So Fox Troop in particular, how did you end up in Fox Troop?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Basically, the Fox Troop, as we talked about earlier, upon redeploying of the

regiment back from the first Gulf War, Sergeant Major said you have a position, but we had about three First Sergeant positions across the regiment leaving. First Sergeant Perales out of Fox Troop was actually right there. I knew the Squadron and the Squadron knew me so it was a pretty easy fit just to put me in where First Sergeant Perales left so that's kind of the decision the Sergeant Major made.

SGM WATERHOUSE: The Regiment now has all come back from Desert Shield/Desert Storm and I'm sure Fox Troop was the same, but what was the Squadron's focus, I would say, after everybody came back from taking leave, I think everybody got 30 days or so probably when they came back, what was the focus of your troop and the Squadron there for the next year or so?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: I think basically we were resetting from the deployment and of course a lot of people were locked, so they were locked, no PCS and no ETS for the deployment period so after we got back and we had the block leave period type stuff, then all of

a sudden it was now we've got to get back to our rebuilding of standards. Do we have the gun recycles, our certification set up? Do we have all of the 350-1 type tasks set up and are we doing all of those things? At the same time you're doing all that, oh by the way, now we kind of got a change of commanders out a little bit different cycle than we thought we were going to so you compress that leadership change over. There are PCS' that got compressed a little bit more so you take a normal unit life cycle and you compress it, I wouldn't say into half the time, but I felt you probably condensed it by about three-quarters time so what you would do in the 12-month period, you kind of had to do in a 9-month period, but never miss a beat in doing that. As far as the organizations go, the Squadron was still a Squadron. We were still a Regimental Reconnaissance Organization for three Corps so there wasn't really a hard transition except like everything else, every unit has its own personality so even though I was next door neighbors to Fox Troop when I was Eagle Troop First Sergeant, when you get to

Fox Troop, it is a different personality and as much as you influence that organization by you and your personality, you've got to allow that organization to influence yourself, too. That organization's processes, its sort of ethos if you want to call it, you've got to learn that and work within that structure a little bit so it just can't be "I'm the new guy on the block and here is how we're going to do it." It will always fall apart that way.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So when you got there, the equipment you sent over, is that the same equipment that came back or did you have new equipment coming back?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: No, same equipment back and forth. In a way that's good. You kind of knew that you took stuff over, you kind of knew it was broke before you came back. The vehicles only run for so long and so you are into a lot more wear and tear than which you had forecasted before you deployed, but nothing out of the ordinary, I would say.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Now this was the first

time, it's not like the next time we went to Iraq and Afghanistan where you had this constant, we as an Army kind of got used to deploying, prepping for deployment and going into a deployment, coming back and reset, this was the first time it had been done I think since Vietnam really. This is bigger than Vietnam because those were individuals coming back and these were units coming back, so what were some of the challenges with really setting the groundwork? It would become kind of a standard later, but this was kind of our first big redeployment as an Army in a long time, probably since Korea.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: I think earlier we talked about shipping the rounds over in the tanks and having to replace honeycombs, taking whole honeycombs out of the ready racks because we couldn't get the rounds out so it's kind of the same lesson learned coming back where how much had the sand worn the tracks? Did we get dirt and dust inside the transmissions? How much did air filters because we couldn't clean them out good enough while we were deployed, how much of that

get into the engine? Did the engine wear date run out more? Of course, that was well beyond what you would think about as being a troop level First Sergeant or someone like that doing, but it impacted your ability to go out and do these other things called gunneries and do maneuver STXs, sticks, that you couldn't use the equipment if it was broken in the motor pool. I can't honestly say I remember the vehicle status changing much as far as having more deadline vehicles sitting in the motor pool than we had before, but we definitely didn't have the excess equipment in the motor pool like we had before deployed. That was one good thing. When you cleared the motor pool out and you found, I mean literally we had M1 tanks when we deployed and we had M88 with the recovery vehicle road wheels inside our connexes and mill vans because they work for the M60 series tank, but the M1 road wheels did not interchange, so you wonder why, I think it was pretty close. In our troop alone, it was probably close to 25 road wheels that we couldn't use. They were just sitting in connexes, and those were all

dollar items so as you turn parts and get dollars back for it and I think when we came back, that was one thing we re-instilled right way was how do we make sure we don't become hoarders and get stuff in the connexes we don't really need anymore and keep the dollars out to be used as far as return parts go.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Sergeant Major, as the Fox Troop First Sergeant, is there anything you would like to highlight during your tenure there before you moved to HST?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: I think really it was a great time there. I got to finish out first hard time. I think if I didn't have that opportunity, even if I got put into the operation position right from the get go, you would have felt like you missed the opportunity to be with soldiers. The one thing that you reflect on, when I moved up to be the Ops, the one thing that we reflect on at a First Sergeant level is the last time you are really going to get to go out and be directly connected with the soldiers. It's not that you don't get out in the field as Sergeants

Major, but you don't get to influence those soldiers as directly beyond the grade of First Sergeant, and I think that was the biggest realization when I finally left that position. As a matter of fact, when I left the position, Colonel Mixon pulled me up to be the Ops Sergeant Major and I was like I didn't want to do it, I was happy being a First Sergeant, I'm a First Sergeant, but he said "Yeah, but you have been a First Sergeant now for about three years and you are going to come out of that position, and I need an OPS [Operations NCO] so you're going to come up here." I kind of hemmed and hawed a little bit. He goes "I tell you what, if it is about leaving the First Sergeant diamond on, then you leave your First Sergeant diamond on and it's okay." I said "You can't do that. You can only have one First Sergeant unit and it wasn't fair to the HHT First Sergeant."

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah, Headquarters and Headquarters Troop, they already have a First Sergeant.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: They already had a First

Sergeant and I'm subordinate to him as a First Sergeant so he is over all of us, even though I may outrank him by position, I still answered to him for PT and weight standards and all the rest of the stuff and I have to support him in doing that. Again, in essence, I had to grow up a little bit leaving Fox Troop. That was probably the biggest thing as a leader and I know I went through the same way when you become from a young trooper to an NCO, an NCO into a Platoon Sergeant level where you can no longer go and kind of party with the soldiers no more. You got through that, but it was at the First Sergeant level that it hit home that I am no longer going to be able to be down that level every day like you want to be.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Sergeant Major, if I'm tracking correctly, you moved up to Headquarters and Headquarters Troop or HHT 2nd Squadron in September of 1992. You ended up only serving up there for four months or so because you ended up going to the Sergeants Major Academy. How did all that come about and when did you find that out?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: I got pulled up because our Ops Sergeant Major was leaving and he was at his retirement point. He was one of those lock and you cannot retire, so when we got back from deployment, he had to go out the door. That's how I got pulled out of First Sergeant position. When I got up to the Ops piece, again Colonel makes a good leader and all the rest of the stuff. We were doing gunnery. Go out and do gunnery and as Ops Sergeant Major, you're on the next range. You get this range going, everything is going good. You go to the next range and make sure that one is ready to go so the Squadron can kind of roll into that one. I was up in Donnie Interrange [ph] Complex and I was on range, I don't remember the number of it and I'm in the tower proofing the targets are coming up and down and making sure things are good to go, got the Master Gunner up there with me, we're doing these things and I look back and I see the Colonel's Humvee pull on the range and go down to the briefing shed, which was about 400 or 500 meters behind the tower area and he pulls in down there.

About two minutes later, I see the Sergeant Major's vehicle pull into the range and he links up with the Colonel down there. The phone rings in the tower and he says "Hey, come on down here, the Colonel needs to talk to you." I'm like okay. Of course, what is broke back at the last two ranges we are shooting right now and I am forward fixing this one, how am I going to fix the one behind me and try to figure out how to stretch yourself. So I walk into the briefing area and Colonel Mixon is on the phone. I sit there and wait with Sergeant Major and he is not saying nothing to me. He is just saying we'll wait for the Colonel to get off now. I am not okay, it's no longer something wrong with the Squadron, it's now something wrong with me. What do I have to wait for the Colonel to chew my butt for?

SGM WATERHOUSE: Why don't you just tell me?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Yeah, exactly. So I'm waiting and waiting and the Colonel finally gets off the phone, comes over there, sits down right in front of me and says "Hey, I have a problem I need to talk

to you about." I'm trying to figure out what's going on here. He goes "I got a call that said they want to put you into this next course with the Sergeants Major Academy. Now, the benefits are that you'll be in a," that was when we were doing the year's cycle of corps, so you would basically be able to synchronize your family. I'm sorry, I was in the 6-month course so I would be able to synchronize my family to move in the summer cycle so that we would be able to move my kids when they were out of school versus trying to move my kids in the middle of the school year. He says "But I really need you. I'm being selfish, I really need you, I really want you to stay, but this is about you, not about me. Tell me what you want." He gave me the option. I said "Sir, to tell you the truth, with all the things you just said, I understand what you're telling me, but for my family, this is the right thing for me to go to school right now and get into the summer cycle." He goes "I agree 100%, don't like it, but I agree with it. It's the right thing to do. So, in saying that," and now it's about 1400 or 1415, he

goes "Now saying that" and he looks at his watch, "You have to be at the Sergeants Major Academy by 1700 hours tonight." We're at Donnyanna [ph], which is about 45 minutes away from post to get my vehicle to drive another 20 minutes to get to my house to get into the PT uniform to drive all the way back on post to the Sergeants Major Academy to get weighed in by 1700 hours so I'm like crap. I hurry to get back. I bust in the house and my wife goes "What's going on, I thought you were at the range?" I told her "I got to go to the school, I got to be weighed in, I'll see you later," and I was in and out of the house. I got there like 1645 to the academy, weighed in, made that okay, had to do a cholesterol test. They took blood for a cholesterol test that night too. I was the last student.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Was this early January of 1993 when this was happening?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Yes. This was literally.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So you would graduate that next summer and be able to move, if need be, somewhere

else.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Exactly. The academy was in a 6-month training cycle at that point so I basically got that all done and I got home probably about 7:30 that night after I did all my paperwork I had to go through. There were literally five cadre there filling out paperwork with just one guy, me, because I was the last of the last students allowed to come to the class. I got home and told my wife that tomorrow morning I have to be over here at school because I am now a student at the academy and that's how I got to the academy so quick.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Were you told "Hey, you're going to be a Sergeant Major at end after you graduate" or did you go the course?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: No, at that time it was Select-Train-Promote is what we were trying to do so it was like select you to go to school, train you to be a Sergeant Major and then once you qualified, promote you, but the reality was that the promotion system was still we were trying to fill vacancies and

if you got selected, you got selected when you did. I was already E-8 promotable before. After I got moved into the Ops position at the Squadron, probably about six weeks to two months after I got put in that position, the E-9 list came out and I was on it.

SGM WATERHOUSE: That's what I meant so you knew you were going to get picked.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: I knew I was already selected for Sergeant Major.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Because I know the Army, I don't remember what years, I think it was actually in the early 2000s or late 1990s, they would send folks non-promotables to the academy...

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Yeah, we called it building the bench.

SGM WATERHOUSE: That wasn't the case for you.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: No. I was already E-8 promotable going into the academy.

SGM WATERHOUSE: That's what I thought. I just wanted to clarify. So you were at HHT for a

little while. You got some time as an Ops Sergeant Major. Did that kind of help you at all going into the course or maybe after the course, did those experiences make things easier or harder?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: It gave me a different perspective of combat arms. We know how to pull triggers, but there's a lot more to preparation to pull triggers than just going out and putting gun tubes loaded and stuff like that so understanding how to synchronize resources, how to project requirements in order to put a rifle range together. Six months out we had to forecast ammunition at that time for the range complex. Because of some of the range problems, you had to forecast ranges a year out. If you weren't forecasting range requirements, you weren't going to get what you thought as your normal training cycle, and that's what the Ops position really kind of opened my eyes. You kind of think the near fight is that first hill, but when you become that Ops, the near fight is really about three hills to four hills out and that's the near fight you're working on, and

that's the one piece that when I was all done being Ops, I did not like it because as a combat guy, you engage a target and you're done with that. You see results and then you see another target and you pop it up and you always see completion of engagement. As an Ops guy, before that engagement is completed, you are battle handing that over to somebody else to execute and you are moving to the next task. You never seem to get to the end state of any mission you are doing. It is somebody else who is finishing it, but you are always the guy starting it. Some people love that. I had some great Operations Sergeant Majors, but that was not my forte.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So Sergeant Major, you said it was a 6-month course back then. What were some of the things you learned in that course and maybe you can highlight some of the more difficult parts and how you got through it?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: I think the first thing was just having Sergeants Major teach you and you are now that senior guy yourself. Your cadre were

experienced people. They were at least one-time or two-time Battalion Sergeants Major. Most of them were Brigade Sergeants Major at one point as instructors. They really try to coach and mentor you through that. The other thing is you are at that level, you are not in a peer group, it's a peer competitor group. There is not like it was when you came into basic training where everybody was kind of like you are starting out. We had some people who you knew weren't going to make it past the first enlistment and other ones were kind of like maybe they wouldn't make it to the first enlistment, but at Sergeants Major Academy, they are all quality people. The other thing is 99% of them are probably Type A personalities, so everybody wants to be in charge and that's where you learn that rule of leadership. You know to be a great leader, you must first learn how to be a great follower. I think the Sergeants Major Academy really taught that to me was that there are great leaders in there and sometimes you can exert yourself, but a lot of times, you have to learn how to be the follower. Once you learn how to

be a follower, then what I found is that because you became that follower, more people started following you because they kind of understood what you were doing and felt that was the right way to do it and they followed you down the road.

SGM WATERHOUSE: About how many people are in that class?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: I want to say about 400.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So quite a few.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: There were a lot, yes. It filled up the auditorium.

SGM WATERHOUSE: I think they have 700 this year or something like that.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Yeah, the class has grown quite a bit from the time I went through it, for sure.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Four hundred is still a lot.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Yes. We had like my base group I had a Coastguardsman was in my group with me. I think we had one Air Force, a couple of Marines so we had a few sister services mixed in to the class

that we had. Again, they brought some perspective. As you know, they rotate the class three different cycles of the class and every time you rotate, they mix the group up again so you get exposed to more than just your base group, which I thought was a good way to get more experience of learning from each other. We all have experiences. Because I did a certain thing a certain way doesn't necessarily make it the right way to do it all the time and hearing somebody else tell me how they did something with almost exactly the same situation made me kind of go back to that reflection of good bag/bad bag. I got to look at myself in the mirror by listening to how they did something and was that a better way than I did it or maybe what I thought was a good way is now going to the bad bag and is not as good as I thought it was. That helped me a lot in the way the academy organized itself.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Somebody would call that the toolkit now. The good stuff you put in your toolkit and the other stuff you throw away.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: That's what everybody

says, throw it away, but I said if you throw it away, how do you remember what not to do? The hard right or the easy wrong. If you never keep the easy wrongs around, how do you remember what the easy wrongs are? You are bound to repeat yourself.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So Sergeant Major, in August of 1993, after graduating from the Sergeants Major Academy with Class 41, you were assigned to Manheim, Germany where you served with Headquarters and Headquarters Company or HHC 3rd Battalion, 77th Armored Regiment and you were there for about ten months as a Battalion Operations Sergeant Major. When did you find out you were going to Germany? I'm sure you were in the academy at some point.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Yes, the class about two-thirds of the way through your class, the assignment people show up and in your mailbox you get this little congratulations note. They sit with you. They have a couple of days to sit with you before they actually make that final assessment, but they put your little notice in the box and then they will stick around for

another day after that and basically, if you didn't like the assignment or there was a reason you shouldn't get that assignment, then you could go sit with them one-on-one and they would try to either tell you to suck it up cupcake or we'll work with you. Sometimes it was like two individuals had different assignments. Each one had something the other one wanted and they found each other and they went together to see the Assignments Manager and they would swap out those two assignments for them. What was really I think, at least for me, an observation was when I saw people trying to swap, and the Assignment Manager was not letting them swap. It was because they were trying to give those individuals a more well-rounded experience. Some folks were at a location for almost a whole career, and this was an opportunity to give them the chance to develop a different light or different environment.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Back then you had people I think staying with the 82nd or staying in Germany or Fort Hood.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Or even Fort Lewis in Korea. It was a back and forth type deal so this was a way to kind of get them to broaden their horizons, and a lot of folks resisted that. They didn't like that and so they tried swapping. I think, looking back at it, I think Branch did a great thing for an Army to try to broaden all those leaders horizons.

SGM WATERHOUSE: They have a tough job.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: I would not want it.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Sergeant Major, you arrived in Germany, you were still a (inaudible), but I think you got promoted in December of that year so it wasn't too long after getting there.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: No, it wasn't. It was, you got there, moved into the Ops position and got selected to do that. It was really kind of nice. The only thing that, I'll tell you, it was another reflection of leadership, my Brigade Sergeant Major never showed up. He wasn't right there on that concern we were. He was 20 minutes away, 30 minutes away, so I was being appointed to an Ops Sergeant Major, and the

feeling I had and some of the discussions I have heard is "Oh you're just an Ops Sergeant Major," and so there is a difference between Ops and Command, and I got that, but a promotion to an E-9 grade, they are all E-9s, but we do treat them differently.

SGM WATERHOUSE: This was your Battalion?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: This was my Brigade Sergeant Major. My Battalion Sergeant Major was there, but my Brigade Sergeant Major never came.

SGM WATERHOUSE: And he was 20 minutes away.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Never sent me a congratulations note, never did anything like that and it's just like you are just an Ops Sergeant Major. Now, fast forward to when I was getting ready to be reassigned, I was selected to go on and now I'm getting laterally promoted to CSM and he is there with bells on and thumping his chest and "Oh, this is a great day for the Army blahblahblah," and that's why it really reinforced him not being as a Staff Sergeant Major at my promotion, but he made a big deal about it being there at the lateral promotion to Command

Sergeant Major so that is something that I really, again, put into my don't let this happen when it's your turn to do that box.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Sergeant Major, when you got to 377, I think you started at the Ops Sergeant Major for about ten months or so, does that sound right?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Right.

SGM WATERHOUSE: As the Ops Sergeant Major, I'm sure you are a little bit, even though it was a little bit of the previous Operations Sergeant Major time probably helped you obviously kind of get a leg up on your duties and responsibilities in this particular unit, 377 Armor, did you have any roles or responsibilities that were different than they were in your previous unit?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Yeah, a little. Even though I was Ops in the Squadron, it was really such a short period of time as that Ops in the Squadron. I never got to do a lot of Ops stuff. It was focused on gunnery, get the gunnery going, not a lot of orders

productions or tasking. We did do a little bit of range preparation and stuff like that, resourcing, but not tactical ops where I got to 377, that was our focus. Our focus was maneuver. Our focus was we had a short gunnery while I was there, but nothing that was out of the ordinary, so I really had to learn how to develop a TOC, Tactical Operations Center. I had to learn how to coordinate my guys to do the missions that they were doing without me having to stand over their shoulders and watch them, and that was a challenge I think sometimes because you had folks that... I got told there was one young man we have that will never be in a field problem with you and I asked "Why not," and he said "Well, he's never made a field problem yet." "How long has he been here?" "He has been here 18 months." I said "He's been here 18 months and has never..." He always goes into the field, but gets sent home because his wife doesn't, he can't handle this or he can't handle that or whatever it is.

SGM WATERHOUSE: It's career change time.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Exactly, so I said "Okay,

well he will make this next field problem." We had a maneuver/gunnery coming up in Grafen in Hohenfels area and so I told my wife. She's going to call. She's going to try to make a big deal. I need to be prepared to take a baby because they had a little baby and I need to be prepared to take the baby, have her stay at the house with you, whatever it takes to get him through this and she goes "I got it." That was a blessing to have a spouse like that. She understood the mission of the Army and she understood her role is trying to help the soldiers and family members too. Long story short, I get this phone call, not from a soldier, not from his wife, from his mother from the United States and I'm in Grafenwohr, Germany. She is talking to me on the phone and my chaplain walks through the door. I'm talking and saying yes ma'am, yes ma'am, I understand that your son, yes ma'am. "Ma'am, can I ask you a question?" "Yes." "How do you feel about your son flipping hamburgers at McDonalds for a living?" She goes "What?" I said "Because if he doesn't finish his field assignment, I will put him

out of the Army. I will make sure because this is what he does, this is what we pay him to do. If he is not able to perform his mission, I do not need him in the Army. I'm putting him home. Now, you have a grandson. You have a daughter-in-law. Do you think that grandson and daughter-in-law are going to be able to be taken care of by your son flipping hamburgers at McDonalds? Ma'am, it's your choice. If you tell me right now you want your son home, you want me to send him out of the field, I will and tomorrow I will have the paperwork done for him to leave my Army. Just tell me which way you want to go." "I didn't realize. But my grandson is not..." I says "Ma'am, your grandson right now is at my house. Your daughter-in-law is in the hospital right now being evaluated by a doctor. My physician's assistant has already contacted that doctor and found out there is absolutely nothing wrong with her. This is just her trying to get her husband out of the field. So if you don't let them grow up, we're going to end up with a grandbaby who is going to be sitting at your house and you're going to wonder why your son

can't take care of his family and I'll tell you something else, they are not going to be married. They'll get divorced because money is going to break that couple apart. He has the abilities. He can do this, but you have to help me help him." And she said "I didn't realize you all would do that." I said "We're not here to hurt people. We want to help and this is our family." She goes "Why don't you keep him in the field." I said "Got it." So I hung the phone up and the Chaplain goes "I can't believe you said that to a mother." I said "Chaplain, you're the one who taught me tough love."

SGM WATERHOUSE: It is the Army.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: We have all seen this. There are probably 100 examples each one of us could talk about with something in that situation that we just got to show them this is how you have to live, not that you have to suffer every day, but there are sacrifices that we make to be in uniform and if you are not able or willing to do those sacrifices, it's okay. It's not for all of us, but if you already

signed up, finish your commitment and then go home.
That's the best advice I could give to anybody.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Sergeant Major, you served in 377 in Germany about ten months and then you were assigned to Fort Polk.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Right.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So obviously you didn't do two or three years in Germany.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Are you seeing a pattern about career. This guy can't hold a job so let's keep moving him around.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So you get out of the Academy, you get promoted, you are starting to get paid for what you are doing as an Ops Sergeant Major and then within a year, now you are told you need to PCS again or permanent change of station again outside of Germany back to the states.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Right. Part of it was I was selected to become a Command Sergeant Major. Well, actually what happened was the unit was being deactivated and moved back to Fort Lewis.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So part of the drawdown.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Part of the drawdown piece right there. I was now at E-9 Select for CSM. There was no place to move me to Fort Lewis. There was no E-9 position available. There were too many E-9s there already. I couldn't stay in Germany, because there were too many E-9s in Germany now with the drawdown going on. Initially there was no assignment at all for me so I was like what am I going to do? Everybody was in limbo. We were already starting to move household goods for the families out.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So everybody in 377 is trying to find jobs elsewhere.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: It was like everybody is moving. A majority of them had moved to Fort Lewis, but I didn't. I was on the phone probably for a total of about four to five hours with DA trying to find where they were going to send me and what ended up happening was kind of the same routine. Where do you want to go? I don't care, with soldiers. Well, where do you want to go? I don't care, with soldiers.

