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SENIOR NON-COMMISSIONED OFFICER ORAL HISTORY  
PROGRAM

INTERVIEW WITH COMMAND SERGEANT MAJOR (RETIRED)  
ALEX RAY LACKEY

Bowling Green, Kentucky

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COMMAND SERGEANT MAJOR (RETIRED)

ALEX RAY LACKEY

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## I N T E R V I E W

SGM WATERHOUSE: Good morning. My name is Sergeant Major Brett Waterhouse of the United States Army Heritage and Education Center. And today I'm interviewing Commander Sergeant Major Retired Alex Ray Lackey, for the Senior Non-Commissioned Officer Oral History Program.

Today's date is April 3rd, 2018, and this interview is being conducted in Bowling Green, Kentucky. Sergeant Major, can you please tell me your date of birth and where you were born?

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yes. My date of birth is March 7th, 1953, and I was born in Middletown, Ohio.

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

CSM(R) LACKEY: Sure. As I said, I was born and raised in Middletown, Ohio. And I had the

opportunity to visit my grandparents, you know, in the summertime. I enjoyed that. They lived in Eastern Kentucky. And so it was a little bit different scenery, you know, had out houses and we worked on the tobacco farms and all that stuff. So that's what I remember.

And most importantly, it's one of the things that caused me to have a hobby today when one of my grandparent's locations came open, my sister and I bought it and we go there now and we've made it into our little compound and things. So it's really a part of my life now. And we go there four or five times a year.

But growing up was a little bit different for me. My mom died when I was at an early age and just 12 years old. And so after that my sister and I stayed with some of our relatives, and my dad was a truck driver and gone all the time. So it was a little bit different scenario than when I was with my mom and things.

So I had a kind of a, not a hard life, but a

difficult life growing up as a child. And so it also built my character and made me stronger. Some people said, you know, how did you and your sister become who you are and what you all come by. My sister's very successful too. And so that I think was my building block in what made me who I am and what I am. And it could have went a different direction.

But, you know, I went to school, Middletown High School. And I went to Monroe High School, you know, like the gypsy with different schools because, like I said, my dad, and the situation and things. But it was, like I said, an opportunity for me to build character.

And then when I had the opportunity to go into the Army I chose to enlist and go into the service.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, Sergeant Major, when you were I guess in high school, I mean is that what you were looking at doing or, you know, by the time you're a junior or whatever. I mean what did you think you were going to be before you decided to join

the Army, what did you see yourself doing? I know some people say "I'm going to be a Blue Angel's pilot or I'm going to be a doctor." I mean is that something you were always kind of thinking about?

CSM(R) LACKEY: No. I actually, I had five uncles, and we'll talk about that, I think in the course of this thing, that were in the military. But the military really never crossed my mind at the beginning. I was in a point where I had some friends. One of my friends, her dad was a radiologist, and I was interested in things like that with my mother being sick. And I always thought I would go into a profession where I could help people in the medical field. And he'd talk to me about going to school and becoming a radiation technologist and then pursuing other avenues and things. So I thought that I'd probably want to be in the medical field just based on what I went through and with my mom's illness and stuff.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So did you look at maybe going to college for that after high school?

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah, you know, my dad, like I said, my dad was doing okay with the trucking company and everything but back then never promised me an education or college. So it was, you know, what I thought I would do would be graduate from high school, go to work for this doctor.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay. Then work your way up.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Then work my way up and go to school at the time that I'm doing that.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, Sergeant Major, you joined the Active Duty Army in October of 1970. I think on a three-year contract?

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yes.

SGM WATERHOUSE: While we still had troops in Vietnam at that time, the draft was still in effect. So how did you make a decision to go in from having to work for a doctor's office to joining the Army during the Vietnam War?

CSM(R) LACKEY: Well it's kind of interesting. I was in high school and one of my

buddies said "Hey, I'm going to join the Army and I would like for you to go in with me on the buddy plan." You know, they had the buddy plan back then. And so we talked about it, we went down and we saw a recruiter. And this was in October. And I said "Okay, you know, okay, yeah, let's go on the buddy program together." So we went into the buddy plan, we signed up and --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Did your dad know about this?

CSM(R) LACKEY: MY dad did know about it. And he, you know, we talked about it. And of course he was in the Army and he served in World War II along with all of his brothers. And, you know, my sister wasn't too keen on it. And she was the one I communicated with more.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Now is she older or younger?

CSM(R) LACKEY: She's about 18 months older than me.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay. Big sister.



CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah. So she wasn't too keen on it. And it's kind of interesting because the day we went down to join, my friend, who his name was Bo back then. But he chose not to go in.

SGM WATERHOUSE: What? Left you hanging.

CSM(R) LACKEY: So I was -- talking about the Army of one, I was the buddy of one. But I'm one of those people that was dedicated and my word was my bond even back then. So I told them I was going to join, and I joined and went into the Army.

And from going on the bus to the Met station, flying in my first plane ever and stuff. So the experience started overwhelming me right from the beginning.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, Sergeant Major, why did you chose to join the Army instead of maybe the Air Force or the Coast Guard? I mean there are some folks joining different things obviously.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Well, I looked at a lot of variables, and like I said, my dad served in World War II. He landed on the Anzio Beach. My uncle, Alex

Lackey, who I'm named after, was at the Battle of Bastogne. And so, you know, and I had one uncle that was in the Navy, and the rest of them were all in the Army.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM(R) LACKEY: And they all survived and they came back. But I looked at things, and they were talking about the draft and we had the lottery system back then. And so, you know, after I joined, you know, my draft number was seven. So it was kind of interesting. But my dad and my uncles they said, you know "You go in, it's going to be Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, and you don't get to choose. This one --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Well number seven, you knew you were going.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah. You get to choose what you're going to do and, you know, and things. So I chose to join the Army. And so -- but to interject that, the call for the draft didn't come until that next first year. I actually joined before I knew what

my draft number was.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Oh, okay. So you would have been in but just a little later.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah. I would have been in regardless, yeah. But that's why. Basically my dad and my uncle that I was named after, the other uncles didn't talk a lot about it. And I always teased my uncle in the Navy. I said, you know -- he said "Why'd you join the Army?" I said "Well I didn't think I could swim 2,000 miles if something ever happened to the ship."

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, Sergeant Major, back then, for folks that don't know. Did you get to sign up for a particular MOS, or you just signed up for the Army and then you'd figure that out once you got done with Basic Training?

CSM(R) LACKEY: Well, at that time I really didn't know what I was doing. I think that they signed me up for a particular MOS, because I wanted to be an infantry guy. And, like I said, my dad was a tanker, and my uncle was with the 101st. So, you

know, I just wanted to serve. And didn't know that I was going to be chosen for the profession that I did in the beginning. As we talked, you know, you all know that it all worked out. But, yeah, I went to the Army not really knowing what I was going to do.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay. So when you did join, you signed up for three years. What were your expectations as far as the Army? What did you think? What were you expecting that time in the Army to do for you, I guess, is another way of saying it? And did you think about that time making a career, or was this "Hey, this is just a first step in life, then I want to try something different."

CSM(R) LACKEY: I didn't think of joining as a career. I think that in the beginning I joined, like I said, for the buddy plan. And maybe to escape where I was at, what I was doing, because, you know, I didn't really know, you know, I had friends that were going to go to college and do different things. And so I thought, hey, this is an opportunity for me to get my feet on the ground, decide what I want to do.

I was aware that there was a Montgomery GI Bill and if I wanted to go back to school, you know, it would give me an opportunity to --

SGM WATERHOUSE: And you're about 18 at the time?

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah. -- have my education paid for. And so, you know, it gave me something to look forward to.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, Sergeant Major, you attended Basic Combat Training or Basic Training, as most people say, as a Private E-1 I think, right?

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yes.

SGM WATERHOUSE: At Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri. What was your experience like there at Fort Leonard Wood?

CSM(R) LACKEY: Well it's interesting. And some things you never forget. And so, you know, my Drill Sergeant was Drill Sergeant Stamps. And, you know, you talk to leaders and they say "Hey, you know, this was my Drill Sergeant, this was my Master Sergeant."

SGM WATERHOUSE: Mine too, yeah, I can still remember.

CSM(R) LACKEY: So I remember him and I remember the way that he molded us and, you know, took us down and made us into a cohesive team. But one of the things that I learned as a young individual, and started making me want to do more and be a better soldier, was the first day in the Army I'm sitting there and, you know, they say you don't volunteer for anything, but of course I didn't know all that. And so --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Give me a Private.

CSM(R) LACKEY: We need somebody to go do something. I raised my hand. And it was like "We want you to go to the Supply Room and pick up such and such." I'm like "Okay." Well I didn't know where the Supply Room was.

SGM WATERHOUSE: You didn't know what they were asking.

CSM(R) LACKEY: I'd been at Reception Station, I'd learned, you know, to march a little bit.

SGM WATERHOUSE: How to put the uniform on.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah, put my uniform on straight. But I'm going to the Supply Room and I'm running, and I pass an officer, and it's a Lieutenant. Well, I didn't know what a Lieutenant was. So I'm running past this. And I get my first butt chewing.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Butt chewing.

CSM(R) LACKEY: And so, you know, he dressed me down. And I said -- I asked him where the Supply Room was at.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So for those who don't know, you didn't salute him, you just ran right by him.

CSM(R) LACKEY: I ran right by him.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So he corrected you.

CSM(R) LACKEY: He corrected me. And that made me realize that, you know, first of all someone shouldn't send you somewhere that you don't know where you're going, and don't have the ability to know who you should be saluting. And so I was very cognizant from the beginning, more so than those other soldiers

in my Platoon, what I needed to do to become a soldier.

SGM WATERHOUSE: And, so, Sergeant Major, by that time I'm sure your fellow trainees in there, you had a mix of probably draftees and volunteers? Did that make the experience different, just for those who have never experienced something like that?

CSM(R) LACKEY: The only difference that I saw was the fact that when we went into the chow line, you know, you'd be waiting in line there. We had two lines, we had an RA line and we had a regular line. And when they come in, you know, for some reason they separated us. And I don't know if it was whatever, but we would go in and you'd have to sign one sheet versus another sheet or something because --

SGM WATERHOUSE: So the draftees were in one? Really?

CSM(R) LACKEY: -- the draftees --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Really, they segregated?

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah. They weren't segregated in the mess hall as much as they were, they



kept count of them for head count I think.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Oh, okay. But it kind of gives the impression that they're lesser than or different. That's weird.

CSM(R) LACKEY: And that's the only thing that I really remember. Because in the barracks and with the Platoon Sergeant, and nobody ever, you know, knew what was, you know, going on and who was what.

SGM WATERHOUSE: It must have been some paperwork deal.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah. And I always used to tease, you know, after I got out of the Army, I used to tease people. You know, because we weren't rich by no means, and we were actually poor and with my dad traveling all the time and running his business and my mom deceased, my sister and I had a rough time. And so I came back I always tell the people, they say like "So what do you like best about the Army?" I said "Well, I got a pair Low Quarters and two pairs of boots. I never had two pair of shoes in my life." And, you know, really, you know, going to school and

on, I didn't know I was poor, you know, and my dad would come and we'd get clothes and things. But, you know, and it wasn't like we were poor, just financially circumstances changed because my mom was working.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM(R) LACKEY: And when she got sick and couldn't work and all the hospital bills and things like that, I guess is what changed our livelihood.

But, yeah, I used to tell that joke, but it wasn't that bad. But that's, you know, the only experience I really remember different than anybody else.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, Sergeant Major, after you graduated from Basic Training you were promoted to Private E-2, as we call it. And you attended Advance Individual Training, or AIT for Field Artillery Crewman at Fort Sill, Oklahoma, which I think is about eight weeks long. So when did you find out that you were going to be told you were going to go in the field artillery?

CSM(R) LACKEY: About a week before we graduated everybody got their orders.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So everybody was kind of in the same boat?

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM(R) LACKEY: And especially for the RAs.

SGM WATERHOUSE: And what do you mean by RA?

CSM(R) LACKEY: The draftees.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay. Okay.

CSM(R) LACKEY: I guess they called them RAs back then, I don't know. And then they didn't know what they were going to do. And I really didn't know what I was going to do. I had a contract maybe, but I didn't know what I was going to do, you know.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Your recruiter might have signed you up for it.

CSM(R) LACKEY: I was going to Basic Training. But about a week before they got us in a room, Drill Sergeant Stamps comes in the room. He said, you know, "Here's your orders." And I'm like

Fort Leonard Wood, I'm in Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri, I'm going to Fort Sill, Oklahoma. I'm like "Never been to Fort Sill, Oklahoma, that'll be pretty cool." So, you know, another trip for me.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM(R) LACKEY: So about a week before was when I realized I was going to be a Field Artilleryman, and be in Fort Sill, Oklahoma.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So what did you think of that training there? What are some of the things you learned from AIT?

CSM(R) LACKEY: The training at Fort Sill, Oklahoma was a little bit different. You know, they didn't treat you like a basic trainees. We did have I think one Drill Sergeant, the rest of them were Cadres. But what I liked most about it was the professionalism. You know, first time we went to the range, and you see it now when you go to live fire exercises, you know, when they take a 105 and a 155 and they shoot the 155 up in the air and then they crank down the 105 and they shoot it after they time

it, and they both impact into a 55 gallon drum at the same time. That's pretty impressive.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Wow.

CSM(R) LACKEY: And so, you know, I learned "Call for fire," I learned a bunch of things that probably helped me a lot for my future endeavors in the military. And so I was blessed that I got that opportunity to go and be an artilleryman on a 105 Howitzer, which would help me in the future.

SGM WATERHOUSE: And that was towed artillery or self-propelled?

CSM(R) LACKEY: It was self -- it was not self-propelled, it was towed, yeah, towed artillery. And I was able to get that MOSQ, which later, you know, when you get more MOS's, you get more promotion points and --

SGM WATERHOUSE: MOSQ as in qualified?

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah. So you were certified in your job as an artilleryman.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yes.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, Sergeant Major, after AIT at Fort Sill, you attended Airborne School at Fort Benning?

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yes.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Which is in Georgia. What led to you going to Airborne School as an Artillery Soldier?

CSM(R) LACKEY: Well we were all in a big fieldhouse there.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Still there.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah, I saw it the other day. But we were in this big facility and they were talking to us about where we were going next. And one of the people there was recruiting people to go to Airborne School. And I'm like hey, my Uncle Alex was 101st Airborne, he was at Bastogne, you know, he was somebody I looked up to, and he cared for me and my sister whenever we were growing. You know, we never did live with us but he always checked in on us and made sure we were good to go when my dad was out on the road. He was a truck driver too, but, you know,

he was home more and got short runs and things. So he actually was like a mentor to me. So I'm like yeah, I raised my hand, I want to do that.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So how did you end up at Fort Knox before Airborne School? Or was it you left --

CSM(R) LACKEY: I was just saying it was like Sadowski.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Oh, it was like Sadowski. Okay.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah. It was a fieldhouse. We were all in this big auditorium like -- the reason I didn't use auditorium, gymnasium, because that's more school versus military.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So it was at Fort Sill before you left?

CSM(R) LACKEY: It was at Fort Sill but it was like --

CSM(R) LACKEY: Like Sadowski?

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah, just a big fieldhouse. And they had us in there, and they had different

people recruiting, you know, for different things.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Different things.

CSM(R) LACKEY: And so I'm like -- once again I raised my hand, I want to go to Airborne School.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So was that three weeks long back then?

CSM(R) LACKEY: That was three weeks long.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So any particular things you remember about that you'd like to talk about?

CSM(R) LACKEY: Well, yeah, the important things I think was the physical fitness was stepped up a little more. You know, us Artillerymen, we were doing physical training every morning a PT, but not to the rigorous effect we would do it at Fort Benning, Georgia. And so, you know, getting to Fort Benning, Georgia, and being on that run the first day. Because I was lean and mean, pretty physically fit and I'd always exercise and stuff before. But, you know, getting there it was a stressor on your body.

And the first week, we were there for a week



and it was a holiday or something, I can't remember what it is. But we got there and all my buddies and stuff, because I'd just met, you know, they're all going to Florida, because we're not too far away. So we all take off and we get in our cars and we head down to Florida. And a bunch of them got sunburned. Even back then I didn't like the sun a lot so I'd, you know, lather up, and I took care of my skin.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM(R) LACKEY: The next week we come back we're on the swing land train on the 34-foot tower and all my buddies were jumping out of the tower with sunburn, screaming.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Not good.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah. But I remember that. And then obviously when we got ready to do our first jump, we had a Chaplin on our aircraft, you know, and he was up there. And he's trying to make us all feel comfortable and things. And so, you know, we were getting ready to over the DZ and he said a prayer. And then like all good infantry airborne ranger

Chaplins he hooked up and he screamed all the way out the door.

SGM WATERHOUSE: He jumped out first?

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah. So --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Lead by example, right?

CSM(R) LACKEY: Once again we had a very good experience there.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, Sergeant Major, after airborne school in March of 1971, if I got my dates right, you were assigned to Fort Bragg, North Carolina, where you served with Bravo Company 1st Battalion, 504th Infantry Regiment, which was part of the 82nd Airborne Division.

So you're trained to be a Field Artillery Crewman at Fort Sill, you went to Airborne School, and then the Army decides to assign you to an Infantry Unit.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yes.

SGM WATERHOUSE: How did this come about?

CSM(R) LACKEY: Well I got in to the Reception Battalion there, the Receiving Battalion I

guess, is that what they call it, whatever they call it.

SGM WATERHOUSE: In progress.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Replacement.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Replacement.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Army has some. They have them sometimes and they get rid of them.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Replacement Detachment.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM(R) LACKEY: So I went into the Replacement Detachment and I'm there in the barracks. And of course just before that the 3rd Brigade of the 82nd Airborne Division had been deployed to Vietnam and so, you know, they were short of soldiers in the organization. And I'm pretty sure they were short a lot of Infantrymen because they probably took people from other Units to make them 100 percent to fill the ranks to make them full. So once again, you know, they're sitting there and this guy comes in and he's like "We need people that are not Infantry to go into Infantry Units and fill our ranks." And he said, you

know, "You'll get an additional at a boy, it will help you for promotion."

SGM WATERHOUSE: So you were part of the 3rd Brigade?

CSM(R) LACKEY: No, this was -- the 3rd Brigade was gone.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay. So you were going to be like the backup soldiers to go over?

CSM(R) LACKEY: Nope. I'm sorry, I'm not explaining. When we got -- sort of like me with Desert Shield/Desert Storm. When my Unit got mobilized we took people from all over the 100 Division to make me 100 percent full. And back then I was a Private, you know, and I didn't know what was going on.

But when the 3rd Brigade of the 82nd Airborne Division went to Vietnam, I say they took a lot of the infantry resources from other Units, like the 1st of the 504.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So you're filling holes that they took people from?

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah. So they made them 100 percent so --

SGM WATERHOUSE: That's what I thought. I just wanted to clarify.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah, I'm going to be a filler into an Infantry Unit, if I choose. You know, it was --

SGM WATERHOUSE: They gave you the choice.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah, they gave me a choice right then.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Might have changed later.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah. Might have been "Well, since you didn't volunteer, we're sending you there anyway." You know how that works.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yep.

CSM(R) LACKEY: But once again, Ray Lackey raised his hand, said "I'll go, you know, I'll go do that, I want to be an Infantryman, yeah." My uncle was an Infantryman with the 101st. I'm like "That's pretty cool." I don't know if I want to be a gun bunny in the 82nd anyway, so, you know, the good

Lord's looking out for me again. So I sit there and I raised my hand and I said "Yeah, I'll go be an infantry soldier." Probably one of the best things that ever happened to me.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, Sergeant Major, I understand that your NCOs in Bravo Company, 1st at 504th, gave you OJT, or on-the-job training to teach you how to be an infantryman. Is that how that happened? So was that common back then? Because I know it's not today obviously, but back before 1973 when it was all volunteer. This is before then, so was it common back then that soldiers could just change MOSs fairly easily like that?

CSM(R) LACKEY: I don't think it was common or easy, I think it was the needs of the Army.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Once again, with the shortage of Infantry Soldiers. And they didn't know what was going on, you know, they didn't know, you know, we were still in the Vietnam War, you know. They're thinking, hey, are we going to send another

Brigade? I mean I don't know what they were thinking. But from what I know now, you know, the Division Commander, Commander Major and staff are thinking I have employed an entire Brigade to Vietnam, I've lost a lot of my resources, we need to ramp up and be ready in the event we're called on to do something else. They didn't have multiple deployments back then like we do now. But someone was creatively thinking that, you know, what's the number one goal, especially in the 82nd Airborne Division and the 101st, readiness.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM(R) LACKEY: You know. And so --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Some people called that the Army's 911 Force.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Exactly. And so not that it's something they did all the time, I think it was just the needs of the Army. And once again it was, like I said, a blessing for me and a great opportunity.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, Sergeant Major, back then in the Army, you know, every decade or every

generation thinks that, you know, that they're better or worse than, you know, usually better than the previous generation. So back then, in your perspective, in that Army of the early 70s, what was the quality, you think, of the average soldier. Because this is always debatable up to now, you know, some people say "Well, the soldiers today aren't as good as they were, you know, 10 years ago or, you know, or 20 years ago." So in your opinion, looking back at that time, that first Unit I guess, you know, and you already talked about your Drill Sergeant and stuff. The average NCO, average soldier back then, as far as quality, what would you say that was? And how did that influence you, you know, as you served 30 years or so?

CSM(R) LACKEY: And I was, you know, I was going to make sure that I got this point across because I had great leaders. When I came into that organization and Bravo 1st Company of 504, just like my Drill Sergeant, I knew my Platoon Sergeant, PSG A.



J. White. And when I got selected as the Commander Sergeant Major of the Army Reserve, he was one of the first people that I tried to locate and contact. He still lived at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, to let him know that he's one of the reasons --

SGM WATERHOUSE: That you were there.

CSM(R) LACKEY: -- in addition to all the other mentors that I had, and soldiers that helped get me where I'm at. That, you know, I am who I am and where I was because the first day, you know, I go from the Processing Center there, I get to the Unit, you know, they assign me my bunk and get me squared away. Formation's tomorrow morning at 0700. I get out of formation, I'm standing tall. You know, I'm a pretty striped soldier, I just got back from Jump School, you know. And Lieutenant Sergeant White goes through the ranks and he's like "You, you, you, you."

SGM WATERHOUSE: Like an inspection?

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Inspecting.

CSM(R) LACKEY: I mean every morning it was

fall in, receive the report, report, yeah, the whole nine yards.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Make an X mark.

CSM(R) LACKEY: You know, I mean it was hard.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Check on your uniform, hair cuts and shave.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Exactly. Everybody's there, all present.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Check on the shine on your boots and all.

CSM(R) LACKEY: All this accountable stuff, you know, they were accountable unless they were on leave or in the hospital, you know, you were there. And he's like, he's picking people "You, you, you, you." And he points his finger to me and said "Over here." And when he gets done he's got all like five or six of us and we're all new guys in his Platoon. And he uses a little bit of adjectives and he says "If you guys are going to fall into my formation in cook whites, you're going to the mess hall." And so --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Which basically means a faded uniform.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yes.

SGM WATERHOUSE: It's really faded, it's almost white, not green anymore.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Basic training, AIT and Jump School.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Your uniform had faded out.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Washing my own clothes.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Probably not washing the best way, hot water.

CSM(R) LACKEY: So we all go to the mess hall. And I'm like, hum, I volunteered for something again. And so that night --

SGM WATERHOUSE: So he wasn't kidding, you're going to go work in the mess hall.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah, first day in Bravo Company 1<sup>st</sup> of 504, my Platoon Sergeant sends me to the KP and work because I was in cook whites.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So you're doing dishes.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah. So at the end of the

day we get off, it's late, you know, after breakfast, lunch, and dinner. First thing I do is I jump in my vehicle and I'm going to clothing sell store.

SGM WATERHOUSE: To buy another uniform.

CSM(R) LACKEY: And guess what? Clothing sell store is closed.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Oh, no.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Because I get there late. So I go downtown to Fayetteville and I find me a new uniform. I don't remember what I paid for it, but God knows it wasn't cheap.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Pawn shop or something.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah. And I buy me a uniform and I go get the stuff and I get it sewed on. And, you know, I take one of my name tags off and I put my name tag on, I had the U.S. Army and all that. Or they maybe made me name tags.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM(R) LACKEY: But I spent a fortune --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Getting the uniform.

CSM(R) LACKEY: -- getting the uniform. The

next morning I'm standing in the formation and PSG A. J. White walks through after we do reveille and all that stuff. And he says "You, you, you and you, get out of my formation." I'm not one of them picked up, you know, because I'm standing tall.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So you learned your lesson.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah. Just like I did with the young Lieutenant there when I went to the Supply Room. And he said "You guys want to wear cook whites?" He said "You need to go to the mess hall." And one of the guys said "But Sergeant White" he said "I worked all day yesterday, I didn't have time to --" He said "Get out of my formation and go." He didn't want to hear nothing.

SGM WATERHOUSE: You figured it out.

CSM(R) LACKEY: I figured it out.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So you think your buddies would have asked you "Hey, how'd you get the uniform?"

CSM(R) LACKEY: They did that night.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, Sergeant Major, I understand that you served in several duty positions

in Bravo Company 1st of 504th, to include M-60 Machine Gunner, Team Leader and Squad Leader. Also I understand that within your first nine months in the Unit you were promoted to Private First Class and then Specialist, which is E-3 and E-4.

So, you know, that's pretty fast by today's standards. How did you -- maybe I'm not sure how that worked back then, but you made Specialist within like 14 months in the Army. It's normally like automatic at two years.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Two years.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So how did you move up so quick?

CSM(R) LACKEY: Well Squad Leader, Sergeant Duffy. They recognized that I was a force to be reckoned with, you know, that I was going to do whatever it took to meet the standards and to be what I needed to be. And I told this story in front of a bunch of Army Reservists video tape one day on a video, what do they call it, the live cam.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Video teleconference?

CSM(R) LACKEY: Video teleconference. I was up at OCAR for a BOD with the current Sergeant Major of the Army Reserves. And we were sitting there and they was asking me some questions about, you know, things like that and how I get promoted so quickly. And I said "Well, you know, I never came to this point to where I said "Hey, I want to be this great leader." I just realized the things that I needed to do to be successful in the Army. And I said "Unfortunately the only thing you need to do to be in the Army and be successful is meet the minimum standards." I said "That's all you gotta do." I said "If you do one little thing to exceed the minimum standards --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Somebody will recognize it.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah, somebody will recognize it. And the most important thing, we had a lot of Guard Duty back then because the 3rd Brigade was gone, so now we had two Brigades doing Guard Duty instead of three. So every time I turn around I'm on Guard Duty. Well Ray Lackey soon realized that if you were the sharpest soldier on Guard Duty and your shoes

were shined, and you knew all the answers to the questions, that you were going to be the supernumerary, you were going to get the day off.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Which means you didn't have to pull Guard Duty.

CSM(R) LACKEY: You didn't have to pull guard duty. So I studied hard and learned everything. Because I seen all these guys doing that in my Platoon, and I'm like "If they can do that I can do that." So I became supernumerary, then I became the Soldier of the Year for my company. I went before the Board at the 82nd, and I was actually the first loser, I guess you could call it. I was runner up Soldier of the Year for the 82nd Airborne.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So you did all of these things outside of, you know, a lot of soldiers don't even do those things.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Right. I was a Battalion Soldier of the Year, the Brigade Soldier of the Year, and the runner up Soldier of the Year, which made it great. And then I also had the opportunity to be the



M-60 Machine Gun Team of the entire 82nd Airborne Division.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Like the top machine gun?

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah. I mean we got a trophy like three foot tall.

SGM WATERHOUSE: I could see where that'd get you promoted.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah. The recognition just, you know, come to fall in place.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So just kind of going over those positions in Bravo Company 1st of 504th. So when you did your time in those positions, would you just talk a little bit about, you know, your time as a Machine Gunner, Team Leader, Squad Leader, how that kind of came about?

CSM(R) LACKEY: Well, once again, you know, positions and needs of the Army. My Squad Leader, you know, liked me, my Platoon Sergeant liked me. They said "Hey, we got this competition, we want, you know, to be in." And so I took charge of my team, I was the M-60 Machine Gunner Team. And it wasn't in a Weapons

Platoon then, they were in the rifle companies.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM(R) LACKEY: And so every day when we had spare time we'd go draw out the M-60 and we would tear the M-60 machine gun down, put it back together.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So it was you, an Assistant Gunner. Was it just two people or --

CSM(R) LACKEY: Anno bearer.

SGM WATERHOUSE: And an anno bearer. Okay.

CSM(R) LACKEY: And so we would do that every day, you know, like crazy. You know, we'd get done with lunch I would draw out the M-60. Then we got to where we'd tear them down, put them together blindfolded. And every time we had an opportunity to go jump out of an airplane, we did. Every time we had an opportunity to go to a range and fire the M-60, we'd do the table firing to where we got really good. And, you know, unfortunately, we weren't doing it to prepare ourselves for war, we were doing it to prepare ourselves for competition. Which ultimately made us, you know, a great fire team and we were able to do

suppressive fires and could have done anything that we needed to do.

And if I transition just a minute, while I was there, and you asked me about being a --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Team Leader.

CSM(R) LACKEY: -- Artilleryman earlier.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Oh, yeah.

CSM(R) LACKEY: And I told you it helped me down the road. That year we had the EIB competition.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Expert Infantry Badge.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah. Expert Infantry Badge. In my entire Battalion there were four people that got the EIB, that's how tough it was.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Wow.

CSM(R) LACKEY: And I was one of them. And one of the things that 90 percent of the people failed, Call for Fire.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Call for fire. Helps, right?

CSM(R) LACKEY: So once again, you know, I'm blessed. You know, I know Call for Fire like the back

of my hand, I can drop 50, fire for effect.

SGM WATERHOUSE: That's one of those things too, if you don't keep up with it you forget it.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Exactly.

SGM WATERHOUSE: You had, you know, a whole school for training.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Exactly. Eight weeks of it.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM(R) LACKEY: And so -- but to answer your question, you know, from there, and then being a Team Leader and being a Squad Leader --

SGM WATERHOUSE: As a Specialist, right?

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah. I just mimicked my Platoon Sergeant and my Squad Leader. And I had guys like Sergeant Duffy, guys like Sergeant Mackey, all Vietnam Veterans.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM(R) LACKEY: PSG A.J. White, they were all Vietnam Veterans. And they trained you to standard.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So when you filled, because

that's a Sergeant position, and then a Staff Sergeant position. So when you filled those, was that, were you filling those because of how well you did on things, or was that also the need because you were short NCOs?

CSM(R) LACKEY: We were short NCOs.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah. Because our NCOs were being deployed. They were either going to Vietnam, they were going to Korea, they were going, you know, at that time they weren't being called to be recruiters and things like they do now, but they were going to fill gaps as Drill Sergeants.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Especially Vietnam Veterans.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So Drill Sergeants or deployed.

CSM(R) LACKEY: And different things and being deployed. So, yeah, whenever there was a vacancy, because, you know, once again, I could be relied on and trusted, they put me into positions.

And I think that it's, you know, and being a young soldier, I had issues. You know, I mean I had people that were wanting to know, you know, why did you, you know, get this position over me. And, you know, why are you there and what's going on.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah. So kind of backtracking a little bit. So when you first got to the Unit and you were a Machine Gunner, who did you -- I know you mentioned your Platoon Sergeant a lot. Is that the person that you kind of relied on or looked to to train, advise you, assist you, you know, as a new soldier, or was it was somebody else?

CSM(R) LACKEY: My Platoon Sergeant and my Squad Leader and my Team Leader, those three individuals. PSG A.J. White, Sergeant Duffy, and Sergeant Mackey were the people that I didn't really rely on them, they were just there.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay. I've had those NCOs.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah. You know what I mean. When I had issues, it's like they appeared. You know, I mean they -- it was a couple of them, one of them

even lived in the barracks. So it was like you were surrounded by them the entire day. It wasn't one of these things like okay, we're going to leave formation now, we're going to go eat breakfast or we've ate breakfast, we're in formation, we're going to go to training, and the Platoon Sergeant and everybody takes off. No, they're there. And they're with you and they're working with you and they're teaching you the task conditions and standards that you need to know in making sure that you're doing the right things that you need to be doing.

And then I had peers like, you know, I met guys in other companies who were qualifying for the M-60 Machine Gun Teams too, against me.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM(R) LACKEY: And they became my buddies because, you know, we were peers, and Johnny Ray Bell, he's from Marceline, Missouri. I keep in contact with him now. And Sergeant Williams, you know, he was another one. I don't keep in contact, I lost contact with him and wasn't able to find him. But those guys

had Machine Gun Teams and when we got to Company level we competed against them. When we got to Battalion level we were working with them.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Because we took the best of the best, you know. My gunner was the best, Sergeant Williams was, so he became my gunner when we went to compete in Brigade. So we took the resources --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay. So did other teams?

