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SENIOR NON-COMMISSIONED OFFICER ORAL HISTORY  
PROGRAM

INTERVIEW WITH COMMAND SERGEANT MAJOR (RETIRED)  
CHRISTOPHER K. GRECA

Carlisle, Pennsylvania

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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. Today I'm interviewing Command Sergeant Major Retired Christopher K. Greca of the Senior Noncommissioned Officer Oral History Program. Today's date is March 18, 2018 and this interview is being conducted at Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania. Sergeant Major, could you please tell me your date of birth and where you were born.

CSM (R) GRECA: 26 November 1967 and I was born in Landstuhl, Germany. My father was a service member at the time so both me and my brother were born in Germany.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Sergeant Major would you please talk a little bit about your childhood to include family life, places you lived, hobbies interest basically up until when you were in high school.

CSM (R) GRECA: Certainly. Again, with my father having that background, I can tell you that my entire adult life up until retirement, all I knew was the Army. I was born into an Army family, I circulated around with my father for 19 years. He was still active when I joined. I lived in places like Ft. Ord, California, Korea. I went to Seoul American High School in 9<sup>th</sup> grade when my father worked on the J staff at Yongsan. He worked a little bit in Illinois and that's where I finally graduated high school. He was working at Ft. Sheridan as a readiness group commander. That entitled multipurpose, total Army, active guard and reserves, what they were doing for training. He would go up to Ft. McCoy, Wisconsin a lot in armories to inspect.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So when you were growing up, what did you see yourself doing when you were in high school before you graduated. What did you see yourself doing growing up?

CSM (R) GRECA: I think I would have been the last. I have two brothers, I have that's older, I

think we're 16 months apart and my younger brother is 16 months younger than you. I think my father and mother would have told you that I was the last child that they would have envisioned joining the military. What led me to the military, like most, going to college really not enjoying myself. Trying to get away from individuals that I thought were bad influences on me. This gave me an opportunity to enlist. When I came home, the only thing my father said was, and he was a signal officer, he looked at me, he paused for five, ten seconds and he said please tell me you didn't join the infantry. I said well, congratulations, I am in infantry.

Honestly, it was an enlistment bonus and I made a deal with my father that if I did not complete college I would pay him back. If I graduated he would pay it. So I used my enlistment bonus, all of it, to pay my father back for a failed attempt of going to school.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So you joined in 1986?

CSM (R) GRECA: Yes. I was actually in the

Illinois National Guard for a short period of time from 1984 to 1985. I would do weekend drills, I never went to basic training or AIT. That was in the pipe but I still had to show up. They discharged me for having a human bit wound on my hand. I was medically discharged from the guard. I told my recruiter about this, by the way, in Baltimore and he said, don't worry about it, it doesn't look like an issue to me. I said thank you very much. So yes, I joined the infantry.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So besides the bonus, any other reasons you chose infantry over field artillery or something else?

CSM (R) GRECA: It was absolutely about the money. At the time, again, it was very, very important to me in that handshake with my father that I paid him back. This wasn't about me getting a bonus and using it to buy a car or whatever. I think I owed my father \$4200 dollars and I paid him every bit of that. So I got half once I graduated in installments and I paid my father off. I went to Korea as my first

duty assignment and it was cold. There were times that I definitely regretted my military occupational specialty as I was freezing my butt off on the Korean DMZ or living in a hut with 27 of my closest friends. The shower facilities were outside so you had to go about a quarter mile to use the latrine. It was just a different environment and this was pre-Gore-Tex. You can image field jacket liners didn't help too much. So the evolution of Gore-Tex and the way we're talking care of our service members today is absolutely phenomenal.

SGM WATERHOUSE: When you did that initial enlistment, were thinking of making the Army a career at that time?

CSM (R) GRECA: Absolutely not. As a matter of fact, there is probably somebody in this room right now that could attest that I literally was counting down the days and the time. I had met my wife when I was at Ft. Louis. She already had a son who was a year old. So there was responsibilities that I owed as a father to Justin so looking and thinking about getting

out, I didn't really have the option. Then my wife got pregnant with our first child together so there was a multitude of reasons why I decided to stay in the Army.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Before we get to Korea, I want to talk a little bit about your training. So you went to Ft. Benning.

CSM (R) GRECA: Yes.

SGM WATERHOUSE: After you signed up to join the infantry and you did one station training by then.

CSM (R) GRECA: Yes, absolutely.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So what was your training like there at Benning during those 15 weeks?

CSM (R) GRECA: It was cold and it is hard to explain. I thought to myself, November, December, January, February timeframe in Georgia the climate would be okay. I did not realize how cold Ft. Benning got and I literally froze my butt off from the beginning of the training until completion. It is also hard to retain all these skills that they throw at you. Whether it is putting a mine in place, you've



got all these tasks and phase one, two, three testing. How much do you actually retain. I know when I was shipped out to the Army, I really didn't know a lot about a mortar. I really didn't know a lot about these other tasks that they were talking about but I had the foundation, I think.

SGM WATERHOUSE: That kind of leads to my next question. How prepared did you feel for that first unit after coming out of OSUT?

CSM (R) GRECA: Well, I got over to Korea and they had already departed up to the Korean DMZ. They lived on Warrior Base up north of the river. They drove me in the back of a Humvee by myself freezing cold weather. At the time, they didn't have the road networks that the Korean Peninsula currently has. So it was like a three or four hour trip. And then you go across this bridge and these gentlemen would salute, stands alone. That was the motto of the organization that was up there. I was like oh how fitting is that. Because if the North Koreans truly do come across the border, these individuals that were

up at Camp Greeves and some other places, they were truly standing alone.

SGM WATERHOUSE: In March 1987, like you talked about earlier, you reported to Korea where you served with a combat support company 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion 503<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Regiment part of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Division. You served there as a gunner for about a year.

CSM (R) GRECA: Yes. Gunner, or AG, at the time it was a four deuce mortars so it kind of varied. You would fall into one of the gunners positions or AG or even ammo bearer.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Was this the M-60 machine gun back then or something else?

CSM (R) GRECA: No this was the 60 mm mortars and the 81's and the four deuce which had been replaced by, in today's arsenal, the 120's.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So it was a 42 mm?

CSM (R) GRECA: Yes. We sat on what was formerly Camp Liberty Bell which now is called East Bonifas. So they have connected the JSA, the Joint Security Area up there and Camp Liberty Bell was now

East Bonifas. I actually, I know we're going to get to this (inaudible) first sergeant up there as well. It is funny how it is a small world and I ended up exactly back at this location right across the street of where I was a private living in a tent with a pot belly stove. I lived in a hut up there but I was the only person in the hut so my quality of life was pretty good.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So for people who don't know what a combat support company is what type of platoons and/or sections were in that unit back then?

CSM (R) GRECA: We had the scouts, mortars, a lot of your mechanics and your maintenance folks.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Similar to an HHC.

CSM (R) GRECA: Yes very, very similar. And again, as a brand new private, so I get shuttled up to the DMZ and the first sergeant put me on gate guard at warrior base. So literally the first thing I do is get off this bus and I know how to stamp to parade rest and there is my first sergeant in front of me. He gave me a pistol and a pistol belt and he said you're

going to work in that shack for the next couple of weeks. You're going to pull 12 hour shifts and I thought I was so high speed because I would lift the gate up and I would salute the officers with the crisp salute. There I was on the Korean DMZ thinking to myself, we're it. In hindsight, I know a little bit better and I understand it. But at the time, I thought being a gate guard was the coolest thing ever.

SGM WATERHOUSE: And I'm sure you had live ammo (inaudible).

CSM (R) GRECA: I did and I had a Korean gentleman inside the shack with me who spoke no English and I spoke no Hangul so we would just sit there and stare at each other for 12 hours. It was interesting and it took them two weeks to get me right up the road to Camp Liberty Bell to link up with my platoon. Sergeant Sollis and some other role models that I had in that platoon.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So your primary duties as a gunner, I know you said you did different positions. Can you explain what the different responsibilities

you had back then?

CSM (R) GRECA: Yeah you get the mortar pointing in the right direction. It's called deflection and it is really azimuth and you use an elevation mechanism that will change the trajectory of the mortar round so the gunner is primarily the guy who is working the site getting it on azimuth and ammo bearer with fighter rounds.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Now is this a normal position for a new soldier or was it more of an NCO type position?

CSM (R) GRECA: I'm not sure it was an NCO position but frankly what did it look like at the time. I didn't know anything. Frankly, I'll tell you that it was a great assignment, personally and I guess professionally a little bit but it was really the blind leading the blind. In my next duty assignment serving in the ranger regiment I started finally figuring out what an operations order was and commanders intent and how important that is to every single person in the platoon or in the organization.

Honestly, I didn't know that in Korea. I got in the back of a vehicle, we put our four deuce mortar out there, wind up the sights, deflection and elevation and prepared to fire the mortar system.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So you mentioned a couple of guys names a second ago. So looking at that first unit the 2<sup>nd</sup> of the 503<sup>rd</sup>, who did you lean on or who was your go to mentor person there in that unit?

CSM (R) GRECA: Interestingly and I've spoken to this several times at PCC. I will tell you that it was probably the platoon leader, the officer. I respected the way that this gentleman carried himself. I respected his ability to communicate and talk to us and not talk at us. At the time, you don't understand as a young private, you think the lieutenant knows everything. He's got a ranger tab and he absolutely knows everything. So he primarily, a guy named Randy White who works here at the Army War College, he was my first role model. Him and Sergeant Stanley Sollis who went the SF route. So when he left Korea, he went to SFAS, retired as a Special Forces

warrant officer. But those guys really took a vested interest in me to include steering me towards a ranger battalion.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Now was Sergeant Sollis your section leader, squad leader, team leader?

CSM (R) GRECA: I think he was the section sergeant at the time. There was another gentleman, Sergeant Sollis was an E-5 and I think he was working an E-6 position. There was another gentleman, Sergeant Camillio who I really respected. Frankly, he had all these tattoos, he was kind of sleeved. At the time, that's where my fascination started growing with tattoos because I was looking at leaders that had them and if they were wearing a long sleeved shirt you would have never guessed it. It is kind of the stereotyping of what people look like and talk like if they have tattoos. Honestly, I used to do a little bit of drinking then and a little bit of partying in both TDC and I started getting tattoos. A lot of them.

SGM WATERHOUSE: What's TDC?

CSM (R) GRECA: An area outside Camp Casey. Camp Hovey and Camp Casey are connected but the bill outside was TDC. And Tokery was right outside Camp Hovey's gate.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So that's where you guys would go if you were off duty?

CSM (R) GRECA: Yes, if we had a pass. I did not have a good relationship with the platoon sergeant. I thought he was kind of ignorant in the way that he carried himself and the way he talked down to us. So he was almost the complete opposite 180 degree turn from Sollis or Lieutenant White.

SGM WATERHOUSE: That was my next question. So back then, the Army, we've gone through several iterations obviously. Back then, I mean there are always individuals, like you said, good and bad. What would you say was a quality of the average soldier and Noncommissioned Officer back then? How did that influence you going forward?

CSM (R) GRECA: So my expectation as I looked at Lieutenant White and I looked at Sergeant



Sollis. I knew there were good ones out there. By the way, this was back when you did the SQT test, very knowledgeable. They had their EIB back when 5 to 10 percent --

SGM WATERHOUSE: You got tested on what you knew.

CSM (R) GRECA: Yeah so these were two guys. The problem with it is my expectations increased. So when I knew I was going to a ranger battalion, my expectation was I'm going to get Stanley Sollis on steroids. I'm going to get Lieutenant White on steroids. This is a ranger battalion so it is certainly the best of the best. Unfortunately, I was let down once or twice.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Any particular challenges during that first assignment that you want to discuss as a new soldier?

CSM (R) GRECA: Yeah keeping my money. I spent all my money in the vill with partying. I literally redeployed from Korea after a yearlong assignment and I had nothing in my name, to include a

stereo.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah you used to buy stereo equipment or you spent it on other things.

CSM (R) GRECA: I spent it on ladies. I was a young man at the time so I got to know the ladies very well.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So looking back at your time in the Combat Support Company 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion Bravo 3<sup>rd</sup> in Korea, what were some of the positive and/or negative things you experienced that influenced your future decision making. In other words, what were some lessons learned you took from that assignment?

CSM (R) GRECA: Well I think one was certainly this platoon sergeant that I had who's solution, by the way, to what he considered an insubordinate private was, he would try to fight you. When I say that I mean literally his attempt was well I will go beat him up. Although I was a private, I knew better than that and I knew that was not supposed to be happening. I had an altercation or two but listen, I met great people. I was a melting pot. We

had people from all walks of life. My buddies that were in Combat Support Company with me whether it was inner city, whether it was living in rural areas, whether it was being Caucasian, Black, Hispanic, it didn't matter. Because it was all about this mutually supporting idea that we work as a team and we're either going to fail or succeed as a team.

SGM WATERHOUSE: In March 1988, you were assigned to Ft. Lewis, Washington where you served for about five years. Your first assignment at Ft. Lewis was Alpha Company 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion 75<sup>th</sup> Ranger Regiment which we talked about a little earlier where you served as a gunner, at least on paper, for about 20 months.

CSM (R) GRECA: Yes that was an interesting assignment. So I showed up my very first day and my ranger buddy was there. I think he had beat me there by a week. At the time, they were putting 11 Bravo's, they were having a hard time finding 11 Charlie's that could go in there.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Mortar guys?

CSM (R) GRECA: Yes, mortar guys. So I knew nothing about the Ranger Regiment. So Sergeant Sollis gets me drunk on soju behind our hut. He has me sign this 4187. He was absolutely insistent that I went to the 75.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So you had to sign something?

CSM (R) GRECA: Yes it was a 4187 and I was drunk and I signed it and then eventually, I get my orders. I have no idea at the time, I was not airborne qualified. I knew nothing about the Ranger Indoctrination Program and what I was about to go through. I was absolutely clueless on it. Airborne school, no big deal. But the Ranger Indoctrination Program, we started with 128 folks and we graduated with 19.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Did you go through that while you were still in Korea?

CSM (R) GRECA: No you go back. It was done at Ft. Benning. I was actually picked, this is an interesting story too. I was one of the first privates

that was picked to RRD, Regimental Recon Detachment. So I got selected and interviewed when I was in RIP. I was told you, they were getting the majority of their soldiers from the battalions that had proven themselves and they would go up to Regimental Recon. So the day I graduate RIP actually had a regimental scroll on my arm sleeve. Not 275 but stayed there at Ft. Benning. Right prior to the ceremony my RIP instructor came up to me and he goes, Greca are you 11 Charlie and I said, yes sergeant I am, and I thought they knew that. He said Colonel Nightingale will not allow 11 Charlies because we've got such a shortage of them. You need to go up to Ft. Lewis.

I will tell you, at the time, it was a blessing in disguise. I was smoked, I was tired and I went through this experience that externally, my RIP instructors thought Greca is a pretty hard dude. Honestly, if I would have stayed there at RRD, I don't know. I don't know if I would have made it. I'm trying to think back in how much I would have put up with because I was a rough guy back then. I will have

friends that tell you, I went to fist to cuffs quite a bit. So it was probably a blessing in disguise that I went up to Ft. Lewis.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So just to backtrack some. You are in Korea, you signed a 4187, you went to RIP.

CSM (R) GRECA: Yeah I went to airborne school first because you've got to be able to jump out of an airplane and then I go to RIP. My RIP instructor told me, so I meet this guy and he's wearing OG 107's, the old green fatigues. He's got these shiny set of spit shined jungle boots. He's got on a black beret and the high end tight and this guy was just an absolute, pardon my language, but a badass. I'm admiring this guy. I went to him a couple of days prior to my graduation and I said, sergeant, my father is thinking about coming to the graduation but he's only going to do so if I get the opportunity to hang out with my family. He's not going to come up here for no reason. This guy said, Greca, no problem, you will get the weekend off to spend with your father.

I relayed the message, my father came up and they just pinned my wing on and this guy yells, Greca where the heck is Greca. I'm going shoot. So I run up there and I snapped to parade rest and I'm like Sergeant, we had a conversation and my father is here and you said I would get the opportunity. He said, if you don't like it, quit. You got an option right now to quit. If you have a problem with training this weekend, quit. I decided not to quit and I went to my father and my father said, well this sucks, at least I got to pin your jump wings on and proceeded into the RIP. I don't know if you know Doug Maddy, so super Doug, we actually went to RIP together.

SGM WATERHOUSE: I think I met him. So ranger school, when did you go to actual ranger school?

CSM (R) GRECA: I went twice. So the first time I went was in the summer of 1988. I got there, we did EIB training and I got my EIB at Ft. Lewis in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Ranger Battalion. Intellectually, Steve will tell you, I was not a dumb ranger. I was the guy who

was always thinking and I was studying things. So they sent me quick, I jumped the OML list like it typically takes a year, year and a half as a private. I went after a month and a half, maybe two months.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Wow.

CSM (R) GRECA: So I was literally right back. During the Florida phase I ripped the meniscus in my left knee. I was on a boat and the way you straddle the boat and my knee, from the outside hit and ripped my meniscus. So I was dropped from ranger school and people could tell you that served in that environment, you did not come back without a ranger tab, you just didn't do it. You were thrown in loser status big time. So I went from a hero to a zero pretty quick. I was frustrated in myself that I couldn't suck it up a little bit. I just blamed myself and the way I vented and showed my frustration was getting into a lot of altercations. I used to run to bars and I did a lot of fighting. I was doing things that was not representing the Ranger Regiment in the correct way.



SGM WATERHOUSE: Did they allow you to stay in the Regiment?

CSM (R) GRECA: Yes.

SGM WATERHOUSE: A lot of times they'll ship you down to a regular infantry.

CSM (R) GRECA: No, they allowed me and I did a couple of deployments. I went to Ft. Bragg for training and Ft. Chaffey at the RTC and several other locations. At a certain point, I made a poor decision. I'll talk about this decision and I got, it's called RFS, Released For Standards, meaning I failed to meet a standard out there. When we get to it, I'll explain the situation and the incident. And frankly, what I learned from it was probably the biggest life learning event ever, at least in my life up to this point. It was from a Sergeant Major who gave me some advice, the Ranger Battalion Sergeant Major.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So you tore your meniscus you said?

CSM (R) GRECA: Yes.

SGM WATERHOUSE: How long before you were

ready to go back to school?

CSM (R) GRECA: I was ready within six months but at this point, I didn't even really want to be in the Army. I was counting down the days. I was really, really frustrated and the thought of starting day one over again, getting your head shaved and I didn't have much luck on my second attempt. Now I graduated but I graduated equal on peers. I got cellulitis in my knee which we drained with this scalpel. Medic would help me out and we'd cut a hole in my heel because that happened. Then when they shaved my head bald at Ft. Benning, I got sun poisoning on the top of my head. So I go to Florida and I finally make it out of Florida and I'm like thank God.

Out at Dugway Proving Grounds in Utah, I fell off a mountain and I broke my wrist in three places. So literally, when I graduated ranger school, I had a cast on. I had to convince my battalion commander not to drop me for the event. I told him I was left handed, it happened to my right hand. I had a

cast on, I could control weapons systems. Fortunately for me, he listened and I graduated. I had a cast on my hand the day of graduation. You look at my graduation picture, there is cast guy. I ripped it off the second I got done with ranger school.

SGM WATERHOUSE: When you graduated ranger school, how much time did you have left as the gunner?

CSM (R) GRECA: So I had shifted organizations. So I was in 2<sup>nd</sup> Ranger Battalion but I went to ranger school and graduated when I was in 260 Infantry. Frankly, I was a specialist at the time, I think I was promotable. Our future battalion commander, Gary Spear, a Lieutenant Colonel at the time, he was the 260 commander. He was going back to go to 275 and he said, Greca, you're going with me. I was like sir, and being the prideful guy what do you do, you snap to position of attention. This Lieutenant Colonel was talking to me, holy crap I'm an E-4, I'm not going to say, sir I'm not going back to ranger school, I have no interest. So frankly, the conversation went, get him on an airplane and get him

down to ranger school. I cannot tell you how frustrating my first few days of ranger school was. I was anti-social because I had done it before. All these lieutenants and young NCO's are talking about it. I had been through 50 plus days of ranger school and I just was a frustrated guy. But he forced me and then certainly the best decision I made.

Being an infantryman, the training, education and experience and how we build ourselves up, in my personal opinion, being an 11 Charlie or 11 Bravo, you should go to ranger school. That is just my personal opinion, it's a leadership school and we see great leaders out there with the ranger tab, even like John Triapsal who is a tanker. They can transcend their career fields by having a ranger tab. People look at them differently when they start moving their way up.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So the first time you went to ranger school, you came back, you were hurt. Is that when you went to 260?

CSM (R) GRECA: Yes. So we had come out of

Ft. Chaffey and we had got ORD and we went down to Hunter Army Air Field.

SGM WATERHOUSE: This is when you were in the Ranger Regiment?

CSM (R) GRECA: Yes I was in the 275. So we deploy and we think we're going to go get Manuel Noriega at the time. We think the summer of 1989 we're going in there. I made a bad decision. There was a lieutenant that was talking about something that was happening back at Ft. Lewis because he talked to his spouse. I said sir, how do you know what's going on. He said there are pay phones down at this place called Lots Island, it's about three miles away and I went and made a phone call. I looked at him and I said sir, I don't think from an ops perspective you're supposed to be doing this. He said, has anybody told us that we couldn't do it and we're like no sir.

Myself, Scuba Steve and some others, we ran down and made phone calls. Edit this how you need to but I think this is open source now. As a matter of fact, I know it is. So I make a phone call. Our

platoon sergeant hears us talking and that's clearly an OPSEC violation. So the next thing you know, I'm lined up for an Article 15 but there was a multitude of things. There was fighting and just being a clown. I wasn't behaving like a young ranger and a young soldier should.

I went up there and I'm reporting to my captain, Captain Mike O'Keta and he says, so what do you have to say for yourself. I said sir, we were never told we couldn't use the phones. The platoon sergeant and the PL were in the room and they sir, that's a lie, we told the platoon. I said sir, you're lying because I can go get the entire platoon and I could line them up. And Mike O'Keta started his stopwatch and he goes, you've got five minutes to get all your witnesses and be back. And Sabor Hall, down where our tents were, that was a run. So I ran down there and I literally got every NCO in the platoon, almost every soldier in the platoon. I think there were 30 people lined up outside Captain O'Keta's office saying that no, it was not, in fact, put out.

So he listened to the first couple of guys. The first sergeant comes out and say you all can leave, Greca report back in. So I go back in, ranger leaders the way sir, Private Greca (inaudible) and he said it is quite clear that the platoon has selective listening and hearing and I believe your platoon sergeant and your PO put it out. I was like wow I'm sitting here talking to this captain and here comes the life changing event.

So I knew I was wrong in doing it. They ask you, do you wish to appeal this Article 15 and I said absolutely, I do. I want to go talk to the battalion commander and appeal this Article 15 because I knew I was going to be released in the process. My sergeant major, Lean Garrero says, ranger buddy, Ranger Greca, get over here. We sat outside Sabre Hall and he looks at me and says, ranger buddy, I understand you want to appeal it. I said, yes sergeant major, I do, it was never put out. He said listen, he goes you can accept responsibility for your actions, that's being a man, when you know you're wrong or else you can deflect it

and that's what children do. Children deflect blame and blame others for their action. He said this to me and I'll be honest with you, it was a life changing event. I think from that moment forward, I was accepting responsibility for my actions or at least I got on a good path.

Going down to 260 and 9<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division for my short hiatus was the best thing that ever happened to me. I ended up being the NCO of the quarter. I go to PLDC and the honor grad from there. I go to BNOC, I graduate ranger school. There was just a multitude of things that happened down at 260 that would not have happened in 275. What a discussion and then something that I've used numerous times throughout my career was do you want to be a man and accept responsibility or do you want to be a kid and deflect blame.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So in other words, he was saying you knew it was wrong in making the phone call whether they told you or not.

CSM (R) GRECA: Exactly. As a matter of



fact, he asked me that. I think that was open line. Ranger buddy, do you know you're wrong and I said, sergeant major, he never put it out.