Finally it got down to the point where the Branch Manager said "Well, all I have is Fort Polk, Louisiana." I asked if that was with soldiers and he said "Yes." I said "That's good, I'll take it." He goes "But it's Fort Polk, Louisiana." I told him "You're not listening, it doesn't matter. If it's with soldiers, I'll take the job." I went to Fort Polk, Louisiana.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So that was August of 1994 and you were assigned to 1st 402nd Cav Regiment, 1-2 Cav as a Squadron Command Sergeant Major, which is like a Battalion for those who don't know, and you were there for a couple of years as a Squadron Command Sergeant Major.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Right.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So 2nd Cav moved around a bit already so that now that the 1st Squadron 2nd Cav Regiment is at Polk, what was their mission then?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: The big thing now, the 2nd Regiment now is the reconnaissance maneuver force for the 18th Corps so that's how it migrated that mission,

but the Regiment actually coming from Germany to Lewis, Lewis to Polk, there were a lot of moving pieces and my 1st Squadron was the last Squadron to reform at Fort Polk, Louisiana. What that ended up happening was I ended up with the least amount of serviceable equipment. Again, back to the old billis discussion we had before when I was a First Sergeant and I had to assign the same problems with some of the billis [ph] issues. I cannot think of one Staff Sergeant that was not a profile type Staff Sergeant. Everybody that didn't want a Staff Sergeant because they were physically broke or some handicap or something was going on with them, they pushed them in the 1st Squadron so I ended up with all of these profiled NCOs that could not get on vehicles and go out and do the missions. Got down to the motor pool. The Squadron Commander, Colonel Weber at the time, he had gotten there like two days before I did so we both almost simultaneously hit the organization. He is a great cavalry officer, cavalry background, very high on the Regiment, so he knew what the Regiment's

history was and he lived part of the history so he was very pumped up. This is our Regiment and we are going to do this type stuff, great, great individual. So we go to the motor pool and this organization didn't have tanks. It has Humvees. Tow mounted Humvees, gun mounted Humvees. The Humvee base organization. A Humvee has five quarts of oil over the engine to operate with. The average amount of oil we found in the entire Squadron's Humvee fleet was two quarts of oil. They just drove these vehicles until they broke. Nobody pulled maintenance on anything.

SGM WATERHOUSE: How long had the Squadron been there now at Fort Polk?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: At that time, the Squadron probably, the equipment had probably been there for three to four months by that time and so they had been doing some stuff already, but it was like there is no mom or dad to watch over you so you are just going to get away with whatever you can get away with. The other thing was a lot of our Squadron, and I can't speak for the other Squadrons, but I know

a lot of our Squadron was a lot of former Airborne that were either hurt and couldn't jump no more or decided they were done jumping, it's time to move on some place else, had the appropriate MOS' and were reassigned down there as the Regiment was starting to stand itself up so they were just filling the holes with what they had to fill with and do again. I don't think there were really bad people as far as not wanting to do it, it's just a light soldier doesn't think about putting gas in the tank. They don't think about putting oil in the engines. To them, it's just something that is more work to do and they don't need to do it on the battlefield so you had to get a change of mentality a little bit out there.

SGM WATERHOUSE: When you arrived, it wasn't a Squadron Command Sergeant Major you switched out with?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: No. I was the first Squadron Sergeant Major down there.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Who was kind of running the show when you got there?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: There really was no, it was still forming.

SGM WATERHOUSE: There was troop-based stuff going on?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Yes. It was the First Sergeant's role and position and there was a Senior First Sergeant that was actually watching the overall piece. An Ops Sergeant Major was there and he was doing more, kind of the headquarters piece stuff like that so I had no change of responsibility with another Sergeant Major down there.

SGM WATERHOUSE: When you came onboard, was the Regimental Command Sergeant Major around?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Yes. Steve Moore was Regimental Sergeant Major at the time, and he was there, and again, Steve was a standards guy and he didn't like things that were out of place so if you were doing something that wasn't by the book, he let you know pretty quick.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Did you receive any initial guidance or mentorship when you first arrived there?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: I got my in briefing from the Regimental Sergeant Major and here are the standards and here are the SOPs, make sure you get going with those things. My headquarters was just down the hill from the Regimental Headquarters so it wasn't a far stretch for him to reach out if he wanted to. I shared the building headquarters between the 1st Squadron and 2nd Squadron, so 2nd Squadron George Ogles was the Sergeant Major there and George had gotten there a little bit before I did. He was really a key guy. He walked over as soon as I was there and introduced himself, shared with me some of the isms about what was going on there at Fort Polk, shared with me about the isms about what was going on with regimental footprint and shared with me how he did things and why he did the things he did.

SGM WATERHOUSE: He kind of became that guy that you relied on to learn how to be a Command Sergeant Major.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: I did. I leaned on him to say "George, what if I did this." He would tell me

that I would end up getting my butt chewed or I was probably going to have work typed out so yeah, he did. He kind of gave me a lot of how he did things, but it's just one of those kind of deals that he was a guy that I could easily talk to. He was one of those kind of guys. He was from Louisiana so for him this was hometown for him and he was just like a Louisiana boy. Everything is okay.

SGM WATERHOUSE: A lot of folks, the Sergeant Major course now is a lot different. I mean it is always getting changed for the better or worse, but normally for the better based on feedback. "Hey, here is what we probably should include in the course we found out as Command Sergeants Major that this didn't really prepare us for," so a lot of people that I have talked to over the years and in this job, the Academy was good in preparing you to be an Ops Sergeant Major, but not necessarily a Command Sergeant Major. I don't know if it was the case back when you were there, so when I say as a new Command Sergeant Major, who did you look to to kind of help you because

some Commanders don't necessarily know what to do with a Command Sergeant Major and some know exactly what they want you to do.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: I guess I was blessed because almost all of my Commanders, Troop Commanders, as well as a Commander as a First Sergeant up to Squadron Sergeant Major, I had that first meeting with my boss and the one thing I don't remember, it was with Colonel Weber, when I walked into his office to have his command brief, it wasn't him telling me "Here's what I want you to do A, B, C, D and E and then what do you think?" I would tell him "Here's what I want to do A, B, C, D and E." He flipped it around on me and gave me a day to think about it before we met up. He said "I want you to come to my office tomorrow and I want you to tell me what you think I should be doing and then I'm going to tell you tomorrow what I think you should be doing." What that did is it gave us the opportunity that we formulated our expectations of each other instead of saying here's what I'm going to do, which sounds like the

same thing but in reality is I'm putting it in from my perspective. Now I'm going to put it in his perspective and tell him, and this is how it worked out so that when we did it that way, we saw the gaps between our philosophies much quicker than if I said that I only want to do this and he said I only want to do that and then you find out is it because you only want to do it or because that's where you think the line is drawing and you usually end up having a gap in the wire somewhere. When we told each other what we thought each other should be doing, then we saw for sure that this is where he expects me to do A, B and C, which now I know I have to plug in E, F and G type of deal. That was a good learning experience there for me. I agree as far as the Academy goes, it was more Ops based than it was command based, but I think a lot of that command based was because of the Commanders' personality. We work at the pleasure of our Commanders so if the Commander has a certain personality, you have to learn to adapt to it. If he wants to be the guy who tells everybody everything, behind closed

doors you may be advising him, but when the door opens, his lips are moving and you're just nodding your head. Some Commanders are exactly the opposite. They'll go behind doors and say I'd like you to take this out and make sure this happens, and you just walk out the door and everybody looks at, you know when you say stuff, look at the boss and he's got his eyebrow raised and they know they better do it. You just have to find that personality. I think that's why it's hard to teach that in the Academy because it is a lot more personality driven than being an Ops guy where it is very regimented of things you have to do. Forecast the ammo, ranges or just synchronizing the calendars.

SGM WATERHOUSE: You might have covered this and I may have missed it, but 2nd Cavalry Regiment now at Fort Polk, what was their main mission?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: We were the 18th Corps Reconnaissance Organization.

SGM WATERHOUSE: That had nothing to do with the JRTC.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: We did support JRTC too.

That was a secondary role while we were there so we did augment Op4 a little bit, but they had their own Op4, but we did augment them once in a while.

SGM WATERHOUSE: But really you had a wartime mission.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Primarily a wartime mission. What was really interesting is when we did get the wartime mission, we went into the box as a rotational unit. Nobody realized how big, nobody physically realized how big the Regiment is at Fort Polk until we actually got into a war fight mission and then when we flooded the box, and the Op4 goes "We can't keep up with these guys." Literally, we were picking Op4 up and putting them in our vehicles and driving to the next battle so they could get rested a little bit. We had families that would complain because of all the problems with traffic and all of the rest of the stuff, that when we put the Regiment on the battlefield on the parade field, they asked where did all these people come from. They didn't realize how many people Regiment really had. I had a

great counterpart, Jerry Klein was the Brigade Sergeant Major at the other end of post. Great relationship with him and he was primarily responsible for the Op4 and all the different pieces of JRTC down that end. If I needed something, I could call Jerry and he helped me out. If he needed some other stuff, he could call me and we were able to work it together. It's one of those that we talk about I the Academy. You get to know each other and we work, but Jerry was a senior guy to me and that was another guy I learned a little bit from, not so much as a Squadron, but when I got to be a Regiment guy, I really learned a lot from Jerry, but I knew him as a Squadron Sergeant Major over there.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: So Sergeant Major, you said you had that talk with your Commander and I'm sure he shared his vision and then how you could support that and how you could support each other because we all have our strengths, weakness and kind of that thing, about four months after you got there, you had a deployment to Haiti so thinking of your

roles and responsibilities, now you're a Squadron Command Sergeant Major, you are getting used to the job and oh by the way, we're going to Haiti. How did that affect kind of what you saw as your roles and responsibilities in support of the Commander too, but then also getting ready to go somewhere totally different than Fort Polk?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Even then a totally different mission than what we normally think as a combat mission. Haiti, I wouldn't call it combat, but it was peace enforcement as much as probably more than anything else we went down there in a combat role, but it was peace enforcement. The Regiment was very well situated because of the wheel organization of the task force that we were very well suited for that mission. We went down there and the 3rd Squadron was the first Squadron deployed down. They had just slightly shy of six months down there. The 1st Squadron, which was my Squadron then was the second rotation in for the Regiment to be that maneuver force down there. By the time we were moving in, that mission had kind of been

drawn down a little bit. General Kinzer was the commander on the site. He had drawn down the combat role piece in there and they took out mostly the Infantry piece that was fighting. My task force that we went in with, Task Force Eagle, was augmented by two companies from the 82nd Airborne.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So it wasn't your Squadron pure. It was attachments.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: It was my Squadron plus.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So it was your whole Squadron plus?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Whole Squadron plus two additional companies.

SGM WATERHOUSE: That's a pretty big force.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: It was a very big force. That was one of the challenges. How do you go down to an environment with a mixed group?

SGM WATERHOUSE: That you never trained with, right?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: We did a little bit of leadership training together, but as far as the troops

go, nothing. Again, they are a light organization compared to us as being a mobile organization. I wouldn't call us a heavy organization, but we were mobile and they were not used to that. They came about a week after the Squadron Proper got in place. When the Squadron arrived, I had brought red and white paint for the Squadron, and the way I set the camp up was every troop had its own troop row so every troop had its own little company tent in the front and all the way down in that row was...

SGM WATERHOUSE: So you set it up like a tent city?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: It was all tent city and it was all down there. The Squadron, we had our own little company row basically on the main road and then the TOC was set up in a wooden type platform. When the Infantry showed up, they were pissed off because we're not cavalry, we're not red and white and all the rest of the stuff and that was the first attitude a little bit so I had the first Arms come see me and they were all crossing their arms.

SGM WATERHOUSE: You said you had two companies?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: I had two different companies, right. They had their arms crossed and didn't want to talk. I asked what the attitude was about. "Well, we're not painting our fricking rows red and white." I said "I don't expect you to." I reached behind me and pulled out a couple of cans of blue paint. I brought blue paint for the Infantry. This is your organization, as well. I said "I want you to figure out who you want to honor. I want your street named after that person. I want to know who it is before you paint anything up on the roads so that we can make sure it's an appropriate name, not Colonel Dickhead or something like that." They painted everything down their row blue and I separated them by one row of not two infantry companies side by side so I had my Alpha Bravo Charlie Troops, Infantry Company and then I had my headquarters and then the other Infantry Company down the last outside piece. The other thing that really transitioned them a little bit

more was we already had pulled out about 10 Humvees for each company to have that those were their Humvees, and we would overwatch them for a while to make sure they pulled the maintenance and knew how to take care of them.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Were there a couple hundred soldiers in each of these?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: There were about 200 Infantrymen for a Company Commander Alpert Company. They rotated missions like the rest of the organization did so it wasn't like the whole company was going on patrol at one time. We gave them their own Humvees. We gave them coolers to keep their water cold while they were on the mission and at first we were like "We don't want this stuff," but after about a couple of weeks of operating and having cold water and a way to ride around the battlefield, they were like this is not so bad.

SGM WATERHOUSE: It's better than a hot canteen.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Exactly. They honestly

became a great organization.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So Sergeant Major, for those who have never studied or read what Operation Uphold Democracy was, from the unclassified side, can you say kind of what that was and what your task force role was or main mission was in this?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Haiti was in, I think I will just call it political turmoil. That's probably the best way to say it. We could think of different ways. We see it all over the world yet today. The ruling power compared to radicals that want to do something to the government, does the government get overthrown and if it gets overthrown, then who is in charge and so it's like this. There were lots of atrocities in Haiti. There is a field over there called the Killing Field and it's literally where they just took people out there and just made them go on their knees and just shot them in the back of the head. It's that kind of stuff. There was almost no electricity working. The palace was still there, but if you actually went into the palace grounds, it's

just nothing but rubble, bullet holes in the walls...

SGM WATERHOUSE: So the government was basically overthrown.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: The government was overthrown.

SGM WATERHOUSE: And you guys were there to kind of stabilize what's going on until a new government could be formed.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: And that's why the Uphold Democracy turmoil. It really was to uphold democracy. The police force was there. We had some MPs, but for the most part, there were our troopers in the police stations for a while, not to tell them how to police, just to kind of give them that security that they would not be overrun type of stuff. We were down there for the elections. We didn't run the election polling places, but we guarded them. We quarantined them. We secured them and we secured the ballots from the election polls to the place where they counted the ballots, so it was really to try to get democracy back on line. We had the Air Force Red Horse attachment

come in, and they were between us and the main FOB, they were split apart, but they were down there to help start building roads again, help start repairing bridges again, help start getting the water wells fixed and stuff like that. Special Operators were there across the harbor. They had their own little camp across the harbor. I knew a couple of the guys over there so I would go visit them every now and then, but even I could see them across the harbor, to drive around the harbor to get to where they were was almost a three-hour drive. It was just the roads and everything was that hard to maneuver around. We counted success on the battlefield day by day by how many street lights got turned on and we would track where the street lights were at. The Haiti people really were pretty decent people, but they were very, you talk about standards based, they are a very standards based society. There is right and there is wrong and there is almost no in between. We found an individual who had been cut up pretty bad with a machete and under the body we found a small bar of

soap that he had stolen out of a shopkeeper's shop. This crowd just basically macheted him to death because he stole the soap. On the counterpart, the most dangerous mission we had in Haiti was getting rid of our trash. Literally, your trash trucks would go to the dump. You had to put concertina wire around this area, pull your trucks in the middle. We had a combat patrol around it to secure this and then you would dump the trash and then drive the truck out. As soon as you drove the truck out, the wire was open. It would be like Mad Max to Thunder. They would be rushing over this wire to try to get to your trash.

SGM WATERHOUSE: The local Haitian folks?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: The local Haitian folks and there were literally at times where he had reported of adults in their 30s and 40s with hammers hitting kids over the head with a hammer because the kids were running out of a pile of trash with something they wanted. It was almost bad. The American people don't realize how lucky they have it. You see some of these garbage trucks driving down the road and

kids probably 8-9-years-old sitting in the back of the garbage truck eating garbage as the garbage truck is driving down the road. Back to the honesty piece, we had an MP group that went out and there was a patrol that had batons and at the trash site, one of the guys dropped a baton somewhere, either getting in or getting out or whatever and this little Haitian boy, probably 14 or 13-years-old saw the individual drop the baton, picked the baton up, the patrol is leaving, everything is done and they are leaving, picked the baton up and on his bike was chasing this patrol down and probably chased them for 12 to 15 blocks. He finally caught up with the patrol to give the baton back to that soldier so they are a very honest-based population. That's what we had to go through down there a little bit. You live through some really crappy things. The main place where the Regimental Headquarters was located at and the operating place was on a hard stand area, warehouses around there so you had a little bit nicer hard stand to stand on. Where we were at, we called it Eagle Base at the time,

when it rained it was just mud. It was a three-mile perimeter. When I took it over, we were averaging two to three break ins a night and when I took over from 3rd Squadron. I'm just like how the hell can you guys live here?

SGM WATERHOUSE: Was it the local population just coming into the camp?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Trying to come in and they would pilfer, there was a collection point for old paneling and stuff like that. They would stop that or put stuff in that area. They were coming in and stealing that stuff. If there were water cans and they were sitting by themselves, they would steal the water can. If the water can was next to some wash point, they wouldn't touch it because they knew it was supposed to be there for the wash point. It was that kind of thing. What I looked at though when it was my turn to take the camp over, the first thing I did was walk the perimeter and I saw the problem. The guard towers were so far away from the walls that they couldn't see anything going on. There was no, as you

put a guard tower in, there was no kill space.

SGM WATERHOUSE: There was no overlapping field of vision.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: No field of vision.

Literally, they could walk up to the walls and do lots of things. The towers couldn't see anything. The first week I was there, every night we would move a tower back during day and all the towers got moved back and then we put the (Inaudible) back in and every night I was out for a week making sure all of the lights were put up the right way so they could cross again fields of fire, field of vision, all the rest of the stuff. The MPs were over at the main compound. I invited them to bring a dog in. They had two different kinds of dogs, bomb dogs and we had drug dogs. We had four drug dogs to one bomb dog and we usually only had like three or four dogs at a time in country, but you can't tell the difference between which dog is which so I would have them cover a couple times a week around evening time and let the dog, because we had a big open area, just go run, just have exercise, get rid of

some energy, whatever it is and then they could see the dog out. As it gets dark, the MP would call the dog back. They would take the dog and they would just leave with the dog, but the Haitians didn't know if the dog was running loose on the compound or not running loose on the compound. We had the guard towers up now. They had the lights the right way.

SGM WATERHOUSE: A little psychological stuff.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Absolutely. That's what you had to do there. It wasn't that you were trying to hurt people, it was simply you were trying to get them to get back into law and order again. By the time we left, we were averaging maybe one attempt to break in a month so it really dramatically reduced that. The other thing we did is we got rid of that big trash pile and just took the temptation away a little bit. But the Haitian people were great people. Again, we had a worker force that came in every day. You met them at the front gate. We brought in like 20 of them to do post place calls and stuff like this, again,

great people. I guess we were there for six or eight weeks. I finally went into their, we had a GP medium tent set up for them to take a break in, to have their lunch and we gave them an MRE for lunch, their own little space. I walk in and it's just dirt floor. There is nothing in there. I'm like I don't want to offend nobody, is this the way you like to sit? Is this a traditional way that you do it in Haiti here? They said "No, we have furniture. We like to sit on stuff." "Why don't you?" I called my driver on the radio and I said "Hey, get over here." He gets over there and I said "Take this individual and all of his people. They are not doing nothing the rest of the day. They are not working for the U.S. Army. They are working for themselves the rest of the afternoon. Take them to that lumber pile and they can take any lumber they want off that pile. I looked at the guy they had who was in charge and said "I want you to build a table, some stools for around that table and whatever you think in here you need to have to live decently. This is your area so you are part of the U.S. Army in

this tent. I want you to act that way." They get this big ass smile on their face so the rest of the day I hear hammering and everything else going on. A couple of days later I get this invite to come have lunch with them in their new tent. I get over there and the Haitian people are relatively short. They are tiny people. I had to jump to get on top of this fricking bench to sit at the table they built. The chair must have been three feet off the ground. I was like what the hell.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Kind of like a highchair.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: It was like going to a soda fountain type set up. That's what they wanted, that's how they built it and I thought this was perfect. Again, treat people the way you want to be treated and it made a big difference in Haiti, and that's how I think we won the hearts and minds over there.

SGM WATERHOUSE: What were some of those successes or the high points of the ten months you were there?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: One night I was on patrol. I went on patrol with a couple different vehicles and we turn this corner and ran into, they would have parties all the time, they love to have parties. They love to sing and they love music. We turn the corner and this looks like a riot is going on. There were hundreds of people and the headlights of these Humvees lit them up and all of a sudden it's like they started dancing. Next thing we knew, they wanted some light to have this celebration so we pulled the Humvees around a little bit. You find somebody who can always talk a little bit of English in there. I said "Look, I can only stay for 15 minutes." They cranked it up and were dancing for 15 minutes. I said "We gotta go," and they were like "Okay, fine." Another night doing a dismounted patrol with some folks and you hear this God awful screaming going on and you're like oh shit, what's going on now.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Was this a rural area you were in?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: This was Port au Prince.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So you are in the city.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: This is in the city piece and Port au Prince, it's old French turn of the century style, open latrines, open sewage system rather. If you could afford to clean that place up, it would be a beautiful city, just absolutely gorgeous, but again, all the political stuff going on, all the trash was just dumped everywhere so when you do patrol in the town, you were walking over piles and piles of trash. We were on patrol one night and heard this scream. Of course, everybody gets on alert then and all of this rumbling coming down and screaming coming down and as we get to this one intersection, this giant pig comes running around the corner, missing a leg.