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah. You know, to do whatever was the best to compete.

SGM WATERHOUSE: To get the best three guys. So before we -- well go ahead, I'll come back to the school stuff.

So as a young Squad Leader and Team Leader, was it the same NCO, was that kind of, and the same folks in the other companies that kind of saw you through that time?

CSM(R) LACKEY: Right.

SGM WATERHOUSE: And if you had questions as a Squad Leader you'd go to the Platoon Sergeant. So



it was pretty much the same crew.

CSM(R) LACKEY: I could walk right down the hall and talk to them. Or go right next door, like where your car is, that's how far away the next barracks was. You know, they were stat.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So if you had a question you didn't have to go in front of -- there's plenty NCOs you could get the answer from.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Right.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Hey, how do I do this?

CSM(R) LACKEY: And you knew which ones to talk to.

SGM WATERHOUSE: And which ones to not?

CSM(R) LACKEY: And which ones not to, yeah. Exactly.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, Sergeant Major, in 1972 you attended the Basic Leadership Course there at Fort Bragg. Was that different than PLDC? What was the Basic Leadership Course?

CSM(R) LACKEY: It was like a BNCOC, you know.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM(R) LACKEY: You know, it was, for me it was maybe not like PLDC as much, but it was, because I was serving in that position, they wanted me to go to school to learn how to be an E-5, learn how to be a Squad Leader, learn how to be --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Now was this in 82nd Division course?

CSM(R) LACKEY: It was an 82nd Division course.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yes, that they taught right there.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So that was for people filing Non-Commissioned Officers' spots?

CSM(R) LACKEY: Correct.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Kind of teaches them basics of being ODU as an NCO.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Exactly.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Any particular things you remember from that course?

CSM(R) LACKEY: The only thing that I really remember from it is the intestinal fortitude. Because when we got up we did just like at our Unit. You know, we had formations, we did PT, you know. And they wanted you to be strong. And not just physically fit, but mentally fit, and be able to handle things that came along, you know. So they knew that you were in the position, they knew you were working. They would talk to you, you know, "What issues and concerns are you having today. And what difficulties are there?" And, you know, when we get in our group settings. And they would -- somebody would get up and, even back then, say "Well this is what I did." And, you know, "This is how I did it." And, you know, as an E-4 working as a Squad Leader, you know, I got some challenges.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah, I bet.

CSM(R) LACKEY: And, you know, but it wasn't

--

SGM WATERHOUSE: Because a lot of those guys are the same rank.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah. And some of them were bigger than me and thought they could push me around. But, you know, there wasn't much time for that.

SGM WATERHOUSE: But you had the support of your NCO.

CSM(R) LACKEY: I had the support of my NCOs. And, you know, I always go back to that philosophy. I had one guy that he just really, he got -- and down the road we can talk. But he just was really antagonistic and always had -- and I lived in the barracks, you know. Of course when I was a Squad Leader I got to move into one of the --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Single rooms.

CSM(R) LACKEY: -- single rooms, or the joint rooms sometimes in a single room.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Where they lived at least two or three to a room.

CSM(R) LACKEY: And they were in the bay. And one of them, you know, I woke him up and he decided, I guess he'd been out the night before or something. And we'd go and we'd make sure they were

up, you know, getting ready and everything. And he was procrastinating, wouldn't get out of bed and things like this. And so he kind of ruffled his feathers a little bit, you know, was showing his colors. And he said "You need to leave me alone." He said "You know, I'm going to get there in my own time and I'll be there," and all that stuff. And then he made a conversation like, you know, there's others way to handle this, like, you know, I can whip your ass, or something. And I said "Well let me tell you something young man," and I learned this a long time ago. I said "You might be able to do that today, but there's two things you can't do." And I said "That's sleep and pull Guard Duty on your ass at the same time." I said "Because" I said "You might beat me up today, but the next time you open your eyes I'm going to be there with an entrenching tool." And I said "Let me tell you" I said "I'm not going to take any crap off of you just because you're bigger than me." And so I put the fear of God in him. Because you gotta do that, you can't take crap from them.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Did your Company Commander or whoever could control this back then, did they make you a Corporal? Did you wear Corporal Stripes?

CSM(R) LACKEY: I was a Corporal when --

SGM WATERHOUSE: So you had NCO power authority then? Okay.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yes. When I became a Team Leader I was a Corporal.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay. Good. I was hoping that was the case.

CSM(R) LACKEY: I was promoted to Specialist, you know, and then made a Corporal.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Because once you're - I mean that guy or gal has no choice, you're a Non-Commissioned Officer.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Exactly.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay. So I thought this was interesting. So also in 1972 you attended the Jungle Operations Training Course at Fort Sherman, Panama. How did that come about?

CSM(R) LACKEY: Well, our whole Unit --

because once again they deployed the 3rd Brigade, you know, previously. So our entire Unit, Bravo Company 1st of the 504, went to Panama.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So you didn't have a choice?

CSM(R) LACKEY: Didn't have a choice. Our entire company went through the training. We actually landed there but we actually jumped in. After we got there we did a jump. While we were in Panama we went through the school and, you know. And my first sergeant, he's like, "You know, you're going to go down to -- when you go down to Cologne you're going to be dress greens, or actually we were in khakis back then, not dress green. We were in khakis, you know, the old Army khakis.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM(R) LACKEY: He said "You will be in khakis, your boots will be shined, you will be a representative of the 82nd Airborne Division." And he said "If and when you're in a bar or you're doing something, you won't be drunk," he said "Because when

you come out I will be there. And I will make sure that you're doing this." That's the way, I mean that's the way I grew up. You know, I mean leaders. Because any other time, you know, you're in Panama, you're going to go down and drink beer and get wild and get on a bus and come back to your barracks. Not in my organization.

SGM WATERHOUSE: You had some supervision all the time.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Exactly.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So for that Course, which I know it doesn't exist anymore, but it ran for a lot of years. So for people that, you know, will read this a long time from now or even next year, what was the purpose of that Course, and what was -- you know, it wasn't just Vietnam, it lasted after that, but what was the most difficult part of it for you?

CSM(R) LACKEY: Well the purpose of the Course was for us to be oriented to jungle warfare. From day one, I mean we stayed at Fort Sherman, but from day one we were out in the jungles every day. We



would do patrols, we would do water crossings, we would eat the food, you know, Iguana tail, we would do the monkey, anything and everything. You know, he would crawl us into a village, you know, that's where we would negotiate to get our food and to do things. And it was like we were there to learn the process and procedures of working in a jungle environment, doing recons, patrols.

And you asked the hardest thing. Probably the hardest thing that I had was map reading. You know, I was great at a lot of different things in the Army because I always trained to do good. And I knew map reading, but, you know, in map reading I'd always -- and this is probably why then send, one of the reasons you get sent to Jungle Operations, you got three orientations. You know, you can do a straight line to that mountain, you know where you're at, you got your pace count, you know, you keep up with it. You shoot an azimuth, you do a back azimuth and know your point from two known locations, you know.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Figure out where you are,

yeah.

CSM(R) LACKEY: But you're in the jungles, you know, you don't know --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Can't see a whole lot either, right?

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah. You don't know anything.

SGM WATERHOUSE: You can't see very far.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah. You got machetes, of course the trails are there, but you're, you know, working and what. But the map reading was probably the most difficult thing for me. Because it was a different type. And I'm one of these people that are accustomed to, you know, you learn something, you do it this way.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah. So you had to adjust the way you did things.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Exactly.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, Sergeant Major, what were some of the key things in that Jungle Ops Course that, you know maybe you took with you that you

remember and, I guess that would be one of them. But anything else kind of stands out as "Hey, I learned this and, you know, it's something I didn't forget."

CSM(R) LACKEY: Survival. You know, river crossings, how to take and make makeshift rafts and things for your equipment and put them on. And to adapt and overcome and make sure that you and your men are taken care of in accountability. Because it's easy for somebody to get lost, you know, in a jungle. And at all times you got your point men, you got your person in the back, but at all times you're somewhere in the middle, you know, so you can control the situation. But you've got to keep up with 100 percent of your people and know what they're doing at all times.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, Sergeant Major, looking back at your time there in Bravo Company 1st Battalion 504th Infantry Regiment, Fort Bragg, what were some of the key lessons learned that you took from that assignment?

CSM(R) LACKEY: Well I think the key lessons

learned in that assignment is number one, when you go into a new organization, first and foremost, and this is for me as a new leader when people are coming into my organization. You know, people are going to perceive you day one, you know. I know exactly what PSG A.J. White expected of me in the terms of a uniform, being there on time, and being physically fit, from day one, you know. There was no acclamation. You know, like today, you know, kumbuya, warm and fuzzies and hey, come on in. I mean day one you knew what was expected of you in that Platoon.

SGM WATERHOUSE: The reception and integration phase was a day.

CSM(R) LACKEY: You better believe it. And then, you know, the leaders, like I said, Vietnam Veterans in teaching you and training you. You talk about the Company Commander, you very seldom seen the Company Commander. You know, unless we were out in the field doing collective training, all of ours was individual, crew served, squab, platoon, training. You know, we did collective training maybe two times a

year or when we had our missions, you know, because we had a training, we had stand down time when we could take leave in blocks. And then we had Guard Duty and support. You know, so every three months we were on a rotational cycle. And then after we did the training like at second or third quarter, we would do our company training.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM(R) LACKEY: So, you know, I learned about company training, quick training, at those times. And so it gave me a foundation to build on, you know, because you see your little Team and your Squad, your Platoon, and how it works in the big picture when you're jumping out of an airplane and assaulting an objective.

SGM WATERHOUSE: I mean really in that first Unit you got some experience that, you know, take other soldiers six, seven years to get.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Exactly.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah. So you kind of moved up really -- I mean you got six, seven years' worth of

experience as far as duty positions in one year.

CSM(R) LACKEY: And I was very blessed. And I mean it really -- you know, like I said, I just kind of show up at the right place at the right time. And I've always been, as you will see, I've been in some of the wrong places at the right time.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, Sergeant Major, in 1973 you decided to re-enlist in the Army. You were promoted to Sergeant E-5 and you went to Drill Sergeant School at Fort Knox, Kentucky. Why did you decide to re-enlist, and why did you put in to attend Drill Sergeant School? Was that a re-enlistment option or how did that come about?

CSM(R) LACKEY: It was an option. And, you know, it's kind of funny, like when you and I talked in the beginning, you know, I came in for a three-year tour. Well we took some leave, I had some leave time. And my wife and I took some leave and we decided that we were going to look at some options. Of course my options were different than hers. And, you know, I go down to Fort Stewart, Georgia, I want to go into a

Range Battalion.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM(R) LACKEY: And do some of that. I went to Fort Benning, see about going to Pathfinder School while I was TDY. And at that time, you know, it's sort of talking about cell phones. And they may not have they talked about that, but it's like when you decide you want to do something, you know, those options sometimes aren't available. Like in the 82nd, my Company had two Ranger slots. And they were just then forming up the Units and things at Benning and Stewart. So I wanted to go see if I could get a Ranger slot and go to a Range Battalion. I even went down --

SGM WATERHOUSE: That's pretty slim pickings, two slots.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah. I was going to sign in, you know, and of course then we got home after we did all that stuff and my wife said "Well, you know, we got Fort Knox here and we'd be close to home." Because her home was here, mine wasn't.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM(R) LACKEY: But my dad actually moved here.

SGM WATERHOUSE: What was that, an hour or so away?

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah. And her home was right in this area. So it's like okay, do I go become a Ranger or do I become a Drill Sergeant? And, you know, go back to be a light guy. So I said "Okay, I'll look at my options." And since I couldn't re-enlist to be a Ranger, they couldn't guarantee me that Fort Knox was an option as a Drill Sergeant. I could get both of those promotion points, the whole nine yards. And so I said okay we'll look at that. And so I re-enlisted. And also based on me being an Infantry guy now, going to Drill Sergeant School, they gave me \$10,000.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Wow. A bonus.

CSM(R) LACKEY: And, you know back then, my dad's like, you know, "What are you going to do if you get out?" I'm like "Well, I'm probably not going to



get out because I'm getting \$10,000." You know, our first house was \$24,000.

SGM WATERHOUSE: And the deal was you gotta serve whatever it was, two years or three years as a Drill Sergeant?

CSM(R) LACKEY: I had to serve six years.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Six years. Okay.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Six years commitment.

SGM WATERHOUSE: For the 10,000.

CSM(R) LACKEY: For the \$10,000. And so I took that and we went to Fort Knox, Kentucky and went to Drill Sergeant School.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, Sergeant Major, for the promotion to Sergeant, how did that work? How was the timing of that?

CSM(R) LACKEY: Well, I was actually promoted in the 82nd.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay. And then you re-enlisted?

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah. I didn't get it before I re-enlisted, I was actually an E-5 and then

re-enlisted and went to Drill Sergeant School.

Because you had to be an E-5 to be a Drill Sergeant.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM(R) LACKEY: And I went to Drill Sergeant School in 1972. Think about that. You know, actually that's when I left, I went to school in '73, but I mean, you know, I left at the end of the year in 82nd and went there to Fort Knox, Kentucky at the first of '73, yeah.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, Sergeant Major, speaking of the Drill Sergeant School, I'm sure it's changed a little bit over the years. How was that for you, you know, what -- Drill Sergeant School, I know everybody says it's hard. But what was the hardest part for you and then how did you kind of get through those phases or whatever that was?

CSM(R) LACKEY: Well, the interesting thing, because like I said, there at the Bravo Company 1st of 504 we always came in and we had our formations, we did drilling ceremony, you know, we actually did riot control formations and the whole nine yards. So I was

indoctrinated about, you know, DNC and different things. So I kind of knew what was going on in that arena. I didn't know it to the extent. And I'd been in Basic Training, you know, so I knew, but I didn't know what the lecture side of it. There's more than just teaching DNC, as you know, teaching the class was on the basic weapons and every gambit of everything in the military, you know, that you do. All the Drill Sergeants at the cadre teach some limited Drill Sergeant, you know, our platform teaching 90 percent of that. So it was just a rude awakening more so than a problem.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM(R) LACKEY: And I had a good memory so, you know, I was able to memorize the DNC and do the stuff. And became pretty good at it actually on the Drilling Ceremony and different things. So once again I was blessed to have that opportunity.

SGM WATERHOUSE: About how long was that school back then?

CSM(R) LACKEY: It was about eight weeks, if

I'm not mistaken.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay. So, Sergeant Major, after Drill Sergeant School you were assigned there to Fort Knox and you served with Alpha Company 11th Battalion, 5th Training Brigade. And I'm tracking about four years with that Unit.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So was that just a basic Combat Training Unit or was there AIT?

CSM(R) LACKEY: Well I was actually in a Basic Training Unit.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM(R) LACKEY: They had AIT on that side but I was in Armor so I was in the Infantry. I was Infantry so I was Basic Training. And if I could go back.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Once again, I talk about map reading, I talk about, you know, me being a qualified, you know, Rifle Marksmanship. You asked about issues. The only problem that I actually had as a Drill

Sergeant candidate, I had a Rifle Marksmanship issue. And we would go out to do qualification. I mean I was an Expert Rifleman, you know, I mean I got my Expert Qualification Badge in Basic, in 82nd Airborne Division, and I knew how to shoot a gun. And either the weapon that I had or something, I couldn't get it to work. And of course the Drill Sergeants that are working in the school, I couldn't convince them, of course, you know --

SGM WATERHOUSE: That there's something wrong with the weapon.

CSM(R) LACKEY: -- that there's something wrong with the weapon, you know. And so I'm like --

SGM WATERHOUSE: You didn't have like a Master Gunner to come verify that the weapon was --

CSM(R) LACKEY: I took it back -- you know, of course they're going to take it back to zero and bring it back up, so many and they give it to me. And I'm like, I'm in week five and I'm not qualified. You know, we was out to the range. And they're like, you know, you qualified and you did all this but that's

one of the things we gotta do qualify with our weapons to be a Drill Sergeant.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM(R) LACKEY: And I'm like -- and of course I'm issued that weapon, you know.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So you're stuck with that same rifle.

CSM(R) LACKEY: And I'm like "Look, guys, give me that weapon and let me qualify." I said "You know, I'm from Kentucky, I shoot guns, I know how to fire a weapon."

SGM WATERHOUSE: There's something wrong with that rifle.

CSM(R) LACKEY: And I actually finally -- it was actually the Commandant of the Drill Sergeant School that interceded and said "Yeah, let's at least give him that opportunity." So they gave me another weapon and I mean I qualified expert. And, you know, so I put this in there. Then it's like --

SGM WATERHOUSE: So they throw that weapon and send it to an armory?

CSM(R) LACKEY: I hope they did.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Probably gave it to some other poor guy. Said "Here."

CSM(R) LACKEY: Maybe I need to drop it or bang it or do something. But that, once again, it goes back to the parameters we talked about with them sending me to the Supply Room that day without training. You know, you got guys that are Reporting Officer or Drill Sergeants trying to make me a Drill Sergeant, one of the most elite instructors in the entire United States Army, and they don't even have the ability to reason that something may be wrong with my weapon.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Because you're going to have to do that with Privates later.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yes.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM(R) LACKEY: And, you know, dry firing, the whole nine yards. So I wanted to go back in and interject that because that was probably the only --

SGM WATERHOUSE: And you could probably tell

that when you returned to zero that it was an issue.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Exactly. But to answer your question, I was in Basic Combat Training. And the reason we stayed four years - and, you know, you've been in the Army as long as I have, but not earlier as I have.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Back then we had an MOS, double.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Drill Sergeant MOS.

CSM(R) LACKEY: It was a Drill Sergeant MOS so you stayed there three years or four years or what. Until you came down on a levy back in that timeframe you were not going anywhere as a Drill Sergeant.

SGM WATERHOUSE: It was almost like in the Reserves, you're a Drill Sergeant, you know, that's your job.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Exactly.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So as a Drill Sergeant, so you got out of school and now you're a Drill Sergeant of basic trainees. And you did that for about four



years. Any particular challenges you remember during that stint that you'd like to discuss, and how you got through them?

CSM(R) LACKEY: The most important ones were, you know, when you were a Drill Sergeant back in the 70s, it's not like being a Drill Sergeant today, you know, you get a stress card.

SGM WATERHOUSE: I've actually not seen that, but.

CSM(R) LACKEY: I haven't either but I've heard it. So, you know, strike that from the record. But I have heard that. Or that, you know, you can do different things. Well my biggest dilemma as a Drill Sergeant was -- you've heard of McNamara's 100,000 that started back in the 60s.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM(R) LACKEY: And, you know, it was a failed attempt to bring 100,000 soldiers into the Army. Well they were still, even though it failed, we still had people in 1973, you know, the draft, I think, was still going on.

SGM WATERHOUSE: It didn't end until the last draftee was in that year.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Because all volunteer Army didn't start until July of '73.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Sergeant Major, and I know his name was the last draftee in the Army, I can't think of it now.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM(R) LACKEY: From Alaska, and he was a First Army Sergeant. Anyway, he was claimed to be the last draftee in the Unites States.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah, I think it was early '73 he got drafted.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah. So I was dealing with that, I was dealing with, you know, them putting substandard soldiers in the Army, draftees and enlistees, and transitioning to doing things as crazy as beer in the barracks. I mean, you know, we were going from draft to VOLAR to give the nothing to give them everything.

SGM WATERHOUSE: VOLAR is a short for  
Volunteer Army.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yes. And so I'm like, you  
know, you're sending mixed signals.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So you want them to --  
because you volunteered we're going to put beer  
vending machines in the barracks.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah. Of course they didn't  
touch them until the weekends, you know, but still I  
mean for eight weeks of Basic Training you don't touch  
nothing, so why you put it there when they can't use  
it until --

SGM WATERHOUSE: I didn't know you had it  
there, I thought you meant just in the Army.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Oh, no, they had --

SGM WATERHOUSE: So they had beer in the  
trainee barracks?

CSM(R) LACKEY: Not in the barracks, in the  
day room.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Like the Coke machine. Of

course the day rooms are locked too until you had special events and things like that. And so --

SGM WATERHOUSE: That probably wasn't too smart, putting that there.

CSM(R) LACKEY: It wasn't smart at all. But that was some of my challenges. And then we got to where, you know, you could restrict things. Like in the beginning you'd take and you'd say "Okay, you're going to clean your barracks." And we want you to clean the thing so they can use brooms and things like that. And then you had buffers and brushes and, you know, if I ever went in and something was wrong with the barracks and they weren't taking care of them, you know. I had the old saying, you know, the Army issued me a buffer for this facility here and it's on a hand receipt, but there's nothing, I don't have a hand receipt for a brush. You know, so if you guys don't want to, you know, take care of this building, we can do it the easy way or we can do it the hard way.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, Sergeant Major, you were promoted to Staff Sergeant in November of '74.

Did your duties and responsibilities as a Drill Sergeant change at all, or were you in pretty much the same position?

CSM(R) LACKEY: I actually went from being an Assistant Platoon Sergeant to a Platoon Sergeant a little bit after I was promoted. Because my Platoon Sergeant retired, they didn't have somebody coming in.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM(R) LACKEY: And so once again, First Sergeant Floyd was my First Sergeant there. And he was originally the Senior Drill Sergeant.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM(R) LACKEY: And he was acting First Sergeant too at times. I had another First Sergeant. But they saw the trust and confidence in me when they had that vacancy they put me as the First Platoon Sergeant.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM(R) LACKEY: And you want to talk about difficulties in that organization. I had difficulties in that organization. Not with my leadership and not

with my soldiers, but with trying to exceed. Once again we talked about, you know, when you're in the Army and you meet the standard, that's all you gotta do. Well, you know, right now I'm 5'9", 165 pounds, I'm lean and mean, I still stay physically fit and do all the things, you know, I can pass a PT test for my age group and do all those things at 65.

But when I was there we'd get ready to go on cycle break, you know, after a long time. Well people just relaxed, they're like kick back or --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Does that take a couple weeks before the next group of trainees came in?

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah. And they wouldn't do anything. Well, I was going and running, I was working at gyms. I mean back then I probably weighed 180 pounds, I mean I was lean and mean. Because you had to be as a Drill Sergeant, you know, and things.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM(R) LACKEY: But the thing that concerned me the most, you had the test that you took to, and I can't remember the name of them, but it was a test

that they gave you on your MOS.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Oh, SQT.

CSM(R) LACKEY: SQT.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Skill Qualification.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah, skill Qualification.

SGM WATERHOUSE: To prove that you still had the technical expertise.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Every year. And I would study for that, you know. While all these guys were at the bowling alley or going home, I'd be at the barracks, I'd be studying. And so I'd come in, and we'd get our scores. Well the first year I was there, there was an E-6 Platoon Sergeant, I maxed my score, 125. I think --

SGM WATERHOUSE: I think your PT test was a part of that too, right, it's like a consolidation of everything?

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah, consolidation of everything. And your NCOER, you had to have a certain thing on NCOER. But from the standards of grading the test and the whole thing, I maxed it. And of course

they're like "Oh, you, nah, nah. You know, you maxed it." I'm like "Hey, you know, what better place to learn the basic fundamentals of basic combat training soldiering than in a BCT Unit, we teach it every day.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM(R) LACKEY: You know, so --

SGM WATERHOUSE: You should be expert.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Exactly. And so, you know, I got rubbed a little bit on that. But, you know, the thing is it didn't change my standards because, you know, I wanted to be all that I could be and learn as much as I could about my career.

CSM(R) LACKEY: And, Sergeant Major, in that job as the Platoon Sergeant, as a Drill Sergeant you had some E-5s under you I guess, or Sergeant E-5s?

CSM(R) LACKEY: I had a Sergeant E-5.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So was that the first time you had to do NCOER on anybody or Non-Commissioned Officer Evaluation Report, or did you have to do that as a Corporal?

CSM(R) LACKEY: That was probably the first



time that I ever had to do because when I was at the 82nd I really didn't do NCOERs and things.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So this was the first time you were in charge of NCOs?

CSM(R) LACKEY: That was the first time I was in charge of --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Any particular thing you'd like to highlight there, lessons learned? And we can tie it in, you know, to your time as a Drill Sergeant, lessons learned.

CSM(R) LACKEY: I think that the thing is standards. Once again, one of the first guys that -- and I don't want to talk names, you know, I know his name, but it is sort of like it will develop when we go into other positions I've served. People are like "Really?" I mean so when we went to do something, like in the morning we get up and do PT, I expected my Assistant Platoon Sergeant to be there. You know, there was a time, Phase One, they came in, you know, had different things. It wasn't when I started but they had Phase One, the Drill Sergeant lived in the

barracks.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah. Somebody was always there.

CSM(R) LACKEY: During Phase One me and my Assistant would be there 24/7. Well, I didn't say "Okay, I'm a Platoon Sergeant, you know, you're going to stay in the barracks." I took my turn staying in the barracks, he took his turn staying in the barracks. We'd get up, we'd do physical training, you know, we would do whatever the requirements were that day. But sometimes it's like the young soldiers didn't understand why I was always persistent about meeting that standard and doing that, you know. Like "I've got something going on tonight. I will come in and stay there while you're there, or leave the next morning. But, no, we're not going to leave the Platoon without somebody in Phase One."

SGM WATERHOUSE: Without somebody there, yeah.

CSM(R) LACKEY: And, you know, they didn't really like comprehend that. And I'm like "It's a

regulation, you know, it's the Army standard." You know, and "Oh, by the way, I like my job."

SGM WATERHOUSE: You can't let the Privates run the barracks.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Exactly. I would like to say one thing that, while we're talking on this, before we transition to another job. But some of it that you know. I was actually in my last position in the Army Reserve as a CSM in the Army Reserve, and I went to Europe. And me and Jack Tiller were there and we were visiting 5th Corp. And we also had the Sergeant Major, you know, Army Reserve, or had the CSM for the National Guard Bureau with us. And so we were visiting soldiers. And had a Corp Sergeant Major got up and he started talking. And you'll know it's a Corp Sergeant Major when I get done. But he was telling about when he was a basic trainee he was a trainee in Bravo Company -- oh, no, he was a trainee in 11th Battalion in my Company, but he wasn't in my Platoon. And of course he wasn't talking about me, he was just talking about, and he wasn't talking about

actual Unit then, he was just kind of, you know, building up. And everybody was looking around the room. He said "And there was this one Drill Sergeant," he said, you know, "Everybody really respected him," he said, "But my Drill Sergeant, the way he kept us straight. He would say 'If you don't follow the rules I'm going to have you transferred to this Platoon.'"

SGM WATERHOUSE: To his Platoon.

CSM(R) LACKEY: And so everybody is looking around the room, you know, now me. Me and Jack Tiller, you know, we both been at Fort Knox, but we didn't know anybody that was there. And he said "And that individual was Ray Lackey, and he's here as a Commander Sergeant Major of the Army Reserve." And he said "Sergeant Major, is there anything you'd like to say?" And I get up, and it's Ken Preston, the future Sergeant Major of the Army. And of course I'm about three months out from retirement. And Ken Preston, of course I knew him, he was an Armor guy, he'd been at Fort Knox at the schools and things. And he's like

"Sergeant Major, is there anything you'd like to say?"  
I'm like "Yeah," I said "If there was a basic trainee that is now a Corps Sergeant Major when was a Drill Sergeant, it's time to retire."

SGM WATERHOUSE: Time for me to go.

CSM(R) LACKEY: So Ken Preston always had that joke with me about being in my Company when he was a Private and I was a Master Sergeant.

SGM WATERHOUSE: At the time. Any other lessons learned from your time there in the 5th Training Brigade?

CSM(R) LACKEY: Other than those that we talked about, I think the only lessons learned other than the issues we've already addressed is that you never underestimate the influence that you have on an individual.

SGM WATERHOUSE: You saw that there.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Saw that there with Ken Preston. And had he not said anything I would never have known that. But I mean somebody's always watching. And it doesn't matter if it's your peer.

And by the way that was Sergeant First Class Daley, his Drill Sergeant. And it doesn't matter if it's your peer, it doesn't matter if it's a Private in another Unit. But somebody's always watching you and so therefore you need to be cognizant of that fact and always doing the right things.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Sergeant Major, so before we go to the next Unit, I think while you were a Drill Sergeant you attended the Basic Non-Commissioned Officer's Course, or BNCOC, at Fort Benning. Any particular things you remember about BNCOC, something you learned there or --

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yes. And for whoever decides to listen to this tape, I'm going to get a little critical for a minute. You can block it out if you want.

SGM WATERHOUSE: It'll be typed.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah. But the issue with me there when we went to Basic Non-Commissioned Officer Course, the three things that we did, we did training in classrooms. Which I really didn't understand, you

know, we never really got out in the field and did a lot of stuff. For an Infantry Soldier --

SGM WATERHOUSE: This is Infantry.

CSM(R) LACKEY: -- I thought we would do that. We would be in a classroom and the instructor would say "Hey, get up and go over by the thing," and right next door to us was an OCS Candidate Class. And every time they'd mess up they had a rock pile, and they would move the rocks from this end of the building over to that end of the building. You probably heard that before. And they had their big shiny helmets on and everything. And, you know, he would use that as his lessons learned.

But for the first time in my entire military career I was disappointed in the leadership. And the reason being, we were about a week away from graduation. And if you remember, we didn't have cell phones back then, I'd had no communication. I had a home phone, you know, I wasn't allowed to use the phone, pick up, say "Hey, call my wife." If there was an emergency and they knew who to call. About the

last week, three days out from training my wife and daughter were in a serious car accident at Fort Knox, Kentucky. I was not informed of that.

SGM WATERHOUSE: And you were at Fort Benning.

CSM(R) LACKEY: And I was at Fort Benning, Georgia. The day I graduated -- and people were trying to get ahold of me, they were keeping it from me.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So people there knew.

CSM(R) LACKEY: They knew.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Just didn't tell you.

CSM(R) LACKEY: They knew, and the reason they didn't tell me, they said "We didn't want you to leave and not graduate from this Course and affect you for the rest of your military career."

SGM WATERHOUSE: What's more important at that time?

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah. And, I mean, you know, she wasn't hospitalized, but they were both in the hospital and then released, the car was totaled.



I mean somebody's --

SGM WATERHOUSE: They didn't think you could handle that news I guess.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah. I mean, you know. At least let me pick up the phone, call my wife --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Say hello, yeah.

CSM(R) LACKEY: -- see how things are going, what I need to do, you know. And it obviously wasn't that bad but I mean they withheld that from me. And I thought it was the worst thing that had ever happened in my entire military career. And when I came back to Fort Knox, Kentucky, I filed an IG Complaint on them. And I never filed an IG Complaint in my entire life before. So lesson learned, I was very disappointed in my Basic Non-Commissioned Officer's Course there for that time period.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, Sergeant Major, in April of 1976 you were assigned to Camp House, Korea?

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yes.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Where you served as a Platoon Sergeant with Bravo Company 1st Battalion,

32nd Infantry Regiment, part of 2nd Infantry Division.  
And I think you were in that position for about a  
year.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yes.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So what lead to that  
assignment to Korea? Did you put in it for that or  
did they choose you?

CSM(R) LACKEY: Once again, you know, we  
talked about you're at Double O Foxtrot, you're not  
going to go anywhere until come down on a levy or --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah, because you're a  
Drill Sergeant and that's your job.

CSM(R) LACKEY: So I came down on a levy for  
Korea. And people were like "Oh, you can get out of  
that, you can volunteer to go to the 82nd, or you can  
volunteer --" I'm like "Hey, you know, the Army, so  
far the Army's been pretty good in their infinite  
wisdom of what they need for me to do."

SGM WATERHOUSE: Right.

CSM(R) LACKEY: And so, you know, I'll go  
there, I'll take my assignment thing, you know, you

have to sign your 4187 or something saying, you know, you've been levied, you have so many days to do this. I signed whatever it was I signed. Said, yeah, I'm fine. You know, there was people crying and not actually physically crying, but moaning.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Not wanting to go.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Not wanting to go. And I'm like "Yeah, I'll go." And the thing that I find interesting about it is when I get to the Replacement Detachment in Korea, the first thing they do is "You was a Drill Sergeant for four years, you're going to the NCO Academy at Camp Casey, Korea." I'm like "No."

SGM WATERHOUSE: Put you right back in another training job.

CSM(R) LACKEY: I was a -- because I'm cognizant now, you know, I've got that much time in. And I'm looking for points, I'm looking for things, I want to get promoted, I wanted to --

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah.

CSM(R) LACKEY: And I want to go back into a TOE Unit. Not just for promotion, but I mean like

you, you know, I mean we talked earlier about, you know, you know what your career path is, you know what you need to do next, you need to go be a Brigade Sergeant Major, you need to be a Nominative Sergeant Major. And, you know, you've had this time as a Sergeant Major doing this special project but you know what your next career path is getting back out.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Getting back out.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Getting back out. So I knew what my career path was. I need to be in a TOE Unit. And I said "With all due respect, I've been out of my career field for four years, I need to go to a TOE Unit." So they sent me to the armpit of the world, they sent me to Camp House. Which does the DMZ. Which was the best thing that ever happened to me, probably in my entire life, once again.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, Sergeant Major, in unclassified terms, what was the 1st Battalion Infantry mission in Korea back then?