SGM WATERHOUSE: That's not the question.

CSM (R) GRECA: Yeah that's exactly what he said, that's not the question, and boy I grew up from that event. It was something that needed to happen and frankly, that fresh start, I was getting married. It was a good chance.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So while you were in HHC 260 you said you went to Primary Leadership Development Course.

CSM (R) GRECA: Yes.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Where did you attend that?

CSM (R) GRECA: Ft. Lewis, Washington.

SGM WATERHOUSE: What did you learn from that course, if anything?

CSM (R) GRECA: Probably my peers and my instructors. The technical information and data in our weapons systems in the Ranger Regiment are driven home. An operations order was driver home and FAGO

was driven home and you knew all this stuff. And then I go to PLDC and I'm looking at my instructor. She was a female nurse and frankly she just didn't conduct herself like a professional. So what did I learn, I learned about other people and looking around.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Did you say you went to BNOC also during that time?

CSM (R) GRECA: I did. I was there for 15 months, I went to PLDC. It was order and merit list in those days. I was fit and literally BNOC was overnight. NCO of the quarter and brigade commander loves me and I had graduated ranger school and the battalion commander is going to go. So I became this superstar NCO so they sent me to BNOC as well.

SGM WATERHOUSE: When you went to BNOC were you a specials promotable or you already made sergeant?

CSM (R) GRECA: I already made sergeant.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay so when did you make sergeant, in 260?

CSM (R) GRECA: Yes in 260. Probably three

months after I arrived, I became a sergeant and a year later I became a staff sergeant. I really fletted up. As a matter of fact, to the point where I show back up to 275, people are looking at me like what the heck. This guy left as a specialist, was all screwed up and now he's a staff sergeant, how the heck did that happen.

You know what I learned though, I learned how to apply myself. So I really got into going to these schools and we would check academically where we stood, the tests, all this stuff being on the Commandants List or being the honor graduate, I went into every course. So every 1059 I've got from PLDC through the Sergeant's Major Academy says Commandants List. And you're setting a patter with inflated NCO (inaudible) I mean frankly, how do you separate yourself, you separate by going to schools but then exceeding the course standards always. Not once, that can be an accident, you could have been in the last dumb class or you go in there and you apply yourself. I'll tell you, I really applied myself.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So when you did make sergeant E-5 were you put into a leadership position at that time?

CSM (R) GRECA: Yeah I think I had flected up to a staff sergeant billet. Again, being an 11 Charlie and they were coming out with mortar ballistic computer but you still had to work the plotting board and I knew all that. I went to the Infantry Board Leaders Course and was the honor graduate there. I just from being an 11 Charlie standpoint, I learned to apply myself. Frankly, my wife was a big driving factor in that. She was like don't come home if you didn't get the ranger tab. Don't go home if you're not honor graduate of this particular course. I prided myself of academically setting this band of excellence that I think I stayed in.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Now as you know, one of the hardest transitions for soldiers, really over time, is going from specialist to sergeant or corporal for some folks. For you was that a hard transition or were you in charge of the same guys that you hung out with as a

specialist?

CSM (R) GRECA: No because at that time I was engaged to my wife. And certainly the NCO's were buddies. I had a friend down there, Gardner, who went back to the Ranger Battalion as well and he went to ranger school. I was there and he was a scout. I had a guy, Louhahn, he was a staff sergeant. He was kind of the epitome in 9<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division, this motorized unit of what kind of right looks like. I never bought off on the crap that some people would say well I'm a field soldier. So therefore, I look like crap and it's not important. So I'm a field soldier or a garrison soldier. What I believe is you're a soldier and/or a ranger all the time. So therefore, there is a stanza of our ranger creed that says my courtesy to superior officers, neatness of dress and care of equipment shall set the example for others to follow. I'll tell you that creed, I took it seriously both on and off duty.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So just for folks out there that are going to be reading this later for lessons

learned, what would be your advice to those guys or gals that are in a squad, a team or whatever and now over night they're in charge of that same team or squad.

CSM (R) GRECA: Well the environment has clearly changed. If you look at, from a national security perspective, whether it is violent extremist organization, whether it is nation states, listen we've got to have young men and women that are capable of thinking. When I became a sergeant, my specialist and subordinates, I didn't think it was right for them to think. I thought it was right for them to act so if I said be in formation and standing at parade rest in this uniform, that's what it meant.

So I had a come to the light experience where I started figuring out that people are uniquely different and things that motivate people are different and you need to be able to see those individuals for what they are. Later on in my career when you start having subordinate sergeant majors that are working with you, hey listen, how do you build

this relationship where you don't shut people down, you appreciate their thoughts and opinions and I started to learn it there.

As an E-5, E-6, I started to learn at the tail end of being a staff sergeant that hey listen man, treat these people correctly. It's paid dividends. I think my tours as a battalion sergeant major and a brigade sergeant major and a first sergeant at 175 and even a first sergeant up in the JSA I have tremendous and lifelong friends from those experiences because I developed them. It truly was me trying to get training education experience. Lining these people and those experiences being assignments, how do I position them when they PCS'd to a position where they're going to continue to learn and grow.

SGM WATERHOUSE: After you were at the 260 for a while and then you went back to the Ranger Regiment at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion and you served there a little over two more years. And then I think you did some platoon sergeant time.

CSM (R) GRECA: Yeah I did but I had a bad

experience there with a platoon leader. I had a platoon leader and the platoon sergeant at the time, 11 Bravo's, that in my opinion is you're talking about being prepared based off the medal and those individual tasks and those collective tasks. These two guys because they didn't understand being an 11 Charlie, what it was about, they would steer away from it. I had a falling out. I was in Panama and me and the platoon leader had a disagreement that went very public and I went very loud and then I told the platoon sergeant how wrong he was in no uncertain terms. The company commander at the time he jumped in, Kevin Owens, who is a tremendous leader and tremendous man. He jumped in and Chris, what are you doing. I said sir, those guys are idiots. They do not know how to prepare this section, this platoon to support this company and/or battalion. I really had an issue.

So that was part of the reason why I left Alpha company. I had asked to go be a drill sergeant, something that I always kind of wanted to do, go



develop young men and women. I had had enough of this platoon leader and platoon sergeant.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So when you did come back to the 275 who did you look up to then as your mentor?

CSM (R) GRECA: Yeah there was a guy, Dennis Dunn, who was in a different company. Dennis was a weapons platoon sergeant in Bravo company but he's got a special ops background. Dennis was smart. I learned very young that I liked to be around smart people. I like people that can intellectually, we don't need to agree but let's have a discussion. Whether that's employment of people or whatever it might be and I think I'm broad enough that I developed myself where I could talk to the officers and we didn't have this issue. So when I went back to 275 I was a weapons platoon sergeant but there was guys like Dennis Dunn that almost every day I kind of looked up to.

SGM WATERHOUSE: You looked outside of your own unit?

CSM (R) GRECA: Outside the company. I need to mention this and back up just slightly. So when I

showed up to 275 in March 1987 I was so disappointed in my leadership. Literally, the first thing we did was this 5 mile run and there's this gentlemen Al Dierky and I loved Al. Al put us in formation and said 5 miles, conditions, run 8 minutes a mile plus/minus 15 seconds. When we got done with that run, everybody had fallen out except Steve Melliance the front row guard and me and everybody else was gone.

Well, I thought to myself if this is a ranger battalion, we're supposed to have the best here and I didn't see it in my officer, my first platoon leader, Eisenhower. I was so disappointed, he didn't talk to any of us. He wouldn't do PT with us, he would run in a different direction.

SGM WATERHOUSE: His last name was Eisenhower?

CSM (R) GRECA: Yes.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Any relation?

CSM (R) GRECA: I think so, distance. Trust me when I tell you that Dwight D. Eisenhower would be very offended and disappointed in his nephew or

whatever this guy was. So anyway, I was disappointed. I remember getting a counseling statement and it said you did, pardon my language I'm going to swear because this is what the counseling statement said. It said you did a fucking greet job and it wasn't great it was greet because he misspelled it and it literally was the only thing. Back when you're a private, you're kind of looking for this reinforcement and what do my leadership think about me. Honestly, I got that more from my peers, people like Steve Melliance, than I did for my leaders.

There was one, Mark Avadale, tremendous freaking leader, somebody to look up to, educated, smart. I don't like dummies because I think dummies put us in a box and I think some officers want to always put us in a box by the cohort. Certainly I've seen the change over the last 30 years in a positive manner.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So towards the end of your tour there at Lewis, January 1993, you moved to the Assistant Officer position?

CSM (R) GRECA: Yes.

SGM WATERHOUSE: What exactly was that?

CSM (R) GRECA: That was nothing. I did a mountain climber -- I have a picture with Steven Seagal. I got pinpointed as the NCOIC to go up there and I took like 120 rangers. Steven Seagal, of all people, was filming, On Deadly Ground, and he was actually in my tent. I see this really large beast who looks really flabby and like he's out of shape. I said, excuse me sir, you need to get out of the tent because we had classified systems that were in there so we could communicate. I said it second time and I said I'm not joking and he pulls his head out and he stares at me face to face. So I did things like that.

I also went to Pathfinder School, it was kind of my reward. I had a first sergeant, Wally Wracko, who took care of me. That's one of the reasons why I came back into the Ranger Regiment as an E-8 down in 175.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So you moved out of the platoon sergeant gig so you could do some other

things?

CSM (R) GRECA: It was because I had to be separated from the lieutenant. That was all about the platoon leader and the platoon sergeant. Believe it or not, it was over survival training. I wanted to do some training, we had no depth on the plotting board so I wanted to create depth for my FDC. It is something that all 11 Charlies and they wanted to do survival training and I said, you guys are idiots. Because right now, the only one that knows how to do FDC is this guy and this guy and if you lose this guy then you don't have a check computer. You've got to have a check.

I in no uncertain terms told them how screwed up they were in my opinion on this guy. Interestingly, I ran into this gentleman as a colonel when I was deployed in 2010 and 2011 down at RC South. I ran into this guy he was an O6 and frankly he was as dumb then as he was back when he was a lieutenant.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Looking back at this time at Ft. Lewis, covered a lot of years. But looking

back at that time in 275 going to 260 and then back, what are some of the key lessons learned you took with you?

CSM (R) GRECA: Well I was a believer in the big Army. Now part of it was I had started out in Korea and I had Lieutenant Randy White and I had Stanley Sallis and I had these leaders. So even when I went down the road, it is not hard to go to some conventional organizations, especially motorized, where your physical capabilities are not as demanding as they were in the Ranger Regiment. What did I learn, I learned that the big Army has great soldiers and they are sprinkled throughout and there are a variety of MOS's and it was a tremendous and great assignment.

I will tell you, my assignment in 260 was as good as my assignment in 275. I went to drill sergeant school out at Ft. Leonard Wood. Geographically, it's the way it works from being at Ft. Lewis. I went out there and it was my first exposure to female NCO's who were DSL's, Drill Sergeant Leaders at the Ft. Leonard Wood Drill

Sergeant School.

SGM WATERHOUSE: And this is something you put in for?

CSM (R) GRECA: Yes, absolutely. Well I had heard that it was either going to be drill sergeant or recruiter that they were coming and they were really looking to pop. Like Jimmy Carabella went and became a recruiter. Why, because he got pulled. So being a drill sergeant, yes it was a choice that I had. I honestly thought I could develop these people. I really honestly from the bottom of my heart, you put me around young men, I can develop them better than everybody else. I just thought that. Now was I a little naïve, yes. But was it a good assignment, it was a great assignment. I've actually kept in touch with several students from that time.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So after Drill School you went to Ft. Benning right?

CSM (R) GRECA: Yes.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Where you served in Drill Sergeant Delta Company 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion 11<sup>th</sup> Infantry?

CSM (R) GRECA: It says that on my thing but it was actually 332. It was Delta Company 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion 32<sup>nd</sup> Infantry and then they rolled and we became 119. So I did that for about a year and a half and then I became an instructor at the Ft. Benning Drill Sergeant School. I had one drill sergeant (inaudible) again and the sergeant major said hey, what do you think about going to Drill Sergeant School. I was not up to that, Brett, but the Army was not going to PCS me. I knew right of the bat that if I only did two years as a drill sergeant that I was going to stay and I knew it would probably be 4<sup>th</sup> RTB and I would go out there and be a ranger instructor and to me, that was too much time being away from soldiers.

So I just wanted to be a platoon sergeant and frankly, I picked Ft. Bragg. It was something that I picked because again, all these rumors about Ranger Regiment guys hate 82<sup>nd</sup> guys and 82<sup>nd</sup> guys hate 101<sup>st</sup> guys. It just kind of rolls that way but it was an eye opening experience.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So as a drill sergeant was



it Infantry OSET?

CSM (R) GRECA: Yes Infantry OSET and then going to the Drill Sergeant School. And the Drill Sergeant School, by the way, is where I learned how to relate to other NCO's. There were several occasions where at the time, I was promotable staff sergeant. There were times that the student was an E-7 and there were a couple of times where that sergeant first class absolutely bowed up on any and all of us staff sergeants that were working at the school. That's kind of where I learned how to deal with people. What approach am I going to use in order to get things done. Still being respectful but understanding this guy or gal, how do they respond. That was a great assignment from that perspective. I worked around great people.

SGM WATERHOUSE: And you were a drill sergeant instructor for about 18 months or so?

CSM (R) GRECA: Yes. It was 18 months being a drill sergeant and again, having the brigade sergeant and then again, my thought was, he said if

you do that you get assignment of choice after your third year. So there was a thought that there was a rational decision. At the time, they literally were making people as they took off the campaign add, working the orderly room as like company whatever it was. I was like oh no.

SGM WATERHOUSE: I don't want to do that.

CSM (R) GRECA: Oh no this is not going to happen.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So back then the normal career for a drill sergeant was one year on the line, so to speak, and then working the company?

CSM (R) GRECA: Well yes. There were several NCO's that they held over because again, they didn't have the 36 months that somebody would tell you it requires in order to PCS so what do you do with it. If the drill sergeant doesn't have a ranger tab he cannot go to 4<sup>th</sup> RTB and be an instructor. Now he can go to the NCO Academy but now you're talking about a TD assignment into another TDA. From a developmental perspective, that was not me. I made the decision and

I made the decision to go to the 82<sup>nd</sup> and the organization of the 82<sup>nd</sup>. It turns out I knew the company commander, he was a platoon leader at the 275 and we have been long time friends ever since. He is still in, he's a general officer right now.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So before we go to the 82<sup>nd</sup>, I just want to look back at about three years there. Any particular challenges whether personal or professional during that time as a drill sergeant or instructor?

CSM (R) GRECA: It was the hours. You always heard that that hey being a drill sergeant was one of the toughest assignments. Physically, I got it, you show up to the house at 2100 at night and go to bed but you're up before 5. Seeing your wife and/or your children, that is really, really hard. I simultaneously decided, this is where I decided to get back into education. I went to night school on Monday's and Wednesday's or Tuesday's Thursday's and/or Saturdays. I worked it to where as my nights where I was early shift guy. And I would go to

building 4 McGuinness Wickham Hall and I would go take a class from 1830 and I would take two classes and it would end at 2230. I'm simultaneously trying to get my associates at the time and I achieved it. At the time, that was something that I was very proud of.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So looking back at that time there as a drill sergeant, what were some of your key lessons learned from that assignment.

CSM (R) GRECA: People. The Army revolves around people and if you understand that and you're genuine and this level of compassion that we have for men and women that raise their right hand. If it's genuine, people know it is genuine. That was my big takeaway was watching all these drill sergeants and figuring out who was genuine in terms of training and developing. It's like my ranger creed, I say it all the time, Army values. Initially you learn words and how long does it take for those words to drive your conduct and/or behavior. So my ranger creed, I learned a bunch of words. But before I left to go on drill sergeant status, those words were guiding my

conduct and behavior both on and off duty.

That's why I'm such a fan of the warrior ethos and the creeds but we need to train this values based, ethical decision making that is taking place out there on the battlefield, needs to be taught and trained. And that probably was my biggest lesson is I started to understand people.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Before we to 82<sup>nd</sup> ANOC did you go to ANOC there?

CSM (R) GRECA: I did. I went to ANOC there. I had a guy sitting next to me, Dell Byers. By the way, he was without a doubt the smartest 11 Charlie I have ever been around in my life. So Dell, his intellectual capacity or capability was to be marveled. If I needed to learn something, I typically went to my ranger buddy Dell Byers. At a certain point I started out positioning in terms of who we were working for but we were always buddies.

SGM WATERHOUSE: And you met him there?

CSM (R) GRECA: I did. He was in 175 at the time and I was a drill sergeant. It was a walk and

standby. We remember those days where it was order and merit list. You were just trying to get to the top on the merit list. We wanted to go to the school so I was a staff sergeant. I wanted to go to ANOC.

Almost at every step I would be disappointed and I know we'll eventually get into the sergeants major academy. You see people that you want to be like and then there is others that you learn as much from them and the negative stuff they do as you do from those positive role models that are out there.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Was there anything you actually learned career wise from ANOC or MOS or was it pretty much life lessons?

CSM (R) GRECA: I pretty much already knew it. It is FDC heavy, I had already been to MNOC. Again, I'm learning about people so I haven't gone to the 82<sup>nd</sup> yet. There was a gentleman in our course who went down because of the racial incidents and the deaths in and around Ft. Bragg and it was not surprising. Frankly, I kind of saw those attributes or those characteristics come into flaws. And we've all

got flaws and I don't attempt to throw rocks in my glass house. From an ethical perspective, I started seeing it and understanding it. Honestly, I became a little disappointed. I'd look at some of my peers sitting in the classroom with me and I just didn't think they were good role models. Not to be a jerk but, you know.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So in September 1996 is when you went to Ft. Bragg and there you served as a platoon sergeant in 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion 505<sup>th</sup> Parachute Infantry Regiment or PIR part of the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Division. You did that job for about a year and a half.

CSM (R) GRECA: Yes. So I was a platoon sergeant there and then I had a falling out. So I did Sergeant Audie Murphy, I thought that was a big step. I got to the 82<sup>nd</sup>, I knew the company commander, JP Magee. He was General Odierno's XO for a while. I knew JP when he was a lieutenant at 275. He needs a platoon sergeant and I show up. It went well up through for about the first year. The battalion

commander and the battalion CSM were two different people. And then we got an NCO or a sergeant major and a brand new first sergeant and I was a platoon sergeant that I had a huge falling out.

When I say falling out, we went and saw the brigade commander. At the time, a guy name Colonel Lloyd Austin. The CSM was in there and we had a discussion about, it was all about an assignment and me trying to get to Alaska. I had met the requirements to get to KONUS and the leadership said I hadn't done my time. I didn't know my wife was very excited so we had a meeting. At the end of the meeting, then Colonel Lloyd Austin says, it's quite apparent that messed this up for you and your family. So Sergeant Greca, how do we make this right. I said sir, there is only one airborne battalion up in Alaska, the assignments are no longer available. I will hand out basketballs in the gym if I have to but I have no loyalty to anybody in this room except you.

The whole story is it dealt with fraternization and dealt with the first sergeant who



made an assumption. I came in on a Saturday or Sunday to do counseling forms so I'm in my CB. I'm talking to a couple of my squad leaders and this brand new first sergeant, I had never even said a word to him, walks by sticks his head in and we call at ease. The next thing you know I'm being told by Nick Spade who was the 18<sup>th</sup> Airborne Corps NCO of the year, he was a first sergeant. He said your first sergeant is telling the sergeant major that you fraternized with soldiers. So anyway, we had a falling out. I demanded to get out of there.

And still to this day, I hold a lot of resentment towards that model of NCO. That model of NCO was the guy, the dude or the dudette who lined up on the street and yelled at everybody who was running by. Nothing important, the yelling had no, I don't know what the intent was behind the yelling. It was profanity laced. I was doing a burial detail and the sergeant major did not like it and I'm going to quote him here. He said, in accordance with f-in 21-20 chapter 5 paragraph 5-26. So he's got me in a PT

manual not in a drill and ceremony manual and he tells me I'm all screwed up. I had been a drill sergeant leader so I knew what the command was stack and tack arms.

So the conversation became, he said the command was unstacked arms as opposed to take arms. I was like, sergeant major you're wrong. I was told by my battalion CSM to shut up. I was told by him, do it the way he wants it. I said I'm not going to disrespect somebody I put in the ground so I'm going to do it right at the funeral home.

There are many stories that I could use about this model of NCO's that they weren't about training and they weren't about individual teams. They weren't about leader development, they were about the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Association, AUSA, whatever. Don't park in the B lane and if you do we're going to have some outrageous punishment which is so stupid it absolutely has nothing to do with the mistake that was made. That was a great assignment for me just in terms of watching people.

I met some great friends like friends that are now colonels when they were captains. But there were just a lot of NCO's that did not -- I was taught in 2<sup>nd</sup> Ranger Battalion to be a trainer and there they didn't want you to train. They wanted officers to train.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Was that something in that particular division or just the particular NCO's you had?

CSM (R) GRECA: Yeah listen, it started off better. So Battalion Commander Hazan Barron --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Because it usually comes down to individuals.

CSM (R) GRECA: Well, I'm going to tell you that's the first time that I figured out that a battalion CSM and a battalion commander can absolutely have an impact on us down at the company troop or battery level. I didn't think that was the case. I can just isolate and shield and I won't mess around with that BS because that's my company commander. But I learned if you are a nasty leader and you're

ineffective, the idea that you just threaten people all the time, that's a technique but I think it's a poor technique.

SGM WATERHOUSE: For those that don't know, the 3<sup>rd</sup> of the 505<sup>th</sup>, what was their basic mission back then?

CSM (R) GRECA: When I initially got there I think it was about jumping and assembling. I don't think it was about ejections that we had out there. So we were very good at exiting an aircraft and high fiving each other when we went into an assembly area. The Ranger Regiment is about, hey listen, we don't care what your means of insertion is, albeit a helicopter, being an airplane, being a boat, a motorcycle or how you get there. What is truly important is can you fight once you get there.

What I initially found was in my organization was the answer was no. I think we got there and there have been kids that have grown up that are CSM's now that were privates in that organization that talk about it all the time. So towards the tail

end of that, I was having a hard time. So Captain McGee left and he was going back to the Ranger Battalion. The battalion commander and CSM had changed. Colonel Gary Patton was the commander and Sergeant Major Williams was the CSM. Their technique and approach, in my opinion, was just poor.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Because looking at your history in February 1988, it says you were assigned to the Assault Command Post and you served there for about 16 months. How did that come about?

CSM (R) GRECA: Well, when I was leaving the division, Sergeant Major Enland I had known from the 275. He had heard my name and he wanted me to run the ACP. So you worked, that's the jumping toc that works. So about 60 people in the Assault Command Post and I was the platoon sergeant so I was responsible for security, movement, trying to drive a bunch of lawyers and doctors and people that were difficult.

SGM WATERHOUSE: This was a hard stand building?

CSM (R) GRECA: No this was a jumping

command post where you got under the light and until the air land sequence started the drash would eventually come in. I worked this with a guy, Captain Alex Devarona who is now a colonel out there in the U.S. Army and I had a blast. But imagine, again here's this 11 series guy that is dealing with these career fields that they want as part of the jumping toc. These guys, I set us up getting hit a couple of times on the perimeter and some of these things the captains said I can't repeat it on this. It was like are you kidding me, so I would go to the captains and say what are you doing.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So this was a training exercise and they disagreed with your concepts?

CSM (R) GRECA: No they didn't disagree with the concept, they knew the concept was correct. You're probably going to have to erase this part but when you get hit, a bunch of captains yelling, and I quote, "Gooks in the wire, Gooks in the wire" which is probably not an appropriate answer. So I went straight to the captains and to my disappointment

actually one of them was an infantry officer who had just graduated the advanced course. I'm like sir really? I took my job very seriously.