SGM WATERHOUSE: You thought it was a person.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: The way that pig was screaming, it sounded like a person in the middle of the city. You say city, but it's kind of a small town type set up type deal. You have all that kind of stuff

over there. Every day there was some problem, some problem, some problem. I told my First Sergeant "Look, I understand there are problems. Give me one cup of coffee. In the morning, let me get up and give me one cup of coffee before you come in with a problem." The very next morning, my HHT First Sergeant, I've literally just left my tent and he's "I need to talk to you." "I just asked you to hold off and let me have one cup of coffee before you hit me with a problem." "This can't wait." Rats were a problem over there. Literally, they are a problem. We had a little mini PX and the HHT First Sergeant slept in the back of that where all the storage stuff was and all the candy bars and all the rest of that and I guess one came up on the end of his cot, ran up his leg, up over his chest, over his face and off the other side and I said "You know what, I'll give you that one Tom. This coffee can wait for that problem. We'll figure this out."

SGM WATERHOUSE: Get a couple of cats over there.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: I tell you, you better

have cats with body armor. These rats were big. Then I had another First Sergeant who was hunting rats and hanging them off the concertina wire and I'm like "You've got to take that shit down." "I'm going to scare these sons of a bitches. They're not going to be around to see their buddies hanging on the wire." "They don't think the way you do." We had that problem, but just before we were leaving, about a month before we started leaving, a corps of engineers came in and they raised, we had plywood, basically pallets with plywood and on top of it was your tent and the rats were just living underneath. They were stealing anything that they smelled, they wanted to eat and they would get it. The Squadron Commander had a can of peanut butter that was still sealed, metal can of peanut butter, and they smelled the peanut butter through the tin can and ate the tin can. Rats were a big problem over there. They ended up raising the tents about four feet off the ground because monsoon season, everything gets wet and it just gets totally crappy. Once they did that, we could clean up

underneath all those tents and we were able to get that rat population well under control to do that.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Sergeant Major, in November of 1995, your guys' ten-month deployment was up and then you redeployed to Fort Polk and you continued to serve as the Command Sergeant Major of the Squadron for about another nine months or so. When you guys got back from Haiti, what was the focus of the unit then?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: We had to get back into our wartime mission with 18 Corps. Haiti was a peace enforcement type mission. It was doing law enforcement type stuff. It was to help put back the infrastructure of the country. It was those kinds of things we were doing where we had to go back and reblue our wartime mission stuff. We got focused hot and heavy on individual weapons fire. We had weapons qualifications. We had to make up and get back on track. We had to get back into where we're not driving down the middle of the road now and doing these patrols, we actually have to get out and do the sneak and peak move, go from bush to bush and tree to tree,

so we had to go back and relearn how to be a scout. It's a skill that does atrophy and that was one of the biggest things we had to do was try to do that. We didn't have a lot of time because basically we kind of went from a Haiti mission and about two months back an NTC mission into a Bosnia mission.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So you got back and had to get ready for national training center rotation and then you knew you were going to Bosnia a little later.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: We knew Bosnia was cooking. We just didn't know what was going on with Bosnia. That was well towards the end of that Squadron time before Bosnia popped up, but getting back from Haiti was getting all the basic soldier tasks back down. Again, buildings, Fort Polk, Louisiana, hot and humid, so the buildings not being occupied. Anybody that had leather shoes or leather jacket or had leather anything, when we opened the wall lockers up when we got back, it was all green. All the mold had started growing in all those leather garments so we had to go back and figure out how to replace that. We

had to replace a lot of carpeting in a lot of the buildings so it was kind of shaking the dust off the blinds and getting things back the way you're supposed to do. That was our biggest focus. Had some great First Sergeants doing that. My rat killer, I call him my old hippie. He was kind of that 60s mentality of a First Sergeant. I guess we were back for about six or eight weeks and Thursday night I go out there and there's a room worth of beds, dressers and everything else in the middle of this quadrangle out in the grass. I asked "What are we doing here" and he says "I've been telling these sons of bitches we're going to clean these rooms up and by God I'm going to show them how to do it, so being that I can't put all these guys in the room, I'm going to have the room come out here and we're going to have a class on how to clean the room." "I got it Tom, we're good." I might have done the same thing at one time so let him go. The only thing was it was 1700 and why didn't you start this at like 1500 type thing. I just said "Okay look, can you wrap this up in like 30 minutes and then get

this taken care of?" "Yeah, yeah, yeah." Guess what happened the following week? There is another bed set up out. I said "That's it. No more, you have to put this shit back. We can't be doing this." If you can't get NCOs to know how to do this stuff, then have them come in and you teach them how to GI. When a Staff Sergeant has to start getting on his hands and knees with a toothbrush, they'll teach the soldier how to do that. I had great First Sergeants in that respect. I did have one, when I took over the Squadron, I was a Junior Sergeant Major. If you put all the First Sergeants out there and myself, I was by two years' time in the Army less than my Junior First Sergeant so I had some resentment by one who said, he didn't say anything, but just acted like I'm not listening to you, what are you going to tell me. My first couple of meetings with the First Sergeant group, he would be late and so of course he is trying to push your button, trying to get you pissed off. I told him to get down here so as soon as he shows up, I said "I don't mind you not showing up, but just call. You're a

First Sergeant. You're busy. If you have something really hot and important, just let me know. I'm in the middle of something, let's go." So the next week at the next First Sergeant meeting, guess who doesn't show up again. He doesn't show up again. He comes in there and I said the same thing "Just call me." He kept looking like that. The third week, guess who doesn't show up again? Call him and he comes down. Right there I just stopped everything. I said "I know your pissed off because I'm a junior time in the Army guy than you, that you didn't get selected and I did, but that's really neither here nor there, but here's what you're going to do, if you show up late to my formation again, which is this meeting, then you will sign a piece of paper called counseling. The second piece of paper I will have ready for you on the following day is your retirement paperwork. I don't need you in this Army if you can't obey orders. I would rather you decide that we are all a team and let's get on with life, but if you can't do that, then this is no longer your job." Of course, he had his

chest out, but after that, it was like done. He realized, he had almost dug his hole so far, how can I get myself out of the hole and I really believe he thought if I blew up at him he got his point across and he would become that great First Sergeant, but because I didn't get angry with him, he was like well, what do I do now. The only thing I can do is go down that path I took. I had that situation, but literally that was only the first month that I was there and when we did the Haiti mission, it was really a great group of folks. The only thing, I tell you, I can really think of leadership wise was washing the hands. Any time you go somewhere, you have dysentery. It's just a change in the water, change everything, it's just a hard thing to do. Down there it was even worse. The wash points were critical to have. Water at the wash points and all the rest of the stuff taken care of. Go check the water can. Always empty. Had that meeting. First Sergeants, this is it. Get this shit fixed. The next day the water can is empty. I said "Okay, here is what we're going to do. That's a

Private's job so starting tomorrow, it's now a Specialist's job. Only Specialists will be allowed to fill water cans. If I still find water cans empty, the following day it becomes a Sergeant's job to fill water cans. The following day it will become Staff Sergeant's job, Sergeant 1st Class' job and First Sergeants, eventually it will become your job and I will tell you right fricking now, I am not filling water cans so you can be a water can filler for the rest of your deployment if you want to, but I suggest you enforce this standard." So guess what happened the next day?

SGM WATERHOUSE: They were filled.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: They were not filled. So now Sergeants are on this and of course, they're like aww. The Sergeant reports to the TOC before they go do the detail. It's not just you tell me a Sergeant is doing it and the private gets told to go do it. That Sergeant reports and it belongs to the TOC for the day. You lose a Sergeant for all day long. Guess what happened the next day? Still didn't have the water

cans filled. So I said Staff Sergeants, I want a Staff Sergeant up here now. Of course now Staff Sergeants are at the point I'm pissed off, I don't want to do this shit and they weren't being filled. They do the one or do they see and not fill the rest of the water cans. I had a nighttime meeting, a special meeting with the First Sergeant. I said "You know, this is your last opportunity. Tomorrow you are going to have E-7s on this fricking detail." "I can't afford a Platoon Sergeant." I said "You put a Staff Sergeant on patrol. That Platoon Sergeant will be on this detail. That's the bottom line. You guys had a chance to fix this shit." That meeting broke up and they all kind of grumbled. They said they understood, but probably about 8:00 or 9:00 at night I had a couple of First Sergeants come see me and tell me that they really need their Platoon Sergeants. I said "I know you do. I got it, but are you going to get it fricking fixed now?" They said "We will never let this fruck up again." They put Privates back on it and for the rest of the deployment we never had a problem with the

water cans.

SGM WATERHOUSE: That just seems hard to believe that you would have to almost like babysit First Sergeants.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: It is, but again...

SGM WATERHOUSE: Because you were a Sergeant Major. Whether they like it or not, they are not.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: They're not.

SGM WATERHOUSE: It's the Army's decision.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: It's what you see things from your foxhole. What view do you see? From their foxhole, what was the big deal? When you look at it from the bigger foxhole, how many soldiers I had down for dysentery, how many pieces I couldn't do because I didn't have enough bodies across the entire Squadron to do certain things. It was a challenge. I had a camp of I think about 1,200 soldiers were totally on my camp. Of that 1,200, I had nine females. That's all I had in my camp was nine females. Most of them were Medics. I had one Lieutenant who was Intel so she worked at the TOC. Seven were Medics and one was a

mechanic. The Regiment wanted me to have all the females live over at the other compound with the rest of the females where they were living. I said I can't do that. that means another patrol just to get them back and forth to work every day. That's just a waste of time. We have a tent right here. I have a Lieutenant and a couple of NCOs. We'll put the tent and the tent was like three over from mine.

SGM WATERHOUSE: With a latrine and shower?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: We had the latrine and shower, we had all that kind of separated and then what I did with the Medics, basically I had seven organizations, seven company troops. Each company troop got assigned a Medic so each girl basically had between 100 and 200 big brothers. Nobody was going to mess with my little sister here doing that. The mechanics, that was a little bit smaller group, but again, they were in such a confined area that they never left the compound so there was a little bit more overwatch on that one right there so there were not problems. Rules is up until a certain time. You could

go to that tent. You could not go in a tent if anyone inside the tent objected. You could not be in a tent with just two, but you are welcome to sit outside the tent. There were picnic tables all over the place. We had that kind of rule going and it was really perfect. Literally, you could see the big brother/big sister type mentality get kicked in and some of those young ladies were awesome. As a matter of fact, one of the Medics was cited and given an award for saving a ranger's life. He got in an accident and she actually brought him back to life twice.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Sergeant Major, you did Haiti not too long after you took over and then you came back and you served for another nine months or so. About two years?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Yes.

SGM WATERHOUSE: And then in July of 1996, you took over as the actual Regimental Command Sergeant Major of the 2nd Cav. When were you notified that that was next?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: We knew that Steve Moore

was retiring. At that time, it was pretty much you know we try to promote within before selection.

SGM WATERHOUSE: This was before the July selection was done.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Exactly. All three of us Squadron Sergeant Majors were there, but the advantage or disadvantage I had and I knew this and I think everybody else did, 3rd Squadron deployed basically six months. 1st and 2nd Squadron were back with Regimental Headquarters. Regimental Headquarters deploys with 1st Squadron. 2nd and 3rd Squadron are back. Regimental Headquarters redeploys back with 1st Squadron. 2nd Squadron deploys, so the only Sergeant Major that the Regimental Sergeant Major got to see for basically his last year and a half all the time was 1st Squadron. I was the only one he saw all 18 months. I got to know him pretty good. He got to see how I was doing things. As a matter of fact, that female discussion we just had, he told me when we were getting ready to redeploy back to Haiti, he said "I thought you were crazy. I thought that was the stupidest move in the world to

let those females stay there, but it was a good idea." We opened up alcohol on Haiti mission. We were doing one patrol on a Sunday. We were only doing a few patrols on Saturdays. There was literally nothing to do for these soldiers and we were down to this "What do you do with 1,200 soldiers with nothing to keep them occupied?" We put swimming pools, they allowed us to buy some swimming pools and put swimming pools in, but there weren't enough things to do.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Besides guard.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Besides guard and do PT. You can only do PT so long in 100 degree weather. We opened up alcohol and we had like you do for any kind of normal fly mission. It's a two beer limit. Eight hours before patrol, no alcohol type thing and we just kind of did it. I want to say we did it for about three months and then in three months we had one incident where someone, everybody got two beers, two beers, two beers, and five of those ten guys didn't drink so one guy figured he was going to drink all the rest of it for them. We only had that happen one time,

but this Sergeant Major was in charge of that theater, General Kinzer's Sergeant Major came. Literally I was on compound, I was out doing something on the compound and I get shot a radio that Sergeant Major is coming through the gate. Wow, I didn't even know he was in country. Got it. He said "He wants you to meet him at your tent." "Roger." I'm getting over to get my tent and the Sergeant Major is already there. He asks if I have any coffee. I said "Sure Sergeant Major." I poured a cup of coffee for him and poured a cup of coffee for me. We sat down. He held his coffee and never drank it. He said "You know I've come here to fire you. I heard that you would open up alcohol on this rotation so I have come here to fire you. I have been around for two days now. I have visited all over the place. I think it was the right call. I think it was the time to do that here." He put the cup of coffee down on the table right there and goes "See you next visit," and he just left. It was like you could not tell me you come to fire me. What the hell did I do?

SGM WATERHOUSE: Thanks for the pep talk.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: It was like crap, but it was one of those kind of things. Now fast forward a little bit further and we're now in Bosnia and General Keene was the Corps Commander when we were in Haiti, and he was also now still the Corps Commander when we were there and this alcohol question came up. I had one of these First Sergeants that wanted alcohol. Again, the Bosnia mission was not overly tasking, but there was a lot more stuff involved, a lot more moving parts. The First Sergeant brought up the fact that he believes that we should be allowed to have alcohol in theater. General Keane always rode in the helicopter. It looked like he was sleeping all the time. He was always hunched over. He rode in the back right seat of that helicopter all the time so I was sitting in the seat right next to him. The First Sergeant briefing him was right across from him right there. General Keane's head is kind of bobbing with the helicopter and the First Sergeant, he doesn't flinch, he doesn't move anything..

SGM WATERHOUSE: So they were talking through their headset?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Right. The helicopter is flying through the air and the First Sergeant says that about alcohol and General Keene doesn't even look up. He is a big man. He just says "Talk to him." That's all he said. So I said "Sir this theater is not ready for alcohol. We are not anywhere close.

SGM WATERHOUSE: And nobody had done it before then.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: No. Even though I had done alcohol in Haiti, it was not the right environment for alcohol, and he goes "You're absolutely right." In general order #1 for a leader, you could have one glass of alcohol if you were doing a political meeting or a military meeting with senior, you were allowed to have one toast. So general order #1 only allowed you to have that, but not drink like the First Sergeant was asking to do.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Sergeant Major, if I have my dates right, you took over as 2nd Cavalry Regiment

Command Sergeant Major in July of 1996 and you would serve in that position for about a year. Did you have time to do kind of a left seat/right seat transition, I'm assuming you did, with the outgoing Regimental Sergeant Major?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: I did a short one. I was able to do a left seat/right seat. I told you we had looked at internal before we looked at external, but this case right here, I forgot who called. Colonel Lute was the Commander at the time of the Regiment and someone called him and said "I got this Sergeant Major, I would really like you to look at him as potentially replacing Christian."

SGM WATERHOUSE: Somebody outside?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Somebody outside the Regiment and so they did. I forgot his name now, but he walked in and he was not the image of a combat Sergeant Major. He was not the image of a Sergeant Major. He was a little bit overweight, wasn't stupid, was really pretty smart, but you could tell he was out of his environment in that kind of an organization,

but this is who Colonel Lute had selected because someone had recommended him and I said "Okay, I trust this guy and I'll hire this guy." I think he only lasted six months. I think he was asked to put his paperwork in and kind of move on down the road. But we did do a left seat/right seat ride and that's where I tell you, we have a tendency as an NCO not to write shit down, we really do, but a battle handover book is really, really, really a smart idea and just try to figure out some basic stuff to have in that book. It doesn't have to be a great everything, but you know as a Regimental Sergeant Major, you should at least write down every one of your Squadron Sergeants Major and not that you say I like this guy, I dislike this guy. It's here are his pluses and here are his minuses, here are his strong points or here are his weaknesses. If you have an outstanding First Sergeant, you need to know that so that if you do have to replace a Sergeant Major right away because of an injury or something, that is your go to guy to pick up and move forward here. Little things like that are why battle handover

books are a good thing to have. Did I do it? Half assed, I will tell you that right there. Did I walk him through it? Yes, but how many things can you remember in basically a three to four day battle handover ride. You are just trying to figure out how the hell to park your car and how to get to the office in time. I think that's one thing that you have to have or I would make that one of the things that if we talk about how to be a good CSMM, that's one thing I would focus on is how do you build a good battle handover book because especially now that we're not doing the Sergeant Major in places as long as we used to, we're not having, we're kind of synchronizing the Commanders and Sergeants Major to leave at the same time, which takes away a lot of continuity that we used to have. When the Commander moved and maybe it was a year or two years later before the Sergeant Major moved, you had a lot more continuity in the organization. You didn't really move your XOs and your deputies at the same time you did and now we seem to be moving all the leadership at the same time. I feel

just looking from the outside looking in, I think that's a detriment to our readiness is you have seen organizations really do much more dips and troughs in how they are able to perform tasks because they are not synchronized. Not that they are bad leaders, they are not synchronized as an organization as much as they used to be.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Sergeant Major, when you got to the Regimental level and you took over just like any other unit, we really do it as a Squad Leader or Platoon Sergeant, you kind of assess the unit that you have now just taken responsibility for. You have the Commander and you have your responsibilities in this case as the Command Sergeant Major so looking at this, now you are at the Regimental level and looking at this, how did you go about, because this is a fairly big organization, so how did you go about assessing what you had, you knew your old Squadron, but how do you assess what you had and what were some of the things you saw that you kind of wanted to jump on to improve in the Regiment when you took over?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Again, the blessing I had was I was basically married at the hip to the Regiment for 18 months and so I got to watch how Steve Moore did things, especially my six months with him in Haiti and having to spend that really closer time with him and me in Haiti. I really watched what his mentality was and how he kind of looked at things as a Regimental Sergeant Major compared to how I was looking at things as Squadron Sergeant Major and so that helped me watch how he held the position and what he did with that position. When it came to rest his Regiment, I knew all the other Squadron Sergeants Major. I was just one of those Squadron Sergeants Major so I knew the personality of the Sergeant Major, I knew the personality of the Squadron Commanders...

SGM WATERHOUSE: I think you only maybe didn't know too well is the Headquarter Staff.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Exactly. It was how the pieces of staff operated. I mean literally how my Operations Sergeant Major did or didn't do things. I was a big believer, we talked earlier about Staff

Sergeants Major and Command Sergeants Major. I had Sergeants Major call. I had it at my house and who didn't show up? It was my Ops Sergeant Major. The next day, it was on Friday so on the next Monday I walk in there and asked where he was. He said "I'm only a Staff Sergeant Major. I didn't think it was for me." Did the invite say Staff Sergeants Major or Command Sergeants Major? He said "Sergeants Major." I said "You are a Sergeant Major." I could have got you will be there, but it was more I want you to be there. You have to change this mentality and once you start changing that mentality of hey, we all have a mission, but we just have different positions to carry that mission out in, it started gelling a lot more where people were willing to talk to each other a little bit at the staff levels. I think that was a piece. The Sergeant's time was a big thing and the former Regimental Commander who was there when I took over, Colonel Sharpe, he was more of a text guy. He was one that would leave you texts. His office was right next to my office, but he would give me an email before he

would get up and walk around and say... What do you need? Just holler, I'll come running. I'll get there. He would email and say "Sergeant Major, we need to talk about this." Instead of saying come see me, he would put it in a whole email what he wanted to talk about. Okay. When the next Commander came in there, Colonel Hardie, it was a whole different ballgame. Colonel Hardie was more of an "I want you to come talk to me, I want you beside me, I want you to be doing things," so a whole different environment and in sergeants' time training was one thing that you do sergeants' time training and you had to really stop all the other crap and get it done. Family time was another one of those things on Thursdays that you really had to enforce. We are all busy, but if you don't take time for family, then why are you working so hard? I would walk through the Regimental Headquarters literally with a Maddox handle and I would get to the office and there would always be Majors or Captains or Sergeants working at the desk yet and I said "Hey, you were supposed to have been

gone at 1600." "Well, I have to finish this one thing." "Gone at 1600 sir. I'm walking the route and when I come back, don't be here." I come back and of course the Captains usually try to look over here and can I get out of here and the Major says go, but the Majors are always going to push. So the Major was sitting at the desk and I just took that handle and just dropped it on the desk. I pick it up and drop it on the desk. He said "Sergeant Major, don't do that." I picked it up and dropped it on his desk. I said "I can call the Colonel in here and he can tell you to get out of here." "All right, goddamn it Sergeant Major, I'm leaving." I said "Take the paperwork home, but just go home." Again, after you start enforcing those things, they figure out a way to make it work. You empower them to be in charge of themselves, and that was a big principal. Colonel Hardie was a great leader to let me do that. He kind of sequestered himself inside his office with the door closed until I would come by and knock on it and it was empty and he would leave or I would sometimes say "Sir, I need you

to leave first because nobody is going to leave until you do."

SGM WATERHOUSE: They see the boss' car out there.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Yes, so he would make a big point about walking through. He would say "Guys, Sergeant Major is going to be walking through in five minutes and I'm out of here." Again, after a couple of months, when the Colonel walked out and says he's leaving, you heard the door swooshing because everybody was running out the doors. It was really great to see that.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Sergeant Major, you served as the Regimental Sergeant Major for about a year and then you went to Bosnia. Were you still in the Regimental spot or was that a totally different gig?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Yes and yes. This is really a little bit confusing because again when you talk about Vietnam and the first time we really did a major redeployment, we did this. The Headquarters of the 1st Armored Division, which was Major General Ellis

at the time was the Headquarters force. The troop body of the element was the 2nd Regiment so they were brought over to round over the Headquarters of the 1st Armored Division and so the 1st Armored Division Proper, basically the troops stayed in Germany because I came over as Regimental Sergeant Major, the Division Sergeant Major Dwight Brown, he stayed in Germany with the Division, with the Deputy Commander, and I became the Task Force Commander Eagle in Bosnia.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So about a year after you took over as the Regimental Sergeant Major of 2nd Cav, in August of 1997 you deployed to Bosnia in support of Operation Joint Guard and then there your title was Task Force Eagle Command Sergeant Major and you were there for about 15 months.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: It was actually about 12 months we were there, just shy of 12 months. That Task Force, the Regimental Commander basically thinks of it as he became the ADCM so he became the Deputy Commander of a Division is how he operated and then the ADCS was basically one of the Brigadier Generals

who came in from Germany with General Ellis and he remained being the "S". Chief of Staff that was General Ellis' in Germany actually came to Bosnia with us, as well and he maintained his Chief of Staff, but then other staff principals in the Headquarters were intermixed between either a Germany Staff Officer or a Regimental Staff Officer and if it was a Regimental Staff Officer, it was usually a Germany Deputy Commander or a Deputy Assistant Officer or an NCO and vice a versa, so it was really integrated staff at that point how we operated.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Your boss, the Colonel, is that who you worked for? Did you work directly for him or did you work for the 2-star General?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: My Regimental Commander was still my Regimental Commander to talk about Regimental issues, but I really worked directly for General Ellis and so at first it was a little bit cumbersome because the Colonel didn't know if he should be calling me to do something or the General, so it ended up just being I don't know if they talked

behind closed doors, whatever it was, but after a very short period of time, it was like Colonel Hardie just became the Deputy Commander and General Ellis was a commander and I answered to General Ellis, because he was Task Force Eagle Commander. I became that guy. I really didn't answer to Colonel Hardie at all. The only thing, when we got ready to redeploy back, that's when we were synchronizing what we have to do with the Regiment. The other thing that worked out in that respect was Colonel Hardie is ADCM basically and was out in the battlefield circulation all the time, different FOBs and different... We had three separate brigades.