CSM(R) LACKEY: Well, like I say, we were at Camp House. We were on the main corridor which lead

up to Freedom Bridge, the Bridge of No Return, going into the DMZ and that area. And so our mission, when I got there, I was a Platoon Sergeant. And I was directed that, you know, our Company's mission was we would be in the field one month, we would be on the DMZ one month, and we would be on rotation to take leave, go to school or do whatever we needed to do.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So training, real world.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah. Yeah, for the next month. And so every three months we had a rotation for an entire year that I was there. And during that timeframe we had major alerts, there was a lot going on in Korea during that time. But, now talking in unclassified terms like you said.

But once again, there was disappointment in leadership. That the first day that I go to GP Ouellette.

SGM WATERHOUSE: It's Guard Post?

CSM(R) LACKEY: It's Guard Post. I'm sorry, Guard Post Ouellette, which is right overlooking --

SGM WATERHOUSE: North Korea side?

CSM(R) LACKEY: -- the North Korean side.

And where they have all the talks at Panmunjom and, you know, from the way the crow flies, you know, with the shifts in officers and everything, you know, we're a little bit over a football field away from the DMZ and it's right there. So I go there, and you didn't do the left seat ride, right seat ride, you know, you show up, you count the ammunition --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Not much of a transition.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah. You bring your own weapons. You count the ammunition, that's the only thing that's really there, and, you know, they'll sign hand receipts, but as a Platoon Sergeant, and my Platoon Leader, you know, we signed for that stuff. And I found it very disturbing because the person who was there before me, they had banded the ammo boxes and put hatchets beside of them, you know, the snap plastic straps, so they didn't have to count the ammo and to do things. And they were already, I mean they were in magazines and loaded and everything. But in the event, you know --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Break glass.

CSM(R) LACKEY: -- there was a war, they had a hatchet in every Guard Post with the ammo so they could get it in there.

SGM WATERHOUSE: But they're supposed to have the ammunition out, ready to use.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Out and ready to use.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM(R) LACKEY: And the next thing that I saw was that we did an inspection. The Claymore Mines were not properly done, the sand bags were eroding. And so I got my Platoon together and I said "Okay, guys, guess what. Today we become Infantry Soldiers." Today, we've been sitting back the last month, you know, we've been in training and stuff. "We are going to learn how to fortify the position in the event of an attack. We are going to fence in and fence out and do patrols like we're supposed to do, and do all those good things. And in lieu of all that, you know, we're going to have down time, we're going to be, you know, when you're off, you go over to the Day Room, you can

do whatever. But when you're here working during the day or you're on Guard Duty at night and you're in those posts, I expect you to be alert, ready, relevant. And I'm going to be up all hours of the night coming around and checking on you. And don't let me find somebody asleep." And so we actually refortified, because I mean they had footballs there and basketballs.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So when you took over most of the Platoon was already placed so you're just coming in trying to get everything like it should be?

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah. Well when I took over though, I was back at Camp House.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM(R) LACKEY: My entire Platoon moved forward with me.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay. So you guys replaced the entire Platoon?

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah, we replaced the entire -- and when we got there the Platoon that left, you know, some of the guys had already been there before.



Because if they'd been there six months they'd already had two rotations there. But it was kick back, laid back.

SGM WATERHOUSE: They weren't taking their job seriously.

CSM(R) LACKEY: They weren't taking their job seriously. So I'm like it's a rude awakening. And I ordered Claymore Mines, I got everything, you know, and they're like, you know, we got the culverts over the top of them, sand bags from around them.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So you just get everything back to standard.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah. Everything. The fences, you know, we made sure that there were no impediments in the fences, redid Constantine wiring. They literally thought I was crazy. And I was just, once again, what was I doing? Doing my job to this Army standard.

SGM WATERHOUSE: And, Sergeant Major, during that time as a Platoon Sergeant in the 1st of the 32nd, who did you look up to as kind of a mentor or,

you know, right-hand person back then?

CSM(R) LACKEY: Well I had two people. And the first one's name was Juan Coronado. And Juan Coronado and I were Platoon Sergeants together, we lived in the same building. And so we did PT with our Platoons. Because we were both, you know, very cognizant of what was going on in Korea and things. So we were the same kind of leaders. So we did everything together. We didn't go down into the village and we didn't -- you know, we went to the village to do patrol and check our soldiers and stuff but we didn't spend our time down in the village drinking beer and doing all those other things.

Kind of like you said earlier, you know, I was married and I was trying to do the right things for my soldiers, for my family and for my Army.

So he was one of them. And it's kind of interesting. We lost track with each other. And one day I got an email from a Postmaster, because we had a Postal Unit, you know. And the postmaster out in California says "I got a guy that's standing in front

of me, he's looking at --" because Desert Shield/Desert Storm, they had a Desert Shield/Desert Storm medal and it had every postal employee --

SGM WATERHOUSE: That had participated in that campaign?

CSM(R) LACKEY: -- that had participated in that campaign.

SGM WATERHOUSE: He saw your picture?

CSM(R) LACKEY: And he seen my name. He said "I served with this guy in Korea, can you find him?" And he went on to the TILDA account, which we call a postal account for all members. He said "Yeah, he's a Postmaster in Bowling Green, Kentucky." So he sent me his email, sent me his information.

He actually came to Bowling Green and spent about two weeks with me. Went up to the Corvette Museum --

CSM(R) LACKEY: And you hadn't seen each other in 20 years?

CSM(R) LACKEY: Hadn't seen each other in 20 years. I picked him up at the airport, you know, he

met my family. And then, once again, we talked about Ken Preston a little while ago. The other person that was an influence on me that I didn't really know at that time, because you didn't really get near your Battalion Headquarters. You know, like when I was at the 1st at the 504, the only time I was at the Battalion Headquarters was when I'd do the Soldier Board or when I was on CQ. Because you didn't want to be there any other time.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Sergeant Major quarters, answering the phones.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah, typing your Shop Group up. And so, you know, my Battalion Sergeant Major came up and saw, you know, they hear all this ruckus going on, you know. So he's up on the DMZ and seeing what's going on and GP Ouellette and everything. He's like "Good stuff, you know, you got it going on." And that Battalion Sergeant Major was Richard Kidd.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Another soon to be --

CSM(R) LACKEY: Sergeant of the Army, Richard Kidd. Who became a mentor of mine in my last

position in the Army. So you can see, talk about being blessed.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM(R) LACKEY: But, you know, it's like, you know, between my soldiers, because I don't want to leave my soldiers out because I had great soldiers that, you know, helped elevate me to where I was at. But I had great mentors and I had great assignments. You know, it's just like this one, you know, why would a Battalion Sergeant Major ever come up to the GP unless there was something going on, you know. He heard that, you know, we were up there changing things around and doing stuff, and he just wanted to come up and see what was going on with this new young Platoon Sergeant up there.

But those are the two people that influenced me the most. And we also had a TOE Section that was assigned to me during that time too.

SGM WATERHOUSE: The Weapon TOE?

CSM(R) LACKEY: Weapon TOE System. So I was responsible for the WET, for the Dragons, and the TOEs

and the training thereof.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, Sergeant Major, I don't know what all you can say about this because it may be classified, but I understand that you served on, like you said, several rotations at Guard Post Ouellette on the DMZ or the Demilitarized Zone. But you also served as a Platoon Leader of your Platoon on a Combat Patrol on June 14, '76, which was the bicentennial of our country, obviously.

In fact, your Platoon was the only Combat Patrol in Korea that day. So can you describe what that was all about?

CSM(R) LACKEY: Well, you know, and as an NCO, you know, now they do a birthday cake, they do all this stuff. And back when I was growing up in the Army we didn't celebrate birthdays like we do today. I mean, you know, it's Flag Day, it's the Army's birthday.

SGM WATERHOUSE: But it wasn't a big deal.

CSM(R) LACKEY: But we didn't do the big ceremonies, the big ribbon cuttings, the big birthday

cakes. But, you know, I'm sitting here and my Platoon Leader, you know, of course we were on the old land lines, you know. And he's like "We got the newspaper going to come up and going to do an article on you today." And I'm like "What's going on?" It was like, I mean I'm up there for 30 days, I don't even know what day it is let alone. And he's like "Well today's the Army's birthday and they know that we're doing patrols every day." And of course I'm not cognizant of it being a Combat Patrol, you know.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Right.

CSM(R) LACKEY: I'm on the DMZ, but they're like --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Well they're all technically Combat Patrols.

CSM(R) LACKEY: But nobody up there gets a CIB or gets any --

SGM WATERHOUSE: It would turn to combat real quick if they cross the border.

CSM(R) LACKEY: And so they said we want to do an article. So they came up and I never -- I had

that paper, I think my sister had a copy of it. But somehow we lost that, but it showed the picture of me and my team that went out that day, fenced out, did the wire, checked everything. And they actually went and got permission to go out with us and do a patrol on the Army's 200th Birthday. Which I thought, once I realized what was going on, was pretty cool. But, you know, before that, had nobody said anything, I would have went out, done my patrol, come back and said okay, another easy day today. I don't know about tomorrow.

But, yeah, that was once again a turning point in my career that, you know, somebody, you know, the Army Times, wanted to recognize our organization for being there and serving on the front lines on the Army's 200th Birthday.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So now why did you have to serve as a Platoon Leader? You didn't have the Lieutenant at that time?

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah, I had -- well, there was a Lieutenant there at that time, and he was --



SGM WATERHOUSE: That particular patrol you were --

CSM(R) LACKEY: I was a Patrol Leader.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay. I wrote it down, so Patrol Leader, not Platoon Leader.

CSM(R) LACKEY: And I might have said Platoon too, yeah.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM(R) LACKEY: But I was the Platoon Sergeant and I had a Lieutenant up there. But Lieutenants never went out on the --

SGM WATERHOUSE: You were a Patrol Leader.

CSM(R) LACKEY: I was a Patrol Leader at that time, going out on that mission. And I try to do that. Because we get -- like if I got new members into my Platoon, you know, it didn't matter if we were up on a DMZ, you know, they get processed in, they bring all their stuff, they come there and they'd be with us for five days, one day or 29 days, so whatever day they assign. And whenever I had a new individual I would make sure that I was on that Patrol going out

to make sure they understood what the task conditions and standards were instead of one of my Team Leaders or one of my Squad Leaders for that. So I always made sure that I, you know, I did my turn.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah. So, Sergeant Major, in looking back at your year in Korea as a Platoon Sergeant, any particular lessons learned you'd like to highlight?

CSM(R) LACKEY: Well the most important ones that I think about is readiness. You know that's always the Army's number one thing. But when I got there and I saw what was going on. We had an event where, okay, we retrograded from the DMZ as an organization. This was where we weren't on the DMZ, we weren't at GP Ouellette, but our Company did a retrograde operation so we would know how to retrograde in the event that we needed to.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Of attack or whatever.  
Yeah.

CSM(R) LACKEY: And this was a Company led, you know, organization. So it was a Company Commander

with the Platoons. We came all the way back to Camp House. You know, not with vehicles and things, we were walking and crawling and all that.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM(R) LACKEY: And so I realized that, you know, whoever my Company Commander, my Battalion Commander, the Tank Commander was a Colonel Savacy at that time too, was later General Savacy. But whoever made that decision, you know, was a great thing because I learned a lot.

And one of the things that I learned was there was places where we had to rappel, and some of my soldiers weren't in the 82nd, they were in places, they never rappelled before. So Ray Lackey got back, we got done, I had, of course, you know, people once again thought I was crazy. We tied up to the building that we lived in and we were rappelling --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Teach you how to rappel.

CSM(R) LACKEY: -- off of the fire catwalks and stuff to teach them how to rappel. Because my people, you know, and once again, it's a standard. I

want all my people to know how to rappel.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah. You gotta be able to do it.

CSM(R) LACKEY: But, yeah, task conditions and physical training. Juan Coronado and I reintroduced physical training into our Company to the extent that we ran long races, we did marches and PT runs in all our field gear, and the whole nine yards.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Sergeant Major, in April of 1977 you were assigned to Fort Knox again. Where this time you started as Operations Sergeant in Charlie Company, United States Army Armor Center. So how'd an Infantryman like yourself get assigned to the Armor Center?

CSM(R) LACKEY: Well, this was probably, this position, once again, at the time I didn't realize what was going on. But once again, this was going to be another position that was going to reshape my entire life. I asked, when I left to back to the 82nd, you know, the center of the universe, Fort Bragg, North Carolina.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Which you should get, you got a choice back then, right, coming out of Korea, where you want to go.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah. Usually. And in their infinite wisdom, they must have talked to my wife, might have had a cell phone back then, I don't know. You know, they may have had stenograph machines or something sending out to her. But for some reason we went to Fort Knox, Kentucky, and I was not a happy camper. Because once again, you know, I just had all this good training and I wanted to go to a high speed Unit. And so they sent me to Fort Knox, Kentucky. And as the Operations Sergeant, of course, being an Operations Officer, as you know, you said you never been in Battalion Operations RD, you know,

SGM WATERHOUSE: Always was higher end Brigade --

CSM(R) LACKEY: Being an Operations Sergeant and taking that time away from the what I call the, you know, you got two ladders of success. You got that pyramid, but within those two ladders you've got

staff positions and you got command positions or leadership positions. And so you always have to take a break and do those positions. But for me I didn't think it was right place, right time. Because I was looking to be promoted to E-7 and, you know. And so they sent me there.

And what I was actually doing, you know, that Operational, we were a Test Evaluation Unit. We were responsible, which by then standards, we're responsible for doing all the physical fitness tests, all the weapons tests, any testing and evaluation that was done at Fort Knox, Kentucky came through my office, with my Commander and my Sergeant Major. And there was really not any standards in place, you know. If you've ever been with test evaluation people, you know, they come, they show up, you know, no formations, none of that, you know, "Oh, I've gotta be at the PT site at 7:00 to test another Battalion on their PT test before they graduate." Well they didn't even come over to work, they'd go show up over at the PT site, you know. And they'd bring the score cards

back, they'd drop them off and then you'd never see them again until they had another test. I'm like "Sergeant Major, what are we doing here?" You know, I mean, so I kind of helped him understand that, you know, this wasn't a, you know, laid back organization, we need to be proud of what we were doing.

And we set up standards, our own standards for formations, physical fitness, PT test, you know, being at the proper place at the proper time. And when you got off "Oh, by the way, you're not going to go back home, you know, you got an eight-hour day." We may do activities together or we may, you know, do training. We'll go do leader training, we're going to do, you know, individual training. And so I was not the best liked person in that organization. But I knew that there was a problem and it needed to be fixed. And I got the support of the Company Commander and the Sergeant Major to identify that and help me work with them to get it done.

But at the same time that and two other things helped lead me to understand that I needed to

get out of the Army and pursue something else when this tenure was up. And one of those -- and one thing I didn't see or say to you was I was actually on the E-7 promotion list at the time I got out of the Army. And if I would have re-enlisted I would have been promoted before I re-enlisted, with nine years in the Army, which is almost unheard of.

SGM WATERHOUSE: It's quick.

CSM(R) LACKEY: And so I took the opportunity to say, you know, this position has showed me that I need to do something else. I want to go back to school, I want to go to college. It also showed me that, you know, if I make E-7 now and I stay in, back then 14 years to make First Sergeant. So it's going to be five years, if I got picked up the first time. And if I got another bad assignment I wasn't going to be picked up as First Sergeant, you know. So I was looking at five years before I could even be considered --

SGM WATERHOUSE: For a First Sergeant.

CSM(R) LACKEY: -- for a First Sergeant. So



I chose, not the needs of my family, you know. I mean it's great, you know, being back home and stuff. But I chose to get out of the Army at the end of that tenure and come here to Bowling Green, Kentucky where my wife's from and my dad came to be -- he was in Middletown, Ohio.

And I'll tell you a quick story if you don't care. I missed this back when we was in the 82nd. We had a deployment in the 82nd, you know, we got called up. And back then they take the -- it wasn't really a deployment, it was an alert, we got on an airplane --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Exercise.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Figure out where you're going when you get there.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah. And so the first thing they do, you know you're getting mobilized in the 82nd is they got the little black phone booths there. They unscrew the receiver and the ear piece from all of them, they lock them in a safe because you can't talk to anybody because there are no cell

phones. Well while I was gone -- and you take your car down to the motor pool. So as soon as we got back from this exercise I go down, you know, we get some time off, I take some leave. I go down to motor pool, get my vehicle. I jump in my car and I drive home. My dad's not there. My dad sold his house, he's gone. My sister still lives there, and I'm like "Where's Dad?" "Oh, he moved to this place in Bowling Green, Kentucky because his truck route -- because I told you he was a trucker -- he can be centrally located and he can haul meat out of Chicago, he can haul fruit and produce out of Florida, and he's got a great opportunity.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Changed his hub.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yes, changed his hub, thank you very much. And so I go, you know, from there drive down to Bowling Green, Kentucky where we're at today.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM(R) LACKEY: And I talked to my dad. And I always accuse him, I said "You tried to lose me but

I found you.”

And I tell that story to young soldiers in meetings and stuff, you know, when I was in different organizations, you know. They're like “Well why didn't you pick up your cell phone and just call him?”

SGM WATERHOUSE: You know what year that was, right?

CSM(R) LACKEY: They didn't have cell phones.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah, they go to a pay phone and put at least a quarter in there.

CSM(R) LACKEY: You had to put a quarter in, or a nickel and hit it. I always heard of people doing that. But anyway I wanted to share that story with you because I thought it was kind of funny, and I always accused him of trying to leave me but I found him.

But that, once again, that one assignment made me re-think my entire military career. And when I left Korea I thought I was going to be a, what they called then a lifer. I thought I was going to stay 20

years active duty, get out, do something else, use my Montgomery GI bill and go to school. But that one assignment there at Fort Knox, Kentucky changed my whole insight, which changed my life.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Sergeant Major, before we get to when you got out. I know you went to the Advanced Non-Commissioned Officer Course at Benning while you were there.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Right.

SGM WATERHOUSE: What did you think of that Course back then? I know you --

CSM(R) LACKEY: Actually that course was a little bit better, you know, I didn't have any of the issues or concerns. And they actually had changed that based on some of the things that were going. You know, we actually went out in the field.

SGM WATERHOUSE: It wasn't all classroom based?

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah. I actually was able to get in my first 113 ever. Because I was a light guy. So we went out and did training and I learned

about the lateral lines and at least how if something happened on a battlefield I could jump into a 113 and maneuver it, you know, and operate it because I knew how to do M-60s, 2000, things like that. But, you know, Cooper based and traverse and things like that. So I thought it was probably on track, especially for senior Non-Commissioned Officer. Because I think, you know, they weren't trying to teach me how to drive a 113, they weren't trying to teach me how to shoot an M-60 or a .50 caliber, what they were trying to do was teach me how to teach my soldiers to meet the minimum basic standards of being an Infantry Soldier.

SGM WATERHOUSE: And a little bit of mechanized too.

CSM(R) LACKEY: And I liked it. And we did PT every day too so.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, Sergeant Major, this job as the Operation Sergeant, obviously wasn't your cup of tea and it wasn't what you wanted to do at the time. Was there anything positive out of that assignment, anybody that you met there or served with

there that, you know, kind of influenced your career in the Reserves later?

CSM(R) LACKEY: Well, you know, it's kind of interesting you say that because the Captain that was our, he wasn't our Company Commander, but he was our Section Leader. He was, actually he had served his time and he was getting out of the Army and he was transitioning. And that's kind of why he was there too. He was transitioning, my Sergeant Major was there, he was retiring. So we were all kind of in that, you know, last part of our career. And, you know, and he would talk to me about things like, you know, "What are you going to do," and, you know, sort of like we had this conversation.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So he didn't try to talk you into "Hey, just stay and the next one will be better."

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah. Because he was getting out, yeah. He was like, you know "What are you going to do?" And he actually went to work for a large company up east and they were throwing big bucks

at him, you know, but he had a college degree and I didn't have a college degree. And he's like, you know "You need to go back and go to school." And he said "Ray," he said "Ray, you need to go back and go to school and look at becoming an officer." He really thought, you know, that I would make a good officer. And I'm like "Well, you know, I really appreciate that but, you know, I've chose those path to be a Non-Commissioned Officer and that's what I want to do." And so being reflective of that, you know, I wanted to stay in the service. So, you know, that's what brought me into the Army Reserve.

SGM WATERHOUSE: I'm surprised there wasn't at least one NCO there that didn't try to change your mind. You know, because we always say don't judge the Army on one Unit. Some guys get to their first Unit, it's not what they wanted and they get out. And they could have been a great leader.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Oh, the Post Sergeant Major would beat me up every month, I mean for retention.

SGM WATERHOUSE: But nobody in your touch

zone, so to speak, nobody in the Unit.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Well I had a -- you gotta remember, like I say, before I got there we were our own little world. They'd come to work, they'd drop off their cars, they go home, they go do whatever they want to do. They work maybe two, three hours a day.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So it wasn't really a Unit, per se?

CSM(R) LACKEY: No, it wasn't a Unit. It was a Test Evaluation Section.

SGM WATERHOUSE: We have a separate command for that now for our Test Centers out there.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah. And so, you know. But now the Post Sergeant Major, because they want a Retention NCO come and talk to me. And he'd go back, you know, and he'd give his stats. And he's like "We got a guy up and coming guys on the E-7 list gonna get out of the Army." Post Sergeant Major, I can't remember his name, I'm trying to think of it. Ray White I think. And he would call me up and he would say "Now you need to stay in the Army, you need to re-



enlist, you know, you got almost 10 years in the Army, you know, you've really, you know, you're at a turning point. You enlist three more years, you know, you can get a station of choice." And I just told him, I said "You know, Sergeant Major, I really appreciate this," and I said "I'm probably going to, you know, kick myself in the hind end down the road." Because I didn't have a job, I didn't have anything, you know. I said "But I truly believe that I was brought to Fort Knox to understand that I needed to do something differently. And I explained to him, you know, "I don't want to wait five years to be a First Sergeant." I said "I'm going to wait five years to be a First Sergeant because the Army's setting conditional standards on timeframes." I said "What if I'm ready for promotion in 12 years?" Because I'm one of these thinkers. And he's like "Well I understand that." But he said "You really need to."

So they did, they beat me up all the time. Not really beat me up, but they talked to me and tried to coerce me into staying. Because that was their

mission, you know, they had people out there trying to keep people in the Army and things. So after that timeframe, you know, there was a lot of people getting out and stuff.

But there wasn't probably -- and don't get me wrong, I had good NCOs in that. I don't want somebody to pick this up and say "Well every NCO and Test Evaluation organization back then were terrible people." No, they were doing what was expected of them. I had great NCOs there, you know. But the difference is they conformed.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM(R) LACKEY: To the current situation instead of changing the current situation and making people comply to the standards.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah. So, Sergeant Major, before we get to the next, talk about the Army Reserve. So any other lessons learned from that assignment that we haven't discussed, that you took with you to your Army Reserve or civilian career?

CSM(R) LACKEY: No. Just the only thing

that I would add is that, you know, being an Operations Sergeant did give me the ability to understand the staff side of the house. And it allowed me to see that there's a need for that. Or I would have probably fought tooth and nail, you know, when I was asked to be assigned as Battalion Operations Sergeant Major.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Later on?

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah, later on to do that. Because I realized that at a young early age that, you know, you've got to have those positions in order to develop. Because there were time when I was a Battalion Sergeant Major, coming out of NCO Academy or other things, when I knew what that Operations Major was doing, our Operations Sergeant was doing. And was he doing the right thing for my organization or was he not doing the right thing for my organization.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah, you had experience that realm.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Exactly. But that's probably -- and like I said, there were good NCOs

there. And some of them, you know, they came around, they're like "Hey, we been waiting for this," you know. And others are like "I can't believe I can't go home after PT Test."

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, Sergeant Major, like we mentioned before, after this assignment came to an end in June of '70, you decided to leave the active Army but enlist in the Army Reserve?

CSM(R) LACKEY: Uh-huh.

SGM WATERHOUSE: And we pretty much already said why. But as a member of the Army Reserve your first assignment was Echo Company, 2nd Battalion 399th Regiment for the 100th Division, I think it was Training back then, 100th Division Training in Bowling Green, here in Bowling Green, where you served as a Drill Sergeant, as a Senior Drill Sergeant for a period of two and a half years or so?

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yes. My actual Battalion was here in Bowling Green and the Unit was here in Bowling Green. But I actually drilled in Scottsville, which if you would have got off of the road and turned

right and went down about 20 miles, you'd hit the town of Scottsville. And that's where, even though it shows Bowling Green, Kentucky, they didn't really --

SGM WATERHOUSE: But your actual --

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah, my actual duty assignment was in Scottsville. It was a little VFW post that we had on the weekends to drill. The uniqueness of that position as being a Drill Sergeant was the fact that when I first went in the best thing I remember about it was we had good food. You know, because they, you know, we got our rations and things and they would go out and buy the food for us. They wouldn't maintain the master menu, and they'd cook whatever the NCO would do, the food service guy would do that weekend. And so we had really good food.

On the other hand we had no physical training. After we got in the morning and signed in and we did all our stuff. And the most important thing was recording your points for your retirement so that you'd get credit for that. Because, you know, it's done by mark since form and all this stuff. And

so we would do that. Because that wasn't, you know, that was the only way you got paid and that was the only way you got retirement points. So if you went there that morning, you made sure you did that because at the end of the day you may leave and not get it done.

And then after lunch everybody would play cards. And then we would --

SGM WATERHOUSE: You're supposed to be doing Drill Sergeant training, right?

CSM(R) LACKEY: Well, it didn't last long. But then we'd go back to work. And we'd have the TV on and doing things. And so the next drill weekend I got there. And you gotta remember I was an E-7 Drill Sergeant position even though I was E-6 promotable. Because even the Army recognized that I was promotable, and I got promoted based on me being promotable from the Army.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM(R) LACKEY: And so all I had to do, I had to go before a Board. I had to be there 90 days

to go before a Board to get promoted is all I had to do. I didn't have to wait any other timeframes and things like that. So being in that position, had an up and coming Captain that was there, he later became a Two-Star General in one of the Divisions in the Army Reserve. Had a great First Sergeant, you know, they all knew the right things to do, they just were letting the NCOs take charge and do what they'd always done.

And so I got there early and, you know, got there and they were getting the coffee ready and everything. And the first thing I did was I went over, we had the schedule, we had made up the schedule for the thing, we were going to do PT, everybody was showing up for PT. I did PT that day, had everybody doing PT. And we didn't do rigorous PT, we just started. I told them, "Men, you gotta be physically fit. You know, if you're called to active duty, you gotta run with these basic training, you know that, you do it two weeks out of the years. You're going to have a heart attack, you're going to die. You need to

-- "

SGM WATERHOUSE: Because in the summer that's what you guys would do, right, you'd go to Fort Benning or Fort Knox or whatever and you'd --

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah, went to Fort Knox. It used to be Summer Camp, now it's Annual Training, it used to be Summer Camp. And I just told them after we got done the reasoning behind my wanting to do PT. But the other thing that I did was I cut the cord on the TV. And I tore the cards up. And, you know, because I was responsible for training. They put me in charge of training and --

SGM WATERHOUSE: And you're supposed to do so many hours on Saturday, so many hours on Sunday, right?

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah. And so somebody complained and so the Battalion Sergeant Major come over and he's like "What's all the ruckus?" And I said "You know, we're supposed to be training, we're supposed to be doing this, you know, and people don't want to get up and do anything, they want to watch TV,



they want to play cards." Well I had to replace the cord on the TV, which I told you, I'm a master electrician, I know electricity.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So you physically cut the cord.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Because it belonged to the VA.

SGM WATERHOUSE: I thought you meant you just unplugged it.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Oh, no, I cut the cord. Unplugging it doesn't do any good. And I should have switched the breaker. And so I had to replace the cord on the TV. And that was my whatever. And believe it or not, that was the first year and the only year that I never got a maximum NCOER. My First Sergeant rated me one area, and it on -- it probably was the right thing to do because I probably didn't do what was the best thing to do at the time. But when you don't have support and you got, you know, people know what the standard is and know what to do and they're just not listening and you, brand new off

Active Duty, you know what to do, you know how to accomplish it and get it done. You know, you're going to do -- I'm going to take whatever means are necessary to get it done. Did I make some people mad? Yeah. Did I do some things that I shouldn't have done? Yeah. But, you know, and like I said, that one NCOER was probably worth all of that because it obviously didn't hurt me in the Army Reserve.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Right.

CSM(R) LACKEY: It propelled me in the Army Reserve.

SGM WATERHOUSE: And, Sergeant Major, why did you decide on the Army Reserve versus the Guard? Was it location, for you to come here?

CSM(R) LACKEY: No, I had heard all my life about the Army Reserve and the Guard, and we'd interacted. You know, I had Army Reservists come to Fort Knox when I was a Drill Sergeant.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah, they would form the Eco Company.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Every year they'd call and

come in and work for two weeks. And they were with the 100 and they were all over the State of Kentucky. And I knew that I wanted to be an Infantry guy, I knew that I wanted to be a Drill Sergeant, that's what they chose, position available. We were actually Infantry, they changed to Tankers later, which, you know, we'll talk about. But when I first got there we were in an Infantry Unit. And I didn't want to be -- I knew I wanted to go to school, I knew I wanted to get a job. And I didn't want to be involved in State disasters. You know, because I just seen those things from afar and I'm like, you know, I don't want to be at work and be called out to -- not that it's an unworthy or not a noble cause, because it is, and the Army Reserve does it, you know, from time to time as needed. We've even got a program now where we do it. It's just not -- I wanted to be a soldier, I wanted to continue to soldier. And I wasn't worried about the money, you know, because I had my Montgomery GI Bill and was able to pay for my education.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So for those who have never

served in the Reserve side or National Guard. How were your duties, roles, and responsibilities as a Reserve Drill Sergeant different than they were on Active Duty?

CSM(R) LACKEY: Really other than once we realized what we needed to do, and that wasn't being done in Bowling Green, that was the outlying Units that kind of took charge and kind of did their own little thing. Because when I went back to Bowling Green we were trained. They were there training and doing the things we were supposed to do and doing the PT. So once I realized that this was just, you know, a little issue and it wasn't, you know, it was remote, it wasn't something that was happening everywhere else, and I realized that the Army Reserve was actually training and teaching and we were bringing in Basic Training, people were getting ready to go to Basic Training and we were working with them.

SGM WATERHOUSE: You bring them in for those two days?

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM(R) LACKEY: And working with the Recruiters for the Guard and the Reserve. And even Active Duty, you know, we would work with them. And that was a program that had started which, you know, really allowed us to do some good stuff.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So it wasn't you just training yourselves, you actually had kids there to practice.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah, that needed our help because within a month or two they were actually going to be in Basic Training.

SGM WATERHOUSE: That's good. That's a good plan. So, Sergeant Major, when you did your two weeks, where did you guys do your two weeks?

CSM(R) LACKEY: We did ours at Fort Knox.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay. So were you training 19 kilos at that time, or was it still Basic Training?

CSM(R) LACKEY: I was doing Basic Training. At that time, because we had not transitioned to --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay. So it wasn't from

one Station Unit to another?

CSM(R) LACKEY: Right, it was still Basic Training.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So in that Unit, any particular challenges you'd like to highlight as the Drill Sergeant and later Senior Drill Sergeant in that Unit?

CSM(R) LACKEY: Not really, you know, getting a foothold, like I said, and I guess it was more of a culture shock of getting off Active Duty and coming. Even in the laid back environment that I was at at Test Evaluation, was no preparation for what I observed that first weekend. And so, you know, and like I said, not to say that that was the way it was every weekend, I didn't know, but I just know that --

SGM WATERHOUSE: That was your initial impression when you go there.

CSM(R) LACKEY: -- was my initial impression. You know, it probably was. You know, I was getting ready, maybe getting near Thanksgiving or something and it was, you know, a weekend. I don't

really remember, because I know I went to Bowling Green first before I went there. So it could have been the drill weekend or the Thanksgiving and everybody was just --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Due to timing, yeah.

CSM(R) LACKEY: You know, but I think that once I got in and, like I said, I understand what we were doing with the Recruiters and, you know, giving us a real mission every weekend. And if we were doing physical fitness. And it was good stuff, you know. And I had a great Battalion Sergeant Major. You know, he went on to help me, you know, become a better Drill Sergeant and compete in competitions and, you know, said "Hey, you're the guy, I want you to represent my Battalion." So he identified, like me, he was identifying talent and not just me, other people. And he was also taking corrective measures.

I mean he was one of those guys that was like, you know, he was a Vietnam Veteran. And, you know, he knew the difference. He understood what's supposed to be done versus what was being done. And

he didn't have any idea as to, you know, some of the things that were being done in that line. Because when they were coming they were on a schedule. "Hey, Lieutenant Sergeant Major, the Colonel's coming."