So working up there and again, now I'm working up in the division headquarters, I'm seeing the division CMS a lot. They got me to coach their best ranger team in 1998, don't ask me how that happened. I eventually, so the E-8 list comes out and there is literally, you could research this. There were two 11 Bravo's that got picked up in the entire division and I was one of them. So now what am I thinking, I'm thinking first sergeant, I want to be a first sergeant. I run into Sergeant Major Enland and he says congratulations. It is going to be about 18 months before I can get you a company. I said well Sergeant Major can I then go to Korea? I'm willing to go to Korea for you and then I will have home base assignment program back here. So he allowed that. I literally called branch and they said when do you want to go and I said as soon as possible. I think I had 30 days lead time going into Korea.

SGM WATERHOUSE: I failed to ask you before but when did you actually make Sergeant First Class?

CSM (R) GRECA: I was on that extended list but I made it when I was a Drill Sergeant Leader. I was promotable for two years so it was that two year list where they backed up 1993/1994. I made the 1994 alpha list but it took 20 months to pin on.

SGM WATERHOUSE: But when you were in the 3<sup>rd</sup> or the 505<sup>th</sup> you were actually a Sergeant First Class?

CSM (R) GRECA: Yes.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So you got branch qualified there?

CSM (R) GRECA: Yes. I had the time from the Ranger Regiment as well but is was. It was let's go be a platoon sergeant and I actually was getting credit for being a platoon sergeant in the 82<sup>nd</sup> Assault Command Post.

That's how I learned, by the way. So Gatson, Colonel Gatson the double amputee, that's where I met him. He was my company commander in HHC 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Division. Earl Rice was his first sergeant. That's



how I got to know some of those guys.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So you mentioned a lot of things that you took from that assignment that you took to the 505<sup>th</sup>. Anything else you want to highlight as far as lessons learned before we move to the Korea assignment?

CSM (R) GRECA: Yes it was the stovepipe thing. Again, we're starting to evolve in the Army, by the way. So during this time period, we're going from roughly 875 and 16 divisions down to 10 and we're drawn down. We're literally almost cutting ourselves in half. So this is 1993/1994. So I started thinking to myself, they're going to depend on us, lean on us, we're smaller, how are we going to do this. Again, learning it's about people and by this time I think I totally get it.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So in July 1999 is when you Camp Bonifas on the DMZ in Korea where you served as the First Sergeant of the United Nations Command Security Battalion, Joint Security Area for about a year.

CSM (R) GRECA: Yes. I actually backfilled John VanCleve who was a friend from the 275. At the time, there was 300 people. So there is 300 U.S. in the company and then JSF was the Rock Company. I worked for a guy, Colonel James Nixon who left there and became the third ranger battalion commander and eventually he became the regimental commanders. He got in trouble for the Pat Tillman, he was part of that investigating officer. Hence, the reason why his career stalled out as a one star. He was in General Officer time out.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So when I was looking at this unit you had over there, according to now today's 8<sup>th</sup> Army Korea website it says the UN Command Security Battalion is, "the most forward deployed unit on the peninsula. The unit proudly stands face to face with the North Korean People's Army to preserve the armistice and help bring out peaceful reunification of the Korean Peninsula." So as a first sergeant, what was it like working literally feet from a possible enemy?

CSM (R) GRECA: It was eye opening. And remember, I had been there before and the '88 Olympics really revitalized so I'm gone when this is happening. And Seoul in the Korean Peninsula has just taken off. So now you're looking at infrastructure which is fantastic. Being up there in the DMZ east office, the North Boniface and we all know the history behind Captain Boniface, the axe murders that took place when he was attempting to take down a tree.

So every day we would have toc updates and we literally would go into the toc and it was a real world mission. We were walking patrols up there on the routes, we would pretty much stay on there. Up to this point, I had not gone to Panama, I didn't go to Desert Shield, Desert Storm because I'm in 275 and we didn't play at that time. So I had never really been to combat and there was no conflicts at the time. That was the most forward deployed and I was honored to have that job. I will tell you that my company commanders were idiots. You're going to see this reoccurring theme.

By the way, I'm not being disrespectful but I'm telling people, I learned that I could say a lot of things. In order to make an organization better, you have to be candid. I was telling Steve there were popular things to say and then there is the hard things. There have been a couple of decisions that I have said words and/or actions throughout my career that are the most proud things I reflect but at the time, very unpopular. Telling a battalion commander this guy sucks, you getting me to write OER's because the dude is illiterate. And Rich Kim was our XO so now two star Kim, anyway.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Since this was a unique company for those first sergeants or to be first sergeants out there in the future that look at this and read your story, what would you say your primary roles or duties and responsibilities as a first sergeant of that unit were?

CSM (R) GRECA: So the training cycle, so you would stay up on the DMZ for 28 days and then you got a pass and everybody would go into Seoul. It was

Monday through Sunday, there were no weekends off.

This was an organization and I thought from a training perspective, this is me. This is me training these guys patrolling, how do you do patrolling on the DMZ.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So literally a deployment.

CSM (R) GRECA: Yes and that's exactly the way I looked at it. I would go up to observation posts and I would do these patrols outside the wire and to me it was all about are these men and women prepared. To this day I say it was probably one of my most rewarded assignments. Because at the time, being an E-8 I'm frocked at the time and I'm really trying to make a difference. I'm running these guys, I'm PTing them hard and I want to make sure mentally, physically and emotionally these guys are ready to roll. So great assignment.

SGM WATERHOUSE: You mentioned your commanders. So during that year over there you are frocked, you're not getting paid so to speak for being the person but you are the first sergeant. Who did you look to for help?

CSM (R) GRECA: My buddy who listened was Tommy Cargone and Tommy was an XO at the time, he was a lieutenant. Although he was a lieutenant, he hadn't been to the career captains course. He was a smart, intellectually gifted guy who learned quick and would ask the right questions. Frankly, he was like my BFF and I was like his. But I had some individuals both NCO and officers that I used to go play poker with all night, Colonel Nixon and Rich Kim and others. So it wasn't just NCO's. I've never been one of those guys. I said hey we're apart of the same team. We have different roles and responsibilities but we have to help each other out. My XO was the guy I really leaned on.

SGM WATERHOUSE: For most first sergeants that's good anyway. Your guys are tracking a lot of the same information.

CSM (R) GRECA: Yes absolutely. We had so much visibility up there because everybody wants to do the tours and I wasn't a tour guide. My battalion CSM he likes to do tours, God bless him. So he's all about

the tours and showing people around where I was all about the patrols, the training, leading up to the patrols and the integration and stuff like that. Again, very rewarding.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So for this assignment, again just to reiterate you're the First Sergeant of the United Nations Command Security Battalion Joint Security Area. What lessons learned from that unit?

CSM (R) GRECA: I learned that you don't let a private wonder by himself. NCO supervision has to be there all the time. We had an event up there where we click clackity boomed about 14 claim orders on the DMZ out on the observation post. They sent a young private by himself and he disconnected the test device and the click clacker boom and when he went boom those claim wars went off. From a strategic standpoint that can be a very, very bad thing. The platoon sergeant and the NCO's and the squad leaders were all snugly in their hooches so we replaced a few people.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So you were promoted to Master Sergeant in May 2000?

CSM (R) GRECA: Yes.

SGM WATERHOUSE: That was in Korea correct?

CSM (R) GRECA: Yes, I was. I was a couple of months away from going back to I had to go through the ranger selection program. I come back and do that and that's where I meet Darren Bond. He's collapsing from Italy, I'm collapsing from Korea. We both show up and we were both going to 175 which was surprising. I knew, I kept in touch with somebody who was there and the first sergeant positions because all I wanted to do was continue being a first sergeant. I don't want to be the ops guy. Nothing against the ops guy but I really don't want to be that dude.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Did you put in for first ranger battalion?

CSM (R) GRECA: I did. I actually got a phone call when I was over there from the regimental sergeant major asking me if I would be interested in coming back. I thought I was going to Ft. Campbell. When I got over to Korea, I changed my HAP because I hated my previous assignment so much. It literally was



the first thing I did. So I changed it to Ft. Campbell. I don't have any thoughts about going back to the Ranger Regiment I kind of liked (inaudible) to be quite honest with you. Nothing against that but when you're working with superstars and you're surrounded every day certainly you've got a leadership challenge but it's not what most people are exposed to in the big Army especially at this time. Now you're talking about 9/11 will eventually happen and then you got bogged at the well and you've got a bunch of stuff like that that's about to happen.

SGM WATERHOUSE: I understand when you got there you weren't put into a first sergeant position you were put into the S3 as the battalion operations sergeant?

CSM (R) GRECA: Yes I was supposed to be the S2, the intelligence sergeant which is an 11 Bravo position. Darren Bond got there and he wanted to ride his bicycle so much so Darren convinced the CSM, Doug Greenway, to flip it around. He was supposed to go be the ops guy and I was supposed to be the S2 guy. I

showed up because Darren beat me there and that dude had taken my job. I backfilled Rick Merritt. Rick was the ops guy and there was a promotion list that was going to come out. All the movement in the Ranger Regiment is based off of who makes sergeant major. They are E-8's, they're very senior, most of them, and we thought they were all going to make sergeant major. None of the made it.

So the solution was, well we're just going to leave you all in position because these guys need more leadership time. I was like you've got to be kidding me. So I had a meeting with the regimental sergeant major and he wanted to send me back up to the 275. I had already arrived at Hunter Army Air Field, I'm already there and he's like yeah but we've got Bravo Company 275 opening up. Grad your family and go back up to Ft. Lewis.

SGM WATERHOUSE: This is when you first got there?

CSM (R) GRECA: Yes and the answer was no. I'm not going to do that. My family likes it down

here. To go back up, my mother-in-law still lived in Washington State area so she didn't want to do that. I end up staying there waiting for people to make the sergeant major list. Originally I was told Bravo company 275. I was going to back fill John VanCleve. He was the BCO. He was going to go up and be the Rip RO commander and I was getting that job. The next thing you know, no they shifted the guy who was going to go to ACO and Darren Bond goes in and I'm still sitting there in the ops position. I'm like are you kidding me.

SGM WATERHOUSE: You did that for like 18 months.

CSM (R) GRECA: I did, it was a long time. Honestly, I don't want to say there is this reoccurring theme with me not getting along with commissioned officers because I do. If you talk to all the generals that I worked for I got along with 99 percent of them. I had an SG that I just, anyway.

SGM WATERHOUSE: He was a major?

CSM (R) GRECA: Yes. He's a two star

general now.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Who did you work with there?

CSM (R) GRECA: Mazaracki. There was the AS3 so there were some guys that are colonels now. Chuck Mazaracki is an absolute superstar. John Pagneni absolute superstar. Then Timmy Dodson comes in, Marty Barras and it is people that I had known. I had been to battle staff NCO course at Ft. Bliss with Timmy Dodson. And Marty Barras we rode motorcycles together. They show up and eventually I get a company.

So 9/11 happens. I'm in the back of an aircraft and we're flying from England to Hungary and the pilot comes back, there are six of us on this airplane. The Battalion Sergeant Major Doug Greenway is on this thing and the pilot comes back and says the World Trade Centers have been hit, the Pentagon has been hit. There are 17 hijacked aircraft in and around the U.S. airspace. Now the latter ended up being the fog of trying to talk, communicate with what

was going on. We thought it was a training exercise so we got rediverted. They said he we were going to redivert you because we were supposed to go after some Russians. Instead, 9/11 really did happen. How did it change, it changed everything.

At the beginning, it's about deploying and people want to deploy because they get stereo scrolls and people want to deploy.

SGM WATERHOUSE: What is a stereo scroll for people who don't know?

CSM (R) GRECA: Stereo scroll, combat patch. It's a big thing in the Ranger Regiment. And people don't think it is going to last a long time so everyone is panicking a little bit. They change the order of the deployment cycle.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So you were in a planning phase in the ops shop.

CSM (R) GRECA: Yeah but I ended up in Afghanistan in November 2001. In the end of February early March, two of the E-8's, the promotion list comes out and they get non-resident Ken Turner and

Darren Bond, both of them get non-res. The sergeant major looked at me and he said Chris, I hate to do this to you but ranger buddy you're the only one with first sergeant time, you did it in Korea. You're going to HHC 175. I was like what are you kidding me. I got it and we got snipers and wrecke and we consolidated the mortars by this time and things had changed but it was not what I wanted. It was not what I signed up for.

Frankly, if you ask my wife, I was very pissed off at the time but it happens. So they as fast as possible get us back to the U.S. It took three, four, five days. Airspace had opened again. They had to get airlift and then it was going to be how do you sequence in the ranger battalions to do the right mission at the right time and place. Now I'm going to steer away because I'm going to get into some classified stuff. It ended up being a very rewarding experience.

My commanders were tremendous. They listened to me, Jesse Pearson, just great guys.

Proctor, these gentlemen, really leveraged what they thought was a capability in my to accomplish things and to get it done. That dealt with task organization, that dealt with how we're employing these folks. So it was very rewarding. But at the end of that very first deployment, Doug Greenway says you've got to go back. We had only deployed a company.

SGM WATERHOUSE: This was to Afghanistan?

CSM (R) GRECA: Yes this is early 2002. So I'm going back to take HHC. While I'm traveling we lose three rangers up top Roberts Ridge. We lose Bradley Krouse, we lose Mark Commons. This is when the seal fell out of the back of the aircraft and then we send up another Chinook and we lose the three rangers. I'm traveling back to the U.S. I literally don't have any idea that this is going on.

I get back and the battalion XO, Dan Walrath says do you have your Class A's together. I'm like what are you talking about. He said we lost three rangers and you're going to go do the knock on the door. It was the worst thing I've ever done. I have

dreams about it and it is just this, I'm watching it on the TV, Fox News has the ISR feeds and they're showing the little blimps. There is a picture of Brad on top of the TV and I'm like. It's like 9 o'clock at night and we have to synchronize because you're really not supposed to tell. We've got three family members, three sets of families down in Tampa. Mark Anderson, his parents are still together, Brad Krouse his parents are divorced. So now what we have to do is synchronize the notification process so one doesn't learn from the other one. At 2100 hours at night, we get the approval go.

So I go knock on the door and I've get this chaplain with me. He was from the aviation unit on post but he wasn't a ranger. I'm thinking I don't need this guy anyway. I typically don't have problems in public venues. I'm thinking I'll knock this out, this sucks but we'll get it done. I knock on the door, the step father answers the door and he said can I help you. I said sir, is Ms. Sheila McGuin live here? Yes she does she's sleeping though. Can you



come back tomorrow. I said sir, I cannot come back tomorrow I apologize. I could hear her getting woken up in the next room. The husband is like honey you're got to get up there are some Army guys out here. I swear to God Fox News is playing it on this thing and I'm standing there with this chaplain. She comes around the corner and she looks at me in the eye and she says don't you dare. Tears are starting to flow, my tears are starting to flow. I become an absolute U and in untrained, in terms of freaking getting this notification out.

The brother, somehow the notification Dad has been told, Mom has been told. She is bawling on the floor and wailing. I'm sitting there and I'm like this is horrible. I never said anything.

SGM WATERHOUSE: They have specific things you're supposed to say verbatim.

CSM (R) GRECA: That's right and I failed. It was the worst thing I ever did and then the brother comes in. Brad had a younger brother but a bigger brother and I thought dude was going to pop me. He

was not a happy fellow over the loss of his brother and he gets in my face. He says don't you dare, how did this happen. I'm like your brother was killed as a result of direct action, that little blurb you have to say. He was like, and he was bumping me and stuff and I was like.

In hindsight, Steve has been to a couple of my retirements, it is something that haunts me. It not only hurts but the 7000 people that we've lost over the course of 15 years and all the mothers and fathers and brothers and spouses. Steve has lost good friends, I've lost good friends. People that I didn't think you could kill them. When I was in the academy, I lost a great friend, Kelly Hornback. He was a preacher guy and he worked with some very special units. I didn't think Kelly Hornbeck could be killed but he was. That was the first time I said this might be about luck. We have hone our skills and craft them but where does luck play into this.

So that was notification number one. I'm going back to become a first sergeant and then there

is a rotational thing going on. It's a 100 days deployed, 200 days off. It is three battalions, that's pretty much unclassified rotation cycles.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Now when you did take over the company and you were in there in the S3 shop so you should have known everybody. Did it help?

CSM (R) GRECA: Yes it helped. I literally became the guy that the battalion commander from a senior NCO perspective. Doug Greenway has left the unit now and we get this other guy as a CSM. Literally, his first day in the office, it's some guys that you might know the names. It's Timmy Dodson, Marty Barras, myself, Rob Art and he looks at us and says I've been watching for the last couple of weeks. I've got to say without a doubt that you four are the worst first sergeants in the Army. I was like wow that's pretty serious right there. I raise my hand and I'm like am I last? I just want to know where I stand in this whole pecking list. That started a relationship where I became kind of like the senior NCO. The other first sergeants knew I would go to bat

with them.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Well you were that sergeant major's first sergeant?

CSM (R) GRECA: Yeah but he didn't like me. I must relay this story. So there is a young man who is in my company who's wife is pregnant. We have already done the Jessica Lynch mission, we have headed north vehicle interdiction some stuff and we're getting ready to go home. There is a sequence. One battalion is going to leave first, we're going to be second then we'll get on this whole rotation. So there is a young man in my company who's wife is due with their first child.

SGM WATERHOUSE: This was a soldier that was in Iraq at the time?

CSM (R) GRECA: Yes we were in Iraq. The 375 was getting ready to come back to the states. I said hey man can I put this kid on your airplane. I really don't need him, he's like a mechanic. Once he gets to Lawson Army Airfield he can be home for the birth of his child. Well the CSM hears me talking

about this and he says what are you doing. I said sergeant major, I'm just trying to take care of this young man. We're going to be home in a week anyway, I'm just trying to speed up him going back. He says let me tell you something. That's fine, you can do that but as soon as he gets back, he's RFS'd, he's out of the battalion and you can tell that son of a bitch and he's going on this tirade. I want no, sergeant major I'm not going to do that. If you think this is such a big deal this young man will redeploy with us in a week. There is an opportunity here to get him home for the birth of his first child.

SGM WATERHOUSE: It's the first child not his third child.

CSM (R) GRECA: Right, I'm trying to be a caring guy that I knew we would do stuff like that in the rangers. Most organizations don't do that. So that's when he told me, I said no he won't go back then he's going to stay here with me. That's when he told me, get your butt on the next short bus heading up here. And I'm so pissed off, I'm at the airfield

and I'm going through a couple objectives that we have up north. I fly on an agency aircraft. He doesn't expect me. I walked into the toc and Colonel Mike Kershaw was the battalion commander and he sees me and he knows it's about to go down. He's like this isn't going to be good. I'm like sir, where he is at. I just thought the guy, again you learn as much from those Doug Greenway tremendous role model and then there is others that what they teach you is how not to act.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Looking back, I think you had about 15 months with HHC First Ranger Bat?

CSM (R) GRECA: Yes I did. Then I got picked up for sergeant major and attendance to USASMA. If you remember back, this is when we thought it was still going to be a year. We're closing in Iraq and then they make it the six month course. Well, I've already made sergeant major and I've already made the academy list. They put me in as the LNO guy and what I did there was I would go give capabilities briefs to general officers. I would go up to Bragg, I did it

all the time. I did it monthly. They would have guys like us.

I would give a brief and say right here is a ranger and a ranger special operations vehicle. He's equipped with M-240. I had a general go, PVS 7's and I think the guy is questioning me and he's questioning me on the model man. I got my laser pointer and I'm like those are PVS 7's. And the general goes Fred, he's talking about the night vision goggles.

SGM WATERHOUSE: He didn't know what they were?

CSM (R) GRECA: No. I was thinking to myself this dude is a general officer and he has no idea what a PVS 7 is. So I ended up, they took me out of position and moved Tommy Dodson in.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So you went to this position in prep for your move to the academy?

CSM (R) GRECA: Yes. They pulled me out of the first and I became briefer guy. They would send me around I would do brief and stuff. I knew the academy was six months. I had had a baby, by the way, so the

oldest step son and I had a child three years later. And then if you do 16 years and if you do 9/11 February add 9 months of '02 there comes my youngest son. We thought we were incapable. We weren't trying, we just thought and I just knew it was going to be a girl and unfortunately that wasn't the case.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Before we get to your time at the sergeants major academy, looking back at your time in first ranger battalion, what were some of the key lessons learned that you'd like to highlight.

CSM (R) GRECA: I think it is mission command before mission command was defined as a philosophy. I think it is building those cohesive teams built on trust. It is leveraging those folks and the capabilities that you've got. So what I learned was it was no different than me taking a crew up to Ft. Knox to do an AT shoot. It wasn't an officer involved, General Tony Thomas, the current SOCOM commander said Chris can do this. He doesn't need an officer with him. That dude is capable. It was kind of neat to be, it's being reinforced now, this idea of



mission commander and discipline initiative and how do you help commander understand visual eyes.

So I learned all that and I was around great people. But I'm excited to go be a CSM in the big Army. I never really wanted to go back to the Ranger Regiment. I got a phone call one time when I was a battalion CSM saying would you be interested. I said no, if you're going to have the best sergeant major competition, I'm not doing that. I'm way passed that point in my life. If you want to hire me, you can hire me and if not, trust me, I like the big Army.

Why, because all those people, the guy who calls me the C word, the guy who, I had learned more at 21-20 guy. I learned more from these individuals and how not to act and I was just excited about going and having discussions with soldiers. Getting out there and training and just taking care of them. I had a different philosophy and we'll get into this.

There was a sister battalion and my battalion. We were the two infantry battalions internal to a brigade combat team at the time before

they added the third. I took a different approach and strategy. From the time we inherited our privates, we did target discrimination on every live fire we did. So hostile act and hostile intent and. We had some issues at the beginning. As I told my commander, I want to teach these kids to think and that it's alright to think. Yes, mistakes are going to be made but I guarantee you, long term this pays off. It's going to pay off in combat and I think it did. My sister battalion, they were great friends and people but they had some issues. They killed a guy on a live fire, left him down range, shot him in the head. They had multiple live fire incidents which were just standard range understanding MSD's and how to construct.

SGM WATERHOUSE: In December 2003 is when you moved to the Sergeant Majors Academy at Ft. Bliss?

CSM (R) GRECA: Yes.

SGM WATERHOUSE: And you were there until August 2004.

CSM (R) GRECA: Yes.

SGM WATERHOUSE: What did you think of that training? It was six months at that time?

CSM (R) GRECA: Yes. It was closed book tests. I went as a geographic bachelor because my oldest was a senior in high school. So I move down there and I get a roommate and do the six month course. What did I think. I thought it was like me being disappointed in ANOC. I thought I was like me being disappointed in BNOC. The majority of the military schools I had been I had walked away disappointed. I just thought the caliber was going to be difference. Eventually, I'm going to get to the caliber and I'm sitting there at the Sergeants Major Academy listening to sergeants major bitch about doing PT and literally refusing. We would switch days and I had bird dog with me. I had sergeants majors said I'm not doing it.

So I literally hated half my class. I just thought they were terrible role models. I thought they were hypocrites. I used to have this conversation all the time that you're going to punish kids, you're

intentionally sleeping in the east bedroom when you go in to the big auditorium. There were people that would just literally snuggle down and figure out how to make themselves comfortable because they were going to go to sleep right off the bat. I'm sitting there going what happens when your soldiers do that to you. Well, I've heard it before.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Like sleeping on guard duty.

CSM (R) GRECA: Exactly. And these sergeants majors were just hypocrites.

SGM WATERHOUSE: And these were active duty folks too?

CSM (R) GRECA: Yes. I had class 54's, so the current SMA Dan Daly, he's there. That's where I meet Dan at. Bill Johnson, former 5<sup>th</sup> corps and division sergeant major and 1<sup>st</sup> Armored Division. I meet all these people there. They're not in my small groups but they had a CSM course. It's like a week long, you break away and we all sat. It wasn't a large amount that made CSM. While I'm there, the CSM

list comes out and I made it when the majority did not. I was like John VanCleve is more capable than me and he's not making sergeant major and this guy is not making sergeant major or CSM. Then we had dudes that never even became promotable so they went through the course.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So they went back to first sergeant gig?

CSM (R) GRECA: Yes, they did. West, I don't know if you know if, I'm trying to think of his first name. He's at JRTC in Ft. Polk. He was the same way. He became a first sergeant in 3<sup>rd</sup> ID and I think Todd Hidds did the same thing prior to him becoming a leathermen dude. So that's what I learned. I learned academically, did I learn a lot, I don't know. I don't just want to bash it.