SGM WATERHOUSE: He would like to maneuver 1-star General.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Exactly. Our Regimental XO was part of the Headquarters' staff for the Headquarters so I saw him every time I was back in the Headquarters, regardless of whether I saw the Regimental Commander or not. When the Regimental Commander was back, then the XO was there too, so our

continuity factor really between me and the Colonel was our Regimental XO and we stayed kind of that little bit of a glue that way, but General Ellis was very good about understanding that synergy we had going on. At the same time, it was like Sergeant Major I need you to do this and he had no qualms about telling me to be XYZ Sergeant Major.

SGM WATERHOUSE: That's interesting so that the General's Sergeant Major stayed in Germany I guess to keep everything in line back there.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Because that's where the troops were. For the most part, 1st Armored Division's troops were there so that's where that Sergeant Major stayed.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Did you get credit per se on your evaluation as a (overtalking)?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: As a 2-star Sergeant Major. I got rated as a 2-star Sergeant Major. General Ellis was my rater so I basically got credit to be a Division level Sergeant Major while I was still a Regimental Sergeant Major 06 level command. We talked

about the writing skills earlier and this is where it really came into play. I learned how to write early on in my career because I was forced to really do it right. General Ellis always had UCMJ on Thursdays so on Mondays, the JAG Officer would come in. Sundays was the trip where the airplane would show up with all the UCMJ actions from Germany. On Monday, the JAG Officer would bring all the UCMJ actions to me to review minus the officers. I would review all those. I had to have them done by Monday night so that the JAG Officer had it back on Tuesday morning so he could review all the notes I wrote and then he basically gave it to the General to review on Wednesday so that on Thursday night we held court. It wasn't that the individual showed up in front of us, it was here is Case X...

SGM WATERHOUSE: Because the soldiers are back in Germany.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Back in Germany or it was Germany or in Bosnia so whatever Bosnia had plus we also did Germany so I'm looking at all these cases. I'm looking at Sergeants that I have no clue who the

hell they are, but I am reviewing the case just like the JAG Officer is without not knowing who is who and you don't care about it. I started reviewing these things and after a little while, General Ellis got to the point of if it did not have my signature on it, we didn't hold court. Because I was gone somewhere or did something, he wouldn't hold court. He said "If Sergeant Major hasn't seen it, I don't want to see this." It became very, very good relationship in that respect that the trust got built early on, but it was hard to break into that little circle of his.

SGM WATERHOUSE: I'm just thinking about the folks out there... It does happen. There's a normal progression for some folks after Brigade and you get a Division, did you feel you were ready at that point or did you know what you were getting into?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: I actually didn't know what I was getting into. At first it didn't feel like I was going to the Division. I knew I was going to go there and I was going to be the Task Force Sergeant Major, but I kind of felt like I still had a safety

blanket that my Regimental Commander was right beside me. I still had my comfort of my Regimental Commander right there. The Maneuver Force was still my Regiment. The Squadron Commander and Squadron Sergeant Major were the Maneuver Force out in the FOBs. The only think I really had to step up the game a lot was we had a Russian Brigade as one of our brigades and we had a multinational Brigade at that time that was led by a Norwegian Task Force Commander and so I had to go visit these guys. I had not a lot of experience about being a Division Sergeant Major, so when you go see these other brigades, especially foreign commanders that were looking at you like you work for a 2-star General, my God type thing, and the American NCO was always looked at as very awesome piece of tool that the Commander has. I go visit these Commanders and they are expecting me to give them all these glorious insights on how to do shit and I'm like "You can probably tell me how to do something better than what I'm doing," but it was interesting because as I went to visit especially the Russians, I actually went to

Moscow as the Task Force Sergeant Major. General Shalikashvili came in and he was doing a NATO Russian type group. I was, as the Task Force Sergeant Major, invited to come and talk about how the Russian soldiers compared and worked with the American soldiers so I had to give a presentation to the Russian Senior Commands in Moscow. When I did that, it was like an eye opener. It was like holy crap, this is big stuff. I had to go through Red Square. I really thought when I was going through Red Square, there would be an M1 tank.

SGM WATERHOUSE: It was five or six years earlier, that's when the Soviet Union actually...

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: I was able to do that and the Norwegians were a little bit different. The multinational was a little bit different because those are NATO countries, but they look at you as I need some insights and so you look at them and how they are doing things and each country does things a little bit differently so I had to kind of tell them that "Look, you are a Commander. This is what General Ellis

expects of you, and kind of talk as if you were my Squadron Commander or you were my Company Commander. What does a boss actually expect you to do? He wants you to do your job. He wants you to give him information and if it needs to be caught up, bring it up. Don't hold bad news because bad news gets worse over time. Tell him the truth. Tell him what it is. If you need something, let us know early. That's all he wants you to do." And after a while, it was like I got it, we're good to go. The Russians were a little bit different because they are... The Russians were a challenge because primarily that organization, the brigade was Spetsnaz. It was more Spetsnaz than it was regular troops. Not a bad thing. It's just the mentality of the Special Forces kind of guy is, but they were thieves. The Russians as a whole, it's in their blood, it's in their society. Even when they pulled out of Germany, when the Cold War ended and they pulled out of Germany type stuff, they took sinks and they took toilets. They took stuff out of these barracks because they didn't have it in Russia. In

Bosnia, they had these no shit convoys of civilian cars they drove from Bosnia back to Russia. They would come in the PX and buy all the TV sets they could buy and then they would put them in these trucks and bring them back to Russia. It was one of those things you had to kind of kid glove it a little bit, but you also had to put a stop to some of the things they were doing. That was again, our counterpart as Sergeant Major in the Russian Army is a full Colonel. That was something that when Sergeant Major of the Army Hall came over and visited, I got him to visit every single place we had soldiers. The weather just worked out and when he was over there, my Russian counterpart, the full Colonel, he basically had a little basic range of bridge, one rope to walk on and two ropes to hold on between the two camps across this little gulley, and he would come charging across that like there. He ran up and saluted the Sergeant Major of the Army and said "I'm here and I'm just like your Sergeant Major. I am him." He said "Okay, good. I really got to get going to stay on track." "Oh yeah, I just wanted to come

shake your hand." He saluted him. We get in the helicopter to take off and Bob Hall is in the helicopter and he said "You know how powerful that was?" I'm like that a Russian came running across? He said "No, he didn't say you are Sergeant Major, he's like me. He says I am like your Sergeant Major. You have influenced that Brigade so hard that they now believe that you have more power than that Colonel does." I never looked at it that way and truly though, that's why I think a lot of our foreign counterparts do look at the NCO Corps, especially Senior NCOs, that we have and it's not that we don't have the power, we have the authority of our commanders, but we really track those, we take for granted how much authority we have. At the same time, we don't abuse that authority to where we overextend our ability to exercise authority without our Commander's approval. I think that's a key thing for the NCO Corps for the United States.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Sergeant Major, as the Task Force Eagle Command Sergeant Major, so you had a

Norwegian unit, a Russian unit and your Regiment. Were there any other units that you had?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: There was a British sector on the right hand side and a French sector on the lower side and every now and then, we would have to cross because of different command conferences or different organization things. We would go across as with the Queen's zone. I was invited with General Ellis to dine in in the British zone. I'm thinking okay, if the General is going to go, I'll go. I didn't realize in the British Army, NCOs are not allowed in the mess.

SGM WATERHOUSE: They have their own mess.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: They had their own mess and dine in is only Officer's mess. I'm like what the hell, why am I here? I was sitting down with all of these Lieutenants. All of these Lieutenants used to be First Sergeants. That's how the progression goes so they would become First Sergeants and officer or warrant officer type stuff.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Their Sergeants Major

become warrant officers.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Yes. So I was like okay, what the hell am I doing here? I had dinner, had a good conversation. I was sitting at the end table with the Lieutenants and all the rest of the stuff and when it was all done, I walked up to the Regimental Commander and said "Sir, awesome, thank you, appreciate the honor. I know it is not normal for you to bring a noncommissioned officer into your mess and this is a distinct honor and I will never forget this, but with your permission, I would like to leave your mess and join the Sergeant Major in his mess." He stands up with that British salute and goes "Absolutely, honored to have you here Sergeant Major." I left and went just around the corner down there and I got there and the Regimental Sergeant Major was already in there. I had a good time. I had too good a time that night to tell you the truth. The French never had that kind of interaction that we did with the British there, but with the French, we did a lot more political stuff because that's where the NATO

Headquarters was in that French sector.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So as the Task Force Sergeant Major, I'm sure you felt you were obligated obviously to visit all of your units out in the field, how did you determine kind of where and when you would go and when you did visit and talk to some NCOs, whether they were Brits or your guys or French, what kinds of things would you talk about?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: What was easy was we had so many visitors come to Bosnia. The number of Senators and Congressman and Representatives and everybody else who wanted to come visit people in Bosnia, we always had somebody visiting so it was almost not too hard to have a trip going somewhere where you had troops because they were always wanting to visit and do different things, but there were outposts that we had like Mount Zep and different places that were just so remote that you were never going to take a visitor there. There was a compound we had that you had to go through a Serbian checkpoint. Literally, they had a small compound. You had to enter

their gate, drive through their compound to go out their back gate to get to your compound and in that compound we had our small detachment on top of that whole hillside except for the road you drove up on was just like carpeted mines so there was no way.

SGM WATERHOUSE: The only way to get there was by helicopter?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: It was too small. You couldn't even fly a helicopter in. You could if you rappelled down from the helicopter.

SGM WATERHOUSE: But you can't land.

SGM WATERHOUSE: You can't land. That compound was relatively that small so you got up there. I always try to say I want to go every place once a month. It didn't have to be every circle the same time, but I'll be at that place this month and sometime next month I'm going to be at that same place again and sometime the month after that and then it kind of went how we had visitors and how I could go out and get things and what the weather was all about. When we took Mount Zep, we basically went into the

mountain itself. It's a strong command and control center and so you literally walk through these big doors. It was their doomsday place to go to. We ended up putting a camp on top of that hill and the Russians had built a house for the Serbians and so the Serbs had a house kind of thing so they were wood platform off the ground with stoves inside and we had GPP medium tent with the stoves in there, but there was literally four feet of snow on the ground so all of this stuff is melting and of course mud and it was really sloppy until we got the corps of engineers up there to build ourselves a wooden hut. We just monitored that command and control center so it couldn't be used for bad guy stuff doing bad guy things.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Sergeant Major, looking back at your time as the Task Force Eagle Command Sergeant Major, are there any lessons you learned that you would like to highlight?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: I tell you...

SGM WATERHOUSE: And really looking back

over your time as a Regimental Sergeant Major.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: I think the hardest thing was I remember Dwight Brown coming in. He was the 1st Armored Division actual Division Sergeant Major. He came to visit Bosnia. Probably on his second visit, he would go see his boss. He didn't have to ask my permission. He was his boss. You go there. I'm staying out of the way type deal, but he would come out, the first time he came out after the first visit, he said "You need to be doing this, you need to be doing this and you need to be looking at this and need to be doing this." "Roger Sergeant Major, thanks, appreciate that." The second time he came up, it was more, it wasn't necessarily I was doing bad things. It was not the way he was going to do it so we had a little come to Jesus meeting outside the bus as he was getting ready to get on the bus and I said "Sergeant Major, with all due respect, I'm the Task Force Sergeant Major and this is how I do things. I talk to General Ellis daily. I'm not saying that I don't appreciate your advice, but that's not how we are going to be

able to do it here." Dwight never said anything. He kind of okay, got on the bus, and when I actually was selected to go and become Force Com, the first person to call me and congratulate me was Dwight Brown. It's all this guy said was what was on our chest, and we all have to be honest with each other and I think that's the biggest thing I learned and Dwight helped me see that. He wasn't trying to butt in, but that's who he was, the way he worked, and he was trying to make me a better Sergeant Major for it. I realized that. Working with multinational groups was invaluable. It really was. I wish there was a way we could do it more, but tell you the truth, when I look back and try to say if we could put a training plan on how to work with foreign nationals, there are too many things we have to do with our own force that we would take away too much precious time to do that with. I think that's something that you just have somebody learn on the fly. I know the call center we talked about earlier in the day and other places that put together some great lessons learned about different

armies and different relationships and different things, if you ever find yourself in that kind of position that you have to do some homework of how do you interact with these people.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Look at the Center for Army Lessons Learned and learn those lessons by the people who wrote those manuals. Here is what I did.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Absolutely. That I think, it's not that you should do it, it is you have a requirement to do it because you accepted that position at that senior level to be put into that requirement to be able to do that. I would say those are the two biggest things I would say I walked away with from there.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Sergeant Major, in July of 1997, you were assigned to Fort Knox, Kentucky where you served as the United States Army Armor School Command Sergeant Major for about 20 months or so, which was a 1-star General-level Command Sergeant Major position. When did you find out you were going to Knox?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: It was just after Memorial Day and the 2nd Regiment was tagged for a black mission, a classified black mission. The black mission actually was trying to figure out what the new Stryker Brigade should look like, but it was too controversial a time to discuss openly so myself and the Regimental Commander Colonel Luke were asked to come to Fort Knox, Kentucky. We did that over the weekend. We did some meetings. We had some behind closed doors discussions and sessions and I knew Sergeant Major Dave Latey so I just was going to say hi to him, but he was TTY. I just left a little note on the desk.

SGM WATERHOUSE: He was the Armor School Sergeant Major?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: He was the Armor Center Sergeant Major so I left him a note "Dave, sorry I missed you. Catch you on the flip flop." We get back to Fort Polk, Louisiana and about three days later I get this phone call from Sergeant Major Latey who said "Hey comrade, you're coming to Fort Knox." I go "No,

Sergeant Major, I just left Fort Knox." He goes "No, you don't understand, you are coming to Fort Knox. You are going to be the School Sergeant Major." I said "Sergeant Major, I don't want to come to Fort Knox." He said "Well, you don't have a choice. You are a by name select." I'm going "Sergeant Major, who asked for me to come there?" He said "General Wickham." I said "Sergeant Major, who is General Wickham?" He goes "I don't know, but he obviously knows you because he asked for you personally. You're coming to Fort Knox." I had been Regimental Sergeant Major now for about three years. I have had my time. I got to be basically a Division Sergeant Major for a year of that. I kind of felt I have had my time in the sun. The downside was I had like 24 years in the Army and there was no Sergeant Major, if you look at the wall, there was no Sergeant Major that took over the Schools position in Fort Knox, Kentucky that did not retire after two years. They all retired after two years. So that position was a cut your throat, you are done. Somebody saw what you were doing, you got one last time to kind

of get your shit together and then you are going to go out the door. I went home that night and told my wife we were moving to Fort Knox, Kentucky. I had about six weeks' notice. We are moving to Fort Knox, Kentucky and we are probably going to retire in two years. She's like "What do you mean you're retiring in two years?" I said "Well, I got this position and here's what the history of that position is and we're going to go." You can see her and she goes "Well, okay if that's what it is, that's what it is." I go to Fort Knox. I get there and I found out that General Wickham is actually in Washington, D.C. and was set to get a briefing two days later from the Armor Branch on the status of the Armor Force. Hey, that's a perfect place for me to be there too because that way I get updated the same time he gets updated, and we are walking on the same sheet of music. Book me a ticket for... He said "You have to in-process." I said "I'll do that when I get back. Get me a ticket." They got me a ticket. I literally walk into the old building that they had up there and I saw General Wickham walk into

the back briefing area. I dropped my bags by the door. I asked the First Class if he could watch them and he said he would. I walk through the door and I'm wearing a Class B uniform and I apologized. General Wickham looks up when I walk through the door and I said "Sir, I apologize being a little bit late." And he goes "No problem Sergeant Major." So we're sitting in a little bit longer table, about an eight foot table. He's on one side and I'm on the other side and the briefer is at the end of the table. So the briefer has a little book up with the flip charts and he's got the first chart up and starts saying some things and the second chart...

SGM WATERHOUSE: Like a desk side brief.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: He gets to one of the pages and I said "Wait a minute. Sir, that's not quite correct. This is this, this is this and this is why that looks that way, but it really is an inaccurate portrayal." "Okay, Roger Sergeant Major, thank you." The folks cut more slides and the briefer kind of stops and I go "Sir, you also have to clarify this one

blahblahblah," and he goes "Okay Sergeant Major, got it. Thank you." He flips another couple slides, the briefer doesn't say anything and just looks at me. General Wickham stops right there, looks at me and says "Sergeant Major, who are you?" I said "Sir, I'm your Sergeant Major. You selected me." He looks at my name tag and goes "Aw shit." He jumps up and comes over to shake my hand. He had no idea who I was so I said "How did you pick me if you didn't know who I was?" Fast forward, long story short, General Ellis, when he was First Lieutenant Ellis, was in Vietnam with a Second Lieutenant Wickham. Second Lieutenant Wickham got married and First Lieutenant Ellis was the best man at General Wickham's wedding so General Wickham is now selected to become a 1-star and doesn't have a Sergeant Major. He talks to his best man/mentor who I just worked for a year for and asked who he should select as he didn't know anybody out there and General Ellis said "There is one guy you want and I'm going to give you his name, and you get him to work for you now." That's how I got put there. So working

for General Ellis in Bosnia got me the job at the actual up to nominative position with General Wickham.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Is General Wickham the one that the hotel is named after?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: No. That was his dad.

SGM WATERHOUSE: You get to the Armor School. Did you have any kind of transition with the former Armor School?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: No. There was no overlap.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So you had the Armor School, you had the Cavalry School and then the Armor Center.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: The Armor School actually overwatches all the schools itself so any school function, the Armor School was kind of the overwatch so think of it as ADCS/ADCM. If you think about ADCM, it's all the operational units of the organization and ADCS schools, not support, but schools so whatever school it was, we had the responsibility to watch it. Officer courses, NCO courses, basic courses, basic and individual training so all of that belonged to the

school as overwatch as the responsibility.

SGM WATERHOUSE: When you got there and you are learning what your roles and responsibilities are going to be there, how did you go about assessing the Armor School?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: The first thing I did and I kind of learned this from a Lieutenant Colonel when I was back in 469 Armor. Remember I told you I sat in that bed and used to stay on the weekends and I used to clean my own room? This individual showed up, a little bit older gentleman, at my door one day and I'm buffing my floors out. He talked to me about the unit and what I thought, how did I like it and what was going on, if I was to change one thing, what would it be type deal. I come to find out after about 15 minutes, he excused himself and said "Oh, I'm the new Battalion Commander." So he walked around in civilian clothes, didn't get introduced to nobody, didn't have any pomp and circumstance, so that's what I did as a School Sergeant Major. I came in in civilian clothes. I just walked around the footprint. I went to every

little nook and cranny, not in the schools, but primarily in staff areas and the buildings that did all the behind the scenes work that nobody ever seems to go and I actually visited a lot of people that told me a lot of stuff and most of them, when I got ready to leave and introduced myself who I was, said "Can you please not repeat that." They didn't want me saying that they were the ones that made these comments about what wasn't right and what wasn't. It's all closed hole.

SGM WATERHOUSE: You don't know who needs to be...

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Exactly, so that's how I got to kind of feel...

SGM WATERHOUSE: It was almost like a sensing session.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: It was, but it was kind of a just little nonthreatening walk around. I honestly never went back and saw any of those people in uniform and said "I need to follow up with you." There was nothing seriously that was fraud, waste or

abuse type of stuff. It was just "I got assigned over here, I used to work in the DRMO, I only got two years retire. They want me to write lessons right now. I don't know how to spell so why the hell am I writing lessons?" That was the guy who was in the basement of this building two doors over from the Headquarters and the only reason I knew someone was down there, a light was on from an outside window. I walked in and down this basement and he was the only guy in this whole basement. I said "Did you get put in time out or what is this down here?" He said "No, this is where I want to be." So the bottom line, we got him more engaged instead of letting him go hide, get him up and..

SGM WATERHOUSE: Like a troll under the bridge.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Exactly. Those are the kinds of things I found inside in the staff, but for the most part, again, a lot of big brain people working in there doing Yeoman's work for us. I could never begin to understand a lot of stuff.

SGM WATERHOUSE: In your time as Armor

School Command Sergeant Major, what were some of the things you tried to improve upon on the organization or try to make better?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: You had to balance the force a little bit better, I thought. We had one Squadron that was, I mean, I got First Sergeant, even Armor First Sergeants, Tank First Sergeants that had more people responsibilities than this one Squadron Sergeant Major had and it was just because of the nature of the beast of his organization, but we had him in charge of this small group of pretty self-motivated soldiers so why do we have a Sergeant Major there? It should almost be an individual reporting agency to different places. We don't need to waste that slot. It was a good slot for him because he didn't do hardly any work because he had all these senior people, only a handful of him so he loved being a Sergeant Major in that position. It was how to better task organize the force to do things.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Is this 16 Cav at this time?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: 16 Cav was there at the time, as well. 1st Training Brigade and 16 Cav were the two primary units there, but I really had to learn money. I had to learn instructor contact hours and how that equated to getting the right number of people to be the right instructors for the right number of bodies coming into the cycle. What happens if you just pause or add one day to your training cycle, what the impact of that was to the Army. I had to work stuff. How do I synchronize the officer courses to the NCO courses to leverage resources because we had so many tanks, but if we had the tanks out for the officer basic course, could we also move the advanced noncommissioned officer course on the same ground and try to capture some experience from the Sergeant First classes, which we did try later on and tried to make it work, but the cycles just didn't sync up enough and it was a hit and miss type deal, so we couldn't put it in as a POI, program of instruction type every day we are going to do this thing, but when the cycle did sync, that was one of the priorities to make those

advance course noncommissioned officers synchronize training with a basic officer course and just if all they did was sit down and have MRE together, it was worth the time to put them all together.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah, because these are your guys right out of college or right out of West Point, right?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Exactly. They were, for the most part, just beginning to learn how to spell Army.