SGM WATERHOUSE: Of course everybody would be spit shining and polishing when he shows up.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Exactly.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, Sergeant Major, in your first year as an Army Reservist you began working for the United States Postal Service. So what led you to work for the Postal Service?

CSM(R) LACKEY: Well I came to Bowling Green, we got involved in the church. And one of the guys that became one of my friends had been a carrier, was a supervisor at the post office. And he told me, you know "You're a Veteran, you get five points Veteran's credit for taking the test. You need to come in here and, you know, at least apply for the job." So I went and I applied for it. And I had some other people there that helped me. They said "You know, you're going to take this test, go get the



book." So I went to a bookstore. Actually I didn't go to the bookstore, I went to the library and I signed out the book. And it told me what to do and how to take the test. And I went and made up like 50 mark since forms or test forms and I took the test every day. Well I scored a 98.5.

SGM WATERHOUSE: On the actual test?

CSM(R) LACKEY: On the actual test. Which gave me 103.5. So, you know, I got an interview and I got hired immediately. I had also put in to to be a State Trooper for the State of Kentucky. I got an interview to be a State Trooper. The difference in the pay, I was going to make \$7.77 an hour at the Post Office and I was going to make about \$6.50 as a State Trooper. And I was going to be in Harland County, Kentucky, over in the coal mines. So it was very easy for me to make a decision as to which career field I wanted to choose. So I chose the Postal Service.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, Sergeant Major, did you think at the time, you know, maybe once you'd been working a little bit, that "Hey, this is something I

want to make a career." I mean how long before that came to light, you think?

CSM(R) LACKEY: It's kind of interesting that you ask that question because I'm a forms and regulation guy. I've been, you know, other than being at home when I was 17, being in the Army was all I knew, regulations was all I knew. I'm now hired at a place that has regulations. They tell you what to do, they have standards, they have uniforms. I mean, I'm like "That's my cup of tea," you know. Really.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Well both of those jobs you applied for were uniforms and standards, yeah.

CSM(R) LACKEY: And, you know, I've got this standard, you know. And these are the things that they hold me accountable for. And, you know, and they pay overtime. I've never been paid overtime in my entire life. Think about it. Now I'm getting paid overtime to work with an organization.

SGM WATERHOUSE: I'm sure you know the time that you could have a retirement, obviously, from the Postal Service.

CSM(R) LACKEY: And have a retirement.

Didn't know I was going to get retirement from the Army Reserve what, you know, when I joined the Army Reserve they had retirement but they didn't have Tricare, they didn't have Tricare for Life. You know, I joined the Army Reserve never dreaming to get a retirement, only that I wanted to serve and continue to be a part of our organization and what I liked doing.

SGM WATERHOUSE: And I may have it later in my questions, but did you think about going to school right after you joined the Reserves, a college? I know you talked about the GI Bill. Did you start dabbling in any classes then before you the Post Office?

CSM(R) LACKEY: I started immediately when I got out.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Because I didn't have a job.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM(R) LACKEY: When I got out of the Army I

went down, you know, got out the end of the year, the semester was starting. I actually took some term leave, came down here, we looked for a place to stay. And I immediately signed up and started courses.

SGM WATERHOUSE: At Western Kentucky?

CSM(R) LACKEY: At Western Kentucky University. And it's kind of funny because every time something happened I had to stop, you know. I had the birth of a child, you know, and it caused, you know, with us working all the time. And my career starting out new, I worked all the time.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM(R) LACKEY: You know, at the Post Office, you know, you didn't have a route. You were what they call a part-time flexible. When somebody took vacation you worked that job. You came in, you did collections. So every night those blue boxes out there --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM(R) LACKEY: AT 5:00 I'd leave there --

SGM WATERHOUSE: I was going to ask because

your job title I think, your first one was a letter carrier, but I didn't know exactly what that meant.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah. I was a letter carrier. A letter carrier is the ones that carry mail. But I did anything and everything the regular carriers that worked for the organization that were part of the Union didn't want to do.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So it wasn't just going to mail boxes, you were doing all kinds of stuff.

CSM(R) LACKEY: I would do. So in other words today if a carrier has two blocks of walking and four hours of riding and they got an hour of overtime, what part are they going to hand off? They're not going to give me their riding, they're going to give me the two blocks of walking.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Well you gotta earn your way up, right?

CSM(R) LACKEY: And I did that for two and a half years until there was PTS underneath me, until everyone had gotten a position. And then when it came time for me, the first route available was a walking

route on the other side of the railroad tracks, which was not bad. But what I mean by that is they get less mail, you know. Some of the routes, like the one I live on, they get a lot of magazines, they get a lot of letters, and so they may spend four hours in the office putting the mail in order, casing it, by name, by number, casing it --

SGM WATERHOUSE: For the route.

CSM(R) LACKEY: -- and pulling it down. And now a lot of it's automated. But back when I started you had to put it all in order then.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Physically sort it all out.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Anyway, they may spend four hours in the office and four hours on the street. I spent one hour in the office and seven on the street.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Wow.

CSM(R) LACKEY: I walked 12 miles every day for about the first two years of my route.

SGM WATERHOUSE: It's a good ruck march.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Rain. You know what, I'm in the Army Reserves, I'm like they're paying me to stay

physically fit. I loved every minute of it.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, Sergeant Major, you mentioned some of that already, but for those that don't know. So letter carrier, that job, I mean everybody kind of thinks they know what that is. Is there anything else you'd like to describe that job? I mean is that an entry level job for folks?

CSM(R) LACKEY: Well there's several different jobs in the Post Office. You can be a letter carrier or you can be a clerk, or you can be a rural carrier. A clerk is the ones you go in and they process the mail.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Back when I started that meant that they'd know the scheme. And they would say okay, 30 Wood Circle where I live is on City Route 7. So every letter that came in for 30 Wood Circle would be put in a box for City Route 7. Then it would be pulled out and it would be taken to City Route 7 and he would case that mail in order. So all of these were in order when he came to deliver the mail. So

that's what the clerks did and that's what the carriers did.

And then the rural carriers were the ones that drive their own vehicles out in the rural areas. They case their mail, they strap it out, and they drive their own personal vehicles and deliver the mail.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Those are virtually the -- other than the supervisory and the janitorial, and we had maintenance and we had motor vehicles. So, you know, that's basically the three primary positions in the Post Office.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, Sergeant Major, when you started working there, what were some of those challenges associated with also being a Reserve Drill Sergeant and now full-time at the Postal Service?

CSM(R) LACKEY: Well, as you stated earlier, when I first became an Army Reservist, I didn't work like I did in my latter years. It was one weekend a month, we had a schedule year round, the people there



that hired me knew that I was an Army Reservist. I took my schedule in, I filled out a leave slip a month in advance, and they'd schedule me off. There was no problem. They supported me, as I'll talk about down the road, you know, going to different schools and stuff. And even going to different jobs, that Postal Service was amazing. They supported me 100 percent, even when I was in Washington, DC I was a guest of the Postmaster General and got to give a speech there at L'Enfant Plaza and do different things. I mean they were just great. Couldn't say anything better.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, Sergeant Major, in August of 1980 you were promoted to Sergeant First Class.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Uh-huh.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Did your duties, roles, responsibilities as a Drill Sergeant change once you pinned on the First Class Sergeant stripes?

CSM(R) LACKEY: I was already a Platoon Sergeant, working as a Platoon Sergeant, and everybody was recognizing me in that position. And as you can

see, the transition part was almost a year to get promoted because I had to -- like I said, I had to be in there 90 days --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Go to a Board.

CSM(R) LACKEY: -- and then I had to go before a Board.

SGM WATERHOUSE: But you were already doing the job, now you're just getting paid for it.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Just getting paid for it. Exactly.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Sergeant Major, I understand that you earned the title of Drill Sergeant of the Year while you were in Echo Company 2 of the 399th. What all was involved in that, and what all did you have to do to earn that honor?

CSM(R) LACKEY: Well, as I talked earlier about my Battalion Sergeant Major, we had this competition every year for Active and Reserve. And Lieutenant Sergeant Major has seen me out working with soldiers and working with these future soldiers. And he said "Sergeant Lackey," he said "I'd like for you

to compete to be the Drill Sergeant of the Years.”

They gave me the format, they had me work with a person that went up the previous year. I competed at Brigade, I won Brigade. They had me work with a person at Brigade that competed at Division. I competed at Division, I won Division. I went to TRADOC Headquarters and the Board there consisted of the TRADOC Command Sergeant Major, it was the OCAR Sergeant Major at that time, not the Command Sergeant of the Army Reserves, but the Office of Chief Army Reserve, One-Star Major, and it was the Commandant of one of the Drill Sergeant Schools and somebody else. And so they’re like, the first thing you do is you get there, the next morning you get up and take a PT test. You run the wall down there, you probably been to Fort Monroe, Virginia. And we ran down one mile, one back. I maxed my PT test. So, you know, that’s something that stood out from some of the other Drill Sergeants. I don’t know if they were maximum or not but it did stand out from other Drill Sergeants.

Then we had to give a classroom

presentation, and then we had to give a DNC presentation.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM(R) LACKEY: And so I chose to be a little bit different than some of the other people. And it's by the luck of the draw. You get it the night before and you get in the hat or --

SGM WATERHOUSE: I was going to say, you got to choose what you're going to do?

CSM(R) LACKEY: But I chose the format.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM(R) LACKEY: And so when I -- you get a PT and you get a DNC.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM(R) LACKEY: So I chose, the first one I did was a PT, that's the first one pulled out. So I get there the next morning and you have, you know, Drill Sergeants along with the trainer. And you're in that class, you're in that room doing that presentation and you know they're grading. Of course they turn -- and the two previous Drill Sergeant of

the Year in the Army Reserves were in the back grading too. And they turn that in to the Command Sergeant.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Kind of cool.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah. And so when I got up there and I'm giving my PT presentation, it was the high jumper. The high jumper's a pretty hard one to do but it is also pretty easy and simplistic as long as your demonstrator knows what to do. And I talked to my demonstrator, you know, because you got a demonstrator there, you know. So the first thing that I did differently, I started the formation out from a Company size Unit. And I had them go through Baseman Post. I let the entire organization that was grading me there know that I knew how to do PT at an organization level. I used Baseman Post, want to go out so many paces, they were going to sit, the Company's going to fall in on them, the Platoon, extend to the left march.

SGM WATERHOUSE: They extend but retain formation? Yeah.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Extend to left march, left

face, and then at that time count off, even numbers to the left, uncover, and then I did -- at this time I explained, had it demonstrating, you will conduct a practical movement in the high jumper. And so then I talked the guy through the high jumper. So I went through the whole gamut, and they had really never had any --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Which was not required, it was something that you just --

CSM(R) LACKEY: No, just something that I thought of. And so I did that. And I think I stood out a little bit more. And then the next one I had, and I'm glad because the next one I had was an easy one, it was pacing movements at the hall, which --

SGM WATERHOUSE: The DNC mark?

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah. And so I did that. And then we had to do something else. And then they had a dinner that night with the trade up Sergeant Major, and the next morning they announced in me, and actually the Fort Knox Drill Sergeant of the Year, which was Charles Fitzpatrick, which later became the

2nd Infantry Division Command Sergeant.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So they have one Active Duty, one Reserve?

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah. We were both selected, two people from Kentucky that year were selected to be Drill Sergeants of the Year.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Wow. So, Sergeant Major, wrapping up your time there in Echo Company, 2nd Battalion 399th as a Senior Drill Sergeant of the Year. What were some of the lessons learned you took with you to your next assignment?

CSM(R) LACKEY: I think that the lessons learned was I was beginning to have to juggle two careers. And I was now a regular letter carrier and I was taking off additional time to go compete as the Drill Sergeant of the Year.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM(R) LACKEY: And as the Drill Sergeant of the Year, you know, they had a big thing here in Bowling Green, they gave me the Key to the City and my boss was there. And they, you know, and they were

expecting things of me that I was going to travel with the TRADOC --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Sergeant Major?

CSM(R) LACKEY: -- Sergeant Major and the CSM of the Army Reserve, the OKAR CSM as needed. I was going attend the AUSA event.

SGM WATERHOUSE: AUSA event.

CSM(R) LACKEY: So I knew I was going to -- and my boss was like "Yeah, we will let you." At that time my boss was a retired Colonel from the National Guard Bureau too, so.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Oh, at the Post Office?

CSM(R) LACKEY: So he understood. But at that time I got the first glimpse of how to juggle. I was still going to school too. Juggle my education, my family, my work, and the Army Reserve.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Wow.

CSM(R) LACKEY: So my lessons learned on that was, you know, don't overload your plate, and make sure you do what you need to be getting done.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Sergeant Major, in January



of 2000 you basically stayed in the 2nd Battalion 399th, but you moved to the Headquarters, Headquarters Company where you served as Battalion Operations Sergeant for about four years. What led to this change in jobs?

CSM(R) LACKEY: Well I was a Platoon Sergeant, I was in a Company. And we had five Companies in that Battalion and there were no First Sergeant positions open. You know when you made First Sergeant in the Army Reserve you stayed there forever, you know, there was no tenure positions at that time. You know there are still some positions are not tenured for First Sergeant. I don't know if you guys have tenure positions in the Army. So some of them guys would stay there until, you know, they turned 60 and retired.

SGM WATERHOUSE: You're supposed to do 24 or 36 months and then move out and let somebody else get their time.

CSM(R) LACKEY: So back then they weren't doing anything, they stayed there. They were good

First Sergeants, for the majority, you know. But that is the only position that came open where I could get into position, get promoted.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM(R) LACKEY: And once again, it gave me the opportunity to see the overall picture. We had, you know, I couldn't understand because I wasn't a big fan, and never have been, you know, never been a golfer, never been to ballgames and things like, you know, stuff. But, you know, I heard everybody complain "Why do we always drill on Western's Homecoming?" Well it gave me an opportunity to get in there and say "You know, you guys have been in this job for years. And for every year that I've been here we have drilled on Western's Homecoming."

SGM WATERHOUSE: The two days they had to work was during the Homecoming Game?

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah. And I said "People complain about it all the time, nobody hears it." And they're like "We've never heard anything about it." I said "It's out in the drill hall, you're just not

listening or they're not --"So that was one of the first things --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Because you had left that environment so you know.

CSM(R) LACKEY: So I said that's one of the things that I got to a chance --

SGM WATERHOUSE: It's an easy victory for the guys right there.

CSM(R) LACKEY: We never drilled on Homecoming. We never drilled on -- I mean we were drilling on Mother's Day. You know, it's our weekend to drill. Well, hello, you know. I became an enthusiastic planner.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Just with a couple months out.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So for those that don't know, in that Unit, what would you say your basic primary duties, roles, and responsibilities in that Unit, as the Ops Sergeant?

CSM(R) LACKEY: Well, the basic duties would

be for us to, for lack of better words, would be to manage the overall readiness for the organization. We would go, and just like the IG and the Headquarters would do, they'd come in and pull files every month. And we would go in there and we would pull so many files from each Company. We would make sure that they had their PT test --

CSM(R) LACKEY: All their mandatory training stuff.

CSM(R) LACKEY: -- all their mandatory training. Their shots. One of the biggest hitters back then was their inserts for their gas masks. You know, everybody got beat up because --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Glasses or spectacles for their gas mask.

CSM(R) LACKEY: -- you didn't have your spectacles for the gas mask, you know. And I knew what the standard was, this was things they were checking. So I started checking a percentage of those every month until we got to 100 percent.

Urinalysis, you know, why is it that

somebody always leaves or can't be there when we're doing a random urinalysis? Well, you aren't here to do your random urinalysis, come in tomorrow. You're going to do it tomorrow. You can't be here tomorrow you're not going to get paid. You know, you're not going to drill until you do your urinalysis.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Force and function.

CSM(R) LACKEY: And oh, by the way, that's next month and we're not going to let you choose 30 days to do your random analysis, you have to come in one day this week after you get off work. We'll be here. I'll have somebody ready. You know, what time you work? You get off at 7:00 p.m., I'll have somebody here to draw your --

SGM WATERHOUSE: You do have some active Guard Reserve guys that do full-time jobs.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah. And, you know, the thing was people weren't cognizant of that, you know. And so I think that I brought that to the table.

And then the other thing was the training schedule. You know, we scrubbed the training schedule

to make sure that we were, you know, we knew what our mission was, we were going to fall in on this Company to do Basic Training. But why were we not doing the training that reflected their training schedule, and we knew what cycle they were going to be in, what weeks they were going to be in, what they were teaching. Why were we not training on those things, preparing to go to our Annual Training and Summer Camp.

SGM WATERHOUSE: In line of the training, what they're going to do.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah. And it could change, but oh, by the way, if it didn't change, hello. You know, you were ready to do what. Because no matter what back then, this is when you're going.

SGM WATERHOUSE: They knew, they knew ahead of time.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah.

SGM WATERHOUSE: You're going to Fort Benning or Fort Knox or whatever it was. Yeah.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah. Exactly. I mean it

gave me another opportunity to be successful even in an Operations position to where it could have been mundane and, you know, nothing to do. I just chose to pick up the pace and do what needed to be done to make sure across the board for our Battalion we were doing what was right.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Sergeant Major, how did your previous experience with the Armor Center help, or did it help? Your previous experience as an Ops Sergeant, in I think it was Charlie Company?

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah.

SGM WATERHOUSE: How did that help you on this job, or did it?

CSM(R) LACKEY: The only thing that really helped me was I had graded so many PT tests and I had graded so many different events, you know, like the Grenade Course and the all these other things that were mandated, and the Rifle Range and I was able pick up, and just, it was like, you know, second nature. You know, I could tally a score card, make sure, verify the score, verify the signature, make sure it

was handed over, somebody put it on the 2-1 or -2.  
Because, you know, you gotta follow the paper.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Personnel records, yeah.

CSM(R) LACKEY: And so those are the kinds  
of things that had helped me.

SGM WATERHOUSE: You talking about  
regulations and standards and paperwork you were  
talking about earlier.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Right. That was basically  
it.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, Sergeant Major, in  
April of 1983 you were promoted to Master Sergeant or  
E-8. How did your duties, roles, and/or  
responsibilities change once you were promoted, or if  
they did?

CSM(R) LACKEY: Well, I was already a  
Battalion Operations Sergeant. And as I said earlier,  
I couldn't find a First Sergeant position and so I  
took that position. And so I was --

SGM WATERHOUSE: So that was a Master  
Sergeant position?



CSM(R) LACKEY: That was a Master Sergeant position, yeah. And so I was promoted to Master Sergeant.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Kind of like the last gig where you were already doing the job and now you're --

CSM(R) LACKEY: Almost every time I was in a position, you know, and then get promoted. So of course, you know, being in the position doesn't mean that you get the promotion, but I went before the Promotion Board and was considered for promotion and selected. And then based on the fact of where you're at on the promotion list in the Army Reserve, you get to pick. Like a CSM, the first person as a CSM you get to pick which one you want, you know. They come to you and say "Okay, this is the first position available within your geographical area."

SGM WATERHOUSE: As far as the First Sergeant job?

CSM(R) LACKEY: First Sergeant, Sergeant Major, CSM position. So when it got to me on the promotion, I don't know where I was at on there, but

that job was still available. And so I was promoted into that position.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So any particular challenges you'd like to highlight as the Ops Sergeant of the 2nd of the 399?

CSM(R) LACKEY: No, the only thing that I discussed earlier was the fact that, you know, and the leadership didn't understand, you know, why -- and I don't know why the soldiers weren't complaining to the right people but, you know, drilling on Mother's Day, drilling on Western's Homecoming.

SGM WATERHOUSE: The training calendar.

CSM(R) LACKEY: The training schedule. And, you know, and coinciding or training to reflect what our real mission was scheduled for, you know, was some of the things. Those weren't really challenges as much as they were opportunities.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, Sergeant Major, in 1984 you attended a 14-day Course titled the Senior Non-Commissioned Officer Course at the 2085th United States Army Reserve Forces School -- it's hard to say.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah, the 2085th Armed Forces School.

SGM WATERHOUSE: 2085th. And so for me, you know, and our non-Reserve folks out there, what was that Course? Where was it located and what was the purpose of that?

CSM(R) LACKEY: Well it was located in Nashville, Tennessee, and it was a Senior Non-Commissioned Officer Course. What it basically did, it was trying to either give you training in a position you were already in, or give you training in a position that you were going to in the area of leadership. And it wasn't strictly for Army Reservists.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM(R) LACKEY: I mean the school was, but it was for Army leadership. And so they were trying to teach you, you know, things like, in the Operations job I had you gotta be a visionary to do stuff, you can't just look at, you know, today, you gotta look at long-range forecast in training. Like you got a one-

year calendar, a three year and a five-year calendar, to see what's going on strategically.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Something more strategically you're operating on.

CSM(R) LACKEY: And the same thing with your Army. In your Unit, where do you plan on being in the next year, next three to five years, going over your mission statement, your goals and objections and, you know, and talking about lessons learned from the Army leadership. So it was a pretty good Course.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So was this an Army led Course or was it National Guard Reserve led?

CSM(R) LACKEY: It was an Army Reserve led Course.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM(R) LACKEY: And it's kind of interesting because one of the people that was attending that class was somebody who became a friend of mine down the road. His name was Nick Peaunsatny who, I don't know if you've heard the name or not, but Nick actually was the CSM out of AR 1ST Com in St. Louis,

was an AGR over all of the --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Before it was Human Resources?

CSM(R) LACKEY: -- Human Resources, Department of the Army Reserve. He was later -- I selected him to be the USAR Command Sergeant Major, which, you know, at that time they had two. Now Ted Copeland, which you mentioned, Major Copeland, he is the CSM of the Army Reserve and he's the USAR Sergeant Major. And they toggle back and forth but at that time when I was a Command Sergeant Major, Army Reserve, we had it divided into Operational and Mission led. And so I met him at that Course, and then we got to work together at a later time. So it was, you know, building relationships. And that was part of it too, you know, meeting other senior leaders in the Army Reserve.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Now was this part of the Non-Commissioned Officer Education System, or was this outside of that?

CSM(R) LACKEY: It was our own, you know.

So you go to ANOC, you go to BNOC, and you go to the Sergeant Major's Academy, you know, and different Courses. This is something in the interim. They say "How can we prepare our leaders in the Army Reserve to do things in between."

SGM WATERHOUSE: Before you get to the Sergeant Major category?

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yes.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay. Is that still going on, that you know of? Does this Course still exist?

CSM(R) LACKEY: I'm not sure. It's almost like, you know, it's not the battle stat, but it's like a pre-requisite, you know, a leader course to help you maintain and sustain. And I thought they put on a pretty good Course. It was all classroom, you know, it wasn't where you went out into the field and did stuff. And it's like the Academy, they wanted you to share experiences so you'd learn from other people in the room.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Any particular thing you learned there that you used later in your career?

CSM(R) LACKEY: Just unique leadership styles. And, you know, like we talked about earlier, you know, everybody has the same issues and concerns, it's just geographically a different location and, you know. If you have issues with getting dinged on an inspection because of your eye inserts, everybody does. And it's the last thing you want to remember.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Right.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Or it's the first thing you want to forget. Or, you know, is it because we don't have our soldiers qualify with their gas mask on. You know, to me that is the main standard, you know. If you put somebody who wears glasses in their gas mask and you have them fire at 25 meter targets and they can't see --

SGM WATERHOUSE: And they can't see them.

CSM(R) LACKEY: -- you know, their vision is 2200, non-correctable, you're going to identify with that.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM(R) LACKEY: And so that's kind of, like

I said, we all found out we had the same issues and concerns.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Now this next question I think we've already answered this. During your tenure as a Sergeant of the 2nd of the 399th you served as a letter carrier. But in February of 1985 you started serving as a Supervisor of the Delivery and Routes Department for the Postal Service in Bowling Green. So as a Supervisor of the Department, you were responsible for managing, I think, 31 carrier routes.

Can you please explain to the folks not familiar with that, so now as a Supervisor, what were your basic responsibilities?

CSM(R) LACKEY: Sure. And the Postal Service does it a little bit differently than the Army, but kind of like what I did when I was in the 82nd, when I was a Drill Sergeant, when I was in Korea, when I was an Operations Sergeant. They put you in positions that, you know, you haven't been promoted into yet. And they classify it, they call it a 204B. And everybody says "Hey, we're going to make



you a 204B." Well nobody ever knew what a 204B was. Well, you know, being the guy I am, and a regulation guy, I looked it up. And a 204B is the statute in the Postal Service that allows for part-time supervisors.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM(R) LACKEY: But everybody's says you can be a 204B, but nobody knew what it was. So I found out what the nomenclature was. So for a couple of years I served as a 204B part-time Supervisor during their absences when they were gone on vacation or out sick. And then when a position came open to be a Letter Carrier Supervisor, and this was just over the City Letter Carriers, you know, later on I'll do other tasks for delivery. But I had, as I told you, you know, you come in as a part-time flexible and you have to replace people that are off.

Well I had 31 routes plus I had two of the collection routes that start at 5:00 p.m. picking up all the mail from the City of Bowling Green and taking it out to the plant for processing. And I had six part-time flexibles that I had to manage to schedule.

And we also had, in addition to those 31 routes, for every five carriers that I had, I had a carrier that carried those five routes when the person was off. In other words, if Ray Lackey, and they call it a swing carrier. If Ray Lackey's a swing carrier for City Route 1 -- it's not usually that way, it's by zones, zip codes. But like if I carried for Zone 1, if I carried for carrier 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5, every Monday I got Route 1, every Tuesday I have Route 2, every Wednesday I have Route 3. So you don't have to backfill those positions, you only have to fill in when they're on vacation. So it was a pretty nice setup having swing carriers in that scenario. The Postal Service did a great job in the way they did that.

And then days off, we had regular days off with the Route and then later on we had swing days off. But the most important thing that I learned from managing the City Carriers was when I came in -- and I didn't discuss it then, I wanted to discuss it now -- the day that I was hired as a Carrier and the first

time that I ever had an opportunity to case mail, they said "Okay, you're going to go in," it was a trailer park. Well that's how you learn how to case mail because it's easy, you know, it's a trailer park 1 through 500.

SGM WATERHOUSE: They're all numbered.

CSM(R) LACKEY: They're all numbered. And then you deliver the mail. But for each one of those two inch slots where the mail goes, there's one and two. Well when I went to my first day of training they just stuck me in front of the case. They didn't say "Ray, you gotta put one on the left-hand side and two on the right-hand side." Now if I'd been smart enough, or for the people that don't know the Postal Service. If I was smart enough to figure that out, I would have done that. But based on the fact that nobody trained me, they just stuck me in front of the case, all day long I was backing up and going forward because I had mail for Box 1 and 2 switch back and forth, 3 and 4, all the way up to 500. And I learned a very valuable lesson that day. And so I wanted to

make sure that when I put somebody in front of that case, or any case, that they knew when you case this mail, this address goes to the left, this address goes to the right. It'd be like my neighbor over here, Roland and I, if they case the mail for both of us, when they get there they're going to be mixed up.

So I learned a very valuable lesson and as I went on it allowed me to make sure, like in the Army, that when I got new employees at the Postal Service, that I trained them properly instead of saying, like my Supervisor, "Hit it with a great exuberance." That was my training.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Wow.

CSM(R) LACKEY: For the Postal Service that day.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, Sergeant Major, switching focus back on the Ops Sergeant job. So you served there for about four years as the Ops Sergeant and HAC, 2nd Battalion 399th Regiment. What were some of the lessons learned from that particular assignment?

CSM(R) LACKEY: Well, as we talked about earlier --

SGM WATERHOUSE: And some of them you've already given, I know.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah. Basically it was the strategic side of the house, and making sure that we were scheduling the drills properly and that we were checking the records and making sure that the uranalysis and the things were done. And when we ran into stumbling blocks that we just didn't ignore then, you know, we found solutions to our issues and concerns.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, Sergeant Major, in December, 1985 you were assigned to Charlie Company, 2nd Battalion, 399th, so third Unit there, right, where you served as the First Sergeant for five years or so. So you've been in the same Battalion for a while, but how prepared did you feel you were at the time for that First Sergeant position?

CSM(R) LACKEY: Well, I knew the organization, I knew the soldiers because we drilled,

you know, except for the two outlying Units, one in Scottsville, one in Burkesville, you know, they were all right there where my Operations Room was at. You know, we worked with them and observed training and things that were going on. And so, you know, I knew a lot of soldiers there, I knew the Company Commander.

And for me personally, it was a pretty easy transition because I thought I was a leader, you know, from the beginning, being a Team Leader, Squad Leader, Platoon Sergeant, Drill Sergeant. I didn't really have a hard time going into a First Sergeant position and transitioning from a staff position to a leadership role. And so I thought personally it was like a relief, you know, hey, like leaving, being in one position, I'm back into TOE position --

SGM WATERHOUSE: With soldiers.

CSM(R) LACKEY: I'm going to be with soldiers, I'm going to be doing stuff. I enjoyed what I did, but I'm ready to get to work and start working on my Company, making sure that my Drill Sergeants and my Supply Sergeant and my Armor -- and see that's what

a lot of people don't understand. And I'm getting off on a tangent here, but a lot of people don't understand. There's more than just the leadership side of it, you know. Whenever I took over that Company, when I took over and I say took it over, you know, as a First Sergeant with the Commander. But first thing I did, or one of the first things I did, I went into the Arms Room and I looked at the weapons. Because of my experience back when I was in Drill Sergeant School. You know, if the weapons are dirty, you know, we schedule time on the training schedule to get the weapons out and clean them all.

Because mostly ever Arms Room I'd ever been in, and every leadership position I'd ever been in, they had sheets or something over the top of them, they'd been there, and the last time they'd ever been taken out was the last time they went to the field and used them.

And I found the same scenario virtually Company, Battalion --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Which could have been how

long, like --

CSM(R) LACKEY: A year.

SGM WATERHOUSE: A year?

CSM(R) LACKEY: Or more. Yeah. Whenever we did our basic weapons qualification.

SGM WATERHOUSE: The two week.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah, you know, and the Supply Room. One of the biggest obstacle in the Army Reserve is getting your equipment. You know, a new soldier comes in, it used to take him days, it takes weeks and months because you're there this month, then next month you come in, you get fitted, then you send the stuff off, and then the next month it comes in. And then the next month you get it. So if you're not on track with it you could be four months getting a basic equipment and issue to a soldier.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Issue.

CSM(R) LACKEY: So, you know, I saw it differently than a lot of people did.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, Sergeant Major, did you have a transition with the previous First Sergeant, or



was it vacant when you took over?

CSM(R) LACKEY: He was actually retiring. He was one of those First Sergeants that I respect today. He'd been in that position for a long time and he was a farmer, just south of here. And he was a really good First Sergeant, he took care of his soldiers. He was, you know, one of these, you know, one of these big physically fit, strong, lift weight guys. So he had different objectives and things than I had but was he a good NCO? Yes. Did we do the left seat ride, right seat ride? No. It was like, you know, good bye to him, hello to me, you're going to have a cake cutting ceremony and maybe some tea. And the next weekend I have a formation. They all know that he's leaving and I'm coming in.

And so they had a formation, I take over, and we start doing the things that I learned back in Bravo 1st of 504. We're going to have a formation, we're going to have a Receipt of Report, we're going to, you know. And, oh, by the way, if so and so's missing, you know, you give me Accounted For. I

wanted to know who the Accounted For is as soon as this formation's over.

CSM(R) LACKEY: All accounted for who, where are they at?

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah. They're all accounted for, maybe. Because PSG A.J. White didn't believe in Accounted For. He believed in present, pack my lunch.

SGM WATERHOUSE: That's right. So for Active Duty folks, you know, you're in a Company, your Battalion's right there in the same town or whatever. Now in this position as a First Sergeant, did you have a Battalion over you or a Brigade over you or --

CSM(R) LACKEY: I had a Battalion. My Battalion Headquarters, and it's right out Russell Road here. I had my Battalion Headquarters, unlike when I was in my first Company in Scottsville, that Company still exists in, like I said, Burkesville, which is about an hour and a half away from here. Three of our five Companies were right there in the Headquarters.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So this Company, when you

were an HAC, you were together?

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yes.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM(R) LACKEY: But we may not drill at the same time, but we tried to, mostly. And the only time that we did was when the resources were not available, like they had something going on at the VFW and they couldn't drill the same weekend as us, or the National Guard. We competed for resources such as mess halls and things, and the assembly rooms. So we had to schedule around all of those things too. But 99 percent of the time we were all three of those plus the other two Units drilled at the same time if possible.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Now did you get any initial guidance or regular guidance or did you talk to your Battalion Command Sergeant Major?

CSM(R) LACKEY: Oh, yes.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM(R) LACKEY: He's the same Sergeant Major that I told you that, you know, selected me to be the

-- and of course that transitions, he became the Brigade Sergeant Major and I got a new Battalion Sergeant Major who came from Burkesville as a First Sergeant. I knew him well and he was a great guy. And so, you know, when I first got there he was the guy that selected me, said "Hey, I want you to be our candidate for Drill Sergeant of the Year." So he had a lot of confidence in me.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay. Same person. Okay.