What I didn't do and this is the worst decision of my career is I didn't go to college. So they said college or special duty.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Back then I think you had to do one or the other.

CSM (R) GRECA: You did and it was college. So I was thinking in my mind, first of all, I got an associates degree and I'm an infantry dude and you're not trying to make me an officer so I almost in spite, I got the E Army U computer because I wanted the free computer. I had to pay half of it back because I only did two of the mandatory. I went to candle lighters and spent time with kids with cancer. I was geographically separated from my family and they had this great program that gave me the opportunity and it was kind of rewarding to me. It was kind of my point in a stupid way that you can't convince me to go to college.

SGM WATERHOUSE: After graduated, looking back at the course you experienced, as you became a CSM and throughout your career are there certain topics or things you think we should have covered in the course.

CSM (R) GRECA: I think now, the NLC, the Nominative Leader Course, I think what we failed to do because people failed to describe it correctly. The

Army as an institution has people and organizations all over the place. When I left, was I smarter on (inaudible) CAC, the answer was no. I listened to a bunch of people but the intent ought to be, in my opinion, is that when you walk out of there you kind of start understanding. There has got to be a certain point where it is like Dan. So the SMA when you get thrown into that seat, Chandler will tell you he wasn't prepared. He said it took him a year and a half to even remotely kind of start figuring stuff out. That's the end state.

I tell everybody the Army is the great equalizer. You can come in as a private and be sergeant major of the Army. We tell you how to do it. Here's the training, education and experience. I got it, there is only going to be one but if you're the best at what you're doing and you look at the career map, you can be that guy. And by the way, officers, you can be chief of staff of the Army. Because I honestly believe that the U.S. Army is all about what you put into it is what you're going to get out of it,

if that makes sense.

SGM WATERHOUSE: In January 2004 while you were a student there, you were promoted to sergeant major. In August 2004 after graduating, you were assigned to Ft. Polk, Louisiana where you served for two and a half years as the command sergeant major of 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion 30<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment.

CSM (R) GRECA: Yes. So I was blessed in terms of the Army building BCT's. So what happened was, was initially, because you're given a sequence number. They told me hey, you're going to graduate USASMA and you're going to be here about a year before a battalion opens up. But simultaneously they start building third and fourth brigades.

So we started to build all those things. In turn, that opened up all sorts of CSM positions. I got a call and the guy says listen, you can go to Ft. Hood to this Armor unit or you can go to Ft. Polk, Louisiana to be a striker guy. They're forming, they're going to flip two ACR and it's going to stay there at Ft. Polk. I thought okay. And then I wanted



to know what the batch of charts looked like because I wanted to deploy as a CSM. I was like okay, I think I'm going to do this Ft. Polk thing.

So I show up and while I'm traveling they make this announcement that 2 ACR is going to move up to Ft. Lewis, Washington and they're going to start the 4<sup>th</sup> Brigade tenth mountain, a bunch of alternate commanders and me. So I was the only person, John Troxel was my first brigade CSM. So it was Roger Blackwood and Roger leaves and then John jumps in there. I'm up there with Phil Pitch and some ranger dudes and they all op to give us a choice. Hey we told you you were going to be in a striker unit. So if you want to pick up and move to Ft. Lewis, Washington you can do that or you can stay down here at Ft. Polk. I was the only one that chose to stay. I did it because again, the timeline and building this battalion from scratch. At the time, I was fairly naïve thinking the training areas that are available out here, it would be great training. That is not the case. The reality is, is the Rotational Training

Units, the RTU, they've got priority on land and space.

SGM WATERHOUSE: The Joint Reg Training Center?

CSM (R) GRECA: Yes. And there is not enough space. Frankly, I keep hearing about this Ft. Polk expansion. We were talking about my boss, General Yarborough when I became the post CSM. But in my opinion it's a pipe dream.

SGM WATERHOUSE: The battalion wasn't officially assigned to 4<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade Combat until January 2005 so about a year later.

CSM (R) GRECA: We provisionally activated in November 2004. January was the official ceremony where we uncased the brigade colors. John Troxel leaves and John Burns ends up becoming my CSM. I had known him, he was in 375 as a first sergeant. I knew him and then I meet my boss, Colonel Ron Metternick and he is a former enlisted guy who was in the Ranger Regiment in the seventies. So he's an older guy but he's fit, he's a physical freak and he's got the

prettiest hair I've ever seen.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So when you got there, 4<sup>th</sup> Brigade was being formed. Was your battalion called 230<sup>th</sup> Infantry at the time?

CSM (R) GRECA: Yes. Originally, I was the third squadron 2SCR CSM. So I literally stepped into that position. As they went away, a bunch of dudes that I just shifted was the same space I was in in the 230 Infantry. Again, we formed it from scratch knowing that in a year and a half was a deployment timeline.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So when you got there, I don't know how far along they were but how was your initial assessment of what you had and where they needed to go?

CSM (R) GRECA: Oh gosh man. I was blessed in the sense that a couple of E-8's from First Ranger Battalion, Ryan Dillingham and Kirk Johnson, they wanted to come work for me. They were in 175 and they made the 8 list. These guys came and helped me from an NCO perspective. And then the other NCO's I got, Dave Standish and Tony James, these guys were just

absolute rock stars. They got off on the concept right away of this idea of teaching these guys to think but with disciplined initiative and not just this chaos that could ensure. It was this idea that you build the team.

Our NCO, they were enlisted soldier, we looked like a cohort unit. The old cohorts that they used to send out to 7<sup>th</sup> ID, we would have 20 or 30 enlisted folks to one NCO. So initially it was chaos. That was my first exposure to drug use really because I had been shielded at the 175 or the JSA or whatever. Even when I was in the 82<sup>nd</sup>, we didn't have people pissing hot, it was so rare. Now I'm getting into the drug use and the chapters for a multitude of issues. It is literally chaos but I liked it. It was one of those things I was like okay we can do this. Were there frustrating moments, yes.

We did a live fire one time and I think we lost 30 or 40 dudes to heat casualties. Me and the battalion commander and the first sergeant of the company commanders, we had the same body armor on and

everything. We had 30 guys. We had to do a mass cal because they were so unfit that it was like wow.

SGM WATERHOUSE: You knew one of your initiatives was we've got to get the guys in shape.

CSM (R) GRECA: It was fitness and it was the big four. You talk about PT and you talk about marksmanship and you talk about first aid and battle drills and everyone may change the fourth one. But the PT, marksmanship and the first aid, that is kind of standard. I was convinced that if you can people meant from a movement perspective, if you move right you can maneuver folks. It was this idea of just building young leaders. I think eventually it paid off. We had a team leader course then it became the leader course. We did a lot of LPDs and not a lot of NCO's or OPD's. It was consolidating the unit and that we learn and grow together.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Did you have any vehicles or was it a straight --

CSM (R) GRECA: Yeah we had a couple of Humvees.

SGM WATERHOUSE: But you didn't have to train in any mounted stuff?

CSM (R) GRECA: They started figuring out we were going to be motorized. 9<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division was the only one that was ride and we deactivated the motorized unit. We have been motorized for the last 17 years. Whether it's a MRAP or a Humvee. I once had a conversation with the Chief of Staff and I said, you know sir, we really, I keep these things. He said, I can't afford the people. You've got to have people and mechanics and from a facility perspective do you have motor pool space. It came down to all these things that honestly I had never thought about before. I'm like wow that's clearly why you're the Chief of Staff of the Army. That was General Odierno. Now we're starting to be informed by deployments but I would caution people all the time, our last deployment is not our next deployment. So when I deployed to Iraq it was just a different experience.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Katrina happened in August 2005. Did that have any effect on your unit?

CSM (R) GRECA: Yes. We put the BSB. Me personally as the 230 guy. We went to Deritter and did some cleanup and took some chainsaws out there. We tried to be good partners with the community. We went out and cut up some trees and helped people get past that. The effects, not really. You knew they were there as FEMA came and --

SGM WATERHOUSE: But none of your guys got called down to New Orleans or anything like that?

CSM (R) GRECA: No, the 82<sup>nd</sup> was down there. Again, our BSB was down there.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Brigade Support Battalion.

CSM (R) GRECA: Yeah.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So as the 230 Infantry Command Sergeant Major, I know you mentioned the personnel, the young soldiers. Are there any other challenges overall in that assignment?

CSM (R) GRECA: No, no different than any other thing. I started having, I lost a lot of people in peace time. Nothing like negligent discharges but I had a rash of suicides and then I had a company

commander crash his motorcycle. He died and they life lined him and he had a blockage in his carotid artery that he went brain dead. And then I lost three kids going on.

The commanding general, you know, everybody has the best of intentions as you try to mitigate risks that is out there. So General Bolger says, hey listen you're going on block leave but it doesn't technically start until tomorrow. You can start the sign out process at 0600. What he's thinking is everybody is going to go nighty night and they're not going to go to the strip clubs down town which is ridiculous. The only now that you get at 6 o'clock at the morning is a bunch of hungover and/or still drunk soldiers.

Best of intention but it was not raining the night before. That night it started and I was in New Orleans and I got a phone call that Hockman, Raez and I had three soldiers that were in a car that hydroplaned off the side of the road and it killed all three of them. I had to turn around, I was in New



Orleans and I'm like man. One kid was going to meet his fiancé.

So I was just having a rash of bad luck and incidents. My boss was really worried but we did the best of our ability. We're mitigating risks and we're putting things in place.

SGM WATERHOUSE: There is always risk.

CSM (R) GRECA: And that's my point. If they would have left the night before it wouldn't have been raining. So GO guy, you've got the best of intentions. Sometimes we do things in the Army and I'm just like why do we do that. Like why do you have to wear a helmet every time you get into a tactical vehicle. If a helmet kept you alive, it would be required in a POV. So let's issue helmets to everybody and ride around. What they don't tell you is the weight on top of your head will break your neck. I got it we're trying to keep people alive. I lost seven young men in one year. One was playing Russian Roulette and another guy hung himself in his closet in his room. We didn't figure it out until we went to

inventory his stuff two days later. This guy had been dead, puked all over himself. He had scratch marks and you could tell he tried to take it off.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Change his mind.

CSM (R) GRECA: Yeah. During this assignment, our deployment is cancelled. So they come out and they say okay, 410 you're not deploying anymore. Well then they came back and say yes you are, the brigade headquarters will deploy as the NSC, National Command Organization. One battalion will go to Afghanistan and it was 204 Joe Montor and team. Listen, I high fived. My boss was so upset and I'm like sir, we'll get there. My buddy Joe Montor I really said what can I do for you. Do you need people, in other words --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Was it an like unit?

CSM (R) GRECA: Yeah it was an infantry battalion. I don't know why they got picked. Again, they were shooting people out at ranges and frankly Joe was a great guy. If somebody shoots at a hot wall you're pretty much an idiot. I was a team player so I

was like okay and then we just ended up being JRTC support.

During this time, I get a phone call. I'm out on a range and it is this guy, Jeff Bannister. General Bannister, at the time Colonel Bannister says hey, I was talking with Randy Inman. Randy Inman said you are the guy to hire. (Inaudible) and he was up at Ft. Carson. I was like, because he's literally getting ready to go out the door. My battalion's deployment has been canceled and I'm like, so I send John Burns an email. I said hey man, I'm getting offered brigade, it's been a couple of years, and they're going to deploy to East Baghdad.

I think this is going to happen. Ralph Borha actually sends me a handwritten email that says, Ranger mountain buddy, can't wait to see you, you'll do great things. And then the next thing you know, General Frakely called me a quitter. He said I was disloyal and literally --

SGM WATERHOUSE: (Inaudible).

CSM (R) GRECA: Yeah I called him dark

helmet, he had a big head. At night you would look at him and he was like Space Balls. He had that head.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Extra-large?

CSM (R) GRECA: Yes. The next thing I know how can I -- are you kidding me. The infantry school guys said it was some drug deal between me, it was the Ranger Regiment thing. I was like listen --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Like you underhanded your way to it.

CSM (R) GRECA: Yeah. I was like I don't even know what this Bannister guy looks like. If he was standing in a lineup and they said pick Jeff Bannister, I didn't know him. I said how am I a quitter when he is getting on an airplane in less than 30 days and he needs a CSM. So Bill Johnson ended up getting the position and me and Bill have been friends ever since.

Interestingly, he deploys with Jeff Bannister and a year later, we replace them in Baghdad. So Bill Johnson is coming out of Baghdad, I'm going into FAB loyalty and there is Jeff

Bannister. Bill Johnson says to me, dude you have no idea how blessed you are not to work for that dude. He's like man, you have no idea. You could feel it and sense it in the headquarters.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Was it negativity?

CSM (R) GRECA: Yes and this could have been bad. So I ended up back filling Bill Johnson. The NCS comes back and (inaudible) changes the command for all the battalion commanders. If a CSM wants to leave it will be by choice. And then they open up 410, General Frakely wants to do this process. The whole time they're saying, Greca, Greca. I'm like what are we doing here man now that I'm the disloyal guy. But I eventually get the job so that's in September. John Burns messed around with the process and I wasn't official for like four months.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So before we move on to when you took over 4<sup>th</sup> Brigade, looking back at your two and a half years or so as the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion 30 Infantry Command Sergeant Major what were some of your lessons learned from that?

CSM (R) GRECA: Again, it starts getting into the discipline initiative kind of phase and developing these young men and women. In certain cases, our BSB or our (inaudible) that we had, Fox Company, they were doing tremendous stuff. I already knew at this time, the battlefields in Iraq and Afghanistan weren't linear, straight line. You put this here and hospitals here and this support elements. So it's a 360 degree fight.

So men and women, every time they're moving need to be prepared for the unpredictable. I had a sister company who shot and killed this doctor in Afghanistan. Why because he was on the road. Well I drive on roads, I think that's where you're supposed to drive was on the road. This company got so nervous, this forward support company, that they shot the doctor right between the eyes.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Was he approaching like a fab or something?

CSM (R) GRECA: No he was approaching a convoy that had pulled over. It was in those days

where you these stupid signs and I always thought it was ridiculous that said stay 50 to 100 m away. That's assuming they can read. We shot this 75 year old Afghan one night because he was approaching. The rationale thinking was hey was we use escalation of force and went through the process, he walked right by this sign. Dude couldn't read. So it is kind of thinking outside the box.

So I like this bike giveaway thing overseas Almost every day, I would go out and look at the tactical infrastructure, cops and JSS's and certainly the two big fabs. But it was interacting with the Iraqi population. My big picture of all time that I have of myself is me holding an Iraqi baby. It's literally my favorite. The mother said here, take him. I've got this picture where we're downtown Baghdad and to see that, my cultural advisor, my interpreter.

So when I redeployed I had this guy Jacob and he was phenomenal, a great Muslim guy. So he comes to my house at Ft. Polk on Christmas and helps me hang Christmas lights and spends Christmas with me.

Here you have this tolerant Muslim guy and you've got a tolerant Christian guy who's really not a good Christian. That's powerful.

So my lessons learned were to get these kids to think. I went to drastic measures in PPE and making sure that our young men and women didn't lose body parts. There was a guy that was blinded from underneath the dam from 375 and he is never going to get his eyeballs back. If he would have had on his ballistic eye protection he would have. So it is doing that and it is preventing these events from happening. We learned from all our deaths. I could take you down the line on how people died.

In one case, it was literally the guy getting the platoon sergeant leading this convoy who failed to turn on his countermeasures. So not only did he kill himself and the EFP killed him but it took the legs of the gunner. So people now as a result, you can say green up and up or whatever your code sign is. If you're not actually doing it the results are devastating. So that was the big one and then just



trusting in these young men and providing guidance. Not to be the wise old guy but LG when he says men accept responsibility and kids deflect blame it's the same thing.

I never was that dude who became a sergeant major and all of the sudden I'm King Shit of Turd Mountain and writing NCO yards. Every sergeant major thinks he's the right guy and mine were like do you want to look at this NCO yard? I'm like yeah but I'm not going to write it you can you're smart. So it was trusting my first sergeants. And then as a battalion guy, I had a tremendous relationship with the company commanders. It was like almost every day they would be floating in our area and one of them would say he can I steal five or ten minutes of your time. We would have a conversation and it was cool. I think I've always had the ability to get along with the officers.

SGM WATERHOUSE: In February 2007, I think, is when you took over 4<sup>th</sup> Brigade 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain?

CSM (R) GRECA: Yes.

SGM WATERHOUSE: You held that position for a couple of years.

CSM (R) GRECA: Yes.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So when you got there, we all as sergeants major, first sergeants, you assess the unit you have.

CSM (R) GRECA: Yes.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So after you made your initial assessment what were some of the things you sought out to improve right away?

CSM (R) GRECA: This was unique because the sergeant majors were not offered what the commanders were. So they shifted out all the battalion commanders but they don't change the CSM's. I'm the only dude, John Burns is allowed to leave. I fleet up to the brigade so now it's my buddies. These are dudes I was working with as a sister battalion guy and I tried very, very hard to not change that relationship. I listened to them all. I went to a JRTC rotation. Sergeant Major of the Army, Retired, Bill Gates, did an assessment on me. It was a 360 and brought it to

the CTC rotations. He comes back and he says the sergeant majors you work with, they love you. He said I've been doing this a long time and the way of teamwork, really listening to them and valuing their opinion. I said to Gates that's because I'm lying to them. I'm playing them. They're all different. Joe Montour, if I say left he's going to say right. The BEB was one of the dumbest dudes I've ever worked with.

SGM WATERHOUSE: How many battalions did you have in 4<sup>th</sup> Brigade?

CSM (R) GRECA: Six but we picked up two others when we were deployed. That's probably, I already knew this but to not judge an organization by its patch. So I got attached units, one was from 4<sup>th</sup> ID, I got one from 2 ID 69 Armored, Greg Praff, I got Eddie Mitchell who is currently going up to IMT. He's with General McKeen.

I learned, I formerly thought because I had a battalion from the 82<sup>nd</sup> too. They sucked. They were horrible. They were undisciplined. The stuff they

were doing, saying and the way they behaved, it was just absolutely silly whereas 3<sup>rd</sup> Brigade 3<sup>rd</sup> ID were superstars. 4<sup>th</sup> Brigade 1<sup>st</sup> ID and then I had Colonel Caslarage. As a matter of fact the movie, Thank You for Your Service, I recommend that everybody sees this movie. But if follows these three veterans and they were Colonel Caslarage's guys that were stationed at (inaudible). It kind of follows them and their journey and dealing with the VA and the rest of that stuff. That was another big lesson and again, judge them for what they're worth. I had tremendous relationships with the commander.

So when I became the brigade guy, now all of the sudden I don't have captains in my office anymore I have lieutenant colonels. Because now they are the battalion commanders and they want to, hey sergeant major can I steal your time, what does your boss think. I'm like I don't know what he's thinking.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So as a brigade sergeant major you said you knew all the battalion guys.

CSM (R) GRECA: That's right.

SGM WATERHOUSE: In that position now as a brigade sergeant major, who did you look to, who was your right hand guy?

CSM (R) GRECA: There were two. Us three, Colonel Dan Beady, tremendous guy. Mark Hollis who was the brigade XO. So there was these officer dudes and probably the guy I was closest with is Don Hill. Don Hill has taken the second SFAB at Ft. Bragg. He was really the guy that kept the organization going. My boss was terrified of what the general thought. I thought he was going to kill himself when we were deployed. I don't say this to be funny but every night in my office and I would wait for the gun shot. That's called pressure and he can't deal with it. I had one of those bosses that couldn't articulate what he was thinking and he couldn't describe and he constantly led you into this point of trying to guess what he is thinking. He thought he was perfect. We had an IRAM attack --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Let me back up for the guys reading this. So this was November 2007 when you

deployed.

CSM (R) GRECA: Yes, 455 days.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Not long after you took over.

CSM (R) GRECA: I took over after a year. It has been a year but it's the same team. Joe Montour, my other sister battalion, I'm going to lose them. I'm going to drop them at FAB Falcon on the other side the river. I, in turn, am going to pick up a couple. I don't know what they were doing. I would think maybe it was vehicular platform striker but it didn't end up being that. It ended up being, I really couldn't understand. And then we would put them in terrain that wasn't maximizing the capabilities of the organization.

I was in Afghanistan where I had a striker, a light brigade, a heavy brigade and where they were task organized and working made no sense. We were leveraging, it was just the patch chart and whoever fell on what, hey you're going to backfill these guys. Yeah but I've got a bunch of strikers and you can't

move around that terrain that way. Those pressure played IEDs were not to be messed with.

So yeah, 455 days is what the deployment order read when we deployed. And by the way, I do need to bring this up. So I'm broke, by the way. At this time in my life I've got back issues. I've got a multitude of issues but I'm strong arming my way because I'm the battalion CSM guy or brigade. During that deployment I was really having issues with sleep. So there comes the Ambien and now they're trying to medicate me. It was actually my brigade surgeon. I started to have some problems physically. I could mask it because I looked good enough. I wasn't fat at the time.

SGM WATERHOUSE: I would just like to highlight something now. From the brigades current website about what your brigade did over there and this is a quote from the website. "Operated from two forward operating bases and 22 joint security stations and combat outpost. Task Force Patriot assumed responsibility for Eastern Baghdad, a heavily

urbanized area encompassing 80 square miles and more than 2 million citizens.

The brigade's mission in Baghdad was partnering with Iraqi security forces to defeat Al-Qaeda insurgents and Shiite extremists, enabling the Iraqi's to take the lead for securing the population. Supported growth of local governments and promoting essential services in economic development to protect the population while setting conditions for a transition to government of Iraq, civil control. The last major uprising of a Shiite extremist within Iraq occurred between March and May in 2008 in Baghdad an Bashara.

The Patriot Brigade, your brigade, played a significant role isolating Sauder City and defeating extremists elements intent to disrupt the expansion of government Iraq's capability and stability. Fortunately the uprising was short lived and the brigade was able to shift its focus from conducting combat operations to rebuilding and facilitating a return to normalcy.



Specifically, during the course of the deployment, the Iraqi's opened 28 new schools, 19 micro powered generator stations and 5 swimming pools. More than 2000 Iraqi families returned to the area and registered with the government of Iraq as well. Patriot soldiers found and cleared more than 160 caches of deadly weapons, made more than 270 arrests and attained approximately 650 suspected criminals. The brigade started with more than 1300 Sons of Iraq at the beginning of the deployment and transitioned more than 400 people into the Iraqi police. Also more than 300 started Iraqi police training in December 2008 and January 2009.

However, the Patriot Brigade's greatest achievement was reducing violence in Eastern Baghdad and providing a brighter future for the Iraqi people. The reduction of violence enabled Iraqi's to open schools, provide increased electricity to thousands of citizens and allow businesses to flourish and grow. Evidence of such progress included tremendous increases of people attending public gatherings at

parks and pools, bike races at Jude Barrea waterpark, traffic jams, business openings, new cars, solar lights, public displays of posters and banners for upcoming elections and renovations of symbolic Baghdad icons.

These are just a few of the signs of the effectiveness of the combined efforts between the Patriot Brigade and the Iraqi Security Forces. Ultimately, 90 percent of the Brigade's operations included Iraqi Security Forces. Every day, ISF conducted more and more independent warrant based operations indicating reduced dependence on coalition forces in accordance with newly adopted bilateral security agreement."

So this website describes a lot of your brigades accomplishments during that deployment. What would you like to highlight or add to that?

CSM (R) GRECA: It's the diversity of commanders and their staffs to get out there. When you talk about power and you talk about water and you talk about sewers and all the essentials, what I didn't

quite understand prior to this deployment was the civic things that the commanders and the organizations were going to do. Like all those things that you just mentioned, vo-tech, trying to figure out what type of schools to establish so that there is long term potential for those military age males to not pick up guns but instead, do other things.