SGM WATERHOUSE: And these guys could get some touch time with some experienced Platoon Sergeants.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: You're exactly right so that's a couple of the things we were working on.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Do you think your previous experience working for General Ellis helped in this job?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Absolutely. 1) I got to see, literally, I will say I did work as a Division Sergeant Major so I saw the workings of like I do see

in the JAG piece.

SGM WATERHOUSE: The division staff.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: The Chief of Staff was very good. Colonel Peterson was the guy who if I had a question, I come there and he was, again, a very articulate guy, big and burly, but he was a guy who would take the time to explain in detail the things that you weren't quite getting. There was no are you stupid type of attitude. It was like I appreciate you asking, let me show you how this works so that helped me tremendously when I got to be in that school position because again, how the dollar works and then when you start talking about the mission support and seeing how some of these Platoon Sergeants are going to have to go on some of these missions, how are these Platoon Leaders, not so much the Platoon Leaders basic course, but the advanced officer courses, talking to them about how, because most of them are not going to go become Commanders. They are going to go into staff positions right away so I was able to go visit with them and sitting, they are getting told how to be good

S3s and all the rest of the stuff. They are not yet even going to realize that all they are going to do is be the guy who goes and gets all the pencils sharpened all the time.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Sergeant Major, I think you spent about 20 months or so as an Armor School, almost two years?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: About that, yeah.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Any lessons learned you'd like to highlight before we move on to when you took over as Armor Center?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: One of the primary things for the Armor School was putting on the Armor Conference. That actually was not a contracted thing like it is today.

SGM WATERHOUSE: That was annually?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: That was annual Armor Conference just like the Infantry Conference had theirs, Artillery Conference so the school had to put that on so that was sort of our attempt was putting that on. I remember we transitioned the first year I

was there and we put it on. I was responsible to do just like an Ops Sergeant Major, coordinate the facility, coordinate the equipment, coordinate the presentations, synchronize the battlefield, host, who is going to security and that kind of stuff. The second year is actually the first time we contracted an outside contractor to come in and put on the Armor Conference. In my mind, it was the worst mistake we made. We were charging almost nothing to come to the Armor Conference to do things, and after we had a contractor come in there, the same people who put it on were my people policing up the area, my people signing you in, my people who were controlling the access to the location, the MPs controlling all the roads, and yet we had a contractor we were paying \$500 a booth space for somebody to come in and we were charging nothing before to do that. I was trying to figure out who was making money and what do we get out of this thing. I think we commercialized the conferences a little bit too much because of that, but that was a great learning experience again because

having to deal with civilian contractors now that are trying not just to get into have this conference, but also now at the end of the day trying to get you in front of every little new piece of equipment. We talk about some of the stuff the soldiers had, we don't have it yet, but we're close to it. A Darth Vader hat is put on a screen and you get to see everything there is and how your battlefield is run now.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Back then, and it may be the same today, what was the purpose of the Armor Conference and why would the Armor School get involved in that?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Armor School basically got involved with it because basically innovations. It was really to put on a display of innovations from industry to show of the force that got it, but it was more that we could bring as the doctrine writers were writing armored doctrine to bring the field in to kind of come in and do a show and tell. Here is where we are going so kind of tell us where we have kind of missed the boat or here is where we are going, tell us

what we didn't put into the mix or here is where we're going and what should we really know and focus on to get further out. It was an opportunity for the doctrine piece to have the Force come in and really tell us are we on track, are we off track and for the Armor Community leadership to be able to put out to the Force the status of the Armor Community. I think that was the agenda. If you look at the Maneuver Conference today and the other conferences, I think they still have the same agenda. They still basically try to stay here as the status of the Force, here is where we are trying to get the Force to and here is where we are currently in declassified mode most of the time.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Those entities that make stuff and want to sell the Army stuff, they can see okay, well this is where the Army is going and it kind of gives us direction on maybe what we need to make or what we need to adjust in our product.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Right. There are industry days where they invite them in and do something like

that, but at those Armor Days or those Infantry Days or the Artillery Days, that was where industry first got the taste of whoa, that's where they are headed to so I should get down and try to get ahead of the power curve if I want to be any part of this game type deal.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Sergeant Major, in March of 1999, you took over as the Armor Center at Fort Knox or Armor Center and Fort Knox Command Sergeant Major, which is a 2-star level Command Sergeant Major position, which you said a Sergeant Major Lady had held down before you.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Right.

SGM WATERHOUSE: And you served as the Armor Center and Fort Knox Command Sergeant Major for about two and a half years. When did you find out that was going to be your next job?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Dave Lady was selected to become the (Inaudible) Sergeant Major over in Europe so he was selected to do that. At that point, I then had been at the Armor School for about 20 months, a little bit shy of that when all of this was starting

to go on and Dave had recommended me to replace him to General Bell, who was the Commander at the time. Of course, being the School Sergeant Major and briefing General Bell every now and then, he had gotten to see me for almost a year and so it was like a known entity, and General Bell said he had no problem with that. It was easy. I just kind of got moved up. I shouldn't say it was easy. For me it was easy because I was just there, but I think for General Bell, he had a known entity.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Sergeant Major, in that position you kind of had a dual hat so you know you were overall the Sergeant Major of Fort Knox, overall responsibility, even though you have a Garrison Sergeant Major, but you and the Commander there are the Fort Knox Command Team plus the Armor Center so can you highlight some of the roles and responsibilities, I'm sure they overlap a lot of them, but kind of some of the distinct and the different role as a post, the Armor Center and Fort Knox Command Sergeant Major as opposed to the Armor Center centric?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Truly, I never differentiated the two. You are responsible for the facilities. That's Fort Knox Sergeant Major. You are responsible for the Force and that's the Armor Center Sergeant Major. When you put the two together, you already have staff set up to take care of different sides. I had the Chief of Armor Headquarters or Chief of Armor Office was responsible to help us manage the Force so the Chief of Armor Office, which was not.. It's confusing because the Chief of Armor is the Commander of Fort Knox, but there is a Chief of Armor Office, and he basically has a Deputy working inside there, a civilian, that manages initially it's for the Armor Force so that office kind of manages that piece that we articulate to the Force. Look at and see how many Staff Sergeants do we need, what's the mix between the Scout and the Armor, how should we do that and that's the office that kind of puts all that together to bring into the Headquarters to say we have to work this piece. You have a Garrison Headquarters as you said that kind of helps you manage the facility

piece and then as a 2-star Sergeant Major, you have the 1st Training Brigade, which is the primary training Headquarters and you have the 16 Cav, which is an all six level commander. Again, basically their job is to support. They support the officer training courses and stuff like that with their equipment, much like it was in the training brigade that I was in when I was at Fort Knox.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So the Reserve, the 100th Division?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: The Reserve, 100th Division, but at the time though, the 100th Division did not have a Headquarters on Fort Knox.

SGM WATERHOUSE: But you were kind of responsible for overseeing those folks too?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Only when they became augmentees during the summer cycles so the 100th Division would augment our drill sergeant primarily in the summer cycles and then that part of it we would pull in our overwatch, but as far as the 100th Division itself, that was a total Reserve component requirement

because they were off the installation and they were actually up in the Louisville area. It wasn't until, I forget when they brought the Headquarters on, it was after Fort Knox actually moved everything down to Fort Benning, I think before they brought and built a brand new Headquarters there at Fort Knox.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Sergeant Major, when you took over as Armor Center and Fort Knox Command Sergeant Major, was there any initial challenges that you were confronted with in that position that maybe you weren't foreseeing as being there?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Actually, I can't think of hardly anything because again, Dave Latey, I was there for 20 months before Dave actually left. The way the organization is a school, basically if you look at like we just talked about, you have a Fort Knox and an Armor Force. Well, with the School Sergeant Major, you are dealing with the Armor Force piece all the time. What's the requirement for the officer course, what's the requirement for the soldier course and what's the requirement..

SGM WATERHOUSE: So there wasn't much new to learn.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: So I didn't have to learn the Armor Force piece. I pretty much already had to know that to keep control of what we were working on. What I had to really manage more is I got to that 2-star level as the Army was looking at trying to reorganize its manpower structures. How many more infantrymen do I need? How many more whatever's do I need, especially when you started bringing on the Strykers and we started looking at reorganization of what should the back of a Bradley look like. Should it have all scouts, should it have a mixture of scouts and infantry? Should an intel guy be put inside there? Then we started looking at, we started really having to balance the Force, but what people don't truly understand is it's easy to sit here and go "That track should have one scout, two infantrymen, an intel guy and MBC specialist." That's all great until you try to put those pay grades into a Force structure and then how do I grow those people that allow their promotions

to happen, allow development through the branch so that they don't just get stagnated in certain types of organization and then at one point do I cap it? A good example is the Fox Recon vehicle. To entice a lot of people to go into the MBC field with that Fox Recon vehicle, they put all those positions as staff sergeants, so that whole vehicle at one point was staff sergeant authorized. Drivers to the two people in the back.

SGM WATERHOUSE: That's as high as the rank would go?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: That's the highest rank they would go in that so guess what happened? They got promoted real quick.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Then where did they go from there?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: All of a sudden the Staff Sergeants and there is no Sergeant 1st Class positions to go to so they were able to retire, but now they're looking around and these are the high speed big brain people that can't get promoted so you started losing a

lot of people going out of the Army because they saw there was no potential for promotion. That same thing kind of happened in the Armor Corps. We actually had, as they were trying to look at we can downsize when we take these E-7 positions and make them E-5 positions, and these E-5 positions can become E-3 positions, and you start realizing now you are into oh yeah, but those E-5 positions are my loaders or these are my next gunners or whatever, and you are starting to put E-2s and E-3s in those positions and all of a sudden you wonder why you get guys hurt. It's that balance of force you have and the responsibility at a 2-star level, the proponentcy is you write the board guidance for promotions to the boards every year and it's not quite as easy as it looks because you are trying to figure out is a Master Gunner, are you going to give the Master Gunner the same credit of being a leader as a Drill Sergeant or a Platoon Sergeant. A lot of times E-7 Master Gunner has responsibility at Battalion level for the Master Gunner program, but he is not a Platoon Sergeant in a line unit so which one..

SGM WATERHOUSE: Now he is eligible for Master Sergeant, but he is the head of a Platoon.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Exactly. How do you articulate that in board guidance and that's the kind of think you try balancing every year. There might be some other people out there who have figured it out, but I felt there was never going to be a perfect every year solution, that you had to kind of tweak it as you saw the Force growing and you kind of had to give this one preference this year and maybe that one got least preference next year based on what you're trying to move the Force around and doing things for you.

SGM WATERHOUSE: In that job as the Armor Center and Fort Knox Command Sergeant Major, were there certain ways that you tried, you had the Armor Training Brigade, you had the 16th Cav guys, you had NCOs on the step, are there certain initiatives or things you tried to incorporate in the NCO Corps there to kind of help mentor some of those, maybe some of those Sergeants Major under you?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Dave Latey started

something and got it going. He didn't necessarily get it off the ground, but got it going before he had to leave and then I moved in and kind of kept it moving. That was to bring more of the Sergeants Major together, kind of like a Sergeant Major call. We also had recruiting command on the installation so we had a reserve component piece in there every now and then we had recruiting command on there, we had cadet command in there.

SGM WATERHOUSE: You had a regional training up there.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Yeah, we had regional training in that area. We had a Marine Corps that was on. That was such a diverse community. How do you bring them together to do certain things and so he was trying to do this like call, and it was not anything more than maybe a weinie roast in the backyard, just come over there at 1630, I want you guys all here, we're going to have a weinie roast. The wives can show up and then after a while bring so very relaxed environment and of course just like we all talked

about, how much work gets done in those kinds of environments. That was his initiative and we kept it kind of going for a while and it worked out very well. Well to where I didn't have to hold it at my place all the time. It was the Recruiting Command Sergeant Major, which actually he lived across the street from me so it wasn't like you were moving the whole thing all over the place, but just this house or this house.

SGM WATERHOUSE: But you guys were able to talk to each other and kind of learn from each other.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Exactly. Learn and then it was also share the pain. Hey, have you guys experienced the same problem I'm experiencing and stuff that doesn't normally come out in staff meetings sometimes so that initiative went on. The other thing that we did was we were partners with a German Armor School in Germany so Dave again had put the wheels in motion and I was the benefactor to be able to execute both directions for the first time and so we actually went to the German Armor School with the Sergeant Major at Fort Knox.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Kind of like their training school for armor?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: It was just like our Armor Center. It was for us and we went to their Armor Center. We went through classes. We shot the Leopard. We drove their Leopard across the coast. We talked about differences of how they train and how we train. We talked about how their concept of enlistment is compared to ours. It is easy to look at a different Army and say "Oh, why can't we be like that?" A lot of it is because there is a political environment behind it that makes a difference.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Did they have conscripts back then?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: They did. They had compulsory service. Whether it was in the military or into some type of other like a hospital. You can go and do compulsory service in a hospital or a nursing home type of environment and not have to do military, but there was compulsory service to a degree. Again, very limited resources compared to the U.S. as far as

gunneries and stuff like this goes so their gunnery program was a little bit more stringent on not letting you pull the trigger until you already gave to a certain level of expertise, but then again, they weren't doing a lot of maneuver we were doing so their time in the UCOF type systems, the digital trainers.

SGM WATERHOUSE: They did more of that?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: They did more of that before they went out to the door or even in just a little box and match type stuff, but I'll tell you, the Germans are masters at Armor warfare. They got it down, they really do, but I think part of it is because they just drill, drill, drill and they don't rotate. Their units stay together more than ours do. They don't break apart and reassign so much. We did that and then the following year the Germans came to Fort Knox and we hosted the German Armor Senior leaders who came to Fort Knox and we had them. We did the Fort Knox thing. We did the same thing, shoot, train, take them to a training session and the year I did it, we went down to Nashville from Fort Knox. The

Colonel who is their Commandant for their school, he's a Lieutenant Colonel, big, big, big country western fan so when we went to Nashville, I don't care what we did at the Armor Center, that was a successful trip. He was a great guy.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Sergeant Major, looking back at your two and a half years or so that you served as the Army Armor Center and Fort Knox Command Sergeant Major, any lessons learned you would like to highlight before we move forward?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: The thing I looked at when I was an Armor Center guy, I started doing something at the... When I took over, I couldn't find some of our Armor Sergeants Major. The DA said I had 64 Armor Sergeants Major.

SGM WATERHOUSE: At the school?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: No, just across the Force. I'm just throwing that number out, but I'm only authorized to have like 52 so where are the other 12 Sergeants Major that I'm being held accountable for? We had no tracking system to really see at the Armor

Center where our senior leaders were.

SGM WATERHOUSE: And Human Resources Command wasn't there at the time.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: No, Human Resources Command was still in Washington.

SGM WATERHOUSE: It's not like he could walk across the street.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: What we ended up doing was we created this report that we showed every division where we thought their Sergeants Major were. I don't care what it was, what levels, if they were a Sergeant Major, this is where we think you are. We color coded it green, black and red. Green was incoming, black was you were there and there is no known loss or gain, and red was you are known and loss. We did that report and sent it to the divisions the first week of the month. The second week of the month, the divisions looked it over, made adjustments to it. Waterhouse may have been on there as a black. He is a First Squadron Sergeant Major in 3rd Cav, but you may have just received orders that the Regiment

says "Hey, we know he has received orders, he's going to PCS now to Kaiserslautern. They color code you red and then put out the expected loss date so then we get it back on the third week and then we get less in the third week and fourth week to work a replacement. Who should we get to put in the right place? We tried to backfill somebody against you and now all of a sudden here is the first week of the next month come up and Waterhouse is still red. You now have decreased by 30 days on your loss, but now there is a green name behind you, Christian, and Christian is in your inbound behind Waterhouse.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So you see gaps.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: You see gaps, but the other thing was we had a lot of Sergeants Major between Conus and Oconus that weren't getting looked at by their divisions. We have losses in Europe that we didn't know were being put out there and we had great people in the U.S. who weren't going over there or vice a versa. We were missing the boat.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Which is really HRC's job.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: It really is, but again, HRC is just putting a 9 against 9 and not putting a name and a capability.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Not true talent management.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Exactly. We started doing that and it took about three months for it to cycle through, but then I really got the Division Sergeants Major into it to where we really weren't putting Sergeants Major into position anymore. You as a division saw the measure and knew you had a Brigade Sergeant Major ready to take or Battalion Sergeant Major ready to take a brigade and you saw the brigade is opening up in Germany, you would call (Inaudible) and say "Hey, I've got this guy you really need to have. Send me his OER and I'll look at it." You look at it and say "Well shit, this is the right guy," and they would call HR. HR would then make that assignment.

SGM WATERHOUSE: You're helping out HRC basically.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Helping them out, but we

are also helping the Armor Force out because we are getting the right person in the right position at the right time. The other thing we did is I had at that time three Armor Sergeants Major in Hawaii and we had no Armor in Hawaii. I was like "How did this happen?"

SGM WATERHOUSE: You could do a visit in civilian clothes out there.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Part of it was because one was an Ops guy and two at some time had been Ops guys and they kind of waggled the position to get in, but still, it's the wrong place for the wrong people, so we were able to get the Force back to where it was supposed to be a little bit. That was a great success story. The other thing we did is Anthony Wange, you talked about Andrew and him, Anthony and I got to know each other when he was the Fort Sill Sergeant Major and I was Fort Knox Sergeant Major, and we had the Expert Tanker Program. How do you identify somebody who has the potential to move on faster to promote earlier to put in positions of greater authority quicker that we can reward him and/or utilize him in a

place we may need him more. We put that program together and Anthony called me and said "Hey, I heard you guys got this. Could you come here and show me how you do it?" I brought all of our expert tanker type stuff and we gave it to the artillery side and they adopted it.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Is this like Excellence in Armor?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Excellence in Armor. I'm using the wrong term. Right. They developed an Excellence in Artillery Program. It was just basically our program that they just put together so those couple of things like that and that relationship with Anthony at [Fort] Sill, I mean it went on when I became FORSCOM and he became TRADOC. We didn't have to know each other, learn each other. We could call and talk to each other.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Sergeant Major, in September of 2001, you were assigned to Fort McPherson, Georgia where you took over as United States Army Forces Command or FORSCOM Command Sergeant

Major, which of course is a 4-star general-level Command Sergeant Major position and you served as the FORSCOM or Forces Command Sergeant Major for more than four years. How was that assignment? How did you become the FORSCOM Command Sergeant Major?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: 9/11 is basic bottom line. As we talked about earlier, as the Regimental Sergeant Major of the 2nd Regiment, I was the Task Force Sergeant Major with General Ellis in Bosnia. General Ellis, after he completed Division Command, the 1st Armor [Armored Division] became the G3 of the Army. It was just a 3-star billet. General Ellis had just been selected for his 4-star and was selected to replace General Hendrix as the FORSCOM Commander and General Ellis had just gone on leave to the Bahamas for a four-week leave before he took over FORSCOM AND 9/11 happened. I was sitting at Fort Knox, Kentucky. Basically we had MP Company and that's about the max I have. I have FORSCOM transportation unit there and there are no other combat forces so we ended up putting a trainee platoon at Gate 1 with all the Drill

Sergeants and Tank Commander cadre. We put trainee platoon #2 at Gate 2 with their Drill Sergeants and Tank Commander cadre. Gate 3 was Platoon and trainees and cadre and so that was my force protection for Fort Knox, Kentucky.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So you were still at Fort Knox on September 11.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Yes. On September 12, I was out driving going out to the perimeter. I had my maintenance guys up in the tank driving area securing that part of the compound. I got the phone call from my wife to say the CACSAR Major called and she wanted to talk to me, Cindy Pritchard.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Combined Arm Center?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: "Combined Arm Center Cindy Pritchard, she needs to talk to you tonight." I'm like "Well, I'm about 40 minutes out, can you call her back and tell her I'll call her in about 40 minutes. I'll be right home." I turn around and go back there. I get home probably about 8:00, call Cindy and she said "Why didn't you put your name in for

FORSCOM?" I said "Cindy, I'm a 2-star billet, I'm not a 3-star billet and oh by the way, it's kind of a moot point now because we are at war and I have a job to do. She goes "General Ellis called me and he wants to know why you didn't put your name in for FORSCOM." I'm like "Okay, got it." She said "Go see General Ellis." That conversation lasted about 40 minutes. The phone hangs up and a minute later it rings. It's the TRADOC Sergeant Major John Beck. "Why didn't you put your name in for the FORSCOM Sergeant Major?" I mean the same conversation. Long story short, General Ellis called him and talked to him too. He said "Go see General Ellis." I go "Roger that Sergeant Major." So the next morning I'm in there. General Bell has left. General Wickham that was my school commander, PCS Korea, pinned on a second star and came back to Fort Knox and is now the Commander at Fort Knox as a 2-star so I'm now his Sergeant Major again, but now his Sergeant Major is a 2-star. I'm at the office. General Wickham walks in the front door. He comes upstairs. I see him go by my office. I grab my coffee and walk in

and knock on the door and ask "Sir, do you have a minute?" "Oh sure, come on in, what do you need?" "Well sir, I got called by the CAC Sergeant Major last night. I was called by the TRADOC Sergeant Major last night. He holds his hand up and goes "General Ellis called me too. Go see him." I said "Roger that." So General Ellis got back to the Pentagon. All the flights were grounded, but he got permission. They opened a flight up just for him to fly him back to the Pentagon. He was back at the Pentagon so on 9/13, he calls me and on 9/14 I'm at the Pentagon. I'm talking to General Ellis and basically you are interviewing for FORSCOM. He actually was given a slate. He said "I don't want none of those guys. I want this guy." When 9/11 happened, it was like I don't have time for this. As a matter of fact, when I sat with him, we sat in his room in the Pentagon. It was all electrical fires and you know how it smells and that's what the whole Pentagon smelled like. He said "I don't have time to build a team. I know you and trust you, how soon can you be there?" I said "Sir, I can be there as soon as

you need me." He said "Get there now." I said "Roger that, sir." So that was on the 14th. I flew back that night. On the 15th, I told General Wickham I had a conversation with General Ellis and on the 16th I was on the plane down to Atlanta to link up with Andy McFowler who was the FORSCOM Sergeant Major at the time. Andy had a mandatory retirement. He was at his mandatory 35 years. He couldn't stay no longer. That's why he was leaving position, not really quick, but he couldn't stay. That was on the 16th. On the 17th, I met with Andy. On the 18th, we did the change of position for FORSCOM. General Haggard [ph] went through the receiving line. General Haggard said "What is the first thing you want to do?" I said "I need to go back to Fort Knox because I'm still assigned there. I have all my household goods and stuff." That's how quick it happened to take over FORSCOM. Then basically I was with General Hendrix for about three weeks and then General Ellis came in. We had changed command for General Ellis and spent a couple of years with General Ellis' FORSCOM, and then General McNeill took over

after General Ellis.