CSM(R) LACKEY: And the guy that came in to be the Battalion Sergeant Major, which, you know, if I'd had a little bit more, if I'd been a couple more years earlier, you know, I could have maybe been promoted a little bit earlier to Sergeant Major or been put into position. But everything works out for the right reasons. And, you know, because I've been an Operations Sergeant and hadn't that First Sergeant time, I wasn't qualified based on me and the needs of the Army.

And so he came in as the Battalion Sergeant Major. I knew him from Burkesville, I knew he was a

very good First Sergeant. We'd always been over there inspecting his records as the Ops side, and knew he had some of the strongest senior leaders in the entire Battalion. So I had a lot of admiration and respect for him as a Sergeant Major. And he was very, you know, he wasn't a Vietnam Veteran like the previous one, but he was an old farmer and he understood the meaning of integrity and respect. And to make sure that, you know, you get a good day's work for a good day's pay.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So you saw him as kind of a role model and a great NCO. Who else, well as the First Sergeant, was there anybody particular that you looked to for advice, assistance, mentorship or anything while you were the First Sergeant?

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah. I had other First Sergeants. At that time these First Sergeants that had been there, like I told you, for a long time, you know, I'd been in that Operations Sergeant's job for several years. They were rotating out and we were getting guys like me, younger. And so we started

being more peer driven and we bounced up off each other, make those phone calls and "What are you having?" And when we'd have our Battalion meetings we'd try and show up before or after the staff meetings, before the drill, and talk about, you know, what we were going to do and how we were going to do it.

And one of our goals, because this Sergeant Major was so good, you know, and like I said, he came up with this awesome team of people there and we knew he was going to do the same thing at the Battalion. One of our interests was making sure that we took care of that Battalion Sergeant Major. Because, you know, sometimes when you got five Units and two of them are outside the fence and you go out and you're taking care of those and you got the three Units here, it's easier for things to slip. So we wanted to make sure any time that we could, we would fall in on his task and help him. Like if one of our Units was going to Fort Knox and he was coming up there to visit, you know, we were in line, ducks in a row, we were ready

for his visit and, you know, making sure that he was proud of us as Non-Commissioned Officers.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So like in, you know, usually starts about Company level, I mean you really do it at every leadership job, you know, you come in, sometimes you're the only new person to that organization, whether it's a Platoon, a Squad, a Company. But the Company of course, is really important. And you get in there and you have time to kind of assess what you've inherited or what you've taken over.

And you were familiar with the Company, obviously, because you were in the same Battalion. But when you got to personally go around and meet your team and Platoons and Sections and all that, what did you see? What was your assessment of, you know, hey, we can improve in these areas. Or what did you set out to try and improve?

CSM(R) LACKEY: And you gotta remember, we were a Drill Sergeant Unit.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM(R) LACKEY: And I was disappointed in the way that the Drill Sergeants would come to work. And, you know, "Well, we're not in front of the troops, you know." So their shoes may not be as shined as they should be. And so we would have a class, when we had some downtime, we'd have a class on shining shoes. You know, and I'll get into this real quick about, you know, I think that, you know, some people think that's not important. You know, to me, I think it's important and I was getting briefed a few years ago on the Army's new NCOER. And I was looking at it, and one of the things they had there was empathy. And I said, you know, we've never really dealt with a lot empathy on NCOER, we've always dealt with empathy in people. And I said, and they're in a group of people, you know, from the Personnel to the Sergeant Major of the Army to the CSM in the Army Reserve and a lot of different people were in that room. And I said, you know, "I'm glad to see that, but I'm more glad to see it now than I was then." I said because I probably didn't have a lot of empathy.



I probably should have. I said the old story that we were always told was "What would you do if you were in their shoes?" And then you'd say "I'd shine them." And, I mean, think about it. The NCO corps from Vietnam, that's the way I was always raised. And so empathy, you know, did we show anything? Yes. But was it something that was rated on on a daily basis or taken -- so based on what you're saying, or asking me, you know, in that environment what I saw was we needed things to do with appearance. So I worked on appearance.

We needed standards, you know, the standards weren't there for my Drill Sergeants. I made each one of them, you know, I'm a previous Drill Sergeant, I made each one of them teach a class to me personally. They'd come in, I would go over just like I did, teach me this class. If they failed they go back, they'd come back in. Guess what? They were ready to teach that class, no, I'll draw another one out of the bowl. You come back tomorrow, teach again. You've already had time to rehearse this one, I want to see what you

do on the next one.

Physical fitness, height and weight. Had a lot of issues with height and weight back in the 80s, I think you understand that and know what's going on, you know. And then most importantly -- and this is the first time that I probably got into this arena, because you talked about being, you know, a leader and, you know, things, was counseling. I've wrote a lot of NCOERs, but I've never really -- and I did counseling, but at this point as a First Sergeant it got to where counseling became a large part of my job. Because in the past, you know, it was like "Okay, do this." Or "Here's your NCOER, I want you to work on this one." But in that arena, for some reason, counseling was the big obstacle for me and my soldiers because they didn't understand the significance of some of the things that I was trying to get them to do. Because it wasn't business as usual.

SGM WATERHOUSE: They just thought it was like a once a month deal.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Now we gotta do this piece of paper so I can go home.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah. And, you know, for me personally, and I'll share this with you now. But, you know, down the road, I've always had like whether I had 20, or like in the Pentagon, three. I had their NCOERs and they were working documents, you know.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM(R) LACKEY: You know. And I'd say, you know, "This is where you're at right now. You know, where you gonna be tomorrow, now that's up to you." And I would make sure, you know, your goal is excellence, you know. And if you're not excellent it's not because I'm not helping you get there, it's because you're not doing what you need to do to get there. And so for the first time in my entire military career I had a dilemma on how to make sure. Because they had people, they had counsel and stuff to get them to understand how important counseling was up, down, and in between.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah. Sergeant Major, in

April of 1987, during your second year as the First Sergeant, you began working as the Superintendent of the Window Services Section for the United States Postal Service in Bowling Green, where you were responsible for Finance Security and Customer Service as well as maintaining a Window Unit and six Contract Stations. Can you explain all that in layman's terms?

CSM(R) LACKEY: Sure. If you go into Bowling Green or Carlisle or anywhere and you buy a book of stamps. Well I'm the guy that was responsible for the window clerks sitting on that front line.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM(R) LACKEY: You go and you got a little slip of paper in your mailbox, there's a certified letter you got to sign for. I'm the guy responsible to make sure somebody knew that those were in order so when you brought that in we didn't spend an hour looking for it. If you had a package that wasn't left at your door and you have a slip, we had those all in alphabetical order so that you could come into bins and pick them up. So the scheduling and the -- and

the worst part about this job was I had no resources. I had six window clerks, but when they were on vacation I was at the mercy of the Clerk Supervisor to give me somebody that was window trained that could take that. Because window training takes about six weeks to complete. The financial duties, you know, because there could be loss of money and things like that. And they went to school for it and then they come back and they do OJT training on the counter, and then they get signed off on it.

So I was responsible for the window clerks downtown and out at the plant on Scottsville Road. I was responsible for the Contract Stations. One of them was at Western Kentucky University. Where a Contract Station is someone says "Hey, we want to sell stamps. We're not going to make any money off of it." You know, Kroger's is a place here that sells food. You can buy stamps there. They're not a Contract Station but they have an account with us where they come in and they give us \$1,000 and they buy \$1,000 worth of stamps. And they sell stamps.

SGM WATERHOUSE: And they sell them there.  
Okay.

CSM(R) LACKEY: So basically I had that.  
But in addition to that, the biggest job that I had, I had about \$6 million worth of stamps. Anything from one cent to the highest priority rate. And I was responsible to distribute that to 65 associate offices that went from E Town all the way down to the Tennessee State Line and across the I-65 and South down to --

SGM WATERHOUSE: E Town is Elizabethtown up by Fort Knox?

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah. I apologize. But, yeah. And most importantly, that was one of my largest tasks that I had.

SGM WATERHOUSE: How big was that area, 60 miles or so North to South?

CSM(R) LACKEY: It was all from Elizabethtown and you take the Parkway and you go all the way down and come this way.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah, that's more than 60

miles.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah, probably a hundred some miles. And we'd mail those out Registered Mail. So if you were to see the Postmaster of Aberdeen, Kentucky, you'd do your inventory and you'd say "I need this many stamps, this many stamps, this many stamps." And then me and the clerk, I had a clerk that worked full time in the vault, like I said \$ 6 million.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM(R) LACKEY: You know. So he'd count out, I'd verify them, we'd both sign off on it and we'd mail it Registered Mail, they'd sign off on it and send it back to me. And then I'd go in the computer and I'd reduce my inventory by \$1,000 and increase their inventory. And then they would do stamp sales which would reduce their inventory when they made a deposit, so I had to track all that. So it wasn't just -- it was a pretty -- and I learned a whole lot about finances and a whole lot about, you know, one stamp at a time, you know, a penny.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Now this job was a higher level than the last job, or was it more --

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yes, it was a higher level job.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay. So this is the next, a typical career progression.

CSM(R) LACKEY: A career progression.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM(R) LACKEY: And the person before me retired and I applied for the job and was able to get it. Had no background in finance or anything. And I thought they were going to give it to one of the finance guys, but based on, you know, my performance and what I'd done and how long I'd been a Delivery Supervisor, my boss thought it was an excellent opportunity for me. And once I got in I learned everything and I could take an eraser off of a pencil and I could go through these stamps, I could count them out, envelopes, you know, with stamps on them, I could count them out. We shipped stuff out every day, you know, 30 days out of the month, except for on the



weekends.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Sergeant Major, you mentioned, you know, some of the challenges associated with that Superintendent position. Anything else you want to highlight about that?

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah. The only thing that I really had issues with was our systems were antiquated. We had what they call PPOS terminals, postal point of sale terminals. They were postal, PPOS, they were Postal Point of Sale terminals. So when you go in there and today you see them, they'll scan the stamps and that will reduce their accountability. Well back then they had to enter everything in, it was on floppy disks, where the machine would go down or we'd have a boot system from an electrical -- I was the guy that had to, no matter where I was at, you know, I got somebody that was trained eventually. But we had to go and reboot those systems up and get them running and have to re-create everything that happened that day.

SGM WATERHOUSE: And these were early

computer systems?

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM(R) LACKEY: And so, you know, but before that it was all cash and just a ledger. So I was blessed to have that. But other than the PPOS terminals and dealing with the Supervisor over the clerks to get my replacements. Because like I said, if they had bid vacation, that's automatic. You know, if one of my six clerks, window clerks, is on vacation next week, he had to fill that position. But today I get one of them call in sick, he has nobody else to fill it, I mean I'm down a clerk.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM(R) LACKEY: And so when my clerk goes to lunch I got people in the waiting line for a half hour, you know. And so you're out there doing --

SGM WATERHOUSE: You had no control of when they took leave or they didn't?

CSM(R) LACKEY: No, a bid vacation per union. We have control, there's a board there, the

most senior person gets to pick what week they want,  
4th of July.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM(R) LACKEY: And then the last person get  
to pick which week --

SGM WATERHOUSE: So they all can't take off  
at the same time?

CSM(R) LACKEY: No. And the board is like  
four weeks in the month, like the prime time vacation,  
which is summer.

SGM WATERHOUSE: But there could be somebody  
gone, allegedly, every week for something, you know.

CSM(R) LACKEY: There could be somebody gone  
every week. And then they keep going as long as  
they've got -- they can't bid vacation they've earned  
in the past, only what they're going to accrue that  
week. So if they accrued three weeks they get three  
bids. But if they call in sick, and that's where I  
had issues, if somebody called in sick and everybody's  
on vacation, then I'm out in the lobby all day long  
saying "Hey, can I help you pick that package up, go

and get your package, can I get that Certified Letter.”

SGM WATERHOUSE: Which would slow down things. CSM(R) LACKEY: It took away from my job and getting things done and getting the stamps out and stuff.

So those were the only big obstacles that we had in that job.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, Sergeant Major, in January of 1988, about two years into your tenure as a First Sergeant of Charlie Company, 2nd of the 399th, you attended the Resident Sergeants Major Course at the United States Army Sergeants Major Academy at Fort Bliss, Texas.

I'm not sure how it was back then, but a lot of Guardsmen and Reservists typically take, or at least it is now, more of them take the Non-Resident Course because of their civilian careers, but there's also kind of like a merit list or whatever. And I know a lot of folks actually get to the do the Resident. How did that come about where you got the

Resident Course verse the Non-Resident?

CSM(R) LACKEY: Well, it's very interesting because up until that time, and I was in Class 31, which is a long time ago. But up until that time every Army Reservist that had been to the Resident Course was an AGR.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Active Guard Reserve?

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah. Active Guard Reserve. I was the first Troop Program Traditional Unit soldier to attend the Sergeant Majors Academy. It was a big deal.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Wow.

CSM(R) LACKEY: I mean my Brigade Sergeant Major, who's the one that selected me for, you know, to be the Drill Sergeant of the Year representative. My Battalion Sergeant Major, one of the guys that was a buddy of mine that helped me throughout my career. He was a Unit Administrator there, and we had a party, a party of four. And so we celebrated that --

SGM WATERHOUSE: So you guys were the trailblazers. CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Four of you.

CSM(R) LACKEY: No. Well I was the only one going.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM(R) LACKEY: But they were the ones that helped get me there. But that weekend we all got together and had a party for me the weekend before I left. And if you know, you get one Master Sergeant, civilian, and three Sergeant Majors, you know, two Sergeant Majors and a First Sergeant getting ready to be Sergeant Major, pretty good time.

But anyway, I applied for and was selected, like I said, the first Troop Program Unit person to attend. And I was in the First Sergeant billet. They told me that, you know, hey, you have to give up your position because you're PCSing

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah, you'll be there six months.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah. I was actually there for about seven and a half months, by the time getting there, the class and then after.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM(R) LACKEY: And so it was an interesting time for me. But I'd been going to school since 1979, so academically I was number one. And people were saying "How can you do all this? You're a Reservist." And I'm like "You know, it's studies, you're at the Academy, you're learning stuff. I've been studying since I got out of the Army in '79." You know.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM(R) LACKEY: You give me materials, I can max it. I mean I had a spreadsheet, I can do every, you know, I had my computer, you know, I had every question down. You know, when they stomp their foot I knew exactly what was going on, wrote it down. I mean I mastered this Sergeant Major's Academy. And I didn't have a problem -- a lot of people have problem with PT. I never had a problem with PT, I got there, I started running. You've been to El Paso.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Oh, yeah. My first duty station.

CSM(R) LACKEY: The old PLDC, which is now a

prison.

SGM WATERHOUSE: That's where I went. Yeah.

CSM(R) LACKEY: I ran that every weekend.

My kids would get on bikes, they'd have the water bottles. Because I had to acclimate.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM(R) LACKEY: You know, I want to max PT test.

SGM WATERHOUSE: High elevation.

CSM(R) LACKEY: High elevation. So, you know, but I got the opportunity. And I mean I wanted to make sure that I graduated and didn't flunk out.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Now were you the only Reservist there?

CSM(R) LACKEY: There was actually a Guard guy that was an M Day, they call them, soldier there too.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So just the two of you?

CSM(R) LACKEY: Two TP&M Day. There were other Reservists, but they were AGR.

SGM WATERHOUSE: They were on Active Duty.



CSM(R) LACKEY: Yes.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Do you remember about how big your class was?

CSM(R) LACKEY: I can't remember.

SGM WATERHOUSE: But you guys were unique though.

CSM(R) LACKEY: We were unique. And once again I was blessed and had the opportunity to be on the forefront of something, you know, to do something different and better than the Army Reserve.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So going there, you know, the Academy, it's constantly being updated, you know, the curriculum is constantly being looked at. You know, I just actually got accredited now for college credit. But back then, what did you think of the Course?

CSM(R) LACKEY: I thought the course was pretty good. You know, some of the curriculum and, you know, I mean we did PT in the mornings. I lived right over there on Briggs Army Airfield in one of the houses and, you know, so we did PT every morning. And

the curriculum I thought was good. We didn't do a lot of field exercises, you know. But I did some extracurricular activities, I ran the Trans Mountain Run with the team of people and did some things. But I thought the leadership side of it was excellent.

Some of the things getting to the Course I thought were mundane. Like they had a kaleidoscope or something where they flash these -- you had to take a pre-test and they'd flash these words and you had to know what it was. I don't know what it was.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Sounds like a color blind test or something.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Well, it was like, it was some kind of reading test that everybody there had to take, to say that you could do a certain level of stuff. And I don't know what it was. And I'd already had college. You know, a lot of people, in retrospect, I volunteered. But I wish I'd took classes -- I got out of it because I was already in college doing classes. But if I would have I would have had more classes, you know, that could have

transferred stuff.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah. Because back then you had to -- I don't want to say your spare time, but you had to take college level classes or do some kind of community service or something?

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah, community service or something, yeah.

SGM WATERHOUSE: And you already had an Associates or something by then?

CSM(R) LACKEY: Well, I had all of my hours. Once again I had an issue that come up and so I didn't file for my diploma. And I filed for it when I got my job before I left. I had enough hours to qualify, it's one of those things, I didn't need a piece of paper, but I really did.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So this is a question for, you know, future Sergeants Major, future Master Sergeants going to the course. You know, it's one of those things where even Active Duty, there's some Active Duty guys that have to do the Non-Res Course.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Right.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So if you would have been chosen to do the Non-Res, which I guess was the norm back then, but maybe looking, you know, future, you know, maybe five, 10 years after that, you know, or in your future jobs, you know. Did guys and gals in the Guard Reserve see that as, you know, if you didn't get to go to the Resident Course then you were kind of getting short changed on the education and training, or -- and I don't know what you could do about it but obviously it's an honor to go Residence, but if you didn't -- I mean I'm not sure how that worked.

CSM(R) LACKEY: In my day, you know, they had both Courses, and they still do, and the people that went to the Resident Course, it was like you puffed your chest out, you know, and it was a hooray thing.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM(R) LACKEY: But you didn't belittle the people that didn't go. It was a selected thing, especially for a Reservist because very few TPU guys, True Programing Unit guys, applied because of their

civilian jobs. You know, I just had an employer that said "Hey, I'm willing to let you go, right, because I know how important it is, number one. Because you want to, you know, become a Sergeant Major in the Army Reserve. Plus, if you're going to a leadership course," this is what my Postmaster said. "If you're going to a leadership course for that kind of timeframe, just think what it's going to do to help me with your leadership abilities." They understood the difference, you know, they were sacrificing their time and resources to allow me to go to Courses they were going to benefit from too.

But to answer your question, if I hadn't been selected to go to Non-Resident Course, you know, I think it probably would have been harder. You know, because I've got to work all day long, then I gotta dedicate time. And a lot of people have problems with that. You know, you had to be on track within two years to graduate, you know, people would want to wait until the last minute and they wouldn't track it. You know, of course I'd been one of these people that I'd

have a spreadsheet and, you know --

SGM WATERHOUSE: So many hours a day.

CSM(R) LACKEY: -- known exactly what I was going to do and when I was going to do it and how I was going to do it. But I don't look down on anybody. You know, asked about Non-Res. I don't look down on anybody for completing a Non-Resident Course. I don't think anybody anywhere should.

SGM WATERHOUSE: I guess a better way to phrase the question would be if there was guys and gals in the Reserve that put in for the Resident Course and didn't get it. How were those guys and gals picked? And it's probably changed over the years but --

CSM(R) LACKEY: Well in a previous position, when I was in the Pentagon, we had people apply, and we only had so many slots.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Right.

CSM(R) LACKEY: And we boarded those.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM(R) LACKEY: And I took a group of my

nominee Sergeant Majors, and they went through. And just like when we boarded the CSM designee list, we boarded the Residents.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So the higher up you scored, the better chance you got?

CSM(R) LACKEY: Exactly. And what your packet looked like and, you know, and your ability to succeed. You know, because we didn't want somebody going there and washing out. And, you know, I think one of the worst things that ever happened was, you know, I went to a -- it wasn't one of the worst things that ever happened, I'm sorry. One of the things that happened that a couple people didn't like about me, I graduated from Sergeant Majors Academy Resident Course, I went to the Academy as a Sergeant Major in the Army Reserve. And I was talking to these people, they're like "Hey, I'm here," because I know just like everybody else, you know, people go down there and they party and they don't do it. And I told them, I said "Look, you're here for a reason. You're here to learn, you're here to graduate, and you're here to

take that experience back with you." And I said "Success is a two edged sword, and what you're getting today is a rose." And I said "You got that rose but it's also got thorns on the stem." And I said "Guys and gals, don't screw this up." You know, and they came out of meeting and they're like -- they cornered me, they're like "Sergeant Major, it's like you're giving me a butt chewing." I'm like "No, I'm not giving you a butt chewing, I'm giving you fair warning."

SGM WATERHOUSE: That's called a warning.

CSM(R) LACKEY: "You know, we're putting, you know, we PCS'd you. The Army Reserve put in a lot of money and resources into your Non-Commissioned Officer Educational Program and your future career. And all I'm trying to tell you, I only have a little bit of time with you here, you got a lot of time here, you know. As your Senior Non-Commissioned Officer, I'm telling you because I've been in your shoes and I've seen what's happened to people. Don't screw up."

SGM WATERHOUSE: I think, and I could be



wrong, I don't know, I wasn't around back then in the Army. But I think the Non-Resident Course was designed for the Reserve component. So you could actually do the same material but not have to forfeit, you know, time away from your civilian job.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Exactly.

SGM WATERHOUSE: You know, some Active Duty guys have to do it because of, you know, certain reasons. But typically, I mean the Non-Resident is there so the Reserve component can get the same education but not have to now go 10 months somewhere.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah, somebody gets picked up for Sergeant Major in Germany. And, you know, they're going to be three years there, they may not want to wait, so they're going to go, and definitely not going PCS. So they're going to take that Course too.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, Sergeant Major, in July of 1988 you graduated from the Sergeants Major Academy and returned to your Unit where you continued to serve as the First Sergeant for about three more years?

CSM(R) LACKEY: And as I said, I was very lucky that that position wasn't filled. I don't know if they held it for me, I don't know if my Sergeant Major held it for me. I don't know what happened, I just know that --

SGM WATERHOUSE: It was there when you got back.

CSM(R) LACKEY: It was there when I got back.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, Sergeant Major, shifting our focus back, we talked about school here for a minute. But now shifting back to that time as a First Sergeant, I think it was a total of five years or so. What were some of the key lessons learned from your time as a First Sergeant?

CSM(R) LACKEY: Well, and I've been trying to, you know, formulate this stuff and pick some of the good things and some of the bad. And while I was there as a First Sergeant, part of that time my Company Commander was Bob Cobb. And Captain Cobb is an educator up at the Western Kentucky University here

and he also does a lot of the computer stuff. And he's a great guy. And so he and I had a philosophy as a command team on how we did just about everything. And one of the things that I remember is that I had a young soldier, for lack of better words, I won't use his name. But a young E-7 that came in to drill one weekend. He was all tore up and wanted to know if he could talk to me and the Company Commander. And he said "Yeah." And he said "I just found out that my wife's been screwing around on me." And he said --

SGM WATERHOUSE: This is like Friday night before?

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah. And he's like "I don't know what to do." It could have been a couple days before. He said "I don't know what to do." And so Bob Cobb, recently married, he's got a young child, you know, he's sitting there and he's saying, you know, spends about 30 minutes talking about, you know, marriage and how important it is, which is true. And that, you know, "You've got to go back there, you know, and you can try and work things out and see if

you can't make things work out, and was there anything that you were doing wrong and, you know, what can you do to, you know, improve your relationship." And like I say, he spent his 30 minutes on that. And he said "First Sergeant, is there anything you want to add?" I said "Yes, sir." I said "Sergeant so and so," I said, you know "The Captain and I come from different backgrounds, we have different philosophies on this." And of course I'd been divorced. And so I just told him, I said, you know "To me honesty, integrity in the military and in any relationship is the most important thing, fidelity." I said "If I was you I'd go home, I'd pack my stuff, I'd go get some space away from her and/or if she wants to leave, tell her not to let the door hit her in the ass on the way out." And my Company Commander's mouth opened up and got this wide. And after he left he's like "First Sergeant," he said "You don't want to break up that marriage." I said "I don't want to have anything to do keeping a guy in a relationship where a woman's screwing around on him." I said "He has two scenarios, your scenario or my

scenario. And hopefully somewhere in the middle will work best for him, sir." I said "But you gotta understand, you know, once that happens there's not ever going to be any trust there. And, you know, you have to make sure that he understands there's, you know, more things than going home and being in a relationship with infidelity." So, you know, I took away from the table that -- and the funny thing is he and I see each other at reunions and stuff. He's a retired Colonel and I'm a retired Sergeant Major. And whenever we see each other it's always "Captain Cobb, First Sergeant Lackey."

SGM WATERHOUSE: Well you'll always be his First Sergeant.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Right.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, Sergeant Major, toward the end of your First Sergeant time Sudan Hussain invaded Kuwait and this whole Desert Shield thing started up. And then in January of '91 you were appointed, which is when the air war started, Desert Storm. You were appointed as a Command Sergeant Major

and assigned to the 4th Brigade 100th Training Division's Leadership Academy at Fort Knox, Kentucky, where you served as the Commandant of the Drill Sergeant School and Supportive Operations, Desert Shield/Desert Storm. You were personally mobilized and ran the Academy during what was then the largest call up of the Army Reserve component since the Korean War.

So how were you notified, one, that you'd be called to Active Duty, and then I guess, two, serve as the Commandant of the School? How did that all come about?

CSM(R) LACKEY: Well, I had previously, as you know, the high promotion board's award stuff and then with the Army Reserve. I had already been put on the list to be selected as a --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Designee?

CSM(R) LACKEY: -- designee and as a Sergeant Major and then picked up as an appointment for a Command Sergeant Major before the war began. I knew where I was going. And it was actually going to

be drilling with them that month that the war started we were mobilized. So I knew that I was going there and going to be facilitated. And that's why I was going there and I was a First Sergeant as a CSM because my appointment would be simultaneous, you know. I was going to be promoted to Sergeant Major and then simultaneously promoted to Command Sergeant Major and go to that Unit.

And you talked earlier about how you do things as an Army Reservist and a full-time job. One of the things that I chose to do, you know, we chose to do. My kids laugh about it now, but every Tuesday night was family night. So if I did nothing else -- unless my Division Commander, Division Commander Sergeant Major or somebody, my Brigade Commander, Commander Sergeant Major called me or, you know, like my Company Commander and my Battalion Commander, they knew that, you know, I'm available but I try to spend one night every week with my family. Because I'm going to give them six more.

So we were having family night at Chi Chi's,

it's Lone Star now, you see it right over there. And I was sitting there in the restaurant when I got the call. And we always knew, our password was going to be "Raging Bull." And I got the Raging Bull word that I was being mobilized. And I wasn't going to Bowling Green because I had a new Unit, I was going to Fort Knox, Kentucky.

So I got the call and we were eating dinner, and some people were there and stuff. So, you know, we finished and I went home. It was kind of interesting for lessons learned. I was single, I had a Family Care Plan, and in that Family Care Plan my niece was going to take care of my kids. My niece, who had just gotten married and just moved to Nashville, was living in Bowling Green. You know.

Here I am a First Sergeant, taking care of all my people, and didn't even have my own affairs in order the way they should have been. But I knew she got married, but that's the last thing I was thinking about, my Family Care Plan. So I had to find somebody, which I did.



My next door neighbors, which were very good friends of mine, did the interim thing and then I had somebody come in and live with my kids and took care of them while I was gone. They were teenagers, one of them was a teenager, one was getting ready to be a teenager. And then I left and went to Fort Knox.

So I wanted to interject that because no matter how good you are and how good you are at taking care of people, when the time comes there's always something you forget about. And I forgot about my own Family Care Plan when my niece got married.

But with that said, you know, when we got mobilized I came to a Unit and I didn't know anybody in that Unit because I'm the new Sergeant Major there.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Right.

CSM(R) LACKEY: But I also got backfilled just like they did when the 3rd Brigade at the 1st of 504, which I was very familiar with, and that's how I became an Infantryman. I got seven, eight people in my Unit to get me up to strength 100 percent. So I'm

coming in as a new Sergeant Major, I'm trying to identify with everybody and find out what's going on. And in addition to being mobilized for that time period, I also had my drill weekend Drill Sergeant candidates were coming up to be trained to be Drill Sergeants. So that mission never ended while I was there mobilized.

And what we were doing was, as a Mobilization Unit, all Units that went up there, we were the qualification part.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM(R) LACKEY: We did the marksmanship, we did the tank identification, you know, all those different things. We did the -- and I can't think of all of them right now, but there were like five different stations and then the range qualification, that I was responsible for. And each one of my Sections had a different one of those. And that's what we did, every one of those soldiers that were mobilized and going to Kuwait came through us to be certified that they were technically and tactically

proficient on the skills necessary to be deployed before they left Fort Knox.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So maybe I wrote this own wrong. So you were the Commandant of the Academy itself, or just Drill Sergeant School, or both?

CSM(R) LACKEY: It was the same.

SGM WATERHOUSE: The same.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah. The NCO Academy and Drill Sergeant School were the same. The only difference is at the time I took over they were no longer teaching NCO Academy stuff, they were only concentrating on Drill Sergeants.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM(R) LACKEY: At one time, before I took over, it was an NCO Academy and Drill Sergeant School. But when I took over it was called the NCO Academy Drill Sergeant School but I was only over -- our only mission was training Drill Sergeant candidates in the 100 Division.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM(R) LACKEY: And what did you have it

down as, Leadership Academy?

SGM WATERHOUSE: Well, the Commandant of the Drill Sergeant School.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yes.

SGM WATERHOUSE: In support of Desert Shield/Desert Storm.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah. But I was a Commandant of the Drill Sergeant School and had been assigned that position and just hadn't drilled with them yet.

SGM WATERHOUSE: But you were also kind of overseeing Units coming that were non-Drill Sergeant candidates?

CSM(R) LACKEY: You mean for when I was mobilized?

SGM WATERHOUSE: Right.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah. Well when I got to Fort Knox for my mobilization, our whole mission changed.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay, okay.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Like I said, we did weapons

qualification and we did mobilization certification for every one of the Units coming to us. In other words we were set up in a location and they would come and they would do tank identification.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Got it.

CSM(R) LACKEY: And we had --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Be able to ID and all that.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah. And they'd have to get a go at that station. They would do NBC, they would do first aid. And it's all coming back to me now. But they had to get qualified.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So you use your cadre, instead of training Drill Sergeants, getting these Units ready to go out the door.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yes.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay. Now I got it.

CSM(R) LACKEY: And get qualified.

SGM WATERHOUSE: And get qualified.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Except for one weekend a month where our schedule stopped and we went over and trained the 100 Division Drill Sergeant School.

Because there were Units that weren't mobilized in 100 Division, and they still needed Drill Sergeants.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM(R) LACKEY: So I still ran both missions during mobilization. And then when mobilization quit then I went back to full-time Drill Sergeant duties.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, Sergeant Major, you know, this is something that Active Duty don't have to worry about, but when you got the word that you were going to be mobilized, how did you work that out with the Postal Service?

CSM(R) LACKEY: Well that night I called my boss and I told her, I said "I've been mobilized for Desert Shield/Desert Storm." Of course everybody sees, you know, the hype and what's going on and everything. And I said "I been mobilized for Desert Shield/Desert Storm, I'm going to Fort Knox, Kentucky right now in a support mission, but, you know, if the war escalates you don't know what's going to go on and I don't know when I --"

SGM WATERHOUSE: You don't know how long

your mobilization is going to be for, right?

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah. And everybody trains, you know, you don't know what's going to happen, you know. So like in the scenarios we had today, you know, you don't know what's going to happen, talk to classified or unclassified versions.

But anyway I explained to her what I was going to be doing, and I was going to be leaving. And so we called in the 204B that morning to take over my job.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM(R) LACKEY: And she put a 204B on duty temporarily while I was gone, the whole time, to cover down on my position there.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, Sergeant Major, shifting our focus back to the leadership academy there. You've covered kind of what the Unit was doing. What did you see as some of your primary most important roles and responsibilities as the Command Sergeant Major during that time?

CSM(R) LACKEY: Well, as I said, with the

two-fold mission I had a couple responsibilities. Number one, I had to make sure that my cadre and staff were trained and knew exactly what was expected of them so that these soldiers being mobilized and deployed didn't leave there untrained. You know, the most important thing they say, you know, is God forbid that we send soldiers to war that are untrained, unequipped and not technically and tactically proficient. So I knew my job, and the person that I am, I made sure that everyone was teaching that class, they came through the class for me --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Gave you the class?

CSM(R) LACKEY: And they gave me the class and they were able to do the same tasks, conditions, and standards as everybody going through there.