I was just amazed. Now all the battalions, their areas were totally different. So (inaudible) Baghdad was rolled up to the SEJ along Souder City. It was different. So my cav squadron, they lost a couple of people. It was IEDs and they were running the roads. 230, my old battalion under Steve Womack had a hell of a fight. So the cigarette factory, they're fighting every day. I think they were hit by 580 plus EFP's during the course of their year. So every day it's like, and then that March uprising with Jay Salmoddy Jam, the Shiite militias. We went one day, like market is opening. We had heard that Souder was doing these things. The next day there was nobody on the road. I had never seen stuff like that and the

kids were playing soccer in the middle of route oilers and I'm thinking to myself, I don't think this is going to be good. I think this is not going to be good. So they did tremendous work. But was it sustainable and that continues to be the looming question. Ultimately, their governments whether it is GOI, the Government of Iraq or the Government of Afghanistan, they need to make a decision. It's really a political decision. I got security forces and everything else, hey do you want this bad enough.

So that was just an absolutely interesting deployment. I was challenged in that me and my commander did not see eye to eye. So I was having a very, very hard time understanding what his intent and his priorities were. He would talk occasionally and I would hear him whispering about me. If I approached him he would say nothing was going on. Kind of the culminating event, we got hit by an IRAM, we got three killed, 22 wounded and it's on YouTube. It's quite the event. They have a video of it with music. But we lose three kids, 22 get wounded and it's just, man the

damage that it caused on FOB loyalty was wow.

They were violent man, the over pressure. The windows, I was just getting ready to roll. My battle rhythm was fairly consistent that I would do emails in the morning and then I would roll about 1300. I would say gone until 18, 19, 2000. So it was fairly consistent in terms of what I was doing. That IRAM, my dudes were outside and they went into my room. They kicked the door open because I lived in this fire station. The boss says meeting, I want a meeting. It's like we're trying to assess. Steve Womack is just -- and he actually pulled the kid off who was impaled on a frame of a vehicle and it was just an ugly situation.

So my boss, we get into his office and he loved his Coke products. He says okay, Sergeant Major what's the count. I said three dead and 23 wounded. He says to me okay, where are the dead from. I said two are organic, they're out RBSB and the other one was a divisional route clearance guy. My boss says well, what unit. I said I don't know, I didn't

interrogate the platoon sergeants, the kid died so I really couldn't tell you. And then it just escalated to the pure ugliness in the office. Heads dropped, nobody was putting their heads up and it was me just saying I'm walking out of this stupid meeting. You blame people for your inability to describe and direct. Now you want to walk in there and you've got the balls to go hey, I blame you guys. It's like I was having none of it. So he ended the meeting quickly and I thought I was going to be fired.

Dan Daly was north of me and me and Dan used to talk every day. I called him and said do you need an ops sergeant major because I think I'm going to get fired out of this brigade.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Which unit was he in at the time?

CSM (R) GRECA: He was 3 4, 3<sup>rd</sup> Brigade 4<sup>th</sup> ID. But it was like, Don Hill said it best. He was the DCO. As we're walking out of the office I was like, oh crap. Once I was in the breach there was no, you can't turn around once you're in the breach and I

was in the breach. I was like hey since I'm here I might as well just let it loose. So I literally, it was a tirade.

SGM WATERHOUSE: And this was most of the division staff?

CSM (R) GRECA: It's the brigade. It's all the principle guys. It's the 4, it's the 3, it's the XO. My forward was like oh my word. Honestly, everybody would come to my office every night and complain about this guy. I would get battalion commanders and others. So we were all having a challenging time. This guy was not a bad commander but in my personal opinion is he needed to quit worrying about what General Hammond -- General Hammond was a bully. He loved bullying people.

SGM WATERHOUSE: This was the division commander?

CSM (R) GRECA: Yes. He was the worst. This is the same guy that told me at a memorial ceremony, your sergeants are up there crying like sissies. He said soldiers once you strike them

telling you not.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So this is not the guy who you would go to talk to to help with your commander then.

CSM (R) GRECA: No but my boss was the whipping boy for the bully. So I'd go the Division Commanders conferences in Baghdad and I would sit there and I would watch this all transpire and I'm like dude, if you don't speak up and stand up for yourself and stand up for the organization who is doing great stuff, all that stuff you read. He's the worst. He was the worst officer. As a matter of fact in my book, we're writing about him. General Hammond. He went to Southern Miss and was the quarterback under Brett Favre. Brett Favre was clearly better. But General Hammond, everything was about football and he was a field artillery guy. The problem with field artillery officers are is they are 0 to 1 mill. So they are very precise and this guy thought he was Patton. He would run around and berate people. He destroyed battalion commanders that never made O6 that



were tremendous.

Part of our responsibilities are to stand up for your organization. If they don't have an accurate picture painted, that's our responsibility. Colonel Dohurst, he called me in and say hey how do you rank the battalion commanders. I said here's my list. He said, oh spot on. Well, he failed to do that with OER's and battalion commanders. One guy who was an interpreter was wearing a mask because his family lived in the local community. He didn't want this dude to die. Well General Hammond put out this directive that interpreters need to quit wearing masks. They need to stand up. It's like dude it's about their family. It has nothing to do with these guys being scared.

So one day, he tells his division sergeant major -- route Pluto ran right right through Baghdad. We had a rash of IEDS on route Pluto. So John Joya, the division sergeant major, great guy, engineer. John calls me on the phone and says, hey dude, what are you doing today. I was like I was going to go out

a couple of cops JSS's and getting these and rotate around. He says, the boss is not happy with all the IEDs on route Pluto. So he wants me and you to drive up and down route Pluto to figure out the problem. I'm like really. He said so the answer is my heightened situation awareness I'll just be able to see the EFP before it blasts through our door. I was like this is the stupidest.

So John Joya comes out to Fab Rustamya, we ate some chow and then we got on route Pluto and drove north and we turned around and we got to Dan Daly's area and we drove south. Then we went north again. By the way, the route clearance, we got behind route clearance. I know not smart but clearly they were targeting the route clearance vehicles. Because we didn't get boomed but the route clearance guys oh they got messed up.

Interesting assignment and interesting deployment. It ended up being about 14 months when it was all said and done. In the midst of this, I know this is the old school system where people put in

their names for job and JRTC in Ft. Polk comes up and nobody puts their name in it. By the way, I think I'm going to go back and do Bob Gallagher's job. So what I thought was, when I was deploying to Iraq, I wanted to be the ops group guy. So I wanted to go out there and train BCT's, I didn't want to be the post sergeant major guy. So Jim Redmore contacts me, he is the division leader. He says Chris, put your name in. I was like I really don't want to do that. He goes just shut up, get packed together and put your name in. I'm like okay. So I do this and then Marvin Hill goes off. Because apparently I somehow again backdoored the system. So Marvin Hill called me on the phone and says why do you think I should support this when you didn't even use the correct chain of command. I go, sergeant major, then don't send it in. I don't care.

SGM WATERHOUSE: What was his position at the time?

CSM (R) GRECA: He was the MNFI guy at the time. He was Patruse's guy. I don't need that job. And oh, by the way, I just did exactly what my

sergeant majors told me to do. I'm a brigade guy. I gave it to the division guy. The division guy, I think, is going to send it. Because Jim Redmore didn't hand it to the corps guy who didn't hand it to this guy and they got all out of shape. I'm like dude, I don't care.

So during that deployment, finally he goes yeah we'll let you. Me and Scott Schroder were the only two on the list. I was already at Ft. Polk so I think I got picked just basically because I was there.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So before we get into that, looking back at your time as the 4<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade Sergeant Major of 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain Division, what are some of the things you'd like to highlight?

CSM (R) GRECA: I said this earlier. There is the popular decisions and then, in my opinion, there is the right thing to do. During my deployment, I had my BSB sergeant major get suspended. She, Ophelia Wagg, was accused of taking bribes and some stuff that was going on at Fab Rustamya. Dealt with monies on contracts and some other things. So CID

swoops in, they take her out of position. Her two first sergeants, anyway so they do this. I asked John Joya, hey can we stick Ophelia at Victory Base. Honestly, she doesn't need to be around her soldiers every day. Everybody knows she's suspended. In the Army, it's guilty until proven innocent. So everybody was like oh she's guilty and I'm like no she's not.

So General Hammond, back to my favorite General officer ever. So Ophelia goes up there, John Joya says yeah I'll take her. General Hammond sees her walking around and goes, Sergeant Major what is that and John says well that's a suspended sergeant major until the investigation if they do a court martial or however they decide to do this. He says, and I quote, "I'm not taking anybody else's trash. You put back on an aircraft and you get her ass back out to Loyalty or Rustamya." I was like wow. So she came, I gave her a room. She barely left to eat because she was so embarrassed she would only go to midnight chow.

Now, the two first sergeants were guilty. People and what they failed to recognize was is they

go well sergeant major is sticking up because she's a sergeant major and it's a sergeant major thing. No I'm not, I'm not that dumb. What I'm going to tell you is what she's been accused of is complete and utter bull crap. As a matter of fact, if you court martial her, you need to court martial the battalion XO who had visibility on all this stuff that was going on. The first sergeants had a female company commander who had visibility and they were all stealing money from barbers and all sorts of other things. Ophelia didn't she didn't have any of this.

One day I get told, hey man, you need to quit hanging out with her. I'm like what. He goes man, I just got a call that you see her all the time and she comes up to your office. I go, I'm not going to cut out on my friendship. I said first of all, she's a friend. Does she need to get a letter of reprimand and get thrown out of the Army, probably. She made a poor decision that frankly at the sergeant major level you shouldn't do this. But I'm not going to not be friends with her and coach and counsel her

because frankly it think it's crap. My lawyer says, how do you think it's bull crap are you privy to more information? I said no, you're telling me, you're the brigade lawyer. I sit in the meetings with the brigade commander and I know everything that's going on. By the way, it's complete bull crap.

So we redeploy and we're getting ready to redeploy and I have been picked up to be the JRTC in Ft. Polk sergeant major while I'm there but I've still got like four months left. General Yarborough says hey man we'll just bridge. Kevin Sharkey will take the position.

SGM WATERHOUSE: He was garrison, I think?

CSM (R) GRECA: Yes, he was garrison so he's running. So I fly back, I redeploy with the brigade commander and I am not kidding you, two days after my redeployment they said, you've got to get back on an airplane and go back over to Iraq. I'm like what? I said VTC I mean we've got technology, we've got capabilities now. I said are you joking and they were like no. You are required, you are a witness for both

the defense and the prosecution.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Like a subpoena basically.

CSM (R) GRECA: Yes. So I had to fly into Kuwait City commercial and then figure out what aircraft were going out to Byad. Once I got out to Byad then I had to figure rotary wing asset to fly me to Rustamya. I land at Rustamya and here goes the CRAM going off. There are mortar rounds clinking, their burst radius are clearly not right because they're close and we're not getting any shrapnel. I'm thinking to myself I'm going to die. Oh and the best part is, when I get back and I get off and I see Ophelia and John Joya was there and I think Dan Daly was there because they are the sergeant major board. They're like, they don't need you anymore. I'm like what? They're like they don't need you anymore. The prosecution doesn't want you to speak for the defense and part of the deal was, I'm like this is crap. Because she settled for a plea, she pled out to some misdemeanor charges which still to this day man. Listen, I know the whole story and frankly the way she



treated her, I'm surprised she didn't kill herself.

So that's one of those proud moments that I have where I'm proud that I didn't cave to the pressure because everybody else caved. There wasn't a sergeant major that was going to talk to her, there wasn't a colonel and I was the only one that would say you're always invited into my office.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So you got back and I'm not sure February 2009 you took over as the headquarters JRTC Command Sergeant Major?

CSM (R) GRECA: Yes.

SGM WATERHOUSE: And you did that job for 16 months or so?

CSM (R) GRECA: Yes and I loved it because it is training brigades. So it's like ops group but it is really on steroids. At the time, I had combat Bob Gallagher who was the guy who was a little skittish and he's got gazoo on his shoulder speaking to him every day. I'm like the opportunity to get out there in the box and do that stuff. Now I don't think, like I would talk about TST missions and stuff like

that or whatever it was. Whatever the type of of rotation was in the task organization. I would get some really flaky looks from Colonel Lear and General Yarborough. He's an old school guy.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So Colonel Lear was the commander officer?

CSM (R) GRECA: Yes Colonel Lear was the COG and General Yarborough was the commander. And General Yarborough is married to Peg Bundy and she's exactly like Peg Bundy. So it was a great assignment in terms of giving back and preparing individuals and organizations for upcoming deployments and trying to keep people alive. I have a great vignette that I use sometimes. General Casey, the chief at the time, he's got a son and his son is in the Vermont National Guard and they're getting ready to deploy. So somehow we sneak young Casey out of the box and he goes and eats a steak dinner with dad. The next day, we bring him back.

The next day we're driving out to the box and General Casey said Jim I've got an issue man, I've

got something I've got to bring up with you. He said, my son has been here 20 days and he's only trained for three of them. So in 17 days, my son has done nothing productive out here. My boss is like okay I'll figure this out, this isn't right.

SGM WATERHOUSE: What was his son doing?

CSM (R) GRECA: He was a sergeant training for a deployment.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM (R) GRECA: General Casey said Sergeant Major, you look like you've got something to say. I said I do, sir. What is your son doing in order to train his squad? There is a thing called opportunity and training and there is all these different methods that frankly us sitting around and a sergeant, because what I am going to ask him is, what is your proficiency on these individual tasks, crew drills, battle drills and all that stuff. I think your son has wasted his time.

And then I used a vignette when I was deployed in 2002. So I get this knock on the door,

and Harold Hanson, my sergeant major was there and he goes it sounds like a mine. I said no that sounded like an AG round. He said no it's a mine. Then we get this panicky knock on the door. It's like what do you need. It was a platoon sergeant from CECO and he said we just had a negligent discharge with a 203 round. So we go down to the palate yard and it is dark. We're trying through this young private gunner, the team leader was out there giving fire commands. He was out there, I'm not proficient enough so I'm going to do some opportunity for some training. He blew up the Coke pallet at the PX. So I was kind of disappointed because I like Coke. I'm like are you serious.

But I used that vignette with General Casey. I said, the difference is your son is sitting here in garrison and frankly he's probably not doing what a sergeant should be doing. General Casey thought for a second and he goes, you're exactly right, Sergeant Major. I was like I'll deal, so I got off there as they're all sucking up to General Casey the brigade

commander and the battalion commanders. I went and I saw Casey just sitting there, he's off on the side and I'm like there he is. Come here brother, and I wasn't mean. I had a teachable moment where you're sitting down there and what do you think you could have done better. Have you been outside practicing fire commands. That's what this ranger team leader did in combat. One round HE 200 meters, enemy target fire when ready. He thought it was a dummy round or just a cartridge not knowing it was live.

SGM WATERHOUSE: But they were trained.

CSM (R) GRECA: Yes, they were trained. And that's where I think training management, we've outsourced over the last 15 years in an understanding a UTM, Unit Training Management, understanding of the Army training network and how that system works in order to create proficiency.

SGM WATERHOUSE: The next question is for those folks that read this that are sergeants majors already and when they make it in the future. How challenging was it for you to move from now a brigade

level command sergeant major now to a nonmotive one star level.

CSM (R) GRECA: Not hard, it really wasn't. But again, it kind of goes back to the story of working people and understanding everybody is different. Understanding that the first maneuver enhancement brigade CSM was not Steve Womack. I think people, too many times, think that they're responsibility is just to protect the organization. Wrap my arms around them, hey don't mess with my guys. Every time they ask for a detail or whatever, they need some help, they want to fight you on everything.

I think the biggest thing to sergeants major out there is listen, build a team. I used to think officers were crazy with first name stuff. I thought it was so gay even when I went to the sergeants major academy. They're like hey write your first name out. I'm like I'm Sergeant Major Greca, I don't get into this first name. I will tell you years later, I'm wrong. My first sergeants, I would call them by their first name. They didn't call me Chris. They would

show the respect but I would be like, hey Ryan, hey Kurt, hey Tony. There is something to be said about that.

Another thing is just listening to people. As dumb as the idea is just listen to them and show an interest. You know what that's a great point, Mike. Let's think about that for a little while and we'll come back to this so that sergeant majors don't forget who you are.

I remember watching my battalion CSM get treated like crap from a brigade CSM and I'm thinking to myself, they're both E-9's. I got it that your boss outranks my boss. I got all that, my boss outranks your boss. We don't need to operate like that. By the time you're a senior, really a platoon sergeant and above, senior NCO and I'm not telling you to be BFF like the Navy does with their chiefs and all the rest of that crap that they do. On the same token, and show people that you care about their opinions.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So as you know and folks who haven't been there may not know but JRTC in Ft.

Polk is a little bit different than most installations. You don't have light brigades necessarily on an installation. On that installation unit and you also have the training center.

CSM (R) GRECA: Yes. JRTC in Ft. Polk is both. My boss was the senior commander. So from an installation perspective, the predecessors, Bulger and Barbarro when they were commanders there they operated completely different than Jim Yarborough did because he had his hands in everything. Before, the garrison commander was empowered to do a lot of the leadsville and the Deritter and the local social events. General Yarborough was not into that. It was a cool assignment.

I would argue that that is the best one star job in the Army because your boss is the senior commander. Even on other installations, you have have two or three stars at like Ft. Hood. Whereas even the division level guys, they're not empowered with senior commander responsibilities. So I learned a lot from that job. Then I started learning about the civilians



in the process. General Retired Doug McCafferty came in and told my boss, he said Jim, be careful around these civilians. My boss was just trying to do the right thing and that was make them work and make them work in accordance with the priorities. When that happens, they start paying attention. It is not hard.

SGM WATERHOUSE: You're talking about the civilians on the installation?

CSM (R) GRECA: Yes. I started figuring out about unions, all sorts of stuff that I did not know existed. Working with DES, certainly APHES and other things. And we had first maneuver enhancement brigade besides 410 that was training up and then you always had an RTU. We were the number one economic contributors to the state of Louisiana. So post Katrina and Rita we overtook the Port of New Orleans for economic impact. It was the OCO funds that were being driven in from MILCON and other facilities. So the argument always with Governor Jindal and others was hey man look what Ft. Polk is doing for the local communities.

So I heard the chief and he was talking about Brack and what units and this is when we were going to 420 or 430 or whatever our end strength was going to be and what BCT's are leaving the Army. The chief said, well here's the recommendations. I just chuckled because some of them, I don't care what the chief wants, he isn't going to get away with it. Because there are civic leaders and local leaders that are going to talk about the economic impact that it is going to have on the local community. Think about those guys that build houses and they built housing on post and they renovate in thinking that 30 percent, the model is 30 percent lives on post, 70 percent is in the local community. Well, that's 70 percent has builders thinking we're going to get 70 percent. When that starts to not happen, you start having big issues. It was an interesting assignment.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Any particular challenges in that assignment being your first (inaudible) job?

CSM (R) GRECA: I think it was the boss a little bit. Again, it is all training, education and

experience which defines us all and sets expectations and the whole nine yards. I think General Yarborough could have leveraged me more. I think I could have been better assistance other than Veterans Day ceremony and I got it, it's all important and all these other things. Frankly, the G3 shop up in the headquarters or whoever is going to run it, I just feel that he could have used me a little bit different.

SGM WATERHOUSE: I think I skipped this but in that job, I'm sure you had several roles and responsibilities because you had such diverse types of units. You had the 162<sup>nd</sup> where I was at the time.

CSM (R) GRECA: I forgot, starting up the Tiger brigade. That's how I met Brett, Brett was coming out of the 162<sup>nd</sup>. The diversity of that installation, you really start understanding things about running a post. Again, the housing and the DECA. I say to myself, hey why doesn't APHES and DECA get together and build like a super PX. Everybody off post, it's a super Walmart. You could streamline and

put them together in the commissary. They're like no. Why because it's money and those bureaucracies of APHES and DECA they're trying to protect jobs in D.C. So that's a bureaucracy that they don't want to get away from. That was a great assignment.

That was also the year of the NCO and we were doing year of the NCO stuff and trying to get the message out. I went to local radio and stuff like that and tried to put my sergeant Audie Murphy folks out there. So that was a good time. I wish that the Army would do it again.

SGM WATERHOUSE: I think we are in 2020.

CSM (R) GRECA: Oh good.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So looking back at your 16 months or so there at Ft. Polk, what were some of your key lessons learned that you passed on to your successor or took with you to your next assignment.

CSM (R) GRECA: Well, my biggest lesson learned was my predecessors were not involved in the box. They left that up to ops group. What I would say, I used love going to the ranch man for these 1700

updates. What would come out of that and what we would observe, again, our lens is slightly different. We will see things that officers, the senior task force doesn't see. I try to get more people involved. I simultaneously was dealing with Bob Gallagher and that was a tough situation.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So you went out with the units that were prepared to go overseas and doing their evaluation.

CSM (R) GRECA: I did. Validating individuals and small teams and how do you keep people alive. And Bob, that was his job so he's the ops group guy. Bob was having some problems back then and that was one of the first hard choices. I got my boss to say you're going. You'll pack your stuff up and Bob said, I hope you feel good about yourself, Chris. I said Bob, is you're alive two years from now I will. I used to sit at his place at night and he would be self-medicating. It was just horrible.

I was starting to have more physical issues. So now I got told by a specialist up in Shreveport

that I had broken my back a few times. I'm like I never broke my back and they're like yes you have. I had several compression fractures and things. And then my eyes are starting to go out of alignment. So I'm starting to look. I got hit a few times in the 410 during that rotation. There was a couple of engagements that were a direct blast. I got shook up and my eyes were going out of alignment. So right before I went to 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain, my next assignment, I went to BAMC and they realigned my left eye. It was like clicking in a rifle, six clicks down, four clicks to the right and you're good.

So I was having that and I was having balance issues too and sleep issues. My depth perception somewhere in this thing called a career, I lost it. So I have zero depth perception which makes the motorcycle challenging. That's why I don't spend as much time on the motorcycle as I should because I started seeing the cumulative effects. Again, I could put myself in a position and get on an airplane.

SGM WATERHOUSE: May 2010 is when you were

assigned to Ft. German, New York where you served as the 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain Division Light Infantry and Ft. Drum Command Sergeant Major and you did that for about 18 months.

CSM (R) GRECA: Yes. It was really a deployment through a deployment. And then Ray Chandler had broken up and resetting command teams simultaneously was the deal with that. So I think there was a ceremony on one day and then I hop on an airplane to go to the predeployment site survey in Afghanistan. That was when I got off and we were going up to Camp Julian and the IJC was providing the PSD. They were a big block of Tahoe's. They looked presidential and I'm like what is this. They said this is the way we move everybody, Sergeant Major. We move the ambassador and I said well I'm telling you, somebody eventually is going to get killed. So I hopped in the second vehicle and I've got a Canadian general with me. We picked up a Canadian one star and an Australian one star so that we could be multinational. About 40 minutes into the trip, I

could see Camp Julian in front of me and we get hit. At the time, I thought it was another IED directly on my vehicle. Because the flash that I got off of it, it was big and I just said crap. We started doing rotations and I looked at it a little bit too long and hence the superficial headwounds that I took because I didn't do what we're taught to do. The flash just stunned me and I wanted to look at it. When the smoke settled, our vehicle is destroyed.

SGM WATERHOUSE: What were you in?

CSM (R) GRECA: An up armored Tahoe. I've got a picture and I carry it everywhere with me as a reminder. That's the closest I've ever been. The vehicle in front of us, I didn't realize it was no longer in front of us. I was stunned. We had this Australian gal with a machine gun in the back and she sits in the very back. I didn't know she was in the vehicle. I thought it was an IED and then we're secondary device and this thing is going to boom again. So I, in the midst of this say, hey is everybody okay is everybody still alive. I'm like hey



we might be sitting on a secondary device. We could hear rounds going off so I think it is a complex attack. When I said, sitting on a secondary vehicle, it was like rats on a sinking ship. I have never seen people exit a vehicle so fast. I was the last person in the vehicle. I was like wow people shimmying themselves through the driver's side window.

So I look to the front of me. You're all acing it and situational awareness, who's got weapons and the right kinds of weapons. We had to take the weapon from the female guard person. She was shaking so bad that she couldn't load a vehicle. Well I at the time, I looked at the front and it hit bus. Well, an Afghan bus got in the way and there was this guy missing his legs and he's crawling on his elbows. I'm like crap. And something isn't registering and what didn't register was, what happened to the lead vehicle.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So all you see is a bus?