SGM WATERHOUSE: I just want to go back real quick so on September 11th you were at Knox. What do you remember from that day? Everybody remembers what they were doing, but what was going on?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Actually, it was almost like today was as far as sunshine goes. It was kind of a little bit of cloud, but very sunny day. Like you said, everybody remembers it. I was in the Headquarters. General Bell or General Wickham rather was TDY. Colonel Ontel [ph], who was the 16th Cav Commander comes running up the stairs at the Headquarters and yells "We're at war, we're at war! We're under attack." General Ontel is kind of an animated guy. He writes books. You probably read some of his books. Smart, smart, smart guy and I'm like "What are we doing now?" He says "Turn the TV on." That's just before the second twin tower got hit. We watched it and said "Holy shit," so right there..

SGM WATERHOUSE: It was like 8:00 in the morning Knox time.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: This was about 8:30/9:00, somewhere around there. It hit and we were like "Holy shit," and of course the boss is TDY. Colonel Ontel wants to start putting everybody on lockdown. He wants to put machine guns. He wants to load machine guns and put them in the whole housing area so we're like "Whoa, whoa, whoa." We have to be careful with this so bottom line is that's when we started figuring out to put a security plan in place for Fort Knox. The hard part we had was how to we coordinate the gold vault because the Treasury Department has responsibility for that. You can't just show up on their doorstep, even if you want to protect it, you can't just show up and do that. We contacted them and they politely said no thanks, leave us alone and even though the worst case scenario for us wasn't they were going to get gold out of the gold vault, but if you were to think what you thought the most secure place in the United States could ever be, what would it be?

SGM WATERHOUSE: Fort Knox.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: The gold vault at Fort

Knox so if you could just even put a bomb next to it and blow it up, you would cause such a mental image of nobody is safe anywhere so that's what we were kind of worried about and the Treasury Department said not to worry about it, we got it. We still put extra MP patrols on the highway right next to the gold vault and did that kind of stuff. That was kind of the arrival there at FORSCOM is how quickly I got to FORSCOM. Andy Fowler did have a battle handover booklet we talked about earlier, but as far as walking through the Headquarters and finding out how things worked, it was read the book because I'm out of here tomorrow.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Hope you can read. As the FORSCOM Command Sergeant Major, you had about 750,000 soldiers in the Army, Army Reserve and Army National Guard under your purview.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Actually, we had about 1.2 million if you add all those other together. That 750,000 is just active duty.

SGM WATERHOUSE: How did you feel? You had

that time with the 2-star general, General Ellis and you're back, but now you're talking about one of the Army Commands, one of the big three I call it. How did you feel, you didn't have a whole lot of time to think about it, but now I'm wow, I went from Brigade to a 2-star for a little bit to a 1-star and now I'm up here.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: And you're at the largest command in the world basically, and it is humbling, but I will tell you everything was going so fast you didn't have time to think about it. In reality, it's kind of like we talked about earlier getting ready to deploy, even as a Brigade Sergeant Major and getting ready to deploy as a Squadron Sergeant Major, the same principles applied. What do we got to do now, how do we got to do it? FORSCOM is a command that manages resources. It really doesn't have a combatant command responsibility so it doesn't control forces in the right. NORTHCOM is the combatant command to control the forces if the United States gets attacked and they have to fight here. CENTCOM controls the forces outside of basically the rest of us and then JFCOM

coordinates all kinds of joint forces commands so we really weren't a maneuver force command. We were a command that managed resources. Our job really was where are the resources available to put against the requirements and that includes the soldiers. When you are talking about resources, that's the biggest resource is our soldiers so how do we find the soldiers?

SGM WATERHOUSE: Because you have to provide those too to combatant commanders.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Exactly. Again, in Vietnam we did not use National Guard. World War II was the first time, and we realized the fight was going to be so big we can't not use the National Guard. First thing, let's look at our Guard units and of course, you got all these green flags up there. They are all ready to go until you start tapping them on the shoulder and you found out that that 86% reporting unit is reality having about 42% show up rate. The average age for Infantry Company National Guard was about 42-years-old. Average age for an

Infantry Company was about 42-years-old. Wow, how did we get this way? We got that way because we didn't use them. They were showing up for drill. They were qualifying their weapons and they were able to meet that minimum PT, but they were older. They couldn't put this 50 pound ruck on and hop up that hill. But they hadn't been asked to do that for decades.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Bet you're talking Afghanistan. There are lots of hills.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Exactly. So we were kind of in that oh shit mode with our Guard force reserve component. A little different because there are a little over 2,000 units in reserve component, but you could have a two-person unit so it was hard to say. You can't say there were a lot of resources in reserve. There is a lot of capability in reserve, but not necessarily a lot of resources in reserve, so you had to be careful how you managed it. Then the third prong of that piece of reserve and National Guard is a lot of your force manpower wise in those two components are law enforcement. They are sheriffs,

police officers, correctional facility officers. When you start pulling units out of communities, you basically can cripple a community with not having a fireman, paramedic, police or sheriffs, so we had to really start saying holy crap, we can't just go all the way in. A kind of a how do you articulate this and a clearer picture, when the 42nd Division was mobilized and we put the 42nd Division, General...

SGM WATERHOUSE: This is the Rainbow Division?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Yes. Rainbow Division. I'll remember his name in a minute. Anyway, when we put him in there, he was the first National Guard Division Commander since World War II to command and deploy for force of U.S. Army, but I think if I remember right, the National Guard for that division, the Rainbow Division basically was like covered 12 states for all their units that they had. We had to tap into like 23 or 24 states to round that division out with manpower so when you start reaching into all of these other states to grab manpower, now on the

follow-up force, you start trying to grab them, all of a sudden now it's like crap, that unit that may have been 80%, we took 20% of their force and now they are only 60%. Who are we going to rob to fill that unit?

SGM WATERHOUSE: Because these guys were just coming back so you can't double tap them and send them right back overseas.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Exactly right so that was a challenge that we had on the initial flight. We are trying to manage that. The second thing is my predecessors, FORSCOM was less than 30 years old when I took over, and my predecessors basically, the cycle for training for a National Guard [unit] is summertime so they would focus on the National Guard visitations on summer. They active duty in the Fall, Spring and Wintertime and that's so that's kind of their cycle to going to visit organizations. When 9/11 happened, you have to visit everybody. You have to go see everybody. And oh by the way, they all need help so which ones are the priority, and the answer is if everybody is a priority, nobody is a priority. In this case,

everybody was a priority. How do you get there? That was the big thing so like I said, I took over about September 18th I think it was when I took over FORSCOM and I want to say it was after Christmas, it was late January or early February, the first day we did not have a day where we actually went into the office or were somewhere else in the force. It wasn't just the Commander or myself, it was all. It was civilians, it was our staff, working around the clock doing all kinds of things and so the Headquarters is primarily a civilian-based organization. They maxed overtime, maxed time off. We couldn't give them anything else to compensate them and every one of those civilians, not one of them asked to not come in to work. They said if I'm needed, I'm here. When you look at that kind of a force, it was committed to make sure that the units had what they needed to get the job done. That was a great organization to be in at the time.

SGM WATERHOUSE: And the focus at that time was primarily Afghanistan.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: It was only Afghanistan

because basically it was where we were going in, it's what we're going to fight. We had the 101st up in the mountains and all those kinds of things all over the place. That was the real crux of the fight was that area of the battlefield at the time.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Sergeant Major, you mentioned getting together, going to see those guard units that are trying to get plussed up or get ready. I'm sure planners at the Pentagon are trying to figure who we are going to send and when we are going to send them so how did you determine when you would go, which unit you would go visit there?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: The planners at the Pentagon don't decide who goes when. All the planners at the Pentagon say we need X number of force. Twice a day at that time at the FORSCOM Headquarters, there was what we called flag review and it was a classified brief that looks at every single unit we have and it looks at who is currently engaged, who is set to be their backfill, who is the next backfill and then what is the next if and who is against so let's say it's

Africa. Who is the first in Africa, who is the backfill in Africa and who is the backfill for the backfill in Africa? That got briefed twice a day, seven days a week. We would go through that drill because every day something else would change. One of the examples would be when we first got there, it was guard every airport so our National Guard, great folks, a lot of volunteers to go guard our airports, but we had to go back to ask for relief of that program for letting them not to guard the airports but stop letting them volunteer to guard the airports, let us put an assigned unit against that, commit a whole unit because we had, I hate to say it, but we had a lot of guard units that were telling their soldiers to volunteer for this stateside duty, otherwise you are going to get deployed overseas.

SGM WATERHOUSE: It sounds like a Vietnam flashback.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: A lot like it. It wasn't again, in some respects it was bad people, but it wasn't bad people who were volunteering to go. It was

people who were just like most people. They were scared. They weren't sure. When was the last time I pulled a trigger? Am I going to be able to go do this job? All those unknowns scare the crap out of people. The political policy allowed the unit to be disseminated, just gone, so then we come back and say "Okay, we can't support this fight." We literally knew we could not support this fight long-term and we asked for relief from that program. We said we got to have this a managed program. We will do all the same structure, we will do all the same support, but we've got to take a whole unit and put them against it, let that unit leadership control, manage and check these airports, have that command structure, and we got told no, you couldn't do that. It was not the political right thing to do at the time. Election cycle was getting ready to come up and we didn't want to do that so we wrestled with that, but the end effect of that was the Alaska unit was a good example. They had done their six months. Had rotated the advanced party all the way back to home station. Got told you are staying

in the fight.

SGM WATERHOUSE: By their governor or by the Federal Government?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: It was an active duty unit because we didn't have National Guard to fall back on so it was an active duty unit, but we had the unit basically disengaged. Part of it was still in theater and part was in staging area. The advanced redeployment party was already at Alaska, and they were told they were going to be extended for six to nine more months. The ones that were already in country, of course, it's a heartbreak, but you are still here, get back in the fight and that's probably not overly hard. It's hard to hear from the families' perspective. The ones that were kind of in midstream, again, didn't see the families yet, but you already have your feet off the dirt. A little bit harder to take that I have to go back in there. The ones who were already home with family and wrapped in the arms of the kids and the mom, when you tell the mom and kids you have to say good-bye to dad one more time,

that was a definite not just heartbreaker for them, but it was a back breaker for the force. It was almost a violation of trust that we said we would take care of you differently than we did, but that was the end state of not being able to take away the other policy of not having a structure to do the mission. Just let everybody go volunteer to go do what they wanted to do. We had that kind of problem in the Force structure. So Force is kind of responsible for all of that stuff. Again, by law, I cannot take any National Guard equipment and use it in our active duty because that is the governor's equipment. We cannot touch that, but I can give active duty equipment to the National Guard so it's able to go this way, but not that way. The problem is, there were some component pieces that the Guard had that we could use. Minesweepers were one of them, but we couldn't touch it. We were not able to activate them to bring them on. We could activate the unit, but not the equipment so even though they had the equipment, we couldn't touch it because we had to bring the whole unit on,

but we were not allowed to bring the whole unit on. It was that kind of half a dozen of one, six of another. Which one is the worst thing to deal with? That was it. Money, I don't think money was a problem. If you want to know what the real I think tragedy of 9/11 is, we sort of knew something was going to happen like that, but we didn't think it was going to happen for seven to ten more years. All of the equipment upgrades, the new body armor that everybody said we didn't have. We had two brigades that were already outfitted. They were both in the 101st. The 82nd was scheduled to get the 3rd Brigade set of body armor. It was going to be over the next five to seven years outfitting the entire force to include the Guard and Reserve components, but the bad guy got a vote and voted a little bit earlier than what we were ready for and so everybody said the body armor is gone, the body armor is gone. It wasn't that we had to have body armor, we knew that, you could only make so much body armor with that capability because of the raw material that is used so you could put \$10 billion against that

program, and you would have gotten zero additional body armors made. It was physically impossible to make that, and that was part of the other problem we had, which was trying to get that upbeat mentality. We are still giving soldiers the best equipment there is out there, we are getting it to them as fast as we can, but a decision was made, we had to give it to the combat units first. You still have a lot of support units going out that didn't have nearly the same capability of equipment, but it was good equipment and you had to kind of balance that out in the Force a little bit. We did have a lot of, especially National Guardsmen, who were showing up with the old Vietnam flat vests, just had little BB's inside of the vest and all that was was a good tool to lose a bit of weight. You sweat a lot inside it, but it wasn't very protective for what the type of IED stuff that was out there for us.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Sergeant Major, as a Forces Command, Command Sergeant Major, eventually Iraqi Freedom began so now your organization is providing

those troops for Commanders in two major conflicts going on, two different countries, plus there's probably 130 other countries we have soldiers in. Today we have 140 plus so how did you try to communicate with those Sergeants Major that are out there and I'm not sure what level you would communicate with those guys that you would send to the Combatant Commanders, but how would you communicate at that level with subordinate Sergeants Major and kind of going back to battlefield circulation or going out to see, the people that you feel responsible for were under or inside FORSCOM, how would you go about doing that?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Well, there were two things. If you were already in deployed theater, you fell under CENTCOM and the part we tried to not put our foot in the door, too many chiefs can really become a problem.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So let the CENTCOM Sergeant Major handle it?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Let the CENTCOM sergeant

major handle the deployed piece so that was their responsibility.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So you didn't try to do that.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Once we gave you over and you became that Commander's responsibility, it wasn't that we forgot about you, but we didn't try to tell you you had to do X, Y and Z. If I needed something done, we would work through CENTCOM to get the units to do something like this.

SGM WATERHOUSE: But you are more worried about getting the follow-on forces.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Exactly, and truly we gummed the message up a little bit because the Combatant Command is actually deriving what resources they really require and they are trying to synchronize that piece. We are a provider for that resource in a lot of cases, but if we start going VFR direct and they start coming VFR direct back to us, then you have the guy who is actually controlling all the maneuver getting left out of the link so we purposely tried to

stay out of that. As long as you were not tagged, not necessarily tagged, but as long as you were not actually physically gone, we still had responsibility for you back here and so there were still VTCs. If a unit was saying you're the next one on the boat and you're leaving in 90 days, absolutely you are visiting them. You are having VTCs. You are calling them on the phone and doing emails, getting them through the G4 levels, give us your shortage list. We tried a couple of different programs. Instead of us telling them what they could buy or what they needed, here is a catalog, give it to us, we'll buy it and give it to you. We just basically gave them \$250,000 at company level. Here's \$250,000 company level. Go fill your shit off the shelf. Here are the constraints behind that and of course there were some checks and balances. Some of our new sniper weapons were bought off commercial type stuff because it was available, we just provided the monies. It was a VFR direct from unit, Controlled X is through into the supplier and they went right to the unit, so we shortened the chain down that way. We did

a lot of that kind of work arounds. General Burns, who was a G357 at FORSCOM at the time was absolutely amazing. That's a man that if you sit in a room with him and talk to him, he is already four hills out and you're trying to figure out how to put your shoes on. He just has that ability to see requirements and articulate fixes before you can even understand that your first where's my truck. He's got that and he was very hard with his staff. A lot of his Colonels and Captains and Majors and Sergeants Major, they took a lot. You call it abuse, but a lot of butt chewings and a lot of hard hours and a lot of extra work. I sat in one meeting with him one night. This was probably two months/two and a half months into the fight and he said something. He was working on something and there was a briefing and I just went down to see him for something else and he said "Sergeant Major, why don't you sit in here and watch this" and I said "Okay." It was the briefing they were working on some stuff and I said "Okay, got it sir." They started going through the briefing and the Colonel didn't get past page 2,

he's a full Colonel and not a dummy and he was a good guy, and he just waylaid the shit out of him. This is like 1800 hours at night already. He waylaid the crap out of him. The whole room got a brow beating. Then he said "Get out of here, I'm going to go home and grab something to eat quick and then I'll be back in about 40 minutes, and I want a new brief in 45 minutes." It was that kind of mentality. Now, did we need it? Yeah, you always need a pusher like that, especially when you're fighting the fight. Early on like that we were. Everybody leaves and I look at the General and said "Can I give you some recommendation?" He said "Yeah," and I said "Sir, you are so fricking smart that you think everybody else can keep up with you. Hell, I was on the cover page when he was on page 4. I couldn't figure out half of what he was telling me and I know more than the average person does about what you're trying to do. If I can recommend to you, lead them with sugar. Give them a little bit, that's close, but I'm looking more for this on the page. Give them the direction. They are guessing right now. They are right

now out there trying to figure out what you're pissed off about. Was it page 1, page 10 or page 22? They don't know. They're guessing. Can you just give them a little? Would you just let me have one thing tonight and just when you come back, lead them with sugar." He goes, "I'll think about it." He was that kind of guy, but we were getting ready to walk out of his office and he goes "Good point, good point taken. I got it." By that time, again, nobody has had a day off, everybody is working long hours. It just gets frazzled, but I tell you, that man right there, I really honestly believe that if General Burns was not in that position, we would have been hard pressed to push to fight as quickly and as effectively as we did this early on as we did. He was just unbelievable how he could pull all these things together at that level.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Sergeant Major, in that position as the Forces Command, Command Sergeant Major, I know you said you had already had a developed relationship with the TRADOC Sergeant Major who you said you had known when he was at Fort Sill..

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: He was Artillery Center.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Artillery Center, now the Army, but Center of Excellence today, but in that position, so now you are at 4-star level, one of three major commands in the Army, who did you look to initially as far as not your commander, but the enlisted side, who did you look to for assistance and help and somebody to talk to?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: The good thing is we did a battle handover and Andy McFowler handed me that battle book. The last thing he said to me was "If you need me, call me. If you have any questions, call me. I have no secrets. I can't talk on an unclassified phone, but I'll be at Fort Bragg. If you need me, I can get to a classified phone."

SGM WATERHOUSE: He was in the Army still?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: He was actually retiring, but he retired at Fort Bragg. He is a Godfather at Fort Bragg.

SGM WATERHOUSE: But he could talk on a classified phone.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: He could get into a classified phone and talk on there if he needed to.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Onto a classified phone.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: He would go to Headquarters because he was a Corps Sergeant Major there for years too. He would just go to Headquarters and we would do calls that way if I needed it so he offered that piece. I'll tell you, the hard part about FORSCOM, again, we had that change of position and you have to have a little ceremony where it's not legal to bring everybody in just to have a hooah, you have to have a meeting to make it kind of credible, so I had, there were like 23 of these basically Corps, the Army, individual commands, 1-stars and something like this that were in this room. No, it wasn't that many, it was probably about 17, and in this room of course I'm the new kid on the block. As you said earlier, I came from a 2-star billet and I went right to a 4-star. I really, what the hell does this guy know? The 2-star wasn't even a division. It was a TRADOC installation type deal so what's he going to tell me. I had the

table set up in kind of a U-shape for the brief. Went through the receiving line and by the time I got done, everybody was downstairs. I get downstairs and in front of them they all had a pad of paper and a pen and I said, "First thing, thanks for honoring myself and Sergeant Major McFowler and honoring our families for a great, great change of responsibility. 2) In front of you, you are going to find a pad of paper and a pen. I want you all to write down three things that you think I need to be working on to make your job easier. Go." So they all started writing a little bit and when it was all done, I said "Push the papers to the center and meeting adjourned." They're like "What?" I told them "If you think I'm going to tell you how to do your job, you are wrong, but I tell you what I do believe that if out of the 17 units in this room, 10 of you wrote something as the #1 item and that's probably something I need to pay attention to. So that's how I focused my efforts initially in FORSCOM.

SGM WATERHOUSE: You say these were Division

Sergeants Major?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: These were Army Corps, no divisions because they were 3-star level guys and then there were some 1-star in there because they were the separate commands.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Like 18th Airborne Corps, 3rd Corps?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Yes, 18th Corps, 3rd Corps, 1st Army was there and 3rd Army was there. I had, well, the Mortuary Affairs Command was in there so that's a 1-star billet so those kinds of things were all in that room so that's what I said. That's how I'm going to focus my effort. When I said that, they all went hmm, that's not a bad idea. I kind of got buy-in right away for most of those people that I wasn't going to try to tell them how to do things, wasn't going to try to manage their Force, and I told them that. "You are a Command Sergeant Major. You Commanders were chosen for a reason. I'm not going to tell you how to do your job. The only thing I will tell you or ever come down and bust your butt on is if it's illegal, immoral or

you are going to hurt soldiers or break equipment. Other than that, do what you've got to do and if it's not the way I would do it, so be it, but I will tell you I will recommend to you if I see something that I think you can do better or easier, but right now, I'm not qualified to do that yet, but this paper is going to help me figure out what I need to focus on to help you get your job done better." That's how I went about it getting into the first who do I go see first, what do I work on most, that was really my big push how I focused that first few months of my time there.

SGM WATERHOUSE: How did you communicate with them? Did you do a regular VTC?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: I did emails most of the time, but I kind of had a 3-day email requirement.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So you could follow-up on them with "Hey, I read what you said."

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Right, but I had a 3-day. A lot of times, they all do. I think I want to do this, what do you think? I wouldn't answer that email for three days. Now, then I had another meeting a

month later, something like that, and we all would be together or be on VTC. Well, you never answer your emails. I said "No, I answered everyone of your emails." He looked at me and said "No, I wrote you an email." I said "Yes, but I answered that three days later." "Well yeah, but I needed an answer like the next day." I said "So what did you do?" "I just did this." "Did it work?" "Yeah." I said "Then why the hell did you send me an email? You don't need to send emails if you already know the right answer guys. That's what I'm trying to tell you. You are already in positions to make those decisions. Just make the decision. If it's a controversial thing, you think you need some overwatch, give me a little bit of notification. Say hey, I want to do this, what do you think?"

SGM WATERHOUSE: But not for everything.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Yes, exactly. When they kind of got to understand that they had that empowerment, it was a lot smoother. I still average about 125 or 130 emails a day at FORSCOM level.