Then the second mission that I had, and we kind of, I let it go the way it had been going because we were working seven days a week until the mobilization was over. But once the mobilization was over I had every one of my Drill Sergeants, the first thing I did was I had my Drill Sergeants come in to



teach class to me that they were teaching to the Drill Sergeant candidates. And some of them were substandard. So the next thing that I did, I went home -- this is after mobilization.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM(R) LACKEY: I went home, I studied what I think is the most difficult part of 22-5, stack arms.

SGM WATERHOUSE: The Drill and Ceremony Manual?

CSM(R) LACKEY: Drill and Ceremony. And I came in the next drill weekend, on a Saturday morning, like we did formation and did PT. Everybody showered and got ready. That morning we were getting ready for the people to come back and do -- and I had everybody in the classroom. I said "I'm going to teach the class. And I'm going to try to teach it to standards. And I want to show you what's expected of you all." And I taught stack arms. From count off, third squad, stack squad, stack arms, adjust slings, the whole nine yards. I had people just dropping their mouth, you

know what I mean? But I spent my time and I was ready for it.

And when I got done, you know, I said "Now this is the standard."

SGM WATERHOUSE: We call that "Train the trainer" these days.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah, train the trainer. I said "When you come in front of me," because they came in front of me with the Senior Drill Sergeant. And the Senior Drill Sergeant was the first person to be trained by me, or, you know, signed off on.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM(R) LACKEY: I said "You come in front of me, you're going to train to standard. I want you to know that you can get in front, and until you do that, you're not going to teach another class." Now three months up to that I had to let them because I didn't know they couldn't teach a class, couldn't teach a class, we were preparing people to go to war.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Right.

CSM(R) LACKEY: But once that was done. And

the joke was, you know, it's like somebody walk in there they say "Next, please." And I had in front of the thing there, I came in one morning and somebody had painted two footprints in front of my desk where me and the Senior Drill Sergeant was to teach the class. They gave me the painted two footprints there so.

SGM WATERHOUSE: That's funny.

CSM(R) LACKEY: So they were playing the part.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, Sergeant Major, if I got the dates right, so was it April, '91 is when you demote --

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yes.

SGM WATERHOUSE: And then went back and just did what you said you were doing with the Drill Sergeants there. And you did that almost for a couple years, about 20 more months or so?

CSM(R) LACKEY: Right.

SGM WATERHOUSE: And then you went back to basically, you know, running that Drill Sergeant

School, right, and trying to get these guys to do the right thing, get them up to standards. So you were Commandant up there what, about two years total?

CSM(R) LACKEY: A little over two years.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So anything, like before we go on to the next position, anything you'd like to highlight as lessons learned from that assignment as the Commandant?

CSM(R) LACKEY: The only thing that I'd like to highlight is that, you know, when a leader takes over, just like you do -- once again I go back to the Team Squad, the Platoon.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Don't just think or expect that your soldiers are going to know what they're doing. You know, everybody becomes complacent. Now they may know what they're doing. That wasn't, you know, my particular, you know, that wasn't the cards that I got. And so, you know, it was from physical training. I mean we went out and we ran every

morning. I mean, and trust me, and I start them off right. We had a separate remedial training, you know, run a quarter, walk a quarter, run a quarter, walk a quarter, until they got up. And I would not allow them in my formations --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Like run a quarter mile?

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Because they couldn't even run, you know.

SGM WATERHOUSE: And these are Drill Sergeants.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Drill Sergeants. And so, you know, I wouldn't even allow them in my PT formation until they could get through remedial training. Which, you know, you're doing this one weekend in a month, some of them were still in remedial training when I left, you know.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Because they weren't working out the other 28 days?

CSM(R) LACKEY: Exactly. So what is the

standard? But one of the things that I learned, I had a Supply Sergeant there and she was a female. And she's like, you know, "Sergeant Major," she's like "Can we try something different one day?" And I'm like "What do you want to try?" She said "What if I go sign out the gym one day, or a cubicle or something, and so on the two days of drill we do PT one morning and then the next morning we would do aerobics." Because she was an aerobics instructor. Wore me out. And as a good leader, something that I hate, I would just as soon said "You know that's a great idea, but I think we need to be doing Army standard." But I let them push me to the limit. Because it was something that I was uncomfortable with and these soldiers were uncomfortable with their own physical fitness and things. So I never got into aerobics after I left, but, you know, it was a good --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Something not in the manual.

CSM(R) LACKEY: -- culture shock. And they liked it, it was out of the weather in a controlled

environment, and it gave us something else to do.

SGM WATERHOUSE: And it challenged them.

CSM(R) LACKEY: And flexibility and all those good things.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, Sergeant Major, in January, 1993, you were assigned to the 4th Training Support Brigade, or TSB, part of the 100th Division at Fort Knox, where you served as the Brigade Commander Sergeant Major for about eighteen months.

In January, 1993, after serving as a Superintendent for the U.S. Postal Service in Bowling Green you started a new duty position there, Supervisor of the Customer Services Department.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Correct.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So moved to a new Unit at Fort Knox and then you changed jobs. What led to you changing positions at the Postal Service?

CSM(R) LACKEY: Well, the person that was there got promoted and became a Postmaster and this position came open. I'd been the Superintendent for Window Service for several years now and there's only

so many stamps you can count in supervising that number of employees. I wanted to get back into the leadership mold.

I'd seen the degradation at the Postal Service from people, you know, not being in the proper uniforms, you know, even though you get them issued, you know, they're coming in, their shoes not being shined. When I was Supervisor I always kept a brush and shoes and a thing, shoeshine stuff kit in my thing. I'd the guys, gals, clock out, go shine their shoes, clock back in. Because, you know, I'm not going to let them go out and represent me or the United States Postal Service. So I saw that come back. It was an opportunity, same pay, same grade, for me to take that over. And this time I had, but I had the responsibility of the city carriers, the rural carriers, and the Computer Forwarding System and the P.O. Box section. So that's why I wasn't like just a Supervisor of Delivery, it was over the whole thing.

So it gave me a little bit more responsibility. And I had other Supervisors that were



not lateral to me, not subordinate to me. In other words down the line I rated them but they reported to the Postmaster. The Postmaster ultimately had all six Supervisors. But anything under delivery fell under me. And I was responsible for, and that person, even though they didn't report to me, I gave them -- because they had their own job. Like city deliver --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM(R) LACKEY: -- rural delivery. But I was overall responsible and they knew that I would assign the task. And that's when I got to say, "Okay, hey, you're the Supervisor over the clerks, no more screwing over the window section. You know, you're not going to take care of your section and let the window section --

SGM WATERHOUSE: By taking their people?

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah. You know, we're going to all share the pain, we're all going to share the wealth. And so it gave me an opportunity to do that and learn more about things like rural delivery, the P.O. Box, like, you know, you've seen. We had, you

know, hundreds if not thousands of boxes there and the mail had to be up by, you know, like 10:00 in the morning, and packages. And then we had the Computer Forwarding System. You moved a hundred times, a lot of times, those little labels.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Well they had a computer --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Notify us of your new address.

CSM(R) LACKEY: I was over that section. I actually had to go to Texas and become certified over the equipment and the training to where I could learn to be a Supervisor over the Computer Forwarding System. And then the rural carriers, like I said. I learned three new jobs in one.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So on that job, I would think probably your First Sergeant experience probably helped. Now you got all these other Supervisors under you, plus you're responsible for stuff you don't necessarily have your hand on.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Right.

SGM WATERHOUSE: But you're still responsible for those carriers.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah. The Postmaster wasn't gonna cut me no slack if something fell through.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, Sergeant Major, shifting our focus back to the 4th Training Support Brigade, or TSB, which was the job you had just started simultaneously. How did that position come about, how did you -- did you put in for that position yourself and then you got chosen, or how did that work?

CSM(R) LACKEY: It's a little bit interesting because back then, you know, and I'd like to interject. Do you get the Sergeant Major Preston Daily NCO emails? Do you ever see those?

SGM WATERHOUSE: No.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Okay. It comes from AUSA and it's A Soldier Today. And on that email that I get a couple times a week it says the following appointments have been approved by Sergeant Major of the Army Dailey.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM(R) LACKEY: You know, because he puts his finger on it and that's kind of what I did when I was, you know, I actually did the personnel -- because I'd done all this stuff I did the personnel management as we'll talk about a little bit later.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM(R) LACKEY: But it basically gave me the, you know, gave me the opportunity as that Brigade Sergeant Major, what happened -- I'm transitioning here. But what it did, the Brigade Commander and the Division Sergeant Major looked at packets and picked somebody for that job. In other words, not like when I was a Division Sergeant Major, you know, I had my finger in a pie in all those positions.

SGM WATERHOUSE: All right.

CSM(R) LACKEY: You know, and it wasn't done by "Oh, I'm the Brigade Commander, I like this guy, that's who I want in the job." But I was already --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Because back in the day there was a lot of that happens back then.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yes.

SGM WATERHOUSE: You're already in the Division, even a First Sergeant job opens up, you know.

CSM(R) LACKEY: What Brigade I was in as a Colorado Drill Sergeant School. I was with the 3rd TSB in the 4th, 4th Training Brigade. So they knew me.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Because this is before CSL and all that.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yes.

SGM WATERHOUSE: The modern day stuff.

CSM(R) LACKEY: So they're like "You've been in this job, you're going to be rotating within the next year, you need to find you a job, the Brigade Sergeant Major's leaving, it's at Fort Knox." I didn't want to go to Murray, Kentucky or Lexington, you know, I had a place where I could stay there cheap and inexpensive. Because back then they didn't pay for our travel, which they don't do now, but they didn't give us money for, you know, our hotels and things, everything was out of pocket. So I knew it

would be cheaper on me, I was familiar with the organization, I knew what their weaknesses and strengths were.

And, you know, because we did a lot of things for them. We did their PT test, you know, Brigade Commander call up and say "Hey, can you send some Drill Sergeants down to administer our PT tests?" But that's how it kind of came about. The Brigade Sergeant Major retired and I took that position. Was offered that position and took it.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Right. So this Brigade was in the 100th, which was the same Brigade you'd been kind of working under?

CSM(R) LACKEY: Exactly.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay. So the Battalions at that time, who did you kind of have under you? What were some of the Units you had?

CSM(R) LACKEY: Well the Units at that time were typically they had four Battalions.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM(R) LACKEY: And one of them was a

Reception Battalion, which was, you knew, fell in on the Fort Knox Reception Battalion. And one of them was a TSB, a Training Support Battalion, that did support operations. And then the other two Battalions were ROTC Battalions, who either went to Fort Knox or eventually, when they moved it, we went out to Fort Lewis, Washington and did ROTC training for our Annual Training Events.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, Sergeant Major, when they were split like that how did you determine your travel? I mean how did you go and --

CSM(R) LACKEY: All the Units are --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Backfield circulation I think people call it.

CSM(R) LACKEY: And at that time all the Units within the 4th Brigade were located there at Fort Knox.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM(R) LACKEY: And the only one that wasn't, and we were in the old World War II barracks over there where the old Reception Battalion used to

be.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yep.

CSM(R) LACKEY: But the only one that was not co-located with us was the --

SGM WATERHOUSE: ROTC?

CSM(R) LACKEY: -- Reception Battalion.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM(R) LACKEY: And they were over with the AG, where the Fort Knox Reception Battalion was located at that time. I don't know if they're still there or not. But they were over on the far end of the Post.

SGM WATERHOUSE: But everything was on Fort Knox?

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah. Almost where the Human Resource Command is.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM(R) LACKEY: So I was off of Wilson Road.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So backfield circulation was easy?

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah. It's like, okay, how



about I'm going to go over there after lunch.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM(R) LACKEY: I have had Units where I've had to travel, but that --

SGM WATERHOUSE: But not that particular position.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Not that particular time. That was pretty easy. And my Battalion Sergeant Major loved it.

SGM WATERHOUSE: You think? I bet. You can't get away from the flagpole.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So you may have said already, but I may have missed it. But was there a previous Brigade Sergeant Major, was he there, did you do any kind of transition with him?

CSM(R) LACKEY: We didn't make any. He retired, had the cake --

SGM WATERHOUSE: That was it.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Left seat cake, right seat cake. Which I love now, you know, they're doing more

to transition.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM(R) LACKEY: I think it's important. But with that being said, I have been in transition points where Sergeant Major said "You need to keep an eye on this individual, this soldier."

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah, you'd hope you some of in brief or out brief.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah. But that soldier could also become one of the best soldiers I ever had. So, you know, I always told them to keep their thoughts to themselves, I'd look at personnel folders and things. But anything that was tactical or training or anything, I want to know about.

SGM WATERHOUSE: You know at that level it's like, you know, which Companies, you know, which Command Team do I need to go spend more time with. Or, you know, certain things like that. Bigger level of stuff, not necessarily individual.

CSM(R) LACKEY: But one thing that I would say, Sergeant Major for the audience here is that, and

if you could talk to my previous Postmasters, if you could talk to my previous Commanders, if you could talk to some of my previous, even people that I worked with and things, I've always tried to make sure that I never alienated anybody after they left. I brought in previous Commandants. Every time I had a graduation ceremony they were invited. When I left I was never invited to be at graduation ceremony unless I had a soldier there, you know, going through Drill Sergeant School from Reception Battalion or something.

But Postmasters, whenever I had a retirement for somebody I'd always invite the previous Postmasters to my Post Office because they were part of that event. I made sure that they were welcome. I made sure in the last position I had, always had previous CSMS of the Army Reserve up for meeting Soldier of the Year, I'd classify it where they'd come in and they'd actually do presentations, you know, to get them there. But for the Soldier NCO, I think it's important to do that. And so even though this Sergeant Major left and I came in, whenever we had a

dining in, whenever we had a dining out, whenever we had some kind of something going on, I reached out to them and called them, said "Hey, we got something going on this weekend, would you like to come?" You know, "Soldier of the Year NCO Board, how would you like to come be our guest speaker at our Soldier NCO of the Year Board?"

And I think that's important, and I think a lot of that is lost in the environment that we have, past, present, because it's like I just don't see a lot of that

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, Sergeant Major, when you got in that position as the Brigade Sergeant Major, and, like everything, you know, you get to know the organization now at the Brigade level and you do your assessment. What are some of the things that you set out to improve upon?

CSM(R) LACKEY: Well, like everything else -

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SGM WATERHOUSE: Or initiatives anyway, what are some initiatives?

CSM(R) LACKEY: You could call them my initiatives, you could call them my pet peeves. You know, the first thing I did I went down to -- after we got signed in, got squared away every weekend. I went down to the Weapons Room. It was terrible.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Like the Brigade level Arms Room?

CSM(R) LACKEY: Oh, yes. So the next thing I did, I went to lunch, me and the Brigade Commander went to lunch. I said "Hey, sir, what you got going on?" "Oh, I got this." I said "You got a minute? Let's go down --" They were rusty, they were -- he had a meeting and he called his Battalion Commanders in. I brought my Sergeant Majors in too.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Was this like a consolidated armory, like all the Brigade's weapons are in one, all the Companies --

CSM(R) LACKEY: They were all consolidated into one.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah, you know, because the

Arms Rooms are, you know, like in Bowling Green, all of our weapons were kept in Bowling Green in the Arms Room. Because that's where you had your -- we didn't keep them in the VFW or over --

SGM WATERHOUSE: But each one of these Battalions didn't have their own, necessarily, Arms Room, they were -- CSM(R) LACKEY: They had their own armor, they had their own locks and racks, and they had access to them every weekend.

SGM WATERHOUSE: All in the same facility then?

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah, all in the same Arms Room. So he had a what I call "Come to Jesus" meeting with them. And that next weekend on the drill schedule we were cleaning weapons. And so once again, that's one of my little pet peeves. But the thing is you can't train if your weapons are rusted and they're not being maintained and if you can't go to the Arms Room and draw them out and go shoot them and clean them --

SGM WATERHOUSE: You can't fire them.

CSM(R) LACKEY: -- and fire them and do all that stuff. And, you know, my Sergeant Majors, I hate to say this on the record, I replaced every one of them. My Battalion Sergeant Majors, they were just not doing the job. And I gave them the opportunity. When I came in I said, you know, "This is what I expect. I expect you to do physical fitness, I expect you, you know, not to be parked on the grass in my Brigade area so you can pull your car up and park it right in front of your building so that you don't have to walk from the parking lot like the rest of your soldiers, you know."

SGM WATERHOUSE: Every heard of the NCO creek?

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah. Yeah. You know, I expect you to be in the proper uniform. I expect you to have a haircut. I mean, just like the rest of your soldiers. You know, I just come from the Commandant of the Drill Sergeant School, and they're, like I said, that's what I said, oh, they loved it, you know. And I actually did the same thing that my Battalion

Sergeant Major did when he came in and got a new organization and got all new leadership, and that's, sometimes it's good to do that, sometimes it's bad. I don't want anybody to ever think that I'm going to come in and relieve anybody, because I never relieved them. But we had meetings, we had approaches, we met with Battalion Commanders. You know, they had 0-5s they were working for.

But the thing is they gotta meet the standard, you know. They can't pass a PT test they're flagged, you know. They can't pass a PT test and they're flagged, they're not going with their Battalion Commander, they're not going with their Company Commanders, they're not going anywhere on orders until they're unflagged. And they just didn't understand that. "Oh, I'm a Sergeant Major, I gotta go with my Brigade Commander to Fort Lewis, Washington." I said "I hope you got deep pockets."

SGM WATERHOUSE: You're going to pay out of pocket.

CSM(R) LACKEY: You're not going on orders,



you're flagged.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, Sergeant Major, on the Reserve side, so what happens to those guys once they're relieved?

CSM(R) LACKEY: Well, first of all if they're flagged then they can't meet the standards then they retire. And all of them were eligible for retirement.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM(R) LACKEY: If they can't meet the standards and are not flagged, and it's just a performance issue, you know, they're not coming to drill, they're not, you know, meeting the standards, not doing what needs to be done, then they have other opportunities. They can go to the IR, they can come back out, you know, get the 15 points a year. They can come back out and be successful. They can go to a Sergeant Major position.

SGM WATERHOUSE: An SGM?

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah, if there's one available and they're meeting the standards. Not if they're flagged, but if they're meeting the standards.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Right.

CSM(R) LACKEY: There's other opportunities. But in this case every one of them chose to retire. They were all --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Then you got to worry about getting backup for those.

CSM(R) LACKEY: I had people waiting.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Plenty of people waiting?

CSM(R) LACKEY: And I was going to save this for a later time, but when I went to the Pentagon I had, I told you I had one guy that was a Master Sergeant, he was also a civilian tech here in Bowling Green, Kentucky. And when I went to the Pentagon the first week I was there, he called the office and he talked to my Exec. I had a couple Exec Assistants up there. And he talked to my primary Executive Assistant. He said "I'd like to put my name in the hat for a job." And Larry Wallace, he was my Executive Assistant, Sergeant First Class. He said "Well, we don't have any jobs open right now." He said "The Sergeant Major got here and, you know, he's

getting on board and he's got two Executive Assistants." He said "No, you don't understand." He said "Where Ray Lackey goes there's always a job."

SGM WATERHOUSE: He knew it was just a matter of time.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Scared Larry Wallace to death. I came out of my office that day and he jumped up like, you know, like stood at Parade Rest. Is said --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Thought he was going to be fired.

CSM(R) LACKEY: "Sergeant Wallace, what is wrong with you?" And he said "Well I just got a call --" "I said "He's pulling your chain." I said "As long as you're professional, you're doing a good job, you don't have to worry about anything." So I wanted to save that for later but I thought this was a good time to interject it.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, Sergeant Major, as the 4th TSB Command Sergeant Major, really I guess for the folks that don't know. So what was the mission of

your Brigade, and what would you say your primary roles and responsibilities as the TSB CSM?

CSM(R) LACKEY: Well I go back to like we talked about it. We had the Recruiting Battalion that on their drill weekends they physically came to Fort Knox and they went and processed people in --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM(R) LACKEY: -- to one station Unit or Basic Training at Fort Knox. I had the Support Battalion, their job would be to go over and help with like if we had some kind of missions going on or they were going out and doing tank gunnery or they were doing something. They would be the ones that would have the vehicles and secure the ranges. They were the support for the Division as the Training Support Unit. And then the other two Units, like I said, they would train up and teach ROTC training, Basic Officer Advanced Camp. I think it was advanced, always at Fort Knox now, but the basic was out at Fort Lewis, Washington, and that was their goal.

So my job was, that I saw it, was to do

anything that the Commander wanted me to do, but most importantly, other than the individual weapons, the physical fitness and the conditions of height/weight and standards, my job was to make sure these people had the resources and they had the time and they had the ability to perform their missions. And if any of those lacked, it was my job to intercede how I could get those resources, training, materials, so they could accomplish those tasks.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, Sergeant Major, in this Brigade level position, who did you look to for advice as a new Brigade Sergeant?

CSM(R) LACKEY: Well I looked to other Brigades and I also looked to my Division Sergeant Major. And most importantly, when I started, you know, when I was as the Commandant of the NCO Drill Sergeant School and Leadership Academy and I then became a Brigade Sergeant Major, you know, you have people out there that you know are good leaders. And like when I as a First Sergeant, I'd pick up the phone and I would say "Hey, you know, I got this issue, you

know, just tell me, you know, what would you do if this was going on?"

SGM WATERHOUSE: Some of your peers out there?

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah. And then I'd also, if I had, you know, an issue being at Fort Knox or something, I'd call the Division Sergeant Major or I might call, you know, you said you knew Dave Lady. I'd call Dave Lady, I'd call Henry Hurley. Henry Hurley was a Command Sergeant Major for the Armor Training Center at Fort Knox. And he, you know, he and I became very good friends because he couldn't believe there was a Reservist out there that would emulate a Command Sergeant Major. Because I'd bring him down to my Unit, we'd have breakfast, I'd go to his Unit. He's like "Your soldiers are this and that?" He said "I can't believe this, you know." I'm like "Well, you know, you just set the goals and objectives and, you know, they're soldiers, they were your soldiers, they've been in formation somewhere, 99 percent of them served prior service." I said "You

just got to challenge them and give them something to do." But, you know, he lives down in Greenbrier. You passed him before you went up the hill. Henry Hurley, you know, he'll stop through here to have coffee, you know, we'll talk today. But Active Duty, it didn't matter what kind of Sergeant Major it was, Active Duty, Division Sergeant Major, Post Sergeant Major, I just bend their ear and see what I can do.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, Sergeant Major, as the 4th TSB Sergeant Major, any particular challenges, lessons learned, from your time in that position?

CSM(R) LACKEY: Just the aspect of once again going into an organization and even though you got the leadership there and the fundamentals, people were not cognizant of the fact that they had weapons in the Arms Room and they had people that were not physically fit, you know. And it didn't matter what organization I went to, you know, there were great soldiers there. But the ones that were sub-performers are not excelling, were not identified, and were not tracked and not, you know, taken care of. To me

that's the ones, you know, it's like at the Post Service. I told people I spend, you know, you've heard this before, you spend 90 percent of your time on five percent of your people. Never had that, you know. I was with the Union, never had a grievance from a good employee, you know. The grievance came from the bad employees that couldn't come to work, couldn't do their job and, you know, they wanted to be protected.

The same way in the Army, you know, I never had a soldier come up to me, that wanted to be a soldier, and say "I'm mad because I wouldn't do PT today. I'm mad because we had to go out and qualify our weapons." You know.

SGM WATERHOUSE: This is soldier stuff we had to do.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah. You know, like me, I was complaining to you about going to school and not being able to get out in the field, you know.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM(R) LACKEY: So.



SGM WATERHOUSE: So, Sergeant Major, in September of '94 you were assigned to the 3rd TSB, same Division at Fort Knox. And you served as a Brigade Command Sergeant Major there for about nine months.

So what led to the move of the two TSBs?

CSM(R) LACKEY: That was actually a reorganization.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay. So it wasn't a move?

CSM(R) LACKEY: It wasn't a move.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Re-flag.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah. We had -- and it's going to happen here again in a minute. But we had a reorganization of the Division. What happened, they took one of the Brigades and they made that Brigade a Medical Brigade.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM(R) LACKEY: And so they took the other Brigade and since it was in a different location, they kept it there at Fort Knox.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM(R) LACKEY: So that's what made me move to that 3rd Brigade. The 4th Brigade, and once again, you know, we talked earlier off the microphone, you know, I can't remember sometimes what you had for lunch here today.

SGM WATERHOUSE: That's right.

CSM(R) LACKEY: But we had, we reorganized, picked up at that time three other states.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM(R) LACKEY: And one of the Brigades that we picked up became the 4th Brigade. And the 3rd Brigade, which was previously there, became the mission that we took on.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So it was a name change but it was also a reorganization?

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah. Like I said, we cased one flag and opened up another one.

SGM WATERHOUSE: But now you had guys in different states, you said?

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yes. There were people in different states. And at that time, under the

auspices of the 3rd TSB, I still had the same mission.

SGM WATERHOUSE: But now you had Units that you would travel to see.

CSM(R) LACKEY: I had peers.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Peers that were out there. Oh, okay.

CSM(R) LACKEY: That were in other states.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay. Your guys are still at Fort Knox.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah, all my guys at that time, until we reorganized the next time, were all at Fort Knox.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay. So, Sergeant Major, after you were done there at what became the 3rd TSB in June of '95, you were assigned to the 7th Training Support Brigade.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yes.

SGM WATERHOUSE: 100th Division there at Knox. And you served there as a Sergeant Major for 14 months or so. Now was that another reorganization?

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah, that was a

reorganization and a re-flagging. And what happened, they brought in -- at that time we now moved to eight states.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM(R) LACKEY: We had Brigades in eight states instead of four. And so we went all the way up to our 8th Brigade, so we encompassed the 7th Brigade. We had Medical Units then that were reorganizing. Instead of being a Brigade for a Battalions -- and that time I picked up Units at Fort Knox, Huntsville, Alabama, and Millington right outside of -- you probably remember Millington being a Recruiter right outside of Memphis, Tennessee.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So now that it's the 7th, now you're scope is a little bigger?

CSM(R) LACKEY: My scope is a little bit bigger, yes.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM(R) LACKEY: And I spent time at Fort Knox because I had two Battalions at Fort Knox. But I also had a Battalion in Huntsville, Alabama, and I had

a Battalion in Millington. And so I would spend, you know, every third weekend I would be somewhere.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM(R) LACKEY: I'd rotate. I'd be in Huntsville one weekend, then the next month I'd be in Memphis, and then the next month I'd be at Fort Knox. And me and my boss tried to not be at the same place at the same time unless we had a change of responsibility or some kind of function that we needed to be at.

He would hit one place, that way there'd only be one Unit that didn't have leadership guidance and command control going on on a monthly basis.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So the different Battalions, did they have -- they didn't all necessarily, everybody in the Brigade necessarily train on the same two days a month, right?

CSM(R) LACKEY: Right.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah. They were at different times. And there may be times when I would,

you know, pick up additional days and go visit another Unit. But, you know, I tried. I'm one of those guys where I just didn't go somewhere if I didn't need to be there.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Just to get two extra days of pay. You know, if I already drilled my month, there was not anything significant going on and I've been in Huntsville, I'm not going to go to Memphis just to get two day's pay. You know, I mean I got more things going on at the Post Office, I got things going on with my family. But if there was something going on I would be there. It's very important.

I mean there were times when I was working three weekends a month.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah, they're not all on the same drill weekend, you're eventually probably going to have to --

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah.

SGM WATERHOUSE: I don't know if that's out of pocket, but you're going to have to go visit Units.

To see them all you'll have to go on something other than your paid time.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Exactly.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, Sergeant Major, wrapping up before we go to when you took over the Division. Really that Unit, over so many years, any key lessons learned before we get to where you actually took over the 100th Division? Out of all those similar duties and responsibilities, but, you know, three organizations I guess. Any key things from that time period?

CSM(R) LACKEY: Well I think they all had, as I said before, they all had good leadership. They also had all of the same systemic issues, you know. And once again, it wouldn't matter if it was on the Operations side with the gas mask and the inserts, it wouldn't matter if it was weapons, you know. When I left the 7th Brigade, the next Command Sergeant Major coming in might have had his primary goals and objectives, could have been something that I didn't even focus on, you know. And that's one thing that I

tell people, you know.

I was a Postmaster in Bowling Green, Kentucky for five years. Postmaster before me was there for five or six, seven years, and the one before them no telling how long. But in the Army the leadership changes. You transition about every three years. And the good thing about that is you get good leaders. You know, and you learn and you become cognizant of the fact that different people have different, you know, things that they look at. And so eventually if you're in a Unit long enough, everything becomes important. You know, if I've got this Commander wants this, this Commander wants this, and this Commander wants this, and I want this. Pretty soon I'm a jack of all trades and trying to be a master of all of them instead of a master of none, you know. And I think --

SGM WATERHOUSE: The guys in the Unit that don't move around, yeah.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah. I think that that is important. And even the guys in the Unit that don't



move around, their leadership does.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Right.

CSM(R) LACKEY: And, you know, it's like, you know, you talked about that earlier. That's what I try to do. Why would you want to bring the Battalion Sergeant Major into Brigade. You know when I was a Division Sergeant Major if you're Battalion Sergeant Major in the 7th Brigade you're probably not going to be the Brigade Sergeant Major in the 7th Brigade. You're probably going to be a Brigade Sergeant Major somewhere else, you know, as long as you have those knowledge, skills, and abilities. But of course if you're double zero Zulu they say you can go anywhere, you know.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Or get the double zero.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah, there you go. And I've been in some of those situations.

SGM WATERHOUSE: You're no longer 11th, 19th, or whatever.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Exactly.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, Sergeant Major, like I

alluded to, in September '96 you were assigned to the 100th Division Headquarters in Louisville, Kentucky where you served as the Division Command Sergeant Major for about three years.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Uh-huh.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So how did that come about?

CSM(R) LACKEY: Well as you can see with the reorganization, I think my tenure. Of course I got a new tenure every time we reflagged. But the Division, I'd been on track for several years. And, you know, if you look at my age and you look at my time in service, you know, I was a young Sergeant Major. And I'd been, you know, in multiple positions. And so when the Division Sergeant Major position came open there was about eight people that applied for that position, and they weren't all in the 100th Division. Some of them had been in the 100 Division before and they were in Units in Nashville or they were in Units, sister Units.

SGM WATERHOUSE: And this is announced. How was it announced? How was that decision?

CSM(R) LACKEY: It would be announced as a nominative position.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah. It would be put on the thing at --

SGM WATERHOUSE: The Two-Star level?

CSM(R) LACKEY: The Two-Star level position if you want to apply for it. It would be sent out from AR First Com.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah, through a message.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Through a message to all Sergeant Majors that had Battalion Brigade experience, you know. If the Division Commander says "I want people with Brigade experience," then, you know, and like I said, at that time it would probably go through the OCAR stat and they'd sign off on it and they'd go to Personnel and come down. And if the Division Commander put a caveat in there and says "I want only people with Brigade experience," then they may line through and initial off on no Battalion Sergeant Majors apply for this position. You know, and they do

have, you know, we do want to give them some leverage there on what they're going to do.

So the position came down, I'd been in contact with the Division Sergeant Major, you know, and he liked me. And I said, his name was David Solomon, he was a mentor of mine. And I said "What do you think? Do you think, you know, I need some more experience or --"

SGM WATERHOUSE: Would I be a good candidate for the job.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah, be a good. And he said "Ray," he said, and he was very candid. He said "I think you're experienced and your knowledge and the previous assignments are very good in what you're doing." He said "The only advice that I would give you --" and this is where you get our first advice from somebody sitting in a position --

SGM WATERHOUSE: That you're getting ready to try to fill.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah. And he says "The only thing I would tell you," he said "You know you go into

a new Unit --" he said "I've observed you for a long time." He was a Brigade Sergeant Major when I was around. He said "You go 100 miles an hour." He said "This is a marathon, it's not a 5K." He said "You going to be in eight states," he said "And if you get the position, you go into the Division like you've done very other job, you'll kill yourself or you'll burn out in a year." He said "I know you're full of everything," he said, "But, you know," he said "I would just recommend that you, you know, you use your leadership." And he said "We got some good Brigade Sergeant Majors out there, you pull them in, you know, you work with them and you go visit them." And he said "You know, this is a marathon race and not a 5K." And it was some good, you know. And at first I left that meeting thinking, you know, maybe he doesn't like me or, you know, because you always second guess yourself.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Right.