CSM (R) GRECA: All I see is a bus in front of me and Afghan's that are missing body parts and

dead people and it is like bad. Then it hits me, where is that vehicle. That vehicle was behind us because when it got hit it was 750 pounds worth of explosives. It just killed the guys instantly. There was no defensive posture taken up, they literally were sitting. One moment they were awake, one moment they were dead. That was the G8, the G1, Colonel Bulkafer, Colonel Fargus, Colonel McCue, this guy from Ft. Leavenworth. Major Jeff Parker, he was General Corbald's aide, the Canadian one star and the two drivers. Just tragic.

So I get out of that and I get some stitches thrown in my forehead at this Italian hospital. They speak no English. I literally can't figure out what is going on. I'm like I just want to leave, put a band aid on my head. Darren Bond comes over because me and DB have been, Darren is the IJC guy and he's like dude man. I said Darren, I could call that. And then the crappy part is we role in there and General Terry wants to have a meeting thing. By the think, I just had the eye realignment and now the eye is

jittering out of time and space. I never go through any of the MACE protocols, I never do nothing.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Your eye probably hadn't even healed by then, I wouldn't think.

CSM (R) GRECA: No and General Terry was like whatever. He says his little speech and Sergeant Major what do you have to add. I said, we're here for a reason, the PDSF. So the G1 is dead so who is going to pick up G1 functions. The G8 is dead, who is going to pick up G8 functions. I said not to be a dick but we've got a mission here. So how do we drive on with the mission and not, anyway so a bad moment. I never went through protocol.

So I run into Steve Womack at JRTC. So one of the brigades is going through a rotation. Usually we sent the O General Bannister or General Terry would go down. Instead, they send me. It's 410, hey Greca you go down for the rotation and I went roger. So I get down there and Steve Womack says to me, Chris have been checked and I'm like what. He's like you keep repeating the same stuff over and over again. He's

like I can tell that you think this is new information that you haven't told us before. Have you been checked and I was like no. So I went TBI to a clinic for brain bleeds and stuff like that.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So this was back when you were at Ft. Polk?

CSM (R) GRECA: Yes, I went back. So we were in theater for about 20 days. The CJTF 6 which was, he's the British, General Carter and Lady Carter, we host them at Ft. Bragg. He fits the mold perfect. And his sergeant major and warrant officer, they don't do anything.

SGM WATERHOUSE: When you were over there, when you were doing your PSS 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain was over there.

CSM (R) GRECA: Yes. They were up north. But I think what some organizations do poorly is Scott Schroder was convinced that he still owned 2101 down in RC South and he didn't. I never thought I owned 410 who went up to Logar and Mordack, they were part of the 101<sup>st</sup>. So when task organization is in effect, you

need to kind of let it be in effect. Scott Schroder stole a battalion CSM to make him a brigade CSM, Hanbrook, and I love Ron, great guy. But you owe me the courtesy of calling and saying Chris, we've got a brigade open. One of the battalion CSM's that's down there at RC South, because they worked for us. I think some people do a very, very poor job of letting the patch go when they're on a deployment.

SGM WATERHOUSE: I'm just trying to think in my mind. You went over there and you also had 2<sup>nd</sup> Brigade at that time was in Iraq. So you had 1<sup>st</sup> in Afghanistan, 2<sup>nd</sup> was in Iraq, 4<sup>th</sup> was at JRTC.

CSM (R) GRECA: But they deployed literally days from when we deployed. Again, 410 went up to Logar and Mordack. So our task organization, when I got over there, we had 2101, we had 2<sup>nd</sup> Brigade 4<sup>th</sup> ID and then we had two SCR's. So we had a striker, a light unit and then we had battlefield surveillance brigade that put down at spin bulldock to do their stuff there. So we were full.

But then the Canadians, about half way

during the mission, the Canadians, for political reasons, shut down the mission. So what they were doing in the (inaudible) we now had to pick it up. We threw, 125 had come in out of Alaska to backfill two ACR. Essentially, Bernie Knight got thrown into the fire because they were not prepared. I tried to tell them over and over about layering dismounted handhelds and jammers and mine hounds. We just did a terrible job because they didn't listen. 310 replaced 2101 and they tried to tell them, hey you're right across the river from that dry bed. Here's what we're seeing over here in Czar, you're probably going to see the same thing.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So going back to the predeployment site survey, that was for the division staff because the division was going to take over for another division staff in Afghanistan.

CSM (R) GRECA: The British division. So we brought a lot more capabilities. So CJTF 6, Nick Carter and the Brit's, we were the first U.S. division to deploy south. Now behind us was the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne

division came in and replaced us and then 3<sup>rd</sup> ID replaced the 82<sup>nd</sup>. As a matter of fact, General Abrams and he had big Ed Watson with him.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So in October 2010, three or four months after the division headquarters and yourself deployed over to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom and you were there for about a year.

CSM (R) GRECA: Yes.

SGM WATERHOUSE: That same month, 4<sup>th</sup> Brigade Combat Team deployed to Afghanistan correct?

CSM (R) GRECA: Yes. But again, I'm tracking them because we have Title 10 back at home. That is something I also learned is these titles and these authorities. So even when I was the JRTC in Ft. Polk person and you think you own 410 but there you don't. Their monies and all that stuff comes out of 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain Division. I had learned that stuff at JRTC. Again, 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade which is up at RC North, Dennis Defreeze was the CSM. His boss is now the 7<sup>th</sup> ID Commander, General Burleson, so they were up north.

But again, we'd show up and give them a little bit of love about every four months or so. I tried to stay out of their hair because a lot of people were worried about resetting and how we were going to reset when we got back to the rear.

SGM WATERHOUSE: By March 2011, out of your division you had 3<sup>rd</sup> Brigade Combat Team in Afghanistan, 2<sup>nd</sup> Brigade had just returned to Ft. Drum. So about halfway through your deployment to Afghanistan, your division had three combat brigades in Afghanistan and you also served as the RC South and 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain Division Command Sergeant Major. A couple of things there. So you've got brigades in different locations, two different countries for one.

CSM (R) GRECA: And our cav was also supporting RC's.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So how did you as a sergeant major determine battlefield circulation? How did you determine when and where you go and who you would move?

CSM (R) GRECA: Task organization was in



effect. So again, every four months I might go up Logar and Mordack just to say hi to Womack or Doug Maddy who was up there slugging away. Bute the battlefield circulation was always driven off of what was going on. Something would drive me to a location. Typically, it would be bad so I learned a lot about honesty traces and stuff that you could do in terms of setting patterns for ourselves. There were organizations that were out there that I think they flat out quit. I do because to this day I tell you they hold up the Alamo. They seeded all the ground to Taliban men. There were probably IED's 50 meters outside the gate but that's because they lost people. Instead of being resilient, like 310 was fairly resilient, they would quit. I could sense it and I would go in there and I was just like oh man this doesn't feel right. I'd look at the leadership.

I mean listen, it is hard losing kids but you know what, it's the nature of what we do. This profession of arms of our is a nasty, nasty business. You need to understand that from the get go. So what

would drive me would be things like that.

I went to a ceremony and there was a police and one of our pit teams that lost two kids. They were having this memorial ceremony and I'm trying to think of my general buddy who was down at the border. He was a very powerful guy. He was ABP and then he went up to Candleheart City. They're attending the memorial ceremony and they've got an interpreter so they're paying respects. I'm just praying to God that that interpreter is not doing his job and telling (inaudible). The battalion commander gets up there and says, I'll get you all out of this country.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Oh no.

CSM (R) GRECA: Yes he did. And then he says, and we will kill those people responsible. It's like that's kind of a bad thing just running around shooting weapons at suspected IED locations.

SGM WATERHOUSE: And this is with all the local police there.

CSM (R) GRECA: Yes, they're there. I'm like oh my word. So I go out to the first sergeant and

General Dalton grabbed the commander. I said you've got to be kidding me man. You're the senior NCO of this thing and essentially what you just said is this ain't worth it. All the human blood that we've spilled, we're just wasting our time. And, oh by the way, I got it, we've all got thoughts and opinions but you need to keep some of them to yourself. God forbid General Razed here's about this. He was dragging dead people through the fields chained up to the back of his vehicles but he accomplished stuff. You've got to give him credit.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So this was the Afghan police?

CSM (R) GRECA: Yes. General Perkins daughter was flying, Cassandra, I never knew it. She said she just loved to get on the headset when she would give me a lift to just listen to us chatting back there about stuff that is going on. So it was very broad. There were areas that were much, much more dangerous than others. Hence Czar and Pangea completely sucked. It used to be the Argandob River

Valley which actually calmed down for us. For the most part it was quiet. I used to see pictures and I thought you're a better man than me dude.

So our ACP's, our air corridors that we would fly, we were so predictable in these Blackhawks. I'm like, we would fly right by this mountain and the top of the mountain was right there. I was always like I'm so going to get shot out of the sky over here. It's really going to suck by the way. Great deployment in terms of everything that I saw.

Now during this deployment, this health of the force stuff, my father dies. But I knew he was going to die, he had ALS and I was like okay, he's going to die. So I get the call he's going to die. The doctor says within 48 hours homeboy will be dead. So I tell my wife, okay I'm coming home. She picked me up at Syracuse airport. I get home and he's still alive. I'm like I wasn't there to have dude die on me, I wanted him dead so I could put him in the ground because I'm on the clock man, I'm Big Ben man. Big Ben is looking at me and I'm feeling very ancy about

being out of country. I've already taken leave so this was now war time. I told my wife, I said if he doesn't die within two days, I'm gone. You can drop me off at the airport and I'll get a flight. When he dies, I'll come visit his gravestone. I actually went up there last time I was here because he's buried up north of here, north of Harrisburg. It's about an hour trip and I went and seen my dad's funeral. So I buried my dad --

SGM WATERHOUSE: So he did die when you were home?

CSM (R) GRECA: Yes, he finally gives in, it's one of those. I'm watching Ellen, and I never watched Ellen before. My brother gets all bent out of shape because I'm grieving right or doing whatever I'm supposed to do. I was like okay. It's perspective. He's 63 years old. The kids that we're putting in the back of boxes are 20. They would have given anything for another 43 years. So it is perspective. But that might not be a normal way to think.

So what I have figured out along this

journey is that's not normal. By the way, when you flip the compassion switch on stuff like that, psychologists will tell you, you just can't flip it back on. So you know what I grieved for, my dog. My boxer died when I was overseas, Lola. It was like ripping my heart out. My dad dies it's like peace out. But that boxer of mine died. So I started to recognize during these things that I was different. I was becoming more isolated. The public Chris Greca was seen at PCC's and other places around the Army. At 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain Division and Ft. Leavenworth and other places. But what was happening behind closed doors was much, much different. We show people what we want them to see. It is like the tattoos. If I keep my stuff covered, nobody knows I have them. We do the same thing personally with others.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So you would call a work persona versus a personal persona?

CSM (R) GRECA: Yes.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So looking back at Afghanistan, is there any key things you'd like to

highlight, challenges and things you've overcome.

Osama Bin Laden was killed during your rotation, how did that affect things?

CSM (R) GRECA: Was he killed during my rotation?

SGM WATERHOUSE: May 2011 or were you already back?

CSM (R) GRECA: I think we were already back.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM (R) GRECA: What I learned was that theaters of operation are different and they are different on different days so it is never the same. So be informed by previous deployments but don't be overly informed whereas you rush to failure. You put your head down and you think you know what you're getting into but you don't. I'm going to tell you the Afghan's were not e-type silhouettes. They didn't pop up and we put a controlled pair in them and they go down. They set up a defense in depth with trigger lines the same way we would do in Pangea and in Czar.

I'll tell you, when 2101 went through there, if they didn't have MCLCs and APODS and the ability to reduce those threats, it's ugly. And they did exactly that to the point where they get hit, a machine gun crew, what do they do. They return fire and they seek cover. Here's this perfect covered position that they lay on top of and Taliban man blows it up and kills our crew. Why because they do exactly what our doctrine tells us to do.

We made the mistake of going over there and thinking not like them but like we typically would. We got to the point, 2101 and 310 where they would freeze. If they made contact it was like freeze time. Because the thought was, they got you in a mind field or in an engagement area and they're just setting you up. They're trying to pull you, they're trying to put you in certain positions. A first sergeant that I lost over there, he did exactly what -- one of his kids hit a pressure plate ID, boom loses a leg. What does the first sergeant do, grabs the medic and does what he thinks a first sergeant is supposed to do.



What happens, he dies. Why because it is like they know our doctrine and the way we fight and what we're going to do. I think we need to understand that about the enemy. We need to be out there thinking as well.

They're going to write a book one day about Czar and Pangea. They really are and it needs to be told because it was such a brilliant move by the Taliban or the Afghani's. They really set that up. We lost so many people it was stupid. I think it was 140 over the course of the year and that wasn't included the Marines who transitioned from southwest. So every night we're having ranch ceremonies. I had a brother escort his twin brother's body home. I had a wife escort her husband. They were both in the BSB.

In some organizations like our field artillery folks, we weren't using them based off of their capabilities. We made them battlespace owners like everybody else and gave them handhelds and said field artillery guys, shut up. You're going out there and you're going to clear space like everybody else. Well when you start doing that, everybody in essence

becomes (inaudible) series. I think I learned a lot of lessons over there.

SGM WATERHOUSE: I know your divisions and brigades were all separated but looking back, how do you feel your brigades did whether they were in Afghanistan or Iraq?

CSM (R) GRECA: They did well but I will tell you this. I got snowballed one time. So my external opinion as I'm watching organizations, I'm going to the bubs every morning and the updates. I'm watching organizations out there that I think are tremendous. I think these guys are kicking ass. And then what you find out is when you scratch beneath the surface a little bit there might be environments that are not so healthy on subordinates.

So I had a sergeant major, John Horny, God rest his soul. John died, he had a heart attack up in North Dakota. He was one of the CSM's up over in 310. John called me when I was the CAC guy and he said, this is the worst command team I have ever been around in my life. That got me thinking, okay this is just

one guy John Horny. But let me go ask Johnson, another battalion CSM guy. Let me ask me the battalion commanders.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So he was the brigade CSM?

CSM (R) GRECA: Yes the brigade command team that was toxic as fuck. I mean Greg Anderson who commanded 275 post this command, I mean Greg Anderson flat out told me, that is the worst. Well these were people I trust. So sometimes you can be snowed. The fact that the organization is achieving results can mask many, many issues internal to the organization. So I met General Dull at Ft. Benning and he came down looking at the PX. I said hey sir, just out of curiosity what do you think about this organization. He said oh they were all screwed up. I said they snowed me man. I seriously thought this was the best brigade in Afghanistan and now what I'm being told is by all the subordinate leadership was toxic.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Maybe they succeeded in spite of him?

CSM (R) GRECA: Well you can arguably it's

not that you succeed but it's how you succeed. I'm going to tell you, I absolutely believe in that, I do. Some people will sit there and say, well this is warfare, this is tough. It's like have a personality. Perkins retirement speech was so powerful. So Perkins --

SGM WATERHOUSE: General Perkins?

CSM (R) GRECA: Yes. He says that there is people on The Hill that died because General Perkins told me to do it. They followed my orders. So why did they die, they died because the General told me or a colonel who told a captain. He said that's something. That was pretty powerful. And the way he delivered it, and Perkins always nails it out of the park. There is a lot of validity to that. I don't want to be all mushy but I will just tell you that people have got to learn to deal with that.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Before we move on to your next assignment at Leavenworth, looking back at your 16 months or so as the 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain Division Command Sergeant Major and your experience over in Iraq as RC

South Sergeant Major, what were some of the lessons learned that you passed on to your successor there and/or took with you.

CSM (R) GRECA: I didn't have much to pass over to Ranger Rex. Something I saw as I came into position is the dependency that the organizations had on light fighter school was to solve problems for them. So it was kind of like solving the Force Com issues. These 15 people over here at the light fighter school, they're going to teach pre ranger and they're going to teach heavy weapons and then they're going to teach marksmanship course and air assault. It's like don't you already have 19 series guys in your squadron that are capable of teaching people about 50 cal.

So I'm the idiot that everybody makes fun of in regards to the road guard belt. I get up there to Ft. Drum and I wanted to do this when I was at Ft. Polk, by the way, and I just never did. I was new to the nominative world and I didn't want to be this dick. So I get up to Ft. Drum and I said, all NCO's from now on will wear green road guard belt. Officers

will wear blue, enlisted soldiers will wear green. The idea here is, there ought to be a couple of greens in front of the yellows leading them and there ought to be some blue in there too leading the organization.

What we had was when people are in PT uniforms you don't know who they are, you don't have a clue. So I get General Terry's approval to do this and it was stunning. We did a division run. The amount of blues, officers, and the amount of greens that were falling, so they weren't leading from the front, they weren't capable of leading from the front. So some people thought that was a really silly idea but I said that's the only reason why I'm doing it. I just want to know that there are greens out here and if I see a bunch of yellows running around I'm going to ask you. Where is your sergeant, where is the NCO.

SGM WATERHOUSE: In November 2011 is when you PCS'd for a permanent change station to Ft. Leavenworth, Kansas where you served as the Combined Arms Center or CAC, as we call it for short, Command Sergeant Major for 19 months or so. When did you find

out you were going to be the next CSM?

CSM (R) GRECA: When I was over in Afghanistan, I got told by Chandler that I was going to compete for NCOM and CAC.

SGM WATERHOUSE: He was the sergeant major?

CSM (R) GRECA: Yes. He had taken over at the SMA and I was like yeah but I've only been in position. Because Jim Redmore came out and it was this kind of untimely thing. Chandler says, it doesn't matter Chris, we're resetting the commander so he needs to have the opportunity to pick his CSM. By the way, me and the chief, General Milling, we had a lots of conversations on this. I was actually out playing golf with General Dull when Milly made the decision who the next 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain Division CSM was going to be, Rick Merritt, Ranger Rick. I did not think that was a good move. I love Rick but he has nothing but the Ranger Regiment background. He went to Panama a little bit but I was very, very concerned that he was going to jump in at the division level without understanding of BCT. The challenges that

they go through, the first sergeants day in and day out what they're doing that's tough.

I got told when I was overseas. By the way, so Perkins was Daly's guy. So they were 4<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division. And Dan already knew he was going to Tradoc. So they did that and Dan gets picked up for Tradoc and Dan tells Perkins to hire me. So I didn't interview it was just hey, congratulations, I look forward to working with you. Tremendous assignment. The learning curve there, just in terms of dotmill PF and leader development and CAPE, the Center for the Army Profession and Ethics and all that CAC does for the Army in synchronizing the centers of excellence, it is really something else. All the cohorts are represented.

So when I initially got there, I've got to tell you my predecessor, so Phil Jonrowe was my predecessor. He had a division commander conference and they do it every year. There were no sergeant majors in there. We're talking about training and I used to be an adaptive soldier leader training and



education and stuff like that. I walk in and I'm like the only sergeant major. Perkins leans over to me and says why are you the only sergeant major here. I said sir, you've got to extend the invite.

So General Perkins never again held the division commanders conference, a center of excellence in the propanocies, the sergeant majors were always in future meetings. I will tell you, Perkins listens. That dude has a brain and for a tanker, that dude empowers and leverages. He is probably my favorite person to work for. Him and Dan Allen are very, very close, and allowing me to do what my job is.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So for those that don't know and there are a lot of people, unfortunately, that are sergeant majors right now, they have no idea what CAC does. So if you would to sum it up into layman's terms, what does the Combined Arms Center at Ft. Leavenworth? What is their mission?

CSM (R) GRECA: Well they do doctrine training, leader development. So through CACT that's training the Army Training network. Those systems and

everything associated with the mets and the medals they call them something different now. That's CACT and then you have the Mission Command Center of Excellence which is a two star billet that they have up there that synchronizes and coordinates through all domains, land, sea, air and above. It synchronizes and coordinates and brings that stuff together. It is doctrine, it's leader development.

By the way, it is all cohorts too. It is officers, NCO's, warrant officers, enlisted and civilians. Sometimes we forget that civilian cohort that's out there. But in all the meetings that I would go to, the Army Training and Leader Development seminars, they were always there. And the sergeant majors got a seat at the table. I think that was Dan Daly starting and molding his boss correctly.

I will tell you this and I don't mean this in a bad way but I'll say it anyway. I don't really think he knew what CAC does. So sometimes you can think you know. I hear some initiatives and things that I thought of when I was the CAC leader and saying

wasn't I saying that two or three years ago. And then the other thing I learned was, so there is a two star that's the dude over at the college and then the two one stars. We would have discussions on what CAC is and how do we publicize and educate and inform what it does for the Army. If General Perkins would leave, we would spin in a 360 degree circle. So he would come back in and go, hey sergeant major was it accomplished and I said no. Sometimes you need to be around because if you don't these generals aren't bad guys but all of them are the smartest dude in the room. They will spin a conversation over and over.

SGM WATERHOUSE: In that job, what did you see in your time there? What was your roles for the general, for the Army, for that organization and did it change as you learned more about it?

CSM (R) GRECA: It did and that's one of those drinking through a firehose type thing. Simultaneously, were coming out with doctrine 2015 and the ADP's and how the ADP's lead to ADRP's and they kind of filter down to not only concepts but they go

down to tactics and procedures and how we execute out there on the battlefield.

There was a learning curve issue but I always saw my role, not just from an NCO perspective but all the cohorts and how could I help and assist. I was very big into the five I just didn't think I was an NCO guy. That's INCOPD, the Institute for NCO Professional Development and what John Sparks was doing over there. I really got excited about training and getting us back into training. I actually wrote in the ADP about sergeants time, training and opportunity hip pocket training. That's me, the way that I wrote it because Chandler bought off on it.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So when you were there, lots of responsibilities and big organization as far as what it impacts. You had Sergeant Major Sparks there but who did you look to to help you learn this organization and help you assess what it was and where it could go.

CSM (R) GRECA: Joe Parson, Jeff Huggins and the guys that had already been there. They were the

smartest people on the ground so if you look at them and Joe Parson's is a big brain. We were doing the pre-command course which was huge at the O5 and O6 level and their associated sergeant majors. Those guys could really steer me in the right direction. And then Dennis Edgar joined the team and Don Rose and just tremendous addition. Honestly, that thing kind of did itself and all I had to do was help steer the ship and give thoughts and ideas. I used to do monthly conferences with Dan, the SMA when he was the TRADOC guy.

And then I wanted to be responsive because also have CALL, the Center for Army Lessons Learned. It is those TTP's who were coming out of the region and the theaters of operation, how were they getting back to units. How do you make it responsive and quick.

SGM WATERHOUSE: That's one of those things you have CALL and the doctrine. A lot of people look at CALL and say well that's just extra I'm going to off with it.

CSM (R) GRECA: Dan thought that and he was really, some of those positions they were trying to shut down. It was like what was the necessity and what is the use. Here's what I've come to find out. So we get to CAC and we're talking about, General Perkins says, hey man we can't salami slice this thing. We need to find an organization instead of taking 5 or 10 percent away from every organization. We need to go find what organizations have redundancy and then we circulate all throughout CAC. We go through all these places, DLI because we have language institute, WINSEC and then we come back and General Perkins goes, I have figured out that we need to salami slice. Okay because smart people built those organizations and there is a need and necessity.

Sometimes we'll rush to failure. We'll get on this bandwagon of that thing needs to go. He is kind of guilty of it on several occasions. He would go down a path, it's a bad path that we're going down and I used to see it all the time. Perkins isn't a dummy so I got it. Sergeant Majors really don't work for

other sergeant majors. We support through the NCO support channel and we communicate and drive and we've got to be good. Frankly, that was my boss over here. Dan was on this huge kick about wearing a PT uniform out there and I was like they're doing PT and frankly my boss doesn't care.

SGM WATERHOUSE: In your 19 months or so there, any particular challenges or lessons learned you'd like to highlight before we move on?

CSM (R) GRECA: Well, I think NCO Corner was developed when we were doing all that. That's on the Army Training Network and that dealt with those CAC's and those tasks above the individual and small unit level. Getting a better understanding of training management. We also developed the POI for the company commander first sergeant course that went out broadly to the Army so that we can ensure that first sergeants started to understand what the expectations were out there. There was even commanders, especially young captains. I used to think when I came in the Army that a captain, that was a smart dude. Like Zeus my role

model, that's a smart dude.