Primarily I get up at 5:00 in the morning, go out and run two to three miles, get home, shower, ride to the office and I'm back in the office by 6:30 or 6:45. Nobody really shows up for a while yet so I'm able to knock out a lot of those emails that came in overnight, primarily from over in theater, get back, we had a battle update about 9:00 and we did a battle update. Initially we did it physically down in the secure skiff area, but then later on we just went over our computers. We had a secured computer system internally and we just sat in our office and logged onto that system and got the battle update over that so I didn't even have to leave my office then. Basically into the day, which got bogged down pretty quickly and then I would try to go home at about 1730, if I was in the Headquarters, for dinner, and then the back part of my house was set up for an office and I could go in there, log on and I would work there until 9:30 or 10:00 at night and finish up the emails primarily, but I was home. Our kids were already gone. They were married and gone from the house so it was

just me and my wife anyway and as long as I made it home for supper and dirtied the dishes, she was happy.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Sergeant Major, looking back at the four plus years that you served as the United States Army Forces Command, command Sergeant Major, what were you most proud of?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Number one, obviously you got put into a very tough situation very quickly. I was proud and honored that General Ellis thought enough of me to say "Get here and get here now," that the trust that we had that we had built as a command team at a 2-star level was something that when it really got down to the nitty gritty that he thought that I was his guy and he wanted me to be his wingman. That part I will always feel honored that he did that and felt that way for me. The second thing I think is I worked in a project, I think I told you earlier today. I got given, the war is going and a few months later you are starting to get into a little bit of routine stuff and all of a sudden you have to go back and go we still have (Inaudible) to worry about, we

still have to fill the ranks, we still have to do all of the basic soldier stuff that has got to continue to go so one of the things that happened was I got given a \$2 million bill to fix World War II wood from my NCO academies and FORSCOM owned more primary leadership course academies than TRADOC did at the time just because of the structure of where FORSCOM and TRADOC broke out in the installations, and I looked at my school's guy and said "I'm not spending \$2 million to get back to World War II level at 1945 so we got to come up with a better plan. So we started looking at how do we build an academy. Can I build a digital academy? Can I utilize technology? Again, this is year 2001/2002 so when we talk digital technology, it was still rudimentary compared to what we have today, but we were looking at lots of different options and then one day, we were kind of going down the road and I was like "How do I do this" and I called in my National Guard, I had a liaison in Headquarters for National Guard and Reserve component, brought those two Sergeants Major in my office, brought my operations

Sergeant Major in the office and I said "Look, why do our academies have to be active duty National Guard and Reserve? Why don't we have combined academies? They said "We tried it once and it didn't work because they couldn't figure out who was in charge." I said "Oh, good idea. I got that so how about if we put the best fricking guy in charge, I don't care who it is. We shouldn't be getting wrapped around the ansil [ph] as a Guard Active Reserve, but from the Guard and Reserve, it's a dollar issue. They get paid money for doing things so if they get put in charge, they get more resources to do certain things so that's how they were looking at it. I said "Guys, this is neutral, money neutral. Nobody gets nothing. We all get to work this together so we worked a plan. I thought I was going to get pushback from the Guard. I really got more pushback from the Reserve component than I did from the Guard about making it combined academies. But we started looking that way because again, how do I lessen my constraint on resources? I have so many Academies out there that are underfilled and yet we

got the requirement because we are falling behind in our schools. How is it those two things don't seem to make sense to me until you look at where the school slots are at where we're not using them so we started doing that kind of thing. We got into this why don't we do a digital training and what does that mean? I said "I drew a little presentation, little stickmen because my artistic venues aren't so good," so I used stickmen for my people and it was like I had this little triangle. I said "This is the triangle of learning we do. If I give you a book and you read a book, you know what you read. If I give you a test that I know I can validate that I know that you know what you read, but if I make you apply that task, now I can certify that you know you know what you read?" So I said, "What do we do in our academies 90% of the time and we don't get to the certified level, we get to the validate level? All we do is give you a book, you read a book, you pass a test and you go to the next book. So why do I have to bring you to the academy to do that? Why am I wasting all that money,"

and of course right away they are saying "We can't get rid of the academies." I said "I don't want to get rid of the academies, but I want the academies to become mini NTCs and JRTC's. You show up there and the first thing I want you to do is basically on a bus you are going to go through a gate. Your academy is no longer going to be this Taj Mahal, it's going to be a FOB and you are going to have to go onto a FOB." "Why is that?" "Well, I talk about how to provide security at a base camp, but when do I ever train that? Not in any NCO's course have we ever trained that. We don't even show you what it looks like. We just talk about it in a couple of paragraphs and then we skip over it. It's not until you actually deploy before we do it. How do I do a resection, integration and onward staging? That's just verbiage on a piece of paper. But we could physically do that with a class that comes through a gate and do the resection, integration and onward staging in that base camp doing this piece. We talked about water cans earlier. I could reinforce that point on an actual FOB, but those are all secondary learning

events that I still only have the primary task that we always do, but you are going to do it in a field environment. Oh by the way, you are not even going to come to school until you have read the book, passed the test and validated you know what you read. Then you are going to be able to come to school. If you don't pass the test twice at home station, right, you're not eligible for promotion. We're just going to stop you and we're going to skip right over top of you, and we are going to keep promoting those who want to learn how to do these things. That very basic crux to what we looked at that and the biggest intent was how do I get past this mentality that I've got to be in the school? Longer story short, not by much, but by a little bit, is I pitched this to some of my guys. Actually, I pitched this to my boss on an airplane with a piece of paper, actually a napkin on an airplane flying from Atlanta to NTC and I got done and he gave me \$2 million to start the project. I mean it was on a napkin. Every academy I had had two servers. I only really needed one, but I bought two expecting

to expand to TRADOC and then give them all their schools. I didn't want the schools. I needed to disburse of those, but I figured if I could sweeten the pot a little bit and give them the extra server, then all the primary leadership schools would have servers already, they wouldn't have to spend no money to do that, which was the biggest reason TRADOC can't do half of what they do. They are just not funded. We got that project going a little bit. We got that going down the road and had a lot of the stuff. I mean how do I get a wireless campus? Back then it was like it was a miracle how you do it, but then we started looking at I don't want this building. I want a FOB. I want everything on a FOB and in that environment. I went home one night and I saw this military channel and it was about the Vikings or somebody going across the big ocean and they got to the other side, and the first thing they did is put together this little base camp and they projected their force from that base camp. I'm like, hmm, we are a force projection force. We project our power from a platform. I said "That's

it." If I go to Mars and I want to occupy Mars, I'm going to do it from base and project my force from that base. Whatever MOS you are, you have a requirement inside that face, so that's the common operating picture for no matter what MOS we trained NCOES until that point, everything on NCOES is MY material, but it really is an MY specific task only in a common verbiage so how do I change the common verbiage to a common operating picture and then integrate that MOS. It was simply put you in a FOB environment and everything is now common operating picture and that same task that you would do as an MBC guy, it takes a little different flavor than it does if I'm an infantry guy. That's how we kind of looked at how we do this digital training, so that was the crux behind this whole deal. Bottom line, I had to take this to TRADOC so I had to pitch it to the science advisor. I had to pitch it to the money guys and all the rest of the stuff so how I did this was we went to TRADOC, I invited industry, but I said you cannot ask a question, you cannot even burp. You don't

say a word, but I'm going to invite you back a month from now to my Headquarters and I want you to come up with solutions to what I pitch to TRADOC. I just want you to listen. Basically, that's what we did. We were in this room, no windows, two doors, this side and this side and the first thing I did was get up and I said "Thanks TRADOC for allowing us to have this meeting. Do not panic, do not move." When I said do not panic, do not move, the lights went out and I'm yelling fire, fire, fire. I waited about three seconds and we turned the lights back on. The lights came on and everybody is like "What the hell is going on?" I said "Now, that is our training today. All of us are telling you what to do and nobody can see where the hell we are going so if this was really no shit a fire, how many of you in this room would have got out of here safe, how many would have tripped over somebody, how many would be hurt just to get out of the room and that's kind of what we're doing right now. We are training. We are kind of fumbling around where everybody doesn't understand where we want to

go. This is only about how to show us all how to go where I am asking us all to go." We went down that path. We had a lot. I won't bore you with the entire pitch, but the bottom line in this is it all worked out when all done and TRADOC came back and said, "Man, you are on it." The first time we've ever heard anybody say this is what we want to do. That grew into NCODU, NCO Digital University. You guys have gotten some of that work in already. Dave has done awesome work getting down there, but we had the ability to do this a long, long time ago in a lot less cumbersome modes than we are doing today, and we didn't seize the opportunity. I'll make sure you get a copy of that. I want to find that PowerPoint presentation I used initially. I have it somewhere. I'll find that too, and give you an NCODU. That's probably one of the biggest things because even though we weren't able to execute that, partly because of money, even though it was not going to be very expensive to do, we were still executing the war fight. I didn't have enough ammunition. I didn't have body armor yet. I didn't

have a lot of other things. I have to project the force to the fight so that was one of the issues that didn't take off as easily. The second issue was I was told I couldn't talk about it. I briefed the Sergeant Major of the Army and got told "You will not brief this to nobody else. You will not talk about it. You will not say anything." I already briefed the CAC Sergeant Major and Anthony already saw it because of trying to show him where I was going with this so they didn't get blindsided, and it was about nine months later at the Sergeants Major Academy when we had a senior conference, Cindy Pritchard got up and started ranting and raving about something and then she looks over where I was sitting and goes "Sergeant Major Christian, he's the only one who's got it right and God dang it..." They're all turning to me and wondering what I got right, what did I say because it's not out there. She knew about it, TRADOC knew about it and the SMA knew about it and that's about it. That's when the cat got out of the bag a little bit. Again, we are too far down a road now to execute. We had a lot of

Sergeants Major that didn't believe in digital training. They didn't understand. I had several Sergeants Major who said "If you can't put your finger in their chest, they can't learn." Again, not bad people, just they didn't grow up in that era. That is something, even though it didn't take hold 100%, I know that that book got to SMA level. I know it got into the Operations side. I know TRADOC got a copy of it so what I'm kind of hoping is maybe it was a little spark that maybe started a little flame that started a little bit bigger fire and if that's all it did, then I'm happy and I really don't care about that. The other thing that I think the last thing that I feel good about being a FORSCOM Sergeant Major was just being able to be a leader with soldiers, being allowed to really mentor, coach and teach the whole time. I don't care if it was talking to 2-stars, Brigadier Generals, Major Generals a couple of times that kind of got embarrassed because you were telling them some things they should already know and then they were telling you or just young Privates that you still sat

down and had an MRE meal with them and just tell them how good a job they were doing, as you as a FORSCOM Sergeant Major took the time to sit down with them. I have been in theaters with little kids of dads that got killed, too many funerals and even to this day, if a phone rings after 9:00 at night, it is not a good thing. It is a very difficult thing to hear, but that was the life that we chose. The lady upstairs was with me every step of the way and as much as I went through, she actually got told one time I was dead. She got a call from a friend. The unit I was in, 1-9 Cav, there was a Carl Christiansen who was in the same unit, and he actually got killed in a car accident. It went across some and one of our old friends/leaders called Brenda and said "I'm sorry to hear about Carl, what can I do, whatever you need, we're hear for you." I didn't know she got called. She didn't call and there was nothing to confirm.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Where were you at the time?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: I was at Fort Hood, Texas. I was at 1-9 Cav. It was probably five or six

hours after she talked to this individual.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Was this during the day?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: It was during day. He got killed actually in the morning. He got killed actually coming in for PT.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So you were at work.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: I was at work and I knew he had died. We knew he had died, but I didn't put two and two together. I didn't think anything of it. I'm sorry that he got killed. She got a call probably around 11:00 in the morning and I didn't get home until about 5:30 or 6:00 at night. I walked through the door and I got the shit beat out of me. "Don't you ever die." To her, to all the other ladies and men who have actually received that, that's the hardest thing of that job. I saw every report. I read every situation. I was in many, you know how the aircraft have their black boxes and all that, video and audio, I sat through several of those and that's something that I don't wish on nobody. I really don't, but it's important stuff to do so we don't make the same

mistake. To young men and women who work the graves registration piece at Dover, I have been through that facility several times and every time you go there and you see the courtesies and the honors they get to these heroes that we have, it's humbling for you to say I don't care if that's a young private and they are doing it, they are doing it with such courtesy and distinction that you say I bow to them for how they do their jobs. It is very, very hard, but they do it well. Just like our common arms guys and supporters are out there every day doing the dirty and dusty stuff.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Sergeant Major, before I get to 2005, looking back at that time as your time as a FORSCOM Command Sergeant Major, that was four years or so, what kind of things did you tell your successor that you learned before you left. "Here are some things that I learned," kind of like you get a one-day version of it on our end, but what are some things that you passed on to your Sergeants Major.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Actually, I didn't have

the opportunity. My successor was not named until about three weeks after I left, I believe it was.

SGM WATERHOUSE: What would you have said?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: I basically had the continuity book that Sergeant Major McFowler gave me. I just took the book off the shelf and kind of tweaked it and updated it with the information because he had done a great job with the book so I left it to "To Whom It May Concern." I knew I would know whoever it was and I called back. I even called back and Dennis Carry was my replacement eventually. General McNeill and Dennis knew each other in the past so there was a relationship there already between the two of them so I didn't have to talk to him about what the boss likes, what he doesn't like. Dennis knew him already. When I did call Dennis and congratulate him, I basically kind of said "Look, it's a big animal. Don't eat the elephant all in one bite. Get your staff to brief you. I would go to their area. Don't have them come sit in your office. Go to their area in Headquarters. Two reasons. 1) You're going to get more

details because they have it at their fingertips and

2) You're going to get out of your office into their environment and see 20 other things going on around you that you wouldn't pick up in a briefing. Those were really the only two things and I just basically told them. "Here's what I didn't do well. I didn't communicate with TRADOC often enough. I definitely didn't go to Washington, D.C. often enough. You having the force provider with the SMA, I had a phone call with him at least every other week at a minimum. There were some weeks I had a couple three times a week with him, but as far as physically getting off and going to see him or meeting up with him somewhere, it was less than one time a month on the average over that four-year period of time and I told him it's a pain in the butt to do, but it is essential because the impact the doctrine is making on decisions about what we have to do with the Force is not working sometimes with you and you have to show him what your side of the story is before they make a final decision." I try to focus on things that I did not do well and why I thought I

didn't do well and let him make the choice of how he wants to lead from there. I just told him that it is a big animal and to take it slow. You're not going to be able to get everywhere all the time or you'll never be home and you're still not going to be able to get everywhere all the time.

SGM WATERHOUSE: It's physically impossible.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Yeah.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Sergeant Major, in 2005, you retired from the United States Army with over 30 years of Active Federal Service. Looking back over those 30 years, is there anything we haven't discussed that you would like to discuss about your time in uniform?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: I mean we touched on everything. We kind of talked over dinner a little bit. You could sit here for hours on one question and kind of get into the nuts and bolts. The one thing that if I was to go back, it's how do we train leaders to be leaders. I'm not saying that in a tongue in cheek mode. It's not just NCOs, it's officers. The one

problem we have and I'll just use our Tactical Operations Center, TOC, as an example. When you were a young trooper, you walk into a TOC and who was operating the radios? It was either Lieutenant or a Captain.

SGM WATERHOUSE: The battle Captain.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Exactly right. We didn't have sergeants in those areas. They were putting fuel in generators. They were getting copier paper. They were doing mimeograph type stuff. They were doing the mundane stuff. Walk in today's TOC. You are lucky to see an officer doing the functions. If there is, they are doing what we used to have Lieutenant Colonels or Majors doing inside these tactical operations centers. Our NCO Corps is so much more proficient than it has been in any time in history, able to handle multitasking almost without question, but as we continue to grow these requirements, you've got to be careful. When was the last time we redefined officer NCO relationships? Where is it written down today what officer NCO relationships are as far as I do this

task, they do that task, I do this task, they do that task. I don't think it's been rewritten since 1972 or 1974, whatever the date of the manual. We kind of morphed over the years, but we have never defined it again so what happens in my mind is if you are the Platoon Sergeant and the Company Commander comes down and starts doing your job, you've got two choices. You can move down and become that Section Sergeant or you can step aside and put your hands in your pocket. You see that all the time in our units. We call it micromanagement. You see seniors, it could be an Officer, it could be an NCO doing the next little job down instead of empowering and stepping back. The problem is that they don't understand this mushroom cloud is not an unmanageable fact. They just have to manage the stem. That stem is the only part that they have to manage. The rest of this cloud going up is supported by that stem. As long as they are managing that stem, the rest of this cloud can function without them having to be physically there. You've got to empower our young people so I would tell you that's

the thing that I tried at every level. I told you that story about what I did at FORSCOM as far as here is a pad of paper, tell me what I can do. My First Squadron I did the exact same thing as my First Sergeants. In my first meeting with the First Sergeants, I said I had two requirements. The first requirement is I'm going to come see you every single week. One time a week I'll see you. You better have coffee. Second requirement is give me something that I can do to make your job easier. And of course, the first time you go there, remember I told you about my little Hippie 60s, great First Sergeant, but he was just that old in your face chew tobacco type guy. He was the first guy I went to. I knew he would be the guy I didn't have to worry about. I had to get the chain out a little bit and put him back in place, but as far as being a good First Sergeant, he had it figured out. I go see him, John Lithcoff, he saw I had a cup of coffee there so here's a cup of coffee and then he's like "Uh, uh," and you could see him kind of wrestling to try to give me something that he thinks I need to work on for him

so he gives me some bull crap thing. I said "First Sergeant, do you really want me to do that? I'll do it, but I'm going to do it so stupid that you will be pissed off that you'll never ask me to do something again, but that's something that I think you and the Commander can handle, can't you?" He says "Well yes, Sergeant Major, I can do that." I said "Then what is it?" He goes "I really don't have anything." I said "That's a good answer. That's an okay answer. If you don't have anything for me, but I want you to understand that if you do, feel you can always call." He goes "Roger that." That started the process. The other thing I did as a Sergeant Major. We talked about writing skills. Every counseling from that Squadron came to my desk every month and I reviewed every single counseling personally. I went through with a red pen just like an English teacher did and circled things, talked about certain things and I gave it back to that First Sergeant. I told him to fix these problems. It was again what melded to me when I was writing. Here is what you have to work on. Fix these

problems. We basically had a couple of meetings about what I was looking for, why I was looking for things. When I left that Squadron almost two years later, I still had one First Sergeant that had to bring his counselings. Once they showed me how they could do this, they could manage, they could mentor, coach and teach, they had it. I still had one First Sergeant that had to bring counselings to me every single month. On his MCR, I told him I do not recommend for promotion because he is not able to take care of his soldiers. That was one of my bullets that I put on his NCR.

SGM WATERHOUSE: You were enforcing that standard.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Again, it was one of these things that he wasn't capable, but he also didn't try to go back to school. He also didn't try to come and say "Hey, how do I get an English class or how do I..."

SGM WATERHOUSE: His personal counselings, the ones he wrote.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: No, no, no. His soldiers wrote because again, because he couldn't read them. He literally had a reading problem. Because he couldn't read them, he didn't know what right looked like.

SGM WATERHOUSE: He couldn't correct them before they came to you.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: He was trying to just get by with reading, but I'll tell you, I worked for Sergeant Major (inaudible) as a writer. I got this one student that was my ghost. I was a Sergeant First Class and he was a Master Sergeant coming in there. Medal of Honor winner. Awesome guy, but he already had a college degree so on the college days, Tuesdays and Thursdays, he came down to work with me to help me with my lesson plans. He got down there. He was a very quiet, good guy, but he said, don't have me write because I can't write worth a shit. I was like this guy just doesn't want to do any work. I said "Most of the lessons are done, can you just review this for me and tell me what you think and tell me where I missed the boat. I'll do the typing." I could see he was very

uncomfortable and he says "I can read the words, but I don't really get what I'm saying." I said "You got a college degree?" He said "Trust me, the Medal of Honor does a lot of things besides stuff. I'm not happy about it. I'm not proud of it, but that Medal of Honor and my wife got my college degree. Nobody questioned how my papers got done. Nobody questioned how I did shit. It was just done. That's the way it is." Again, he's a guy that showed me how do I take care of soldiers if I can't read stuff. How do I know if the operations orders are right? How do I read a TAC stop? How do I do this? All of those things add up to that stuff and so that's part of what my ethos was because that's the way I was raised. I was given a mission. If I failed it, I was shown why and given a second chance and if I failed the second chance, I would never have gotten the opportunity to do half the things I did.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Sergeant Major, switching now to post Army, your transition from active duty soldier for 30+ years and now your transition to civilian life. I think we had ACAP back then and now

it is Soldier for Life, it's a little more refined, probably a little more detailed now, but what was the greatest challenge for you in making that transition?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: I think the first thing is making the decision to get out. We are fighting a war. You are at the Senior level. You are the most important guy there is in the Army. Obviously, they can't work without you, but the decision was made for family. It was made because my wife had to go take care of her dad. He passed away and so we had both moms alive so the decision was made. We've lost both of our dads now. We didn't get to spend a lot of time with them as adults. We want to spend some time with our moms. We want to help take care of our moms, so that was the biggest crux and reason I got out. The second biggest reason to get out was I was over four years as FORSCOM Sergeant Major. You've got to get the hell out of the way sooner or later. I had the opportunity. I was on the final select list for the Sergeant Major of the Army. I was interviewed for the Sergeant Major of the Army. I wasn't selected and no

matter who the General picked, it was the right choice. General Schoomaker decided to pick, we know who he picked, but the deal is that was a choice he wanted. It was the right choice for him and absolutely no hard feelings. I am still the FORSCOM Sergeant Major. I still control three-quarters of a million active duty soldiers. What more could you ask for? I look back at that time and say it was a great honor and great opportunity, but it was time to go home. I walked into talk to my wife, when she came back from her dad passing and she had been home for six months, he was only supposed to live for two weeks and ended up lasting for six months and she took care of him every step of the way, but when she came back to Atlanta to FORSCOM, I could tell she is done playing. I said "Do you want me to retire?" She said "No," just like all great spouses do, "No, I'm here and whatever you want to do, I'll support you." So that went on for about a few weeks and then I was back at Headquarters and had just come home one night and I came in the back door, I slammed the back door and I kicked the

kitchen cabinet and I said "I'm tired of this fucking stuff, I'm ready to retire." She comes running around the corner and says "Really?" I go "No, not really, but now I know how you honestly feel," and we had a good conversation that night and the next morning I walked in to see General McNeill and I said "Sir, I think it's time." I just kind of walked in to tell him "Hey look sir, I'm kind of thinking about this. I think it's time," waiting for him to tell me "You can't leave. We're fighting a war. I need to keep you here."