CSM(R) LACKEY: But I knew Dave liked me because he always, you know, was a supporter of mine

and things, even for the last positions that I'd gotten because he was the Division Sergeant Major when, you know, when the flagged changed. Because he could have said "No, that position's -- this is a new team, yeah, you got --

SGM WATERHOUSE: We're going to move you out or something.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah, whatever. But I left that meeting thinking, you know, am I doing something wrong, do I need to, you know, do something, or is the leadership of the Division saying that maybe I'm too forceful or I'm too energetic or I'm, you know, like I say, you always want to second guess yourself.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM(R) LACKEY: And we had that conversation later at one of our association meetings. And I said "You know, remember that conversation?" And he said "Yeah," he said "How's that going?" I said we're doing pretty good and everything." I said "Let's talk a little bit about that, Dave." He said "Yeah." I said "I got concerned that maybe you didn't feel I

could do the job or whatever." He said "No, I was just concerned for your welfare. I was concerned for, you know, your well-being, your family situation." He said "And I know the type of individual you are. And I didn't want you going in and killing yourself over something that is there and, you know, you can't eat an elephant in one sitting, you got to take a little piece at a time." But that was, you know, the words of wisdom that he gave me.

And the position came out, I interviewed, and got a second interview, and General Barren selected me as his Commander Sergeant Major.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, and we've talked about the Brigade, a lot of the Brigades, obviously, the TSB and some of the Battalions over the last couple of hours, and the 100th. But for those that don't know, what would you say, you know, the 100th Division is different sections, but overall the 100th Division, what was the mission of the 100th Division?

CSM(R) LACKEY: The mission of the 100 Division, it was training. Of course in the Army

Reserve a lot of our higher Units were Training Divisions.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Training Divisions.

CSM(R) LACKEY: And Training Division doesn't necessarily mean, you know, Drill Sergeants and left, right, left. It means, you know, your sustainability training, your ROTC training, we did leader training for officers, you know. Not the War College, and we sent our officers to War College, but they had other courses that they had to take, like CGSC, you know. We taught CGSC classes to senior officers or field grade officers. And --

SGM WATERHOUSE: CGSC?

CSM(R) LACKEY: Huh?

SGM WATERHOUSE: CGSC?

CSM(R) LACKEY: CGSC.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM(R) LACKEY: What'd I say, CGS?

SGM WATERHOUSE: Command General Staff.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah. We taught those classes, you know. So we were a Training Support



Division and we had medical training. Now that we did, we had Quartermaster Training that we did. We had Logistics Training that we did, you know. Down at Huntsville they had that, what is it, the Arsenal down there. And --

SGM WATERHOUSE: So how many states do you think total?

CSM(R) LACKEY: When I took over we were in eight states.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Eight states. So pretty big footprint.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah. Pretty big footprint for a guy working one weekend a month. For those of you who can't see, I winked at him.

SGM WATERHOUSE: That you were working one weekend a month.

CSM(R) LACKEY: That's right.

SGM WATERHOUSE: And how, and, you know, on Active Duty, you know, it would be hard enough, you know, even if you're working five days a week or six days a week, to visit all your Units. So how did you

go about that?

CSM(R) LACKEY: I took a lot of leave from the Post Office, you know. Of course I was a manager then and the Postmaster supported me and, you know. When nobody else was off and I had something going on, I'd schedule one of the 204Bs to let me off. I'd leave maybe a day early. We took a family vacation maybe once a year, you know. The rest of the time we were gone on a weekend. We'd be in a hotel room and, you know, have a nice dinner somewhere and then I'd be working next day. And we'd have a nice dinner somewhere and we'd go home the next day.

But I literally worked every weekend, and sometimes during the week, for the two years or so that I was -- in '96 to '99.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So at that level weren't you getting the extra money for working at the Two-Star level? Say maybe for some of it?

CSM(R) LACKEY: I didn't get any extra money, I did, of course, you know, when you're at the flagpole and you're in a Division Command Sergeant

Major position and there's things you needed to attend, like --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Conferencing.

CSM(R) LACKEY: -- things or Annual Training, you know. We would schedule out and we would appropriate -- I would have my budget.

SGM WATERHOUSE: You would get temporary duty money or --

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yes. I would get appropriations just like I did when I was up at the office of Chief Army Reserve. I would get a budget and I would choose how I was going to spend that money. And there may be, you know, a weekend when something was going on in Fort Knox, Kentucky, where I didn't get paid to go because I knew I was going to be in Huntsville, Alabama or I was going to be in Mississippi, or I was going to be, you know, somewhere else where I was going to, you know. And then if we were doing like a staff ride, and I would save that to get a weekend paid. And what I would do on those weekends, I would either take one day's pay, you know,

or if at the end of the year you had plenty of money and they were trying to get rid of it, like they do in the Army today, you know. I mean nothing's changed but, you know, I may take two days. But there's times when I worked two days and got paid one day pay. But I always, in those scenarios, I got paid travel pay, my per diem and my quarters, or my housing, not housing --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Hotel.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Hotel and room most of the time.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, Sergeant Major, coming now to the Division level. I'm just thinking like an Active Duty division, it may take a new Sergeant Major four or five months probably to get a handle on -- maybe not that long, three or four months maybe to get an assessment of the -- if there's spread out. If they're in one location maybe a couple months. Okay, I know my Battalions, I know my Brigades. How did you go about assessing the Division, as big as it was?

CSM(R) LACKEY: Well, you gotta remember,

all those seven Brigades Sergeant Majors were my peers. And, you know, we had training meetings, and I seen them at least once or twice a year. I had, you know, conversations with them, you know, they would contact me or I would contact them. I knew what their missions were, I knew a little bit about them.

Of course there were new Brigades that had stood up that I knew nothing about. So those were the ones that I went to first.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM(R) LACKEY: You take the Battalions that I knew coming out of Drill Sergeant School, Leadership Academy, the 7th TSB, I didn't spend a lot of time with them my first year because those are the ones that I knew, you know. I was concerned about, but I needed to get out and meet the soldiers, see what was going on, and see how, you know, things were progressing in the Army Reserve from a Division footprint.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So for those folks out there that are looking at it now, the Division Command

Sergeant Major in the Army Reserve. How are your roles and responsibilities different than, you know, at the Brigade level?

CSM(R) LACKEY: Just larger footprint and less one on one. You know, from the time I left my Team Leader position I lost, not responsibility or authority, but hands on. You know, I mean I was responsible. Even though I'm responsible for every soldier in the 100th Division now, I'm not interacting with them on a daily basis like I was as a Team or Squad or Platoon or even a Company. You know, you get to Battalion, you get to Brigade, your reality shifts from soldier and leader development at the, you know, where you can actually make a difference, to going through someone. And sometimes that's hard to grasp.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah, because now you have all these Sergeants Major under you.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yes.

SGM WATERHOUSE: That you have to rely on basically.

CSM(R) LACKEY: You have to rely on them.

And you gotta trust them, and you gotta give them the opportunity, you know. And it's not easy to, you know, take a Sergeant Major and say hey, you know, just like Dave Solomon did me. You know, and he was giving me some constructive criticism and I'm like "What's going on here?"

SGM WATERHOUSE: He didn't like me.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah. You know. So I took that lesson though and I'd already, you know, unfortunately I've had to help Commanders relieve Sergeant Majors in the past. So, you know, and in today's environment with the way, the economy's getting better now and everything. But whenever I -- and I have that HR background, we're not talking about that now. But, you know, when I talk to somebody I'm like "You know, jobs are hard to find. They're getting easier now. But I said "Jobs are hard to find." And I don't ever want to see someone lose a job unless they absolutely have to." And, you know, I didn't have that mindset back then. The mindset I had back then was, you know, you need to do your job, you

need to accomplish the mission. If you can't meet the standards I can find somebody who will. That goes to the empathy part, you know.

And was I mean and ugly? No. I mean I gave people last chances. I mean I did everything from meeting them and doing PT with them and going to lunch with them to make sure, you know, they knew what the proper diet and things were, to, you know, everything but beg them. But you just can't make some people do things. And so, you know, you asked me the question, it was kind of a long way getting there, but I think when you leave the First Sergeant position you no longer are touching soldiers on a daily basis, whether it be one weekend a month --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Interacting with them.

CSM(R) LACKEY: -- or every day. Now do you talk to them, do you mingle with them, do you find out what they're doing and they say "Oh, Brigade Sergeant Major's here and duh, duh, duh." Yeah. For a Division Sergeant Major --

SGM WATERHOUSE: For just a few minutes.



CSM(R) LACKEY: But it's a whole different -  
- and you have to learn how to interact with people.  
Because it's like David Solomon telling me that. You  
know, and real quick I'm going to regress back to  
that.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM(R) LACKEY: 1st of 504. We were at a  
Unit there, the 1st of 504. We had the Chief of Staff  
of the Army come in. He was at Fort Bragg, North  
Carolina. He made a comment "Man, you all sure have a  
lot of pinecones on this installation." Guess what  
everybody was doing the next weekend? Picking up  
pinecones. So you gotta be careful what you say. And  
I know you've probably had some similar things, you  
know.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Or you say something out  
of, you know, gest or whatever, and everybody takes it  
as "Sergeant Major said this so we gotta get hot on  
this." You know, you never gave an order, you just  
mentioned a comment.

CSM(R) LACKEY: You just made a comment.

SGM WATERHOUSE: I think we should get rid of that guy one day, and then people trying to --

CSM(R) LACKEY: Where's he at? So you have to be, once again, you have to be, once again using that word "cognizant," but you had to be cognizant of the fact of what you're saying and who you're saying it to. Because the message you're sending may not be what you want to send.

SGM WATERHOUSE: And everybody will jump and jump to the ninth degree of thinking that's what you want just because you mention it.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Especially if you're Ray Lackey and you've got a perception that wherever you go there's going to be a vacancy.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Sure would be nice to get some more of this.

So, Sergeant Major, as the 100th Division Commander Sergeant Major, any challenges or lessons learned from your three years there that you'd like to highlight before we move along?

CSM(R) LACKEY: Well the challenges we

talked a little bit about was the eight states.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah. Distance.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah. The locations, the leadership, the training support, the dissemination. I found that as a Division Sergeant Major, and I don't know how you've done it in your past assignments. But I found that, you know, I don't bypass them, but I copy, you know. When I put something out to the Brigade Sergeant Major it never got down to the Battalion Sergeant Majors. And, you know, I'm like this is important stuff. So, you know, we got email and it was up and coming and all that stuff, I made sure --

SGM WATERHOUSE: You probably had email by then.

CSM(R) LACKEY: -- if I sent something out, it went out to every Brigade Command Sergeant Major, every Battalion Command Sergeant Major. You know, I sent it to Brigade Sergeant Major --

SGM WATERHOUSE: cc to Battalion to guarantee they got it.

CSM(R) LACKEY: -- I cc'd, and I blind copied --

SGM WATERHOUSE: First Sergeant.

CSM(R) LACKEY: -- my boss. Some of my friends, great commuters. No. And like I had the Drill Sergeant of the Year, you know, that's one thing. When I left being the Drill Sergeant of the Year, with my help and with the help of guys like Sergeants Richard Clark and some of the other people, we were able to get seven Drill Sergeants of the Year.

SGM WATERHOUSE: In a Division?

CSM(R) LACKEY: In a Division. Yeah. It's all about knowing what to do, when to do it, and how to do it. And I had the same with Color Guard. We did Color Guard competition. And I was able, out of like seven years, to get Color Guard Competition of the Year for the Division five of those years, you know. So I go somewhere, I'm like "Yeah, that's my streamer, I got that one." Because it was Sergeant Major's personal responsible.

But other than that, in disseminating

information down, you know, I had some great guys, great Sergeant Majors to work with, you know. And I'm just proud to have had that opportunity and be given the chance to lead soldiers.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, Sergeant Major, in October of 1999 you went on Active Guard Reserve or AGR status, and you were sworn in as the 8th Command Sergeant Major of the U.S. Army Reserve, a move from Two-Star level Command Sergeant Major position to a Three-Star level Command Sergeant Major position; is that correct?

CSM(R) LACKEY: Uh-huh.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So how did this particular assignment work? How did you --

CSM(R) LACKEY: It was the same scenario, it was a Nominative position. AR First Com sent out a letter to all the Nominative Sergeant Majors. You had to be working for a General Officer to apply for this position.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Right. Smaller pool.  
Yeah.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah. And, you know, I've seen them before where it said even if you work for a One-Star General, you know, it's not like a Sergeant Major. I don't care if they're working for a One Star or a Four Star, it's a Nominative position. But I didn't have any control over that. But, you know, every Nominative Sergeant Major got an opportunity to apply for that job. I think there were about 60 applicants.

SGM WATERHOUSE: A lot more than the other one?

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah.

SGM WATERHOUSE: The previous job, Battalion Division.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah. And the short list got down to about five. And of course a Nominative Sergeant Major is anybody that's currently in a position or they held a position before, you know. They could have been one and rotated back to a Brigade or something. Which I know the Army does that, and the Army Reserve. It kind of drives me crazy. I was

an up or out guy, you know.

But anyway I got on the short list of five interviews. And when I got the letter for being a good civilian employee, I went in, I sat down with my boss, and I said, my boss, because I made sure that when my boss came to town, my Two-Star General, Postmaster, we had dinner. I'm Ray Lackey, you know. And so they knew each other. And I said "My boss seems to think that, you know, I would be a candidate for this job and he thinks I'll apply for it." It means I have to take leave of absence for three and a half years from the Postal Service. I said "And if you allow me to do that --" because they have to hold my position because of the law. I said "If I would sign a letter saying you can fill my position."

SGM WATERHOUSE: With a temporary hire?

CSM(R) LACKEY: With a full-time guy.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Full-time guy for that period?

CSM(R) LACKEY: No, you can fill my position. I said --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Oh, you let them do it?

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yes. I said "I will sign a statement saying you can fill my position."

SGM WATERHOUSE: Because by law they can only hire temporary unless you give them permission.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yes. By law for five years. And other than the three, four months that I had, Desert Shield/Desert Storm, that's the only part of the five years, so I had almost four and a half years that they had to let me go.

And I said "I will sign a statement through the HR that you can fill my position. The only thing I ask is that when I come back you have to give me a job in the Kentucky Indiana District, which Kentucky District is sort of like recruiting command.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM(R) LACKEY: In Louisville it encompasses Southern Indiana and the whole State of Kentucky.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Kentucky, yeah.

CSM(R) LACKEY: And that I make same pay, same grade. So if you make me a level 17 Supervisor,



I still get my same pay, same grade, not for two years, but until you put me in another job. Which I thought was reasonable. She agreed, and she said "Apply for the job." And so I applied for the job. And like I said, I made the short list and had an interview with the Chief and, you know, I thought the interview went very well. And I was --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Was this face to face, telephonic? CSM(R) LACKEY: Face to face.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Face to face.

CSM(R) LACKEY: We had a long -- I mean I was up there all day.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Like this.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah. Yeah. You know, had to be with him all day. We had an interview and I had lunch and met the staff. They took me around all of his Chief Army Reserve, over to JP2 where the staff was at, you know. Showed me, you know -- those kind of people, they treated you like you're going to get the job, you know. And if you get the job you need to know what's going on. So it was an all-day thing.

They brought us in that morning and kept us there all day and then we went home the next day.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So how long before you found out?

CSM(R) LACKEY: It was a pretty quick process. I always tell everybody when I'm applying for a job I either want to be first or last. And I was the last person to be interviewed.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So you knew it wouldn't be long.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah. So I knew it wouldn't be long. And when I got home -- the standing joke was, you know, of course I haven't had a home phone since I went to Washington, DC because I never needed one anymore, I had a landline in the house there and I could call anywhere in the world, and I had a cell phone, so I've never had another home phone. You know, the last house we built wasn't even wired for AT&T or any other service. But the reason that I'm saying that is we had an answering machine. And I'd get home from work, if I'd ever get home early than my

wife would I'd say "I got a call today." "Who'd you get a call from?" "From Chief Army Reserve." She'd say "Did you really not know?" Because that standing joke went on for about two weeks. Two weeks after I had my interview I had a phone call. And the boss called me at work, they called and left a message, you know, that they wanted --

SGM WATERHOUSE: At the Post Office?

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah. The staff did. And so I called, after I got all the carriers out and everything I went and took lunch and I called. And they hooked me up with the boss, and he said "Sergeant Major, I've done my interviews and I've done my due diligence, and I'd like to offer you the job as a Command Sergeant Major -- or back then OCRA Sergeant Major." He said "I'd like to have you on my team." And I said "That's great." And I went home that night, I said "I got a phone call." Of course that'd been going on for two weeks.

SGM WATERHOUSE: It's like yeah, whatever.

CSM(R) LACKEY: I'm like "No, really, I got

a phone call." I'm like "30 days. We've got to sell your house, we've got to be out of here in 30 days."

SGM WATERHOUSE: Wow.

CSM(R) LACKEY: But that's how it went. I got the personal phone call from the boss.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So that was October '99 when you got the job?

CSM(R) LACKEY: I actually went -- and I had the right and left seat, right seat.

SGM WATERHOUSE: With the outgoing.

CSM(R) LACKEY: I went up with Jack Radzinski and spent two weeks with me as OCAR CSM. And stayed with him for two weeks until he left, and then the first of October I took over.

SGM WATERHOUSE: And that's when you get sworn on the AGR status?

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yes.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay. So, Sergeant Major, in May of 2000, about six months into your time as a Commander Sergeant Major in the Army Reserve or that time as Office of the Chief of the Army Reserve, you

served your final month as a Supervisor, like you said, and you've already discussed what that was about.

But the same month, if I did my research right, you started a new job at the Fort Knox Post Office, or Postal Service. Where you took over as the Postmaster at Fort Knox, where you were responsible for 21 employees, eight delivery routes, and one Supervisor there, a position you held. Postmaster you held for about three years.

So me, as an Active Duty guy, I'm trying to think if you're on AGR status for Office of the Chief of the Army Reserve, how are you a Postmaster at the same time?

CSM(R) LACKEY: And it's just like had I not signed the letter and they would have held my position. I would be the Supervisor of Customer Service in Bowling Green, Kentucky. What happened, it's funny how everything works out. Once again, I told you I'm blessed and I've had great opportunities. I'm sitting at the Pentagon, I'm minding my own

business. And I get a phone call from L'Enfant Plaza, Postal Headquarters.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM(R) LACKEY: And the lady on the phone says "I'm the Secretary to the Postmaster General and we would like to invite you to come and be our Veterans' Day speaker." And that's because, you know, October, you know, they were having Veterans' Day." She said "Can you make it?" I said "Let me check my schedule and make sure I'm not in Korea or Hawaii --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Somewhere else.

CSM(R) LACKEY: -- or Bosnia. And thank God I was open. And I said "Yes, I can be there." Walked in and told my boss, you know, "Hey, the Postal Service --" He's like "Well, you got two bosses." He says, you know, because he's a civilian too, you know, he came up on age and joinder. He said "I think that sounds great." So I came back and I went to do the speech up at L'Enfant Plaza. They met me down there.

SGM WATERHOUSE: And which state is this?

CSM(R) LACKEY: It's in Washington, Dc.

SGM WATERHOUSE: In DC, okay.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah, L'Enfant Plaza, big Postal Headquarters.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So right there?

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah, right there. I'm sorry. But anyway, I gave a Veterans' Day speech. And I start getting these phone calls from the Office of the Postmaster General. And they're like "The Postmaster General would like to have you in his presence of a stamp unveiling for Veterans on the mall area." And I'm like "Yeah." And come to find out, you know, he wanted to use me because I'm Active Duty Post Employee, I'm an EAS Executive for the Postal Service working in the Pentagon, one of the senior levels in the Army, one of the top six people on the military side, you know, CSM and Chief. And he's using that for all it's worth, you know. Which is good, you know. Maybe for not all it's worth, but he's invited me to the events. I mean I went to several functions that were over in -- I mean just elaborate places. I mean I don't even know where

they're at. They picked me up or I'd go there and go to those functions.

But anyway, through the course of the thing he asked me a question, and I said "Well, I gave up my position because I wanted to take care of that and make sure that --" And so I don't know what happened. I don't know if he picked up the phone and called somebody, I don't know if in the course -- because every time I was at one of those things, my District Manager came to the event too because he got face time with the PMG.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Postmaster General. So I don't know how it came about, but anyway the Postmaster for Fort Knox, Kentucky retired. I get a phone call. They're like "Ray, you are an exempt employee, it's a level 22 job -- and that's a level 20 job. It's a level 20 job, we will put you in that job if you want it." Because, you know, I didn't even have to apply. I mean I had to apply but I mean I didn't even have to be boarded because I was an



individual that was, you know, not in a position. And they thought Fort Knox, Kentucky, level 20, not have to find me a job when I came back in 2002, 2003, so they assigned me to that position. They put an Officer in Charge in there the whole time I was gone.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay. So basically that position was held for when you got out of the Reserves.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yes.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM(R) LACKEY: I mean I was the Postmaster. My name was on the thing, the whole nine yards. Just like 204B, we have the Officer in Charge. They had an Officer in Charge -- they were running people through, it was like a training facility.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Every six months they get a new Officer in Charge at Fort Knox, Kentucky until I came home.

SGM WATERHOUSE: That's actually good. That's a nice thing.

CSM(R) LACKEY: It was a win/win situation for everybody. You know, going crazy trying to find me a position when I left.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, Sergeant Major, after you'd been in the position as Command Sergeant Major of the Army Reserve for a while and you had time to assess the Army Reserve at large, what were some of those, you know, you say pet peeves or whatever. What were some of the things that you found, okay, out of the entire Army Reserve here are some things that we need to work on.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Well, I had --

SGM WATERHOUSE: I can't even fathom thinking of that but, you know, how do you assess that kind of in the entire Army Reserve.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Well and now --

SGM WATERHOUSE: 300,000 people or whatever it was at the time?

CSM(R) LACKEY: Well 205,000, 207,000.

SGM WATERHOUSE: 205,000.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah. And their families.

And so, you know, I'm sitting there, and of course I got a lot of these guys were peers of mine, you know, I'm a Non-Com Sergeant Major. And at that time we had 80 some Non-Com Sergeant Majors. I think Ted Copeland today has about 24. So that's how much we've downsized and they've reorganized. You know, they've got Divisions under Divisions under various groups and things like that.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM(R) LACKEY: So I think I had 85, 86 CSMs, or non-commands. One, Two-Star Commands. And so I'm like. What has always made me stellar at what I've done, you know. What do I do when I go into a Unit and assess it? I look at physical fitness, I look at height and weight, I look at weapons. Don't have any weapons there. So the first thing I do is they say okay, we're getting ready to have a conference. They always have a conference when, you know, the Sergeant Major of the Army comes in or Sergeant Major of the Army Reserves, Sergeant Major of the National Guard. We're having a conference, where

would you like to go over here to, you know, Virginia and have it. I said "No, I'd like to talk to Nick Peaunsatny, the guy I meet at the Course I told you about when we had --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

SGM WATERHOUSE: -- about going to Fort McCoy, Wisconsin. So I got Nick on the line, said "Hey, Nick, I'd like to do this." And he said "Yeah, we can do that." And I said "Okay." So I had my Executive Assistants draft a letter for me and I sent it out. Had the JAG people look at it, because you know how that goes. And I said "All Nominative Command Sergeant Majors are not requested, but required to come to Fort McCoy," my boss also agreed "Come to Fort McCoy, Wisconsin. When you get there you will not rent a car, we will have vans to pick you up at the airport and shuttle you. You will have quarters, you won't stay in a hotel, you'll have quarters on Fort McCoy, Wisconsin. And on Friday night, everybody arrive on Friday night. On Saturday morning you will receive a height/weight and we will

take a physical fitness APFT test, to include me and every Nominative Sergeant Major. If you fail to attend this meeting for whatever reason, you will be flagged until you can be tested by me or a testing facility other than your own that is non-biased. And if you fail the APFT with the height/weight you will be flagged and not allowed to travel until such time that you are deemed a qualified soldier." Got all kinds of static. People couldn't be there, you know.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Out of what, 80 something, you said?

CSM(R) LACKEY: 80, yeah. Their jobs --

SGM WATERHOUSE: You probably had 40 said they couldn't be there?

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah. Yeah. Well I had about 20 some.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Twenty? I was close.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah, that was close.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Twenty percent.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah. And I had them say "Well I can't come because I've got a job conflict."

I understand, I'm a civilian employee, I --

SGM WATERHOUSE: I was going to ask how would that work with so many different people and so many different jobs.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Well we have conferences all the time in different meetings. And so the first thing I do is I said "Pull all of his travel pay. Pull their travel pays and see when they've been gone on travel." And they were gone all the time. Out visiting Units and all that stuff. And I'm like, you know, I just get them on the phone. "You know, obviously, you know, it's not a concern that you can travel any time you want but you can't attend my meeting. And oh, by the way, you're always borderline on your height and weight. And just barely passed your APFT with your run."

SGM WATERHOUSE: So you had to pull where they'd been.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah, I pulled all the stats on them. I said "Well let me tell you, you know, I'm not playing games here." I said "I want to make sure

from this day forward all of my Senior Non-Commissioned Officers in Non-Com positions meet the standard. Now if you can't be there, you got the letter, you know what it says." I said "If you don't like it you can take whatever recourse you want." Well I had two that didn't show up. And they called the boss and said, you know, "My Sergeant Major's flagged me and he hasn't even done anything wrong, he hasn't been able to test right now."

SGM WATERHOUSE: Failure to report.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah. And my boss says, he said, "Have you talked to my Sergeant Major?" He said "Yes." He said "What'd he say?" He said "He didn't attend the meeting, you know, and therefore," you know, like you said, failure to report, "And he's not going to waiver on it." And he said "Well, you need to listen to my Sergeant Major. And my Sergeant Major has a reason to do this. I'm supporting my Sergeant Major 100 percent.

And I had about 10 of them show up in rental cars. And we drove them back and took -- and when I'm

trying to save money, you know. I mean any time I go somewhere, like when I go to Fort Knox from here I'm like "Why don't you pick me up." You know, I drive, but I'm like why they do like they used to do, get a Private and a vehicle sitting out there, all you're going to be out is gas instead of renting 50 rental cars and, you know --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Take a 15 pas van.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah. Or three to a vehicle, that live in three different locations and stuff. So anyway. And I had wild oats, because you heard the numbers. I had I think it was 22 people that failed either the height/weight or the APLT and I flagged them. So I ended up flagging 24 people.

Then I got back to the Pentagon, and you were asking me a question about, you know, what was success. And we talked about this a little bit at lunch. I got back and it's one of those, you know, I had a lot of success and won a lot of friends by having that meeting, you know, flagging all those people.



So the next thing I do is I go out to the AR First Com and I find out that we got 68 people that have been conditionally promoted that haven't graduated from the Academy. And I wrote them all a personal letter and got it signed off by my boss and the JAG, and said, you know, "Effective immediately you have --

SGM WATERHOUSE: So much time to get to school.

CSM(R) LACKEY: -- so much time to enroll and two years to complete or you will be reduced." And I got 68 IG complaints. Because those were all people that, you know, they weren't playing the game. They weren't ever going to do it. They wanted to be paid but --

SGM WATERHOUSE: They had no intention of going to school.

SGM WATERHOUSE: And one of them worked in DC, wait, he was probably the biggest thorn in my flesh. Worked at DC and was over at the Corps of Engineers. And he came down to my office and he's

like "I'm not going to Sergeant Major Academy, I'm not doing this. I'm the Sergeant Major of the Corps of Engineers and --"

SGM WATERHOUSE: Today you are.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah. And I said "Well let me tell you, Sergeant Major," I said "You caught me on a good day, you know. Today I'm going to allow you to go to the Academy, graduate, and retire or keep your position." I said "Tomorrow," and I used a little adjective, I said "I will not only do that, but I will try my best to recoup your pay after I reduce you." I said "Because obviously you had intent here. You had intent to get promoted and never go to the Academy."

SGM WATERHOUSE: Proved it by his talk.

CSM(R) LACKEY: That's forgery. Yeah. And then the last thing that I started working on was MEB PEBs. So those three things.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Medical Evaluation Board.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yes. We had hundreds if not thousands of soldiers on MEB PEBs that were just wasting the Army's money and resources.

SGM WATERHOUSE: They weren't ever getting to a solution of whether they stay or go?

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yes.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, Sergeant Major, you know, this, obviously the highest levels of the Army Reserve. How would you explain to me, even like the lowest Private, what were your primary roles and responsibilities as the Sergeant Major of the Army Reserve? What did you see those as?

CSM(R) LACKEY: What I told, when I came in for the job and the Chief and I had our first meeting, the Chief told me that my job was to take care of enlisted soldiers and their families. And he also understand the value of the enlisted corps, and that I'm responsible for all individual training, whether it be officer or enlisted. Physical fitness, height and weight. He said "Here at the Pentagon, you know, we've got people probably haven't ever taken a PT test." He said "I don't know that because, you know, that's not on my things to do list." He said "But based on me talking to you and talking to General

Barren and your previous Commander," he said "I know what you're going to be looking for." And he said "That's what I want you to do." And he said "I just want you to keep me informed, let me know where you're at, and when I need you to be somewhere, I want you to be there." And, you know, testify before Congress with him or sitting beside him or Jack Tiller or whoever on that.

And so that's what I did. And the first thing I did was I visited soldiers that were deployed. Any Units we had deployed, that was my, you know, because I thought just like going out and visiting Units that are not in my grasp but the Headquarters, these Units that were deployed or at the 7th Com in Europe. The ones that nobody ever sees, that's the Units I concentrated on.

SGM WATERHOUSE: And so for the audience here, I was going to read basically what you're kind of overseeing here.

As a Command Sergeant Major of the Army Reserve you directly managed 1,900 Command Sergeants

Major and Sergeants Major, around the world, to include their assignments, transfers, conditional promotion and education requirements, which we just talked about. You supported the Chief of the Army Reserve, your boss, and the Sergeant Major of the Army and all policies, procedures and senior leader staff responsibilities. You had Units and soldiers located across the United States and overseas. Like you said about 207,000 or 205,000 soldiers' families in 35 different countries.

CSM(R) LACKEY: We started with 207, but by the time I left we were down force to 205,000.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So how, I mean we talked about, you know, as a Battalion Sergeant Major kind of making your way around and seeing your soldiers, seeing your Units. How did you, you know, determine or prioritize who you would see? Now you've got the whole world as your area of responsibility, for all the countries we were in, you know.

CSM(R) LACKEY: And that's what I said. The first thing I did was I was concerned about soldiers

being deployed. I went over and visited the 8th of the 229th that was being deployed over in Bosnia. They weren't being paid properly. I went over and visited a Unit that had, you know, their Active Duty counterparts had heaters in their Guard Posts when they were pulling Guard Duty, and my soldiers on the other bases didn't have heaters. First thing I did was I called --

SGM WATERHOUSE: And who was overseeing those guys?

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah. First thing I did was called on the people not getting paid. I called and talked to the Sergeant Major of Finance. I said "I got some of your soldiers not getting paid." I said "They're my soldiers but they're also yours, they've Active Duty Soldiers now. I want it fixed." Within 48 hours they were spitting out LESs on a fax machine overseas in a controlled environment. And then I called up Sergeant Major Williams with the 81st RFC, who had access, because, you know, if you work with the Pentagon you get them one of them Colonels on the

phone, you say "Where can I find some heaters at?"

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM(R) LACKEY: You know. 81st has them, they're in Wellington, South Carolina. So I called Williams, I said "I need 34 heaters." He said "What about hand receipts?" Well I said, you know, "Assign them to whoever puts them on the plane." I said "We got a Sergeant Major at Fort Dix." They send them to Fort Dix, Fort Dix Sergeant Major hand received to the person going on the plane, the plane landed there, they hand receipted them. And they're like "We got heaters." Well you're supposed to have heaters, you know, you're supposed to have LESSs.

SGM WATERHOUSE: It's kind of unbelievable that whoever was over there didn't help them out.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah. And so that's what I concentrated on any time that I found something not being done properly, I took the initiative, I always checked on it, you know. Even if somebody called and say "This is happening," we would dig down to make sure it was happening. Because a lot of times things

weren't happening. But some other times they were.

But that was some of the initiative that I did.

But I chose to visit the organizations that I knew needed me first, and then I get all kinds of invitations.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Every ball in the region.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Come to this, come to that. I mean those were, unfortunately, they were down on the lower end. But I would go to those too if I had time and resources. But I would start with mission essential functions of my job, taking care of soldiers like I always did, and that's always what got me where I needed to be.

And one of the things I did as seeing some - - and I tell you, I go back to OCAR versus Sergeant Major of the Army Reserve, we were talking at lunch.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM(R) LACKEY: I was over in Bosnia or Kosovo, flying out of Mogadishu or somewhere in the winter. I couldn't get out of the place. And somebody's like "We don't know who OCAR CSM is." You



know, and I'm like -- I called Dave Lady, USAR Sergeant Major, and I said "Dave," I said "I am stuck in this location." Not Mogadishu, Macedonia.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Macedonia.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Macedonia. I said Mogadishu, Macedonia. I said "I'm stuck in Macedonia, I can't get out, they don't know who the hell I am."

SGM WATERHOUSE: Who you are.