And then you start to work around all these people and then you it just changes. Like the way I see light, I mean I'm not trying to marginalize. To us, who was our hero, probably General Merritt in OG, they were it. Past the battalion, you're just a picture on a wall, you're a board question. Who is the brigade sergeant major and you're like who is that. So the real big thing is how do you become more than a board question. How do you make yourself relevant enough to the organizations and the soldiers around you to become more than a board question. I used to say it all the time. You're a picture on a wall and if that's it we don't have much need for you.

SGM WATERHOUSE: In June 2013, you were assigned to Ft. Bragg, North Carolina where you served as the United States Army Forces Command or Force Com for short, command sergeant major and you did that for 13 months or so.

CSM (R) GRECA: Yes.

SGM WATERHOUSE: How did that position come



about or when did you find out you were going to be the next Force Com leader?

CSM (R) GRECA: I was out at Ft. Leavenworth and General Perkins and General Allen are DFF. So it was a deal where I was on five slates even though I had been in position. I was on the ISAF and the First Army and five of them. General Allen just picked quick. There was no interview process. I simply got a call saying hey, congratulations man, you're going to come. I had never worked for him and there were others on the slate. Earl Rice and Warren Malloy that apparently they were measuring the room sizes to put their stuff in because they were utterly convinced they were going to get selected. That's how I got the Force Com job.

I was really excited about that. Force Com, to us NCO's, that is like it. If you're not going to be a sergeant major in the Army to us NCO's you're like Force Com, that is the baddest dude alive. What you don't understand, because there were about 700 active guard and reserve, multicomponent, the CTC's

and validation as we go overseas. Big pushes on health of the force issues and ethics decision making and a bunch of stuff.

So General Allen was convinced me and him were going to link back up somewhere. It was a deal that I had been there and what did I learn. I learned that there was great people out there and who did I lean on. The core guys, Darren Bond has always been a friend so we T bird a lot. I would T bird with Del Byers. And then being on the SEC. So the SEC was an interesting creature all in itself in the way it is kind of set up.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Senior Enlisted Council.

CSM (R) GRECA: Yes formerly board of directors, Sergeant Major SMA Daly changed it, didn't like it, so now they're the Senior Enlisted Council, so that was interesting kind of being in on that stuff. To an officer, what they all want is COCOM or to be the chief because they all get paid on the same level. There is this additional money from a protocol perspective. Let me tell you something, like the

CENTCOM commander, he's like the president. When you're overseas with this guy, you have never seen shit like this. His entourage man and he worked running whole floors for the CENTCOM commander. He's got his own airplane and by the way, they never stop working. So nipper and sipper goes up and the boss was VTCing with the President, Sec Def and others. There was a huge difference between Force Com and CENTCOM. Just in terms of, I got it they're both four stars. But their levels of responsibility, it is crazy. Seriously the first time I traveled with Austin I was like oh my this son of a bitch, he's the man dude. Seriously we would roll into shit and we always had an ambassador with us and then we had 52 countries that was down there at CENTCOM. So from a coalition perspective, 52 countries are represented each and every day with officers and NCO's. It's an environment that's just something.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So when you got to Force Com and I'm sure it took you a little while to figure out the organization as big as it is.

CSM (R) GRECA: Absolutely. 20 is (inaudible) and First Army, Division East, Division West. Those were the normal organizational divisions corps but we started to change title authorities in there. We were getting back to the corps having responsibility for divisions. So there was a bunch of that stuff going on.

SGM WATERHOUSE: From what I researched for today it said back then, organization as far as Force Com had was comprised of three active duty Army Corps, nine active duty divisions, United States Army Reserve Command and over 800,000 active and reserve soldiers.

CSM (R) GRECA: That's close. What changed is, is First Corps with USRPAC and PAYCOM. Now Force Com has titled authorities over them to give them money but from an operational perspective, and that's the reason why we just keep switching third corps and 18<sup>th</sup> Airborne Corps overseas in the fight. They are the only two corps we've got because First Corps is being shielded and has lately. That's close to being right. It is a lot of people and it is man, train and

equip and it is preparing and as those request for forces kind of comes out it is hey man, can you meet the demands and can you meet the requirements. I felt comfortable in that job. That job wasn't as intellectually challenging as the CAC. CAC was just a beast.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So in Force Com, how do you assess that type of organization? How did you go about assessing it because you always want to try to improve the unit. Commanders and us sergeant majors always want to improve upon so how did you go about assessing Force Com?

CSM (R) GRECA: Listen, you've got to leverage technology in today's environment. I have been a huge, huge fan since I was the division guy of having monthly VTC's with subordinate organizations. So even at CENTCOM, I would do a monthly with ARCENT, ABCENT, AVCENT, SOCCENT and McCulley occasionally would filter on over from SOCOM and he would sit in on the meeting and hey, how can we better assist. General Austin actually made it easy because he came

out like day one and he's like here's your priorities.

SGM WATERHOUSE: He gave you priorities?

CSM (R) GRECA: Yes. So as I would circulate, I would send him a note and say, in accordance with 3 A here's the problem or the issue. Most of the issues were solved by the staff. So they went through General Garret at the time and then General Farrell because the J staff is handling the particular issues. And listen, we agreed to disagree. I said before, I got paid a lot of money to give you my thoughts. It doesn't mean my thoughts are right and I'll completely acknowledge that. I totally think we're fucked up with hazardous duty pay and how we constitute a combat zone or a direct support area. I think it's ridiculous.

Hey the Islamic State in the Saini will kill you as fast as the Islamic State up in Syria or the Laban, yet we're not going to pay those soldiers hazardous duty pay and they're not going to get a combat badge and they're not going to get a free trip home and all the things associated. Listen, with John

Troxel and Dan, we have agreed to disagree. But I've done that a lot with him. He was probably glad to get me off of there. For a while, we discussed putting the marksmanship badge on the uniform and make it like mandatory.

SGM WATERHOUSE: On the duty uniform?

CSM (R) GRECA: No on your dress uniform. I'm like why? Why would we do that? Well it would reinforce the importance of marksmanship.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Oh you mean at the nominative sergeant major level?

CSM (R) GRECA: No I mean like everybody in the Army. So it's a requirement that you wear your bolo badge. Discussing important issues up there man.

SGM WATERHOUSE: And the Forces Com wasn't tremendously challenging but I'm sure you had some things.

CSM (R) GRECA: I traveled with General Allen a lot. Once you start from a development and a mentor perspective, what becomes difficult in a beast like Force Com is it is so big and your subordinate

sergeant majors at the O6 level that are getting into the non-window and then I would go sit on the SAC. Who am I advocating for and why am I advocating. Now Chandler would say, you're not supposed to ask other people. I would go yeah, but if I trust Dave Turnbaugh, if I trust this guy and I'm asking him about the O6 level dudes on that camp post nation and installation, it only makes sense. If you think that I know the sergeant majors in an organization that is 700,000 strong, I mean listen, I don't. I tried and tried to make sure when I was circulating out there as I was doing by battlefield circ I would try to potentially touch those guys to ensure that I had from a developmental perspective some type of input.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Just for some NCO's, what were some NCO related stuff you would discuss?

CSM (R) GRECA: Training. Training was huge. How do we get back to the fundamentals, how do we get back to the ranger schools, how do we pick up the importance of PRC. It was working with the institutional side of the Army as well as developing



standards. When you start getting into all these new PT standards and what we're going to do and how do you define what the requirements are by propanancy, you've got to lift that veil and you've got to have conversations with the sergeant majors. Again, I'm a training guy. I'm going to fall back to 30 years ago or let's call it 28 years ago. I think we're responsible and it's the reason why we always went out to the quad and did gun drills out there and constantly manipulating the system and working the system. I think that's what we're responsible for.

What is frustrating to me is I would go around the Army is at the lack of training that I would see and we would have these discussions. So monthly on the VTC's we'd go okay. We did those VTC's monthly. Chandler wanted notes for dudes that failed drill sergeant school. I didn't give a fuck about that. I was like whatever. Chris, did you read these, shit happens man. My fear is, is we were becoming a zero defect Army and there is not room for mistakes and growth. So Chris Greca 28 years ago Article 15

guy would have I, could I withstand that today and the answer is no. So I think we just need to be careful. We might get rid of some very, very talented people that just need a little bit of time in order to inculcate the Army's values into them and start guiding them. This idea that we just launch everybody and I truly feel it's getting like that. That was my fear towards the end when I was coming off.

So at CENTCOM I still sat in the SAC, I just wasn't a voting member. So the COCOM guys, we would get invited but I was like I think we need to be careful. I don't like this position of trust shit. You cannot be given a position of trust and you can't be a drill sergeant but you can lead America's sons and daughters overseas in combat. That's kind of stupid. And, oh by the way, I think an O5 level commander should have the ability to look at a 4187 and if somebody made a mistake years and years ago, have they overcome it. Speaking with the company leadership to the battalion leadership, I think they can make that decision. We've over reacted to a lot

of this, the sexual assault and the harassment, in my opinion.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Looking back at your time in Forces Command as a Command Sergeant Major, what are some of the lessons learned or other things you'd like to highlight that maybe we haven't talked about?

CSM (R) GRECA: Well, I extended a hand over to the operational side of the Army. So what I learned when I was in 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain Division is listen emerging technology and how do you defeat and layer systems that are out there. What I did is I would talk to ISAF, that was forward, and we would have conversations about how can we better prepare ourselves on the operational side of the Army to meet the challenges that these men and women are going to go into overseas. So that VTC went up and fortunately for me, there's not too many people out there in the Army that I don't get along with. I think it's a handful and frankly, the ones that that is, I think it is petty jealousy bullshit.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So in July 2014 you were

assigned to MacDill Air Force Base in Tampa, Florida.

CSM (R) GRECA: I certainly was. I got a phone call when I was down at CAC and we were doing PCC, the Pre Command Course. General Brown and General Allen were bullshitting and I walked in to get my chow and General Allen says, hey man, the big man is eyeballing you. I said what? He said the big man is eyeballing you.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Who do you mean by the big man?

CSM (R) GRECA: Austin. And Daly was on the slate but I think they protected him because they saw him as the next sergeant major of the Army. It was Rory and it was the typical band of brothers and Schroder. By the way, I felt so bad that Schroder wasn't getting picked because I really thought Scott would be a tremendous CENTCOM guy. I set him up to get my job. I worked General Allen and said, hey sir you need to get this. I called Scott and said, dude, I'm just telling you right now bro, it ain't my decision, I really didn't want this but just FYI I'll put you at

the top of the list. Scott was a little frustrated by that time being a third corps.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So in the end, the general picked you to be the Command Senior Enlisted Leader, or CSEL, a position you served in a little over two years.

CSM (R) GRECA: Yes. What an environment. So you've got insurgents in CENTCOM and these joint headquarters are really, really unique environments and they're hard to adjust. So you can go to keystone and you can go to places like that. They're supposed to set up for the multinational and interagency and all that stuff. I will tell you, nothing prepares you for CENTCOM. All the primary staff is two star generals, the chief's a two star general, they are all different walks of life. A Navy Admiral really could give a flying fuck about a senior enlisted guy, he just wants us to clean his ship. The Air Force guy, he doesn't know what to do with us, we fix his airplanes. We're like maintenance guys and mechanic guys as far as NCO's goes. So it's a really tough

environment.

What happens at CENTCOM is, CENTCOM is run by the principle staff, the general officers out. So those guys are worried about building partner capability. Whether it is through you submit them, OPMSANG, the Jordan group that we've got over there, all these locations, that's what those generals are doing. Internal to the building, it's being ran by civilians. They call themselves the Council of Colonels and they are all a bunch of retired dudes that sit around and literally talk about how fucked up the sergeant major is. I literally had to go in there and say what's up man. You guys think I'm part of the problem and I'm not. I'm here to work with you guys.

SGM WATERHOUSE: That's the impression you got?

CSM (R) GRECA: Yes it was, it was a very tough environment. You go over to the J5 shop and plans and they've got an (inaudible) command master chief. You know what he does, nothing. He sits at the front desk and he gets coffee. He's a nice guy.

SGM WATERHOUSE: But he has no authority.

CSM (R) GRECA: No, he's not doing shit.

And then Steve Hooten was like the J7 guy. He is National Guard New Hampshire guy. I love Hooten. And then Ron Hambrick, they didn't even want him so that was a drug deal that Frank Grippy, he we need to have a CSM that works for this two star. General Welsbach was like sergeant major, I really don't want a sergeant major guy. I'm like what? He's like I really don't think we have a need. You know why they didn't have a need, because they didn't want to create an office and space. That senior enlisted due coming in would want an office right or he would want a desk or something to work in. It's a culture man. It's a flat out insurgency.

And then that's internal to the building but what I had, and I used to do it monthly was, ABCENT, CZ Colon Lopez, the current AFRICOM CSM, he was my ABCENT guy. He's a PJ by trade, just a phenomenal dude. Larry Fennering, my MARSCENT guy, he is a Marine. He's a nice guy but he's a Marine. Literally,

his boss would call me, a three star Marine general to argue about the uniform of the day. And then he says to me, hey have you told your boss about this and I'm like no sir, I'm not going to waste his time. Why am I going to go into my boss and bring up this piddly stuff that we're talking about. I'd be embarrassed to bring it up. And then NAVCENT, great guys.

How I learned CENTCOM was Rob Abernathy. So Rob Abernathy was the TSOC. So he was SOCCENT when I first got there prior to going to USSASOC. So Rob, because he had people in Beirut, because we were standing up the train, advise and building capacity and the Syrian forces, Rob knew it all. So when I got there I was like, I had my little wing man, I had this PSD dude. He came from 5th RTB. He was my guy when I was in 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain Division. When I got hired to CENTCOM, I was told, hire a reliable source. So I went back to Adam York who worked up at 5<sup>th</sup> RTB and I said hey do you want to come back dude it has been a couple of years since we've done this. He said yes, I'll love to. I said it will hurt your career, you



know you'll never get promoted because you need leadership time. Adam said, I don't care about that.

I would always fly commercial overseas. Direct flight typically from Miami to Qatar and then at LUD I would hover around LUD because I have a room there. It's actually nicer than this place. It's quite the living over there and I've got an office. And then I warranted Mil Air so I could pull Mil Air once I was in the region. So I learned from Rob Abernathy, and by the way, I hope he's the next sergeant major of the Army. We think he will do but we'll have to see how this works itself out.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So when you got there, you have the headquarters and then you have this huge area of responsibility.

CSM (R) GRECA: Yeah 20 countries, 75,000 servicemen and women. Out of those 20 countries, we're in 19. We're not in Iran so that's the one place in the CENTCOM AOR. It is broken down into three kind of areas that they go. The GCC, Gulf Cooperation Council, the you've got the Levant area which is

Jordan --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Israel?

CSM (R) GRECA: No we don't have Israel.

Israel belongs to UCOM. They don't like Jewish people there.

SGM WATERHOUSE: I'm thinking of ISIS.

CSM (R) GRECA: Yeah conflict of interest.

And then the other one is central Asian states and Afghanistan and Pakistan. I never went into Pakistan either because the country clearances were such a pain in the ass. We had an SF guy there and he's the one who made the headline in SEL. He was an SF sergeant major and he got caught with a gun or some ammo and it went public. Dude was in jail. He's like hey, I don't think they're going to let me back in the country. I never went there. I never could get into Islamabad. I could sit on the airplane if I wanted to go with the boss but I couldn't get off the airplane.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So the mission of CENTCOM is to "direct and enable military operations and activities with allies and partners to increase

regional security and stability and support of enduring U.S. interests". What would you say to a sergeant reading this a year from now. What does that mean?

CSM (R) GRECA: I used to tell everybody, so when General Rotell came in he was kind of looking for this simple thing. General Garret used to say this, we protect the homeland. We make it an away game versus a home game. So we have that presence of 75,000 uniform in order to make it an away game. NAVCENT keeps the free flow of trade and commerce open. So through the BAM down near Somalia through the straits of Hormuz and as well as the Suez Canal, those are the three major chokepoints. It's the reason why Yemen is so important. Yemen is important because of where it is at and Somalia is right across from it and that waterway has to stay open. The last one is stop deploy proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

In my own words, I tell everybody it is my story and we're sticking to it. That we're over there

and have been over there for the last 16 years defending the homeland. We have not been hit with a major attack since 9/11. Think about that. If you would have asked me after 9/11 when is the next attack going to be, I thought it was coming. I was like, you can't stop this. Again, 17 years later we're pretty secure. I'm a believer and General Rotell kind of bought off on that. He said that's a simple way of saying it and I said absolutely. Protect the homeland, free flow trade and commerce in the region and why it is fundamentally support, and then stop the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction through nation states like Iran with the JCPOA. That's the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. That's where the Iranian's aren't listening to anything we told them to do. I think that's the mission.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So in this organization which has huge responsibility obviously, the headquarters alone was a challenge. So what did you see as your role in that job?

CSM (R) GRECA: I thought I was external. It

really became easy because General Austin gave me the priorities. I thought my job was to get out. A prime example was I saw the attacks on the MFO coming way before Ambassador Satterfield and MFO got involved. Why, because I went out there. I said hey, this Islamic State of Saini, and Clark Linder was out there commanding it, I don't know if you know Clark. He's a tremendous guy, armor guy. Clark was out there and said man, this threat up at North Camp, and I go back to the boss and I said sir, it's the biggest thing I'm worried about.

And then when they had the change of command over in Afghanistan and Campbell was coming out and Nicholson was coming in, I was sitting next to the chairman, General Dunford. By the way, what a great little conversation and it was all about Egypt. I said sir, I'm telling you. Because my fear is complacency that we have 75,000 tourists in and around the CENTCOM AOR. If you have a sense of complacency and you stick your head up your ass long enough, let me tell you something man. We're going to have deuce one and then

my gosh man, the pain that happens based off of that.

SGM WATERHOUSE: As far as if somebody goes missing?

CSM (R) GRECA: Yes.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So speaking of what was going on and just to put this into perspective for future readers, when you took over as a CENTCOM CSEL in June 2014, the terrorist organization, Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, Syria had recently taken over prominent Iraqi cities like Mosul, Dhi Qar from their forces and previously already captured before you came on board, Fallujah and Hit. The United States Army Central Command or ARCENT located at Camp (inaudible) Kuwait had recently established a new organization called a combined joint task force Operation Inherent Resolve, in order to recognize the ongoing military actions against the rising threat posed by ISIS.

CSM (R) GRECA: That's what will happen in all cases. So in all cases, you leverage the service component command to make up the majority of the

combined joint task force headquarters until whatever organization sources it.

SGM WATERHOUSE: It's like a stop gap?

CSM (R) GRECA: Yes. So ARCENT picks it up and they always think they're the CFLCC, the Combined Forces Land Component Command but now he becomes the CJTF until we can get third corps or 18<sup>th</sup> airborne corps to fight it. We're trying to get international contributions. The problem with that is frankly, our partners don't typically give us what we need. We'll tell them what we need and they're like oh we got it. They'll send somebody and you're looking at them and listening to them and they're idiots.

SGM WATERHOUSE: At that time, U.S. troops had left in 2011.

CSM (R) GRECA: Well, in 2014, so we're downsizing. So when I get there, the Islamic State is pushed. They're up in Mosul. We're worried about the Mosul dam collapsing and the catastrophic stuff. Simultaneously, Afghanistan is kind of going, we're really worried about FML. The last administration was

very concerned as was the joint staff in regards to our manning levels. What I can tell you is the new guy and the new administration is less concerned about your numbers. I would say it needs to be based off of capability. Just don't come up with some random number that says you can have 200 people in Syria. What's that 200 drawn off of, what plan, who is that. Honestly, from my perspective, we used to get a lot of that.

Tony Thomas trying to get increases when he was a JSOC, even now at USOCOM and some other things, anyway. It can become very frustrating. It was interesting sitting in a room with Susan Rice and the President and the primary staff. There were about ten people sitting in there discussing the Islamic State. My boss literally said, this was like September 2014, he says, sir we'll take Mosul back by December. I don't think we took it back for two years. Why because the Iraqi's are working off their own timeline. CTS, their counter terrorism forces are the ones that are really fighting the fight. The typical



Iraqi security forces, we're attempting to build capability but really we're trying to build courage. You've got a weapon. Because five dudes with a pitchfork would come over the hill and the Iraqi's would give up their tanks and everything else. That's why the Islamic State was driving around in our shit.

So very, very tough when they're working on their timeline. Now the great news is when they eventually sourced, not only the CJTF in terms of third corps and General McFarland but the division in putting the CFLLC eye in there and originally that was Tony Grinstein and General Funk out of the first infantry division. They were saviors man. But Ray symmetrical Devons was there too but he was doing a little OSCI and he was being Ray symmetrical and not everybody liked Ray symmetrical. I love it. Some sergeant majors get very territorial and it pisses me off. It's like let's just work together.

SGM WATERHOUSE: While you were at CENTCOM, there were a lot of changes going on overseas.

CSM (R) GRECA: Absolutely.

SGM WATERHOUSE: You got a new operation, a resolute, inherit resolve. Afghanistan ISAF becomes Resolute Support so there's a lot of change going on. Did that make it harder or was that more just name changes?

CSM (R) GRECA: Well some of them are name changes but it does make things more difficult. Iraq, when we were first building it up, we used like the special purpose mag taf out in Alisay only because they had organic lift, they had the C-130's. So what was kind of cool was watching from afar, bringing in the joint force and how you prosecute something like that. So the CAOC which controls all the air, we had 15 nations that were flying tech type of aircraft. So when you can bring together, hitting targets in Syria and Iraq that's pretty special.

What I was really proud of is as we get smaller and with the threats that we have globally, we cannot afford to go at this alone. And I say go at it alone from an Army perspective we certainly need our Marine brothers and sisters, our Air Force brothers

and sisters, our Naval folks. I would go on their aircraft carriers and watch them every night. The F-18's going to hit target or 16's going to hit targets in Iraq and Syria, that's pretty special. Globally, we've got a lot of issues. The Islamic State and this violent extremist organization stuff, again I would argue with anybody. Those losses haven't been in vein and we need to continue to make this an away game. I'm utterly convinced that if we wouldn't have done this that we would have had other terrorist attacks in the United States of America.

SGM WATERHOUSE: As the CSEL of CENTCOM, and these are broad questions for future NCO's. How did you communicate with those senior enlisted leaders of the other services or your sergeants majors.

CSM (R) GRECA: I would go into the region in Bahrain. That's been a permanent base for 30, 40 years. It's like being in Korea. It is pretty nice although I tell people they have 75 percent of the population lives off the naval base. Not everybody in Bahrain likes U.S. service members so I would do a lot

of that.

The other thing that I thought was important and it became less important to others was communicating with the senior enlisted folks of the services. The sergeant major of the Army, the sergeant major of the Marine Corps, the Mic Pon. I thought it was important that I come to D.C. and that I walk around that building and make offices and just say, listen. You've got your services, man trained but we're employ. A COCOM commander is going to grab your assets and he is going to employ you. I could not get everybody to understand that. They just don't. They're not evil people. Listen, I wouldn't either.

Back when I was a division guy overseas I didn't know what ARCENT did, I thought they delivered toilet paper. I was like what does ARCENT do, what do these dudes do. I'm telling you, there is not evil people but as we're employing the force out there it behooves us to cross talk and communicate. Now Bataglia, the last CEAC, they have an annual meeting

at the Pentagon. It is in there as the sergeant majors and the mic pon and all the senior enlisted of all the services. But all the COCOM's, the six geographic and three functionals. So you've got TRANSCOM and you've got USOCOM and you've got STRATCOM. They are different beasts in and of themselves really in domains that they're working. You can't be able to crosstalk and communicate with these guys at least have a good relationship. Some of them, I would get the stiff arm.

SGM WATERHOUSE: When you would do these BTC's --

CSM (R) GRECA: Yeah we had an agenda.

SGM WATERHOUSE: What did you normally talk about?