SGM WATERHOUSE: You took over and obviously during a huge moment in our Army's history. Initial stages of any war is hard and you had one of those units that provided soldiers for...

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: If I didn't have gray hair before I went there, I had gray hair. That's why I kept it cut so short because I just couldn't see it, but that happened and then to his credit, instead of just saying "Okay, I got it, fine," he got up from his desk, walked around and Jim McNeal had a rocking chair

in his office all the time. He sits in the rocking chair and talks to you like a dad and he goes "Sit down." We talked for almost two and a half hours, and that two and a half hours wasn't about you need to stay, it was about my career and his career, and if it's the right time, it's the right time. he said "This is the right time for you." He is very, very supportive, very good talk. I told him that I still have to call the SMA and get his permission, but I didn't want to talk until I talked to him and he goes "No, I think it's the right thing for you to do if that's what you feel is the right thing for you to do. I appreciate everything you have done." That was him. I called the SMA and said "I think it's time to do this." Again, very gracious. Sergeant Major Army Preston, it just kind of turned around and he said again the same thing, basically as Jim McNeal, "You gave us over 30 years in the Army. We couldn't ask for more. We understand. The war is going to go on for a while. We are going to have a lot more retire before the war is going to end so thanks for everything."

That started the ball rolling. Once again, I talked to Sergeant Major and you're going to tell me to stay, kind of that your heart kind of halfway tells you somebody is going to tell you they want you and you have to stick around and then you've got to come home and say "I'm sorry, they want me again," but when they all said it's the right time, go home, that's when it was like reality. But it wasn't anxiety. It was like okay, I'm getting ready for the next chapter of my life.

SGM WATERHOUSE: How many months ahead was that? How much time did you have left?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: It was about three months or three and a half months probably from the time I talked to General McNeill. It was probably a good opportunity because I shouldn't say there was a lull in the fight, but there was a constant. There was nothing major going on up or down, left or right. We weren't trying to move in or move out. There wasn't resourcing issues somewhere. There always is, but there is nothing gigantic.

SGM WATERHOUSE: This was pre-decision of going up with the surge and all.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Absolutely. We were getting force projections and stuff like that. You went through all of that, but there was nothing major that a Sergeant Major was so indispensable they had to stick around type deal. That was the decision there. By the time, we kind of started focusing on what's the next step in our life type deal and then we actually went home and got home just before Thanksgiving. I can remember being home for Christmas probably six years before that. The time before that was probably ten or 15 years. It was a long time. You almost never got home for Christmas. I honestly can't ever tell you being home for Thanksgiving. I don't ever remember being home for Thanksgiving. Brenda asked me "We're going to get a lot of calls to go to people's houses and stuff like that." I said "The rule is yes." I'm not going to tell nobody no. We might have to tell them I'll be a little bit late because I got here or we have to leave a little bit early because we have to

go there, but it's yes. We are retiring because of family and we're going to make family feel important. By the time New Years Eve got around, I told Brenda "I'm going to see a recruiter right after the holiday." She goes "What are you going to see a recruiter for?" I said "I'm reenlisting. It's easier to be in the Army than it is to be retired." I was so wore out from doing all the things with all the family. I was like man, I could not remember being this tired over this period of time. It was Battlefield Circulation, but it was a great time to do that. I've got to tell you one more little thing. You want to stay physically fit and we moved door-to-door moved and I hadn't done PT for a few days before I retired out of the force composition because the kids were there and doing breakfasts and stuff like that so I got home, the movers were coming the next day so I helped unload the moving van and my farewell gift to my wife was I promised to be home to unpack boxes. I was not going to go deer hunting the first year. I had never in my entire career been able to be home to help

unpack all the boxes so that's my gift to you. I will be there to help you. We got home. It was a cold November, but it was okay. The day after I unpacked boxes on the first day, so I'm home now for the third day and I'm like I'm right at a week of not going out and running and not doing PT so I told Brenda "Tomorrow morning I have to get up and go run," and where we were on the farm, I had a little 3-mile course and a 5-mile course plotted out. I'm going to go run a nice easy 5-miles and I'll be back home early enough that we will empty boxes. I wake up the next morning and it is November in Wisconsin, but it wasn't quite cold enough. It was right at 34 or 35 degrees, but it was storming its butt off. No thunder or lightening, but it was raining cats and dogs. So I said "I'm a Sergeant Major." I put my gear on and kitted up, out the back garage door, I hit that road and that first mile was dead in the face soaked to the bone. I turned facing left and right, and my left side was getting soaked. The second mile I turned the corner again kind of triangle coming back towards the

house and my butt is soaked. By the time I got to the third mile, the 5-mile went out the window. I said 3-mile is good enough today. I ran up the driveway, got into the garage, took off all the clothes, ran upstairs, nice hot shower and it felt good. Got PT in. The next morning I got up and had a few sniffles. By noon I'm sitting in the chair and I'm shivering and sweating, shivering and sweating. I had not been so sick in years. I caught pneumonia. Brenda walks in, hands me a cup of hot tea, puts her arm around my shoulder and says "Do you think you are retired now?" I tell everybody about retirement. You don't have to go out and be like you were a soldier. You still could do the things, but you've got to enjoy it a little bit more. You could wait until it quit raining before you run.

SGM WATERHOUSE: You don't have to run in the rain now.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: That's the moral of the story.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Sergeant Major, last few

questions here, I just want to ask some questions about getting our insight and maybe some guidance for future NCOs. Up to now we have been talking about your military career and a little bit about after the transition. I want to ask you some basic questions that somebody looking at this letter, if they just want to key on this part, they can kind of get your insights. Sergeant Major, in your opinion, what are some of the key things an NCO must do to be an effective leader? I'll say senior NCO so Platoon Sergeant or Section Sergeant of his or her NCOs and soldiers, leader, not advisor but leader.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: We talked about it earlier. I think the first thing any leader at any level has got to be is willing to be a follower. I really believe that because if you don't feel you have something to learn, you have already become a deficit in your own ability to continue to learn so that's I think the first thing they have to do. Second thing is they have to be a good communicator, and I'm not necessarily saying they have to be able to write the

dictionary inside and out, they don't have to be the speaker that they go through this great speaking program, but they have to be able to articulate to soldiers their requirements. As we went through the Academy, Dr. Massey, who you are is where you were when. You have to understand when you give an order to who you are giving orders or directions to, where were they at that point of your career because you're going to give orders when you were in that position so if I'm a First Sergeant and I'm talking to a Specialist, I'll give you an example that happened to me. I'm a new Squadron Sergeant Major talking to my charge of quarters, a Staff Sergeant, and told him I wanted the latrine cleaned and GI'd so tomorrow morning when I come back in it's ready to go. I walk in the next morning and all he did was sweep and dust it. I'm like what are you doing and I was pissed, but then I realized they had never had that kind of same upbringing that we did of how to clean the latrine.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Didn't know what the standard was.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Exactly, so you've got to show them the standards and articulate that, but when you do that, you've got to understand when you give an order, you've got to give it in the understanding of who they are. I talk about Crayola Crayons all the time. If you take a Crayola Crayon, there is a six-pack of Crayola Crayons and then there is a 12-pack, 24-pack, 48-pack and 64-pack. It just doubles all the way up. I talk about when you become a noncommissioned officer, you've got to use six colors to draw the picture to get that young Private to do what you want because you are removed from that Private position by that much, but if you use all six colors in drawing a picture, the Private does exactly what you tell him to do. When you become a Staff Sergeant, you now are using 12 colors because you are a little bit further removed, but you have to use that extra color to get that same exact idea across to that young Private because you are now in a little bit different experience group than he is. When you get to be that Platoon Sergeant, now you are using that 24-pack and

if you don't use that 24-pack of Crayola Crayons, you are constantly going to miss something, a little bit here and a little bit there, but if you use all 24 colors, that Private will do exactly what you want him to do the way you expect him to get it done. You get to be a First Sergeant and now you're using that 48-pack. You get to be a Sergeant Major and now you're using the 64-pack. I used to tell everybody why you never see your Sergeant Major because they are too busy in their office coloring all the pictures. But that's kind of how I would tell you leadership in my mind really is. You have to understand that kind of articulation of directive and orders and processes and then The Mission, Men and Me. Mission first, men always and me last. But as you grow as a leader, sometimes me becomes a mission and you have to know when that point is. Sometimes you've got to leave work early and go home and spend a little time with the kids. Sometimes you have to take mom out to dinner just because. Not anything fancy, just take her to McDonalds where just you and her do it, but sometimes

me is the mission, and that is an important factor in The Mission, Men and Me. I said it several times in the interview because we talk about this. Empower, empower, empower. The more you allow your subordinates to do things, the more you will find out that you have the ability to control because they will do it the way you want it as long as you do the next step, which is soldiers do what leaders check. If you don't follow-up, you don't keep observation of it, you are going to end up with a big mess, but if you empower them and you go behind them and look at what they've done and how they've done it and make recommendations, that's the difference between directing and when you empower, a lot of times you recommend changes so that they know they have the choice to make that adjustment or they can try something else, but it's their choice. That's empowerment. I think those things right there, if you could fix that, a lot of the other basic stuff, physical fitness and all the rest of the stuff comes almost naturally, but that's the other thing. Stay physically fit. That has saved many a life of soldiers

who have been hurt very bad.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Sergeant Major, NCOs, not only do they lead, but they also advise. In your opinion, what are some of the key things that a Senior NCO must do to be an effective advisor to his or her Commissioned Officer? For example, a Platoon Sergeant to his or her Platoon Leader, a first Sergeant to his or her Company Commander or a Battalion Ops Sergeant Major to his or her Battalion S3.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: I think the first thing you have to build is rapport. You have to build that rapport that says I have the ability behind closed doors or just in personal sessions to be able to say to you things that I think I need to say. If that relationship is not there to that strength, then you are never going to get to the next step of honest and open communication. You've got to build a rapport. Some leaders do it differently. Some say "I don't want to have my first meeting in a military environment. Let's go have lunch together at some place off post." It works. Different people like it a different way. I

think that's the first thing. The second thing is that as you build rapport, that builds the trust and the trust is that I may not know what you're doing right now, I may not see the clear picture right now, but I trust that you are doing the thing that we need to get done. That's the piece I would say you have to get done. Another thing is you've got to talk to each other. You've got to kind of understand and from an NCO perspective, what is the Commander's intent? Not necessarily, like you say a First Sergeant is talking to a Commander. What's the Battalion Commander's intent? As you are talking to your counterpart, your battle buddy, you understand what the Battalion Commander wants so that you can now keep this Captain on the right path with the Commander's intent of the next higher up. As a FORSCOM Sergeant Major, I called a 2-star General into my office and showed him a piece of paper he signed. He was all upset because he's going to kill the Colonel because that Colonel let him sign the paper. I said it's not the Colonel's signature. You failed to read that paper. You just did

it. Again, I'll guarantee that 2-star General will never let another paper like that get out of his office without him reading it. It's those kinds of things. You don't have to kill the messenger to get the message across. There are a hundred other things I think an NCO or Officer even could do, again, it's one of those topics we could sit here with a case of beer and probably only cover ten of them. Trust in yourself. Our values are there for a reason. Live by those values the best that you can. We are not perfect, none of us are, but as long as you can stay close to those values and try to stay online with those values, I think you are going to be successful.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Sergeant Major, another question or to seek your advice on this one. What advice would you give to Sergeants Major selected to serve in their first Battalion level Command Sergeant Major position?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: I tell you, I really like the idea of empowerment so much that kind of what we just talked about what I do with my First Sergeants.

My first First Sergeant meeting was a very tense one because as I said, I was a Junior in time in the Army than any of them were, but it was my responsibility to be in charge. You can't shirk that responsibility, but you can't force somebody to like you. It's kind of like taking a horse to water, but you can't make it drink type deal. You've got to make them believe and you've got to make them trust that they are still in charge of their organizations so how do you do that? What can I do to make you successful? What do I need to do to make your job easier? I think if you just approach it in that respect and then let them understand that if they make a decision, you're there, you're okay, got it. If they think it is controversial, just give me a heads up and we'll talk about it before you make that choice, but for the most part, you are in that position, you were selected at that grade level to make those decisions. Make the decision. I think that would be the one thing I would really recommend they do and I think if they do that and grasp that concept, their whole psyche will change

a little bit more about what else they can do. I can empower my staff the same way. Oh, my driver has that ability too. Oh, my god, I can now take my NCO soldier of the quarters and give them some more latitude. Why not? When you start doing that, it's what happened as a Sergeant. I did it as a Platoon Sergeant. I got told by a First Sergeant to slow down because nobody else can keep up with you. It's just empowering your soldiers to do what they already know to be right and then following up behind them to make sure they are doing it right. That would be the one piece of advice I would give. Let them tell you what they need and do it in such a way as you're not telling them they are all screwed up or you're stupid, but just you're there to help them to be successful.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Sergeant Major, now moving up a couple levels, what advice would you give Sergeants Major preparing to serve in their first Nominative Sergeant Major or Nominative Command Sergeant Major position? They get a course now, but just your personal opinion.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Yeah, it's going to be hard because we all believe that we got to that level because we're smart. We all got to that level because oh, my God, somebody saw how good I am. What is somebody going to tell me that I don't know? The real deal is it's just like every place else. Learn your way to your office and get out of your office. Learn your way to your office means you've got to get in there so people know they can get to you, reach you and talk to you. Get out of your office because that's where the work is really at. As a Nominative guy, that's probably two pieces of advice I'd tell you. Know how to get to your office so that way you check emails and people can get to you if that's really something you have to get done, but know how to get out of your office so that you can get to the real no shit work. Be an advisor, don't be a director. Directors jobs are well below you now. As an advisor, you are there to help things run more smoothly. Get to know your staffs, your primary staffs are the guys who are actually doing the hard work and are probably

dealing with all the problems that you are going to find as you travel around and if you know who is working those problems already before you go travel, when you start to travel and find those problems, you know exactly who to call VFR direct and say "Hey, I just found this, what are we doing" and you can have the answer to fix that problem quicker.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Sergeant Major, what do you think will be the Army's major challenges in the next 15, 20 or 30 years and in your opinion, and I'm sure you watch the news like we all do, what do you think in your opinion are the Army's plans right now, looking at what you are seeing out there, that will meet those challenges?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: I think we are going to have our near peer competitors be a lot more peer. I think we are going to have the ability of Chinas and Russias to have very, very comparable type equipment. I think robotics are going to play a much bigger role in the battlefield. We are going to approach it in the respect of it's a manpower issue. We are going to be

able to do more with less, but I think robotics put us at risk in the fact it becomes a cleaner war. I don't have blood, therefore, it's not really a big deal so I can bring a robot into the fight and it's okay. The problem is that you are going to eventually bring robots to where people live and you're going to fight in cities that we considered not doing before, and the bad guys have already figured out. Soon we are going to be fighting everybody. I think robotics are going to be a great force multiplier. At the same time though it's going to encourage bad guys to do more with robotics and, therefore, it's going to force us into doing more of that piece. I think. I think we are going to see robotics play much more, we're already starting to see ROVs and with the drone, and all that kind of stuff is already out there more than we ever thought was going to be this time. I think the values of our nation and of other nations are going to be a challenge. I say values being something like the chemical weapons we're talking about with what's going on right now in Syria. Yeah, we just did a retaliatory

strike, but I watched a lot of reports on that and everybody says it's the wrong thing to do, but then everybody is criticized for the fact that we took a retaliatory piece and trying to put them back in the box. Chemicals are going to be here for the rest of any humanities known in existence. It's the ability to control the misuse of that chemical is going to keep us in the safe zone because toxins are being developed that are deadlier than ever before. It doesn't take a whole lot and stupid people will do stupid stuff really quick so I think that's something that our force has got to figure out how you do it because it's a very time-consuming training task. At the same time, it's a very resource intensive equipment task and you can't do everything for every little what if. I think that is something that we have to consider. How are we looking at chemical weapons and I'm not necessarily saying in the actual force. I think the way technology is going we think of a battlefield as being a forward deployed battle area. I think again technology is going to drive a global battle area. You are seeing it

right now with missile technology that can go back and forth. I think you don't have to park a submarine off the U.S. Coast. You can park your platform wherever you want, in the silo of a barn in Norway, and still hit any city you want to in the United States, if that's kind of the capability that you think you want to do. I think space is going to be another place we're going to have to figure out how to fight. Just like robotics, people are already realizing how to fight in space without making it look like we are fighting in space already. That kind of carries over to cyberwarfare and the vulnerabilities as we do up all this stuff. How does cyberwarfare start playing? How do you protect against a virus coming into something that as long as it has an external port to it, it's going to get a virus. Somebody is going to figure out how to put a virus into it. Right now, I think we are seeing technology turn every 18 to 20 months. In 30 years, what will it be? It might be 18 and 30 days before something pops up. I saw something the other day about artificial intelligence and

letting artificial intelligence start telling us what to do. I think it was part of the Facebook interview. The artificial intelligence will decide what hate speech is. Okay, not getting into the political realm, but let's put that same kind of thought process into artificial intelligence into a robot that you send out to go find a certain value target and what if it interprets that well, that radio really isn't the value target, but that has a component to become a valued target to I'm taking that radio out. But that radio happened to have a 10-year-old sitting around it watching movies or some crap. That's the kind of stuff I think we've got to go down the road and think through. It's a dangerous world I think, but I also look back at when I was a young person listening to my parents talk and listening to my grandparents talk about what it was like when everything started. This world has become more dangerous, but reality I think it has become more dangerous by generational. The dangers that that generation faced with my grandparents to my parents, World War II had to be an

overwhelming the world is going to end totally now. I think that's the same thing that we're going to see with this 15 to 30 years out. Hopefully, we don't get into this globalization of economies. I think that's the biggest mistake we could make. Even though our economy is going to be tied together in requirement, to say that the worst country in the world is going to have the same stuff that we have, all you end up doing is kind of like you divide by the lowest denominator. You never bring everybody up to the highest one. It always goes down to the lowest one. That's when you are going to start getting into riots. That's when you are going to start getting into other stuff. One of the things our technology has got to worry about is where do we make technology? How many computers? My home computer was built in China. What's built into that system we don't even know is in there? We have some military components that are built outside of the United States. I know we monitor that to a point, but how do you validate that in the future? Those kinds of things. I think those are some of the things. We are

talking 15 to 30 years out. I honestly can't even imagine what it will be. Will we have teleport capability in that time? You say no way, but if technology doubles like it's going to be doubling, doubling and doubling, someone may figure out how to have teleport technology and if you have teleport technology and if you have a weapon of mass destruction, can it transport something like that and just put it down and now it's there. Those are the kinds of things you've got to get into the what if game and it goes back to that talk we had about the NCODU. You've got to get people to think out of the box. How do you do that? The only way you make people think out of the box, especially Type A's, is tell them there are no constraints. What ifs are out there. What if, just tell me what if you think and start playing for that. There are lots of great people already doing that. I know there are. We developed and set up a 10-year plan and the 7-10 year plan is already starting to work, but I think by the time they actually put that Doctrine into place, which takes

about three to four years to do, we've already probably busted that 10-year point in technology. I think that has already passed. It's just a matter of okay, well now we know technology can go that much further, do we hold this program and go on to the next program? We did it with almost every vehicle. The Bradley fighting vehicle. I tested the fire control system and a different site system in Detroit tank plant when I was a young E-5. I saw the Bradley fighting vehicle in prototype when I was an E-5. It had a latrine in it. It had a kitchen in it. It had a little bit of everything because at that time we were fighting a potential chemical environment so this was something that could survive inside a chemical environment. But that was a Bradley type fighting vehicle and that would have been 1977 or 1978, that timeframe, and when did the Bradley appear in manufacture? It was in the 1990s. Twenty years that there was already a prototype built before we actually saw the vehicle here. We can't wait that long, and that's the piece that you can't afford to keep making

things so that's why I think robotics is going to come in because you can miniaturize them much more. They are more lethal, but again I think that drives you into a potential clean war mentality and we are not hurting nobody, we are just taking out each other's robots. In reality, you are going to take out people because that's where robots are going to be doing their business.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Sergeant Major, last question, is there anything else you would like to discuss, maybe a topic or something we have not addressed?

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: No. First of all, I appreciate the opportunity to do this interview. As we talked earlier, as well, and you look back at our history, I don't care if you go back to the real old cavalry days in the West, and you look at the write ups for awards or you look at the write ups, I don't care if it's an award for a soldier or whatever it is, look at the Medal of Honor write ups for our NCO Corps in the Regiments. They are written by a young officer.

The first part starts talking about the NCO and what he did and it morphs into the actions of the Commander. It's just the way our system has been. It's an officer eccentric type mentality. It's not a bad thing. It's just a way we have done it, but this program you're doing with the NCO Corps I think is great. We have got a lot of great NCOs who have done many, many things, and I feel blessed to be given the opportunities I was given. Part of my career was luck like walking by that door when my assignment to Germany was coming up and stopping and not going to ANOC, being the Second Regiment Sergeant Major when General Ellis needed a Sergeant Major and then 9/11 happening, General Ellis happened to select me to become FORSCOM. You would have never got the opportunities to go do those things so it was a blessing and I know that I was given opportunities to do things that I normally would not have done. I was supported by lots of great noncommissioned officers and I was very fortunate to be working for a lot of great officers who just let me do what I thought was

right, and they empowered me to be the best. My first tank live fire I was a PSC Tank Commander. I had an E-1, two week in the unit gunner. That was my first tank down range. Actually, it was a stationary range. We didn't move nowhere, but it was a good thing. Needless to say, we didn't do very well, but how many PSCs get to be a Tank Commander? I wasn't in position, but it was that gunnery and you take this tank and go do this thing. Did I screw it up? Yeah, but I learned so much so now when it was time to be an E-5 tank commander, it was like "I got this. I already screwed my stuff up." It was the same way as being a Platoon Sergeant as E-5. I didn't get everything right, but I know darn good and well that the mistakes I made were E-5 mistakes, not E-7 mistakes and so that's where a lot of my leaders allowed me to be better than what I thought I could be, but what the potential they saw, which I feel very blessed about.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Sergeant Major, thank you for taking the time out of your busy schedule to allow me to come interview you on behalf of the NCO Corps.

CSM (R) CHRISTIAN: Thanks, Sergeant Major. I appreciate it.

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I, Carleton J. Anderson, III do hereby certify that the forgoing electronic file when originally transmitted was reduced to text at my direction; that said transcript is a true record of the proceedings therein referenced; that I am neither counsel for, related to, nor employed by any of the parties to the action in which these proceedings were taken; and, furthermore, that I am neither a relative or employee of any attorney or counsel employed by the parties hereto, nor financially or otherwise interested in the outcome of this action.

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