CSM (R) GRECA: It was the last 30 days, it was upcoming 30 days, it was assistance that CENTCOM and specifically my headquarters in the J staff could help with. So it was trying to be value added. By the way, they all had copies of the bosses priorities and all this stuff. It was discussing that stuff.

Strategically, how do you become value added at this level. Is it value added for me to go to a patriot battery in Jordan, who oh by way, gets a combat patch and all that. And then go to the same, by the way, same battalion but a different battery in the UAE and they don't get shit. That's hard to explain to soldiers that are out there. Frankly, I think there are so long overdue changes. But the second and third order affects to that, listen this paying up front or paying later with PTSD and all the rest of it and the games that some are playing, there are affects to, if you said, these are direct support zones.

Right now like Jordan was so it was Iraq, Syria Jordan. I got people in Beirut and in Beirut these dudes between ISIS, between LH and others they don't get shit. You know what they get, they don't even get tax free money. It is silly. I used to have these conversations and honestly, the kids don't really care about the money. They don't. What they want is a ribbon. They want an Operation Inherit Resolve. They want a patch, a combat patch. That's

all they want. They want to be able to go home, look at their mom and dad in the eye and say I contributed to this. They can take themselves in the VFW. They don't have to get a VFW dude to sign them in.

So it was hard and I did the majority of my work, General Austin is a busy, busy guy. Listen, every night we would have the fivesome when he was back in his office. It would be me, the chief of staff, the J3, the J2 and we would have a small group, we did it every night. So every morning we would do a big group and every night we would go around the horn and discuss things. Most of the time, listen I'm not going to talk the talk if I have nothing substantial for the group, I have nothing substantial for the group. A lot of stuff was not his -- he didn't need visibility. General Garret needed to fix the problems. General Garret needed to energize the staff and talk to the joint staff and others about this stuff that's going on over there. It was interesting. It was an interesting job.

I think the COCOM guys, so there is E-10 pay

right. So the sergeant major of the Army gets E-10 pay and the CEAC gets E-10 pay. So nobody really knows this but they do, there is an E-10 pay chart out there and it is to the base pay like \$1800. So when you retire, it's \$1500 whatever that dollar amount depending upon time, I told John a while ago, listen you need to get the COCOM guys pay. There needs to be incentive. So I'm just telling you because the COCOM commanders with the Army chief, they are from a protocol perspective, equals. Yet a COCOM SEL's we're not getting paid the E-10 pay. By the way, that's chump change in the big picture of things. It's so little it's like how many dudes are really talk about. But if you publicized it, some people might go hey. It isn't all about the money but it is nice to be rewarded. Jeff Right when he came out of JSOC and went to CAC he took a \$2000 a month pay decrease because he was losing all his proficiency pays and all sorts of stuff. These SF guys, God bless them. Rob, he's in it man because he's losing money. Just something to think about.



SGM WATERHOUSE: I don't think I hit this earlier. You got to headquarters which was in Tampa right?

CSM (R) GRECA: Yes.

SGM WATERHOUSE: And then you got, of course, the AOR. How much time did you actually spend back at the headquarters?

CSM (R) GRECA: The intent was when I first got in there, now you've got to remember, I was having a lot of surgeries. So I was getting a lot of procedures done and I would stay in the rear. My initial battle rhythm was 15 to 20 days in the AOR. I thought I would get pulled to the D.C. area with the SMA and/or the CEAC pulled up there and then the additional few days in Tampa. That's what I went in there with. Now I did pretty good. At least 10 to 15 days a month. What I would do is, Iraq and Afghanistan are the two big ones. So I would try to flip flop those things monthly. And then I would go somewhere else so I would go to Jordan. The Jordanians man they're hooked on U.S. crack because they want all our

stuff and our schools. I would go to Jordan and then I would go to Egypt. I would go to the UAE because the UAE is actually doing pretty good. The reason why Yemen went okay because the Saudi's weren't fighting.

So I could give you some very, I'm not sure it would clear a legal review but I could give you very, I think, informed opinions on like all those countries in the region. I think if you looked at them from the GCC perspective, I think the UAE is the big one. I think as you kind of go up, the Jordanians and the Lebanese are both pretty good. Their armies, Egypt has a lot of stuff but they have a tendency to fire tank rounds at suspected IED locations. That's the reason why we ran out of all this ammo. The Iraqi's came back and were like we need more ammo. It was like what did you do with your ammo. So we taught them how to load, fire and reduce stoppage but we never taught them how to employ it correctly. So they just run around.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Switching gears a little bit, your final year as the CENTCOM command senior

enlisted leader, you went public to basically discuss your health treatment at Walter Reed National Medical Center.

CSM (R) GRECA: I did. That story, so I'll tell you why I did it. I thought I would be a hypocrite if I didn't. I know some people that have had an issue or two and they don't discuss it yet we say there is going to be no repercussions yet we don't do it.

SGM WATERHOUSE: This was via Facebook originally?

CSM (R) GRECA: I just put a post on Facebook. The issue was, I thought I was having a heart attack at my house. There was not a doubt in my mind I was going to die on my living room floor at MacDill Air Force Base. I had the chest pains and the whole nine yards. I had just, talking about battle rhythm, I had just returned from overseas. It was a one day pack and turn and I was heading up to the D.C. area. So I was walking down my stairs and I didn't feel very good.

So leading up to this, I was like, and I've always had this thought, I'm going to die of an aneurysm or a heart attack. It's not going to be in combat but it will be something flaky like a blood clot. So I thought I was having a heart attack and my wife came home. I was like, call 911. This is the big one coming on. So they came, threw me in an ambulance and I'm like my heart is racing. I'm looking at the numbers and that's panicking me. What I figured out was, and I didn't know this before. You can talk your body into doing that. If you think it's fight or flight, if your body really thinks that something is going on, it will respond in order to fight that and I was like, no way.

They came in the following morning and they had shot me through with dye and they are checking all this stuff. My wife thought I was having an embolism because I had been traveling a lot in aircraft. They did the test and it was like nothing is wrong with you. I was like what, I almost had a heart attack. Then this gal that I met, Sara McNary, of all the

people in Tampa here's Sara. She walks into the room and she is a care coalition ranger kind of gal and she kicked everybody out of the room except me and my wife. She said, you had a panic attack. I was like, no I didn't. I go I'm not panicked. That's not me man, I don't get stress. I'm probably a little exhausted but besides that, so anyway. I went to NICE and NICE is National Intrepid Center of Excellence. The special operations unit uses the how out of 7 east and 7 west.

SGM WATERHOUSE: This is Ft. Sam Houston?

CSM (R) GRECA: No this is at Walter Reed. There is this neuro guy, Dr. Williamson, he's a specialist. They ran a bunch of cognitive studies because I was forgetful and stuff like that. They put me through a series and it is live in, it's like two weeks. They wouldn't let me dip. I was like what. I almost signed myself out. And that's why I had a sleep study done because I've been on Ambien for a while. My vestibular balance they kind of figured out and my depth perception and then the eye alignment.

So post that, I've had two surgeries to realign this left eye. They didn't quite get, Dr. Chen, and then she did it again.

Here's the thing about that. I swear I honestly believe everything happens for a reason, I do. So everything man. I've been blessed. Me and scuba from the days when we were privates, I am a blessed, blessed man. But everything happens for a reason. I never got interviewed but I was on the CX slate. It's the only slate. It's the only slate I've never gotten picked up for. But you know what, it is a miracle that I didn't. I couldn't have done the job. I'm just telling you, it would have been physically impossible.

SGM WATERHOUSE: This is Senior Enlisted Advisor to the Chief of Staff.

CSM (R) GRECA: To the Chairman. The one John Troxel had, I couldn't have done. There is no physical way in hell I could have done it without not messing myself up. So if I would have been selected, it was like man dude that would have been a bad

showing, a very, very bad showing. John is a great friend and he's the right guy to get picked up for it anyway.

Anyway, that's why I went. So it was a little Facebook post and then the *Army Times* called me and said, we want to publish this. I really had some reservations about that. I was like okay I didn't mean for it to do this but it kind of took off and it was shared a lot. The moral of this story is physically, mentally kind of emotionally, I had become very withdrawn and isolated. You guys don't see it. If you have really paid attention to me you would know what is happening because I don't like to do nothing. I don't like to go to dinner, that's why I got all my food in here. I can get in front of the students and I can put on a show. It's my external façade but my wife will tell you, it is much different.

My psychologist, he came to me, Paul Botchio, and he said are you depressed. I said, I don't know. I said what does depression look like. You're asking me a question that frankly I don't have

any idea. I don't think I am. I'm not boo hooing in the corner but it was a real interesting conversation. Part of this is just hey listen, you can turn yourself off. So from that first meeting with Sheila and telling her son is a mechanism when you lose a lot of people and you're doing RAP ceremonies every night. Listen, you will detach yourself and it just becomes another loss. Frankly, that's all that those people learn is another loss unless they knew them. There were some people out there that I knew them like Gunny Blair. But if you don't pay attention, then relationships falling apart. Ray Chandler getting home and getting divorced right away. There are others that are out there that are struggling right now. We're talking about 30 plus years of marriage with people. I think my wife is going to leave me one day.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Looking back at your two plus years as the U.S. Army Central Command Senior Enlisted Leader, what were some of those lessons learned you passed on to your successor?

CSM (R) GRECA: I think it is building the



teams and it is building the teams with the services and the service component commands that make up CENTCOM. It is getting out, it is being seen, it is having conversation with these men and women to include our civilians and all the cohorts. That's 75,000 men and women. What I can say is, three, four, five years from now, something is going to happen that none of us see. It was like 9/11 and I don't know that it's going to be in the CENTCOM AOR versus the PAYCOM AOR versus the whatever AOR. What I know is agility is the key. Be adaptive and responsive.

I wish the service senior enlisted leaders were a little bit closer with these COCOM guys. They're providing the forces ultimately and I would get that feedback and pass it to Scott Schroder over at FORCECOM. But frankly, there needs to be others.

SGM WATERHOUSE: One thing I failed to ask is when you were talking about your time at Bethesda, what kind of feedback did you get?

CSM (R) GRECA: First of all, I was up there with a senior enlisted guy. It was quite the assembly

of folks that were up there in this thing. There was a ranger medic. So what I got is my father died of ALS and he really knew he had it in his mid-fifties. So there was some discussion about taking some of my DNA and running a strand and seeing if I'm a match for having ALS. Now we didn't do that but I'm concerned about it. I get frontal lobe deficiencies which is your executive thought and function and processing. But you know what, we don't where I was before. Maybe I'm smarter than I was. We don't know because nobody tested me 30 years ago and you need to have that baseline when people come in and something to gauge it off of. I think we have to because if not, we're going to continue to pay people money in terms of disability.

You rushed out of the Army, I bet you didn't get 30 percent. You know the deal, once it is done, it's hard to fix it. I was the same way. Here's the other thing I'll tell you. So the SMA is General Votell was announced. I kind of threw a wrench in a lot of people's plans. People didn't see Votell

shifting over from USOCOM because nobody thought Tony Thomas would be a four star general. I love Tony but we didn't necessarily think that was going to happen.

I was asked by General Votell and his XO, do you want to stay. You have all the say and I said no. It's just time and I always heard I would know when it is time and it is time. No regrets, no disappointments, wish my body would have held up a little bit better but absolutely no regrets. Now Dan said, in order to move me from MacDill because there was this real bad stuff, people looking at me, Dell Byers, Darren Bond and how we all collapsed the Ft. Benning area. There are a bunch of nominative sergeant majors out there that were like what the heck is the SME going to do that for me.

Now I promised Dan that I would give him 365 days if he PCS'd me because that's the law. It's like a regulatory thing. You have to have 365 days in order for the Army to pick your stuff up and move it. But the deal was, I was medically retired. Not a lot of people know that I was actually med boarded. I was

med boarded and found unfit. And then when they found me unfit, I had 60 days to be out of the Army which was perfect. I couldn't have planned it any better. So it worked out to right about six months instead of a year into transitioning. That was part of the deal.

Now in my rush to get out, I had some issues I should have appealed but there is this thing called presumption and the presumption states that if you're in over 30 years they're not supposed to medically retire you. They're supposed to let you retire normally in lieu of presumption. I didn't want presumption. I'll go to what's it called to tell them and show them how messed up I am. I always promised when I am no longer value added to the Army, it's time to go. I don't want to take up a slot. I'm sitting in a seat where a sergeant major can be sitting. That's an interesting end. Retiring with Byers and Darren Bond --

SGM WATERHOUSE: So I was going to ask you about. You guys had a joint ceremony.

CSM (R) GRECA: We did and we did it for a

reason. That's because me and Darren and Dell are closest of friends. We all have the ranger background that we grew up in. I will tell you, Darren Bond is somebody that I use to T bird in VTC with. I'm telling you, when he was IJC I was down in RC South floating around the corps level. Darren is a great friend as is Dell. We were originally going to do it out at the Ranger Memorial but it grew into a bigger event then we thought it was going to be. We ended up doing it inside in Wickham Hall.

SGM WATERHOUSE: At Ft. Benning.

CSM (R) GRECA: Yeah. The only bad part is yeah, you get three of us so it ends up being very long. That would be the only -- my wife, I actually had some thoughts because I joined the Army from here. I lived off Lead Street in D.C. I thought about going up to D.C. and having one of those sexy retirement ceremonies done by the old guard which they would have done but I was like I don't want to get those guys out there. Frankly, I don't want to put on that stupid bus driver cap.

SGM WATERHOUSE: We're almost to the general questions for the NCO Corps. So not many sergeant majors can say that they served as a command sergeant major at the one, two, three, four star general level like you have. Working both at Army Command ACOM and Combatant Command. Looking back over your military career of 30 plus years, what were some of your proudest moments and as a soldier NCO?

CSM (R) GRECA: I think seeing and doing what I thought was right and not what was popular. Again, those discussions that I had with commissioned officers in regards to people, like Ophelia Leb, the person that was court martialed and/or others. In hindsight, I'm not proud of the way I delivered it. I'm proud of the message because ultimately it was something that they needed to hear. I'm proud of the relationships that I've built with, I say general officers. It's not because they're general officers but they're great people. You look at Dan Allen and Dave Perkins and these folks just are tremendous people. The ability that I've had over 30 years of

working at those levels and through my lens, I'm intaking bits and pieces from all of them. I think I've been blessed to do that. There are not too many folks that again, have worked at the one, two, three and four star. Three of those positions, one, two and three we were the senior commander at those particular posts. It was kind of a neat experience to be at JRTC and Ft. Polk or Ft. Drum and/or Ft. Leavenworth.

I wouldn't take anything back. I always hear this, get back to the basics. I don't by it. I don't even think people know what the basics are. They are defined differently so I think people need to have the conversations but quit trying to pull us backwards. We've had a tremendous Army and we've been capable of making an away game for the last 17 years. I've got the 6800, 7000 that we've lost as a result of this. I'm proud of each and everyone of them.

I will say that I think there is clearly people that are milking the system. But we need to take care of these men and women when they get back. Not to a point of overkill, I'm not talking about

paying them, I mean there were plenty of substandard soldiers or aka dipshits that I had in my formation that are same way that they're transitioning out of the military. I've been blessed. Then the opportunity to come up here to the Army War College and mentor this course and this class it is special.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Just from a military perspective, how would you want to be remembered?

CSM (R) GRECA: Caring and compassionate. I hope people generally look at me and say this dude did it for all the right reasons. There is not a bullshit bone in his body where it was about him and job assignments. There used to be this, listen I've gotten a lot of jobs but what I can tell everybody I didn't want them, I just got them. Then you've got to do what the Army asks you to do until you get to the point where you retire. I hope people look back and just go, that is a real genuine dude that really hasn't changed from back when we were privates. I got it, we got more experiences and we've had assignments and we've developed ourselves but fundamentally, we're



still the same people. That's what I hope people say about me. That guy cared.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Before I get into some questions of what I call, get your insights for the future and current NCO corps, one of the biggest things people have to deal with is transitioning to civilian life. For you, what were some of the greatest challenges in that process?

CSM (R) GRECA: I lucked out and dumbled into a lot of jobs. You have an influence over those decisions that are going to be made. If you've got a solid reputation when you transition, I promise you this that people will seek you out and organizations will seek you out. Now simultaneously, have a realistic thought in regards to pay scale. Sergeant Majors, it is so difficult to describe what we do and what we've done for organizations that people are like I don't know what he does. That is why it's important like Steve writing a book or others telling this story and trying to articulate exactly what we did.

Get on LinkedIn. LinkedIn to me has been one

of the biggest helps. You could network yourself meaning there is some dude out there, Pearson, this retired first sergeant from recruiting command. I'll tell you, that dude has done a phenomenal job of marketing himself and what he's done. And then you got Quinn out there, Mike, who is just all over it. Remember the connections. I've got two cards in my wallet that I am emailing tonight or tomorrow. One is Dan Allen and the other one is General Brown. Why, because Dan Allen, General Retired U.S. Army, they might be looking for people. It is kind of working several avenues of approach.

Listen, I don't have job security, I'm just telling you. I could lose my job tomorrow. So it's a little bit dangerous and it doesn't help that I overspend and over buy and over purchase and the whole nine yards. I have not been smart in terms of my financial future. But you know what, I could get into a car accident today and if I do, I win. I've got the coolest stuff.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So now I'd like to switch

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gears and ask your thoughts about the NCO profession and the future NCO corps of the Army. Again, these are what I call free mentorship from the NCO corps. In your opinion, what are some of the key things a senior NCO, a sergeant first class or above, must do to be an effective leader at his or her subordinate NCO's and soldiers.

CSM (R) GRECA: Well, being a good role model, showing them that you care, develop them correctly. I think one of the worst things I did was I was not good at taking those 30 company troop battery level first sergeants and developing them. If you remember, it was two levels down and two levels down, are you seriously sitting down with those individuals and trying to assist them in their development. I think you've got to have a plan and a strategy, just don't attempt to dumb your way in. As I look back, that's one of the biggest mistakes I made. I didn't go in there with a strategy, I just did stuff. I hoped it worked out but it might not have been fair to all the company troop battery level first sergeants.

SGM WATERHOUSE: In your opinion, what are some of the key things a senior NCO must do to be an effective advisor to his or her commissioned officer, i.e. a platoon sergeant to a platoon leader, a first sergeant to a company commander.

CSM (R) GRECA: It goes back to my point where I said Army pays us a lot of money to give our thoughts and opinions. I've often said, at the sergeant major level, I'm not going to tell you what I think is popular, I going to tell you what I think is right. By the way, I think way too many leaders get overly concerned about their bosses disagreeing with them. So whether it was a war recommendation, whether it was whatever. If I sent in and said, sir here is my recommendation, and dude didn't agree with it, I didn't care. My job was to give the recommendation. Now if I was passionate about it, I follow up with a conversation. Ultimately, don't get your feelings hurt if people disagree. Commanders make the tough decisions. There are too many people I think they always need to be synced with their bosses and I don't

buy off of that.

SGM WATERHOUSE: You mentioned earlier that you went and did some night school to earn some civilian education, your associates degree. That's always, I won't say a controversial topic but a lot of NCO's think civilian education is not important. Some people will say it is important and we go back and forth over the years. In your opinion, what do you think about it.

CSM (R) GRECA: It is the biggest mistake of my career. I had somebody ask me the question, Sergeant Major, over your 30 years, what if anything would you change. This is when I was down at CENTCOM and I was doing my last all hands. So monthly I would do an all hands. I said there is nothing I would change. I thought about it for a second and I said no, I'm going to take that back. I pissed away opportunities to get my civilian education. Now I finally got my undergraduate degree and I did it from an institution that my father -- so my father passes away. I go to Park University because that's where my

father got his degree. I thought that was fairly important.

But listen man, I ought to have a master's degree already and not a BS master's degree but a real one. I'm not trying to harp on TUI and Phil Genre who is all over it and he's selling it. My one mistake, and I've got several but the one that is glaring is I didn't think civilian education was important. But as it develops us as leaders, you become better spoken, you write better and I think that becomes important.

SGM WATERHOUSE: This next question is where some people disagree. In your opinion, should NCO civilian education have any bearing on his or her selection for promotion to sergeant major. Why or why not.

CSM (R) GRECA: I think what the change in the NCO ER system and the block change is I don't think it should. I think these proponents and the proponents are building the strong man of what that guy or gal needs to look like. I want you to be a warrior. But at the same time, like if you ask me

what is more important, having a bachelors as an infantry sergeant major or a ranger tab I would say ranger tab any day of the week. Some people will disagree. The SMA told me about this accreditation that is going on with USASMA and he is very excited about it. I got it. It certainly doesn't hurt but I tell people all the time, I pissed away some opportunities. Hell, I ought to have a PhD by now as long as we spend in the service.

SGM WATERHOUSE: What advice would you give to sergeants majors selected to serve in their first battalion level command sergeant major position?

CSM (R) GRECA: Be approachable, sit down with your commander and define expectations. So I think way too many just kind of go into this thing and they really never define it. So the battalion commander doesn't sit down and say, hey sergeant major. I think what it needs to be is a collaborative event where you go in with a 3X5 card of what you think you're going to do and when your commander comes in with a 3X5 card. We all have our strengths and

weaknesses. What you figure out collectively is sir, ma'am, I might be able to help you with that but I might not. If I had to do all my assignments over again, I would do that. I used to share that out at PCC. I think that's important, defining expectations.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Speaking of the Nominative Leader Course which we're going to see tomorrow, what advice would you give those guys and gals that are preparing for their first nominative level sergeant major position?

CSM (R) GRECA: They need to figure out, just like the expectation with their commanders, they need to figure out the bigger picture. Instead of developing PT plans and looking at organizational PT plans, it is how does your commander write policy that affects and ensure that fitness takes place. It is kind of like you're ramping it up through a policy letter. Through policy and that's how your boss at the general officer is working and that's how he affects change. Again, be more than the board question, be more than just the picture on the wall



guy. In order to do that, you've got to be out and you've got to be approachable. That is approachable by all.

I know some officer haters man, I do. You know Steve Womack, great friend. His biggest problem, Steve is one of the most smart and most capable dudes I know. But the way he would talk to the officers, they hated him. It was almost condescending to a certain point. My point is, you've got to have a relationship. At CENTCOM it was the deputy. So General Burke, he was my go to guy. At CAC it was the Chief of Staff Agguto. Certainly the one stars if I was in their area. I always had that person and it usually wasn't the commander. I got it, I loved the commanders. When I was a battalion CSM, I was BFF with the battalion XO, Dan Beatty. At every level it shifted to somebody else and it wasn't necessarily consistent. Maybe it was personalities but it was people that I believe trusted and valued my input to the organization.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Last question. Is there

anything else you'd like to discuss, any topic, any subject, something we haven't addressed?

CSM (R) GRECA: Yeah I'm just going to get in to my overwhelming desire to tell people not to go backwards. It is, listen, it is hard when you talk about disciplined behaviors and then you simultaneously want soldiers be allowed to think. You can't be a zero defect organization, you can't build an organization.

What a private will do is if he or she makes a mistake and you crush them, everybody else in that organization will say it does not pay think in this unit. It doesn't pay. Greca just thought and he got crushed, so we can't do that.

As we go forward we do not need to regress and go backwards. I got it, it is hard. It is hard to allow these young people -- I read this article on basic training and how we've gotten away from, I disagree. No what I would say is this. You need to be good at about 15 things in the Army. Shoot, move, communicate with pieces of equipment, you need to be

good at that. Past that, quit trying to overload the sensors in the training and put that back on unit and home station training that when they come out of the training base, if you're making guy or gal with this weapons system you train them.

I think sometimes we have over complicated stuff and we need to get our NTO's right. We haven't changed the equipping piece of the NTO for years. So you can have first brigade and 10<sup>th</sup> Armor first brigade and the 101<sup>st</sup> and they look different, why.

They shouldn't look different. It is either because they have theater provided equipment that they brought home. OCO funding has bought them stuff, we need to knock this off. We really need to get down to the baseline of building an NTO and the equipping piece the right way.

SGM WATERHOUSE: First sergeants still don't have training NCO's?

CSM (R) GRECA: Yeah. That's crazy.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Sergeant Major, I appreciate you taking time out of your busy schedule

to do this interview.

CSM (R) GRECA: You bet, buddy.

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