CSM(R) LACKEY: And I said -- and the Army Reserve plane that they come from Heidelberg, they had no avionics there, all of them were blew out and everything, you know, so they couldn't fly in. So they had to wait. So they were able to get me on some kind of plane and get me out of there. And actually you went up from the back and boarded with the other people. Because I couldn't speak the language. They got me a ticket, got somebody there to get me the resources. You didn't want to eat the food that was on the plane served, and I landed in Frankfort, Germany. They picked me up and I got out of there. And the day I went back to the Pentagon I walked into

the building and I talked to my boss and I said "We have got to change my title." And so from that day forward it became the Command Sergeant Major of the Army Reserve.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So you were responsible for that?

CSM(R) LACKEY: And I don't want to toot my own horn, but it wasn't because of vane, it was because of necessity.

SGM WATERHOUSE: I mean it's pretty cut and dry.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah, Office of the Chief, what does that mean. Yeah. And I could see the average person --

CSM(R) LACKEY: Or OCAR.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Something combined acts rehearsal, what's that?

CSM(R) LACKEY: Whoever it is he don't need to leave.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, Sergeant Major, you spoke to some of them, but any particular challenges

you'd like to highlight, you know, you had three years, you know, in that position. Some of the key things that, you know.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Other than the ones I've talked about. I think the MEB, PEBs became a very viable thorn in my flesh because the more I dug into it the more I saw people getting over. I mean I would go and I would visit people and they said "Well this soldier comes in and signs in and then leaves." And so we actually tracked one soldier and they came in, they signed in, but they were too sick to work. They went home, they changed their clothes and they went to work at a civilian job in shoe sales. I got them out pretty quick.

But every time I turned around I was confronted with an IG complaint or something, you know. "Well we got hurt on the job," or "We got hurt while we were in the military," or we did this, you know. It was usually 10 percent are your problems and 90 percent. In this situation about 10 percent of them were doing the right thing, about 90 percent of

them were trying to draw a check as long as they could in the process, and we were allowing it.

You know, you miss an appointment for an MAVP, you will then wait another six months waive of duty, you get rewarded. You get to stay in the Army Reserve for another six months. Wrong answer.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM(R) LACKEY: You know. But other than that, you know, I really didn't have a lot of issues. And I will say that when I went to the Pentagon and I was briefed the first time by somebody on the staff there. They said "Sergeant Major, you don't have problems in the Pentagon, you have issues and concerns." So you've been hearing me through this whole time talking about issues and concerns. It's drilled into my head that I have issues and concerns, not problems.

SGM WATERHOUSE: I'm going to shift gears here a little bit, talk about your relationship with the Chief. You know, because very few people get to that level. I don't know how much time you guys got

to see each other, but how did you not only communicate and form that relationship with your boss, but all those Command Sergeant Majors and Sergeants Major that were out there. I mean that's a lot of people to try to communicate with.

CSM(R) LACKEY: It is.

SGM WATERHOUSE: And share your boss' vision and your initiatives, your concerns and issues. You know, how do you go about communicating?

CSM(R) LACKEY: And luckily at that time we did have email and it was pretty significant, you know, it changed a lot and the systems were great. You know, I didn't really have Blackberrys but I had the pre-cursor to a Blackberry. And after 911 I had Meridian because I never wanted to be without a phone again. And so we had those in the office. But I made sure that it was my boss, I communicated with him every week. Even if I just stopped in and said hi or, you know, if we went to lunch once a month or whatever, you know. He selected me for the job, and I had the pleasure of actually working for two Chiefs.

General Plusas retired and General Helmly became the next Chief of the Army Reserve, and I worked for him for a little over a year. And, you know, he didn't choose me, but we had a great working relationship.

And the thing that I would say to everybody that's listening to this, and I think the thing that's probably made me the most successful, and it doesn't matter if it was at the Post Office or in the Army. Whenever I got a new boss I'd always tell them, I'd say "Sir or Ma'am, you know, I'm going to tell you my nature, this is who Ray Lackey is." And I said, you know, "You may not like what I have to tell you, but I will never lie to you. And I think that integrity is the most important thing." And it doesn't matter who your boss is, if they know you're going to be honest, forthright and, you know, coming and confronting issues and doing the right thing, then you usually don't have a problem. And, you know, the boss and I would go to lunch on occasion.

And, you know, I think it's funny too because even at my level you would come to find out

with all the stresses he had of running the Army and the budget and the Colonels and the Boards and, you know, meeting with the Chiefs of the Army and the Secretary of the Army and Sec Defs and, you know, in the White House and all the other things that we had to put up with, you know, I think that when there was an issue, I mean he's like any other Commander, he's got a Sergeant Major. There was times when both of my Commanders would walk into my office, they would come and say "Hey, Sergeant Major," they walk in my office and they say "You got a minute?"

SGM WATERHOUSE: Goes back to you like First Sergeant time. No, not really, but come on in.

CSM(R) LACKEY: And they'd sit down in my office, shut the door, and they'd talk to me about what was on their mind. And the reason they would do that, they knew when the door opened that it didn't go any further. I didn't go home and --

SGM WATERHOUSE: But you'd also tell them the truth, not necessarily what they wanted to hear.

CSM(R) LACKEY: And I'd tell them the truth.

And they knew when I left there I wasn't going to go home and tell my wife "Hey, guess what the Chief had to say today?" You know, because that's between me and him, and I didn't share that. And sometimes it was good, sometimes it was bad. And I heard stories, believe it or not, sometimes that you don't even want to believe, good and bad, you know. But when it comes down to it, there are people, and they got a lot of responsibility, and they trust you. And that's what I had to learn quickly is that you know, you're their Non-Commissioned Officer and they trust you, and they expect you to do a job.

And so I'll be very honest with you. Today I have, because I worked hand in hand with their spouses too, you know, and Marie Helmley and Liz Plusas, they were very instrumental in getting things accomplished for us. And there's not a year goes by that I don't write the boss or their wife a birthday card, personally, and a Christmas card. Because I respect what they did for me and their soldiers. And as long as I'm living and I can remember their



birthday, nothing more than Outlook, I'm going to do that.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah. So, Sergeant Major, for all those Sergeant Majors, did you have -- and I'm sure you couldn't talk to all of whatever it was, 200 something. But certain ones of those I'm sure you communicated with kind of regularly. And how would you go about that?

CSM(R) LACKEY: Well I had, like I said, the 85 or 86 Nominative Sergeant Majors that I communicated with on a regular basis.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay. So All One Star, Two Star.

CSM(R) LACKEY: And then the AGRs that were over like Fort McCoy, if it was a Colonel position and not a non-nom position, they would be on that same mailing list.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Anybody that had like -- it didn't matter if it was Dix, McCoy, whatever, they weren't in a One Star, Two Star billet, they would be

on the same email, I would communicate with them. I treated them just like my Nominative Sergeant Majors because they had centers of influence. They were dealing with active Guard and Reserve Soldiers every day, they were on the front lines. And phone calls, communications, one of the things that I did, Jack Tilley got the Sergeant Major of the Army Referral Program, that's something he initiated. It might have been before your time, as a Recruiter.

SGM WATERHOUSE: I don't remember it.

CSM(R) LACKEY: But he had these goals and objectives, you know, you get a soldier that comes in, and they get somebody to join the Army they get this, gotta get two people they get a coin from the Sergeant Major of the Army. They get three, they get a certificate.

Well I mirrored that program.

SGM WATERHOUSE: We had something similar, but you would you'd get a promotion, like PD2 or something.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah. And I mirrored that

program for him. But one day we were at a meeting and he said "I met so and so and he didn't know anything about the Sergeant Major of the Army Referral Program." That was one of my Nominative Sergeant Majors. And I'm like "I can fix that." So my next conference, which was whenever we had the Chief was in and all that, I personally brought every Nominative Sergeant Major, all of them, into my room either before, during, or after the conference, and they sit down and they enrolled in the Sergeant Major of the Army Referral Program.

And what that did was it prompted -- like I enrolled in it too. It prompted the Recruiter in Bowling Green, Kentucky to contact me and ask me. Because I enrolled as Ray Lackey, not Command Sergeant Major.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Prompted him to call me and ask me about if I wanted to join the Army. And then they all had contact. And the next time I saw that Sergeant Major after my meeting, I had eye contact and

I said "Sergeant Major Tilley, every one of my Sergeant Majors has personally been enrolled in the Sergeant Major of the Army Referral Program. They've all been contacted by their Recruiters in their home towns, and they know what's going on, and we're tracking it." Because somebody let me down.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM(R) LACKEY: And let the Sergeant Major of the Army down. And that's kind of how I take care of it. And my Sergeant Majors know that, you know, it's not do I take care of what's, you know, hot on the burner, I try to take care of everything that's in my grasp and what I can.

But to answer your question, email, phone calls, visits.

SGM WATERHOUSE: That's a lot of folks to keep up on.

CSM(R) LACKEY: That's a lot of time. I mean, you know, it'd be like 1:00 in the morning. They'd be like "What are you doing up at 1:00 in the morning?" I'm like "I just got in and it's so and so

time somewhere and I'm doing business."

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah. There are soldiers that are awake at all times.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Depending on where they are. So, Sergeant Major, before we get -- I got a couple more things I want to ask you about your time as Sergeant Major of the Army Reserve. Because you were in the Pentagon on September 11th, 2001 when the terrorist attacked the Pentagon. I'll just go ahead and let you talk about that. I know you were there when the plane hit the building.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah. I was there. I was like everybody else probably in the United States, in awe. We went into the room there, you know, we have a TV that has all the current events on it, what's going on there at the Chief's Office. And, you know, we was watching TV when the first plane crashed and when the second plane crashed we were, you know, watching the reruns and things that were going on. And the next thing I know that my Executive Assistant says

"Sergeant Major you need to come here, we need to leave." I'm like "Where we going?" He's like "Well come here, I need to show you something." And there were people running down the hall, screaming. Of course I couldn't hear them, you know, I was in that room and not listening. They were screaming, running down the hall, so we needed to evacuate the building.

So we grab our stuff, what we had, you know, backpack and phone and stuff, we run out. First thing I do is I go down to the Armory Operations Center to make sure everything's okay there and they know what's going on. Go to the bathrooms. I go to go out the closest door, that's what they tell you to do, go out the closest door. I put my finger on the thing like you're supposed to to exit. Never used it before, we never had a fire drill. Wouldn't open. I didn't know I had to leave it there for so much time. And so we come out of there and go up the stairs. And where we were at down in the basement, because we were in the renovation side. And one thing where General Malden, Sergeant Major Commissioner Larry Strickland and Lacey

Ivory were in the room when the plane hit right there. That was the Chief of the Army Reserve building office before the renovation. And we moved out of the building. And it was --

SGM WATERHOUSE: So you were in the basement when the plane hit?

CSM(R) LACKEY: We were in the basement. And the way the crew flies, we got the measurements on it. They said it was less than 300 feet from the nose of the aircraft to where we were located at in our little area there.

But when we got outside the boss said, you know, "We need to go." They were already landing choppers to take us to an undisclosed location north. And I said "Boss," I said "If it's okay with you," I said "I need to go to the sound of the guns." I said "I've been trained all my life that, you know, I'm here to take care of soldiers, I'll meet up with you later." And so my Executive Assistant wouldn't leave my side. We went around the corner of the building, went in the building. Went into several areas, went

into the gaping hole, trying to find survivors, went into other parts of the building. Where we were at it was so hot that the rubber on the soles of our Low Quarters were --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Oh, you were in a Class V uniform?

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah. Were falling off. Yeah, that was back in the Class Vs every day, before 911.

And we met up with a Lieutenant Colonel by the name of Ted something, you can look him up or something, and this young guy that was with him. And then the General that was over the thing after, went in, you know, helping all the people and stuff. But me and Ted and stuff went into an area. And the interesting thing is, you know, where we went to, every time we'd come to a dead end we couldn't find anybody and so we'd come back out and we'd go to another area. And then Ted split up one way and we split up another way and me and Paul went this way and him and that other guy went. And they were able to



rescue a few people. He was actually the guy that represented the Pentagon, was on the news the next day.

And what bothered me the most out of this whole thing was that -- not for me, because my boss wanted to put me in for a Soldier's Medal, and I said, "No, you don't put the Sergeant Major of the Army Reserve in for a Soldier's Medal." Even though I qualify, it's General Officers only. I said "Because somebody said they handed that to you." But we put Paul, Sergeant Major then in for a Soldier's Medal and they turned it down. I mean we were there right by where the helicopter pad was, there were tires exploding off of vehicles and whizzing past us. We were up in the middle of the burning building, you know, shoes melting off. And, you know, you read the description of thing, just because you don't -- it's the act that counts.

And I questioned them on that. But the Army, in their infinite wisdom, chose not to give Paul a Soldier's Medal. And I even went back a couple

times and like I read some of the others, you know, people that did the same thing got Soldier's Medals.

SGM WATERHOUSE: You pull somebody out of a burning car, what's the difference.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Act aside.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Like you pull a kid out of a burning car of whatever, it's the same kind of thing you were doing in the building, right?

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah. And, you know, there was people there that actually didn't even go into the burning building, they were actually helping the people when they got them out of the building. Which we did too, you know, but where, you know, their body was burned and things, and were treating the soldiers before evacuation, that got Soldier's Medals that never even risked their lives going inside the building. And so that's a pet peeve of mine, but for what it's worth.

But anyway, the long story short, we didn't go in there, but I thought Paul, you know, I'm a reg guy, by the regulation he deserved one. I put him in

for one but he didn't get it. And he is actually the Command Sergeant Major of the USAR and Force Com Building there at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. He's the Headquarters Sergeant Major, like, you know, the people take the PT test for Force Com and the weigh ins and all the administrative stuff, that's his job. He's a great Senior Non-Commissioned Officer. And I'm glad that he made CSM.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, Sergeant Major, in October, 2002 your three-year tour as a Command Sergeant Major of the Army Reserve came to an end. In looking back at, you know, your three at that level, what are your key take aways from, you know, serving at the highest level of the Army Reserve?

CSM(R) LACKEY: Well I think the most important is that, you know, you're given a lot of responsibility. And that's why I think that they go to the extreme in putting the right people in the right place at the right job. I think that some of the most rewarding things that happened to me was I was able to, you know, redo the CSM and Sergeant Major

selection processes. You read there, I personally had a thumbprint on that, you know, I managed the CSM.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM(R) LACKEY: I managed the AGR CSM and Sergeant Major. There was two First Sergeants when I took over in the Army Reserve Program. There's no way to grow CSMs if you only got two. We made 14 additional First Sergeant positions in the AGR side of the house to where we could grow CSMs. And great people like Paul Mantha was able to serve in that First Sergeant position and become a CSM.

We were able to do a lot of things like that. The fact that after 911 I was able to go to -- I sit in on the War Room and the briefings and watched them destroy Unit after Unit and individual after individual. I had a seat there with Jack Tilley and -

SGM WATERHOUSE: Talking about Afghanistan?

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah. Right. And so we were able to watch that and get the briefings every day in the War Room. You know, that's the things, you

know, you talk about very few people get a chance to be the CSM of the Army Reserve and work for a Three-Star Chief of the Army Reserve and have all this. That, to me, is something very few people get to do too.

And then one of the highlights of my career I think is that the Army Reserve mobilized -- I don't know if you're aware of not -- mobilized the first Unit after 911. The 311th Quartermaster Mortuary Affairs Unit was mobilized within 24 hours of the plane crashing in there. Plus the Army doesn't have a lot of Mortuary Affairs Units at home station. We brought them in, flew them in, and brought them into -- they had nowhere to stay. We put them in racquetball courts at Fort Meyer, Virginia, where they stayed until we could open up quarters to get them in. Women in one racquetball court, men in two other racquetball courts. They had to live like that for weeks on end. Plus going into the building and --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Identifying the bodies.

CSM(R) LACKEY: -- bringing out, identifying

the bodies, tagging every piece of equipment, coin, envelope, billfold, everything there was.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Had to be a hard job.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Getting sick. You know, one of the best jobs that I ever had one day was when they first went in, I was there. I was there every day because we couldn't fly anywhere, you couldn't go anywhere, we were burying our dead and going to funerals and doing these things. But I was there and they had these guys that were working, civilians were working there. And one of these young kids, Specialist, going to school, joined the Army Reserve so that he could get his education. Came out of the building after he went in there because he ran upon some dead individuals in there, and got sick, and came out, they were cleaning -- they were laughing at him. I walked over there and I said "What are you doing?" I said "You need to get out of here." And I said "If you don't want to get out of here I'll make sure you never come back to this facility, I don't care who you are." And I said "You know, these kids are here,

these soldiers are here because they want to be, they're mobilized to come in there. Are they prepared for it, maybe not. Will they be before they leave, yes." But I said "But you don't make fun of my soldiers."

And so after that, you know, I was cognizant of the fact that we got counseling for those soldiers and made sure every one of them was in the system and taken care of before they left.

But we mobilized the first Unit in the entire Army after 911. And, you know, we're talking now -- I was at Fort Knox last weekend, and they're talking about the Steps of Readiness, you know, and Ready Force One and how many, you know, you gotta talk about the non-classified part, but how many days it is before somebody leaves.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM(R) LACKEY: And on the Army Reserve side, the mobilization side, I'm like "Well your Units are leaving before your people are mobilized to take care of them." And they said "Well we're going to do

that at Home Station." I said "No, you're not." I said "Lesson learned." The first Unit to ever mobilize, they had no resources, they had no people, they had nothing. We brought them in to Washington, DC and mobilized them and gave them ID cards because we had the resources there.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah.

CSM(R) LACKEY: I said "So you need to rethink that." You know, I'm sitting there as an Army Reserve Sergeant Major. I said "You need to relook at that because I don't think that's going to work."

But, you know, that's some of the things. And then most importantly, change. You know, you talk about change, it all comes back around, you know. The only thing I think that changes is sometimes resources, sometimes the paces, but we're always looking to be readiness. Missions may change but readiness is always number one. Army, Army Reserve, it doesn't matter what you're doing.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, Sergeant Major, is there anything else you'd like to discuss about your



time as the Command Sergeant Major of the Army Reserve that we haven't covered?

CSM(R) LACKEY: No, I think that's about it.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay. So in January, 2003 you retired from the Army Reserve with over 32 years of military service. And what led to your decision at that time to go ahead and call it a day and get out of the Army Reserves?

CSM(R) LACKEY: I was in a tenured position and the boss had told me, he said "You know, we got a war going on, you can stay if you want." I'd already had a commitment, I promised my boss that I would go after three years in that job.

SGM WATERHOUSE: At Fort Knox now?

CSM(R) LACKEY: You know, integrity's the most important thing. And I said "Sir, you know, we can find somebody to replace me, get them in here, get them trained up, you know, do your slating." And I said "You didn't pick me up here working for you, you can pick your own person and, you know, do what you need to be doing to move forward on the war." Because

we don't know how long this portion will last, not long. I can only be extended for another year anyway in the AGR program.

SGM WATERHOUSE: And somebody else had to come in anyway?

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah, somebody else has to come in anyway. And so, you know, as I said, my tenure's up, I had an opportunity to go OSDRA as a Sergeant Major there like a lot of AGR Sergeant Majors do and the CSMs of the Army Reserve. But once again, I believed upper route, but for me that wasn't something I wanted to do. I wanted to come back.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Secretary of Defense Office?

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah. I wanted to come back and fulfill my job as a --

SGM WATERHOUSE: That they had kept for you.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah, they had kept for me. Exactly. And like I said, it was the best thing to do for the Army and for me and for the Postal Service.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, Sergeant Major, looking

back at the three decades you served in uniform, what are you most proud of?

CSM(R) LACKEY: I think that I'm most proud of being the standard bearer, you know, setting the standard requirement, standards to be met, and maintaining standards across the board and in the organization. From the young Private that was called out for "Cook whites," to being the Sergeant Major of the Army Reserve. You know, I learned early in my career that, you know, regulations, just like I said about the Post Office, you follow the regulations, you know.

You gotta guy from Bowling Green, Kentucky, lost his mother at a young age and, you know, joined the Army on the buddy plan, without a buddy. Came through all this process, and in every scenario I was either promoted earlier or put in a position before my time. And I'm going to tell you something, Sergeant Major, it wasn't because I was great and wonderful. It was because I was doing my job. And we're talking about minimum standards, you know. Did I excel on the

PT test score? Yeah. But, you know, I showed up for work, I made the formations, I did everything that was required of me. I passed my tests, I did my MOSQ, any training, any school, any, you know, anything that was asked of me I did. And, you know, and the reason I'm saying that is for all those people out there, it's easy. You know, you qualify your weapon you get a badge. You jump out of an airplane you get a badge. You know, you become a soldier during a conflict, whether you're in the conflict or not you get a medal. The Army rewards people. You get certificates, you get AAMs, you get all these accolades. So, you know, I think for just being a guy that came in the Army to serve three years, and then look back on my career doing my job, taking care of my soldiers. My soldiers and my mentors taking care of me, I've done pretty good.

SGM WATERHOUSE: And that's pretty much how you're going to be remembered if somebody says about your military career. I think that sums it up pretty good.

CSM(R) LACKEY: That's how I'd like to be remembered.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, Sergeant Major, about five months after you retired from the Army Reserve you took over as the Postmaster of Bowling Green, Kentucky. I might have that timing off a little bit. But as promised, you went back here, took over the Post Office as the Postmaster where you served until you retired from the U.S. Postal Service in March of 2008.

After you retired from the Postal Service you worked for a few different companies, and in August, 2010 you began working for Western Kentucky University where you served as a Human Resources Instructor Trainer and Leadership and Strategic Planning Instructor. Would you like to explain kind of what that is for the folks that don't know anything about universities and those titles?

CSM(R) LACKEY: And if I could throw a thing in real quick for my old boss. I was at Fort Knox, Kentucky, had a job for the rest of my life. And my

boss chose to stay on, even with adversities, she chose to stay on until I got back to Fort Knox, got my feet on the ground, before she retired so I could come back to Bowling Green, Kentucky. Not only did she help me get to go to the Sergeant Majors Academy, allow me to go to be the Command Sergeant Major of the Army Reserve without any hassle, but she saved her job for me until I came back. You don't find bosses like that, and Judy Myers is one of a kind.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So you got back, went to Fort Knox, stayed there for four or five months, and then transferred over.

CSM(R) LACKEY: She wanted me to get my feet on the ground, learn all the new stuff, and then she retired.

SGM WATERHOUSE: She got you ready and then you get moved here.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah.

SGM WATERHOUSE: That's awesome.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Couldn't ask for -- you know, if it got any better I couldn't have planned it

myself. None of this stuff --

SGM WATERHOUSE: I was missing that piece of the pie. I'm like, okay, Fort Knox. Okay, yeah. So she squared you away and then you came here.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yep. Because had she'd left six months before I wouldn't have been qualified.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM(R) LACKEY: I wouldn't even know what was going on in the Post Office, they wouldn't have put me in a level 22, 24 office, you know. And then, you know, after I got there I had to have time to ramp up and know what was going on within the Postal Service. And prove myself again after being gone three and a half years. So I would like to throw that out.

But to answer your question, had a couple jobs. And if I could go to one before I go to the other.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM(R) LACKEY: One job was working for Quality Associates. I don't know if you saw that or

not in the bio. But I had the honor, my sister and two other individuals on Quality Associates, they worked for Proctor & Gamble. They were in Cincinnati, Ohio, and then they went to other states, they actually ended up with eight states. And working for Proctor & Gamble they needed to hire people. And somebody came to me and told me about this program. They were always taking care of Veterans. But now the Department of Defense has an MSEP, Military Spouse Employment Program. Don't know if you've heard about it. But if you haven't it's getting ready to go to Germany, it's a great asset.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So this is 2009, 2008, 2009?

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah. It's a great asset. Her company, their company hired me. For two years I worked on getting the vetting process because you gotta get qualified, you gotta get selected. Then you go to DOD for a ceremony. Then they put your name up, 200, and your company, on a website jobs for 256 locations all around the world to hire Veterans'



spouses, whether the Veterans are ETSing, PCSing, retiring, or whatever. And I'd just like to say that that was probably one of the most pleasurable times of working because I made very little money. Made very little money but -- because I did it for very low money. But I was able to help spouses of Veterans that are doing those things.

On the side of Western Kentucky University, I went, after I got back to Bowling Green, Kentucky, and I'd already, we talked about it, I had my Associate's Degree that I got when I went to DC. Because my boss, he's like "You got an Associate's Degree. I see you got the hours." So I got my Associate's Degree before I went to DC, and then when I came back I got my Bachelor's Degree. And then I got the opportunity to, after 911, to get the Post 911 GI Bill Benefits. And so I went back and took courses to give me my certification in Human Resource. So I had my PHR, Professional Human Resources from the Human Resources Institute, and I had my CP certification professional from Shuron. And so once

again, right place, you know, right time.

Western called me one day and they said "Hey, the instructor's going on sabbatical to China for a year, we'd like for you to be our instructor. He said "You were one of the best students he's ever had and you knew your stuff and everything. What do you think?" he said. And I said "Sure." So I started doing all that.

And the average percentage of pass rate in the United States was 56 percent. My first year I had 85.

SGM WATERHOUSE: As far as college kids?

CSM(R) LACKEY: No, this is for people passing the criteria to be a Human Resources Professional.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay. Okay.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Once you take the training you go down and take a certified test.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM(R) LACKEY: And you get your credentials. It's about 400, 500 questions, you know,

about 56 percent pass rate, I had 85. Ron comes back and he's like "How would you like to continue to do this because you're doing so good on your statistics." Because I tracked, you know, I'm a leader, I know how to track people and make people do what they need to be doing, be successful.

And then they liked what I was doing there so they said "Hey, how'd you like to start teaching some cohered leadership classes?" "Sign me up." And so I started teaching leadership class." And they said "We got a problem with" -- I don't want to mention a name, but -- "an organization here at Western Tech University. We would like for you to do some strategic planning with them." And so I spent two days with the entire organization and found out what their squad analysis was, their strengths and weaknesses, and we worked on that. And we went all the way back to the basics, what they do as fundamentals, and then tried to help them build from there. And it became a very successful program. And so the person that hired me for that liked me, and so

I was able to do some other things too.

But to make a long story short, you know, I'm 65 now and I'm about to the point where I don't mind doing some things but probably going to get out of the teaching profession and look at doing some other things. I don't mind doing a class here or there but, you know, when you commit to a 12-week class, three hours a night, couple nights a week, you know. And then monitoring their progress, their test scores and stuff, it's not something that I don't mind doing, you know, not too ambitious for me, I just don't know that I -- you know, there's younger people out there that can do the work and make the money, that probably need the money, rather than having me continue to do it.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, Sergeant Major, up to now, of course, we've been speaking about both your career in the Active Duty Army Reserve and Postal Service and a couple positions you just mentioned with Western Kentucky. I want to switch gears a little bit now, get your thoughts, kind of your -- and you

probably highlighted some techniques, tactics, procedures for folks to learn, but I want to switch to kind of some NCO Course specific areas, just get your opinion on some of these things and some advice for some future Specialists or PFCs out there, or Master Sergeants, just to get your insights on some of these topics.

So, Sergeant Major, in your opinion, what are some of the key things a Senior NCO, you know, Sergeant First Class or above, must do to be an effective leader of his or her subordinate NCOs and soldiers?

CSM(R) LACKEY: I think first and foremost they have to lead by example. They've got to be the person that people can go to for the knowledge, the skills and the ability. They've got to set the standard. They gotta be physically fit, they gotta be mentally tough. They gotta have that high ideal, just like all that. And they've got to have integrity. Like I said before, I think the number one trait of a leader is integrity. And if they have those things

and they focus on just meeting the minimum standards in the Army, they'll do well.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, Sergeant Major, obviously NCOs are leaders but they're also advisors in certain positions, especially, you know, Commanders and such. And so what kind of advice would you give to those, you know, Platoon Sergeants, you know, so they could be an effective advisor to his or her Platoon Leader, First Sergeant to their Company Commander, you know, Operations NCO to their S3 Officer, you know. What would you say was some of the key things Senior NCOs must be able to do to be an effective advisor?

CSM(R) LACKEY: I think that most importantly, and one of the terminologies that I used to use a long time ago was you never walk out of a room and leave a light on, you know, you flip the switch. Now my wife probably won't agree with me now, I don't do that every day. But, you know, that's part of doing business, you know. You walk out of that training facility, the lights are on, somebody's

paying for the electricity.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM(R) LACKEY: So I'm the kind of guy who's like you never leave a facility without the lights off, the doors locked, the building's secure, check all the doors. You know, just taking care of the basics, the simple stuff. And you mentioned it earlier, and I wrote it down before the interview. Be, know, do. If you're the go-to person and people see you, you know, you have an air about you. And I'm not saying that conceitedly, you know. I'm just saying if you're in a military uniform and you're, you know, you're striped, and you're, you know, when you had on khakis they were pressed properly and you had on BTUs or fatigues and, you know, your fatigues were right and your headgear's on correctly and you're clean shaven, and if you wear a moustache, like I do, you know. How'd you ever get to the Pentagon with a moustache?

SGM WATERHOUSE: Are you Calvary.

CSM(R) LACKEY: And, you know, my answer to

that was "If it'll make me a better soldier I'll shave it." You know, but the scenario is be, know, do. And, you know, people look at you and they say "Hey, you know, I've asked him a question before. He doesn't mind doing this or he's there when I needed him, or he may be a real prick but I can depend on him."

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, Sergeant Major, for a civilian education, I know, you know, you took some in the Reserve during your career as you were coming up. As far as that helping you, your civilian education in the Army Reserve. How important do you think those classes were, you know, until you got your actual degree later. But taking those civilian, you know, those college classes. How did those help you, I guess, as a leader?

CSM(R) LACKEY: Well I think that everything you see today, and, you know, and the pendulum is kind of shifting because of all the student debt, you know. But thanks to the Armed Forces you can get an education for free. But, you know, people are saying,



you know, should you go out and spend \$200,000 to get an education and not have a job?

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM(R) LACKEY: So that pendulum is switching. When I went to college I went to college because I had a Montgomery GI Bill. It didn't pay for everything, you know, like today you get the stipends, you get so much. I think it's great. Post-911 they get -- here's this card. You can get pencils and paper and like wow, you know. I didn't get all that with the Montgomery GI Bill. You know, I had to struggle, I had to pay for extra stuff and do things, and I'm glad to see soldiers aren't doing that now.

But if you're asking me the question, I think all education is good. You know, I don't know if you saw the video, and I'm going to make a pump for that. The guy in Texas that, you know, talked about it was belittling military people in the classroom and they --

SGM WATERHOUSE: California, wherever he was.

CSM(R) LACKEY: California where it was. And they ended up firing him. Well you know, the response to somebody gave to that, every leader in the Army that's an Officer has a college degree. You know, 99 percent of your Non-Senior, Non-Commissioned Officers has some form of college, one way or the other because they've been in the Academy and whatever, you know, and there's all kinds of training. I think that any educational process makes you a better person.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah. I think that guy's comment was something like the people who join the Army aren't intellectuals, they're not smart, they're the lowest of the low. Obviously he doesn't know anything about the military.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah. Well he was stupid on his own. Be so smart, he was stupid.

But anyway, what I'm getting at with that is the same thing. You know, people don't understand that. But any education you can get will further your career and your advancement. Do you need something for the Non-Commissioned Officers that says you must

have a Master's Degree to be a Command Sergeant Major?  
No. Do you have to have a four-year degree to be a  
Command Sergeant Major? I've heard about that, you  
know. If you're going to give them time and you're  
going to give them the resources. You know, but some  
people don't have the time or the resources. I was  
able to do it while I was out as a civilian, working  
and going to school and being in the Army Reserve.

So to answer your question, you know, it's  
really -- I think it's the dynamics of the individual,  
and maybe the position. Like the position you're in  
now, you know, you talk about doctors working there.  
So if somebody's looking and doing your job -- and  
you're doing a very good job, I want to thank you for  
everything that you've done and everything. But, you  
know, you look at the dynamics of your job. If  
somebody else goes in there they may not be able to do  
that. But, you know, you've got the background,  
you've done other things, you can do it.

So I think you need to look at particular  
positions. I think you need to look at skill level.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Which one should include education.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah. And which ones, you know, should the Sergeant Major of the Army Reserve have some kind of additional education? Absolutely.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Because that's my next question actually. And you're kind of answering it as some people may vehemently disagree that civilian education should be anywhere in the NCO promotion system. You know, I almost came in with a degree. I didn't have one but, you know. Some of our soldiers come in with a four-year degree. So should those promotion -- should that kid get promotion points to make Sergeant faster than the kid that came in with no, you know, those are the things that are debated every year.

CSM(R) LACKEY: But they do get points right now, right?

SGM WATERHOUSE: They do get points right now but, you know, okay, what about the kid that didn't have that ability to go to college.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Like me.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah. Didn't have the ability, the money, the time to go to college, yet that person's going to have let's say, I don't know what the points are now, but I would say 100 less points.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Is that fair? Or do you count it once, do you keep counting it for Staff Sergeant too? That's how we do it now. How many times you get credit for something you did before you came in the Army, for example. Yeah.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Let's take Ray Lackey for example. Should I get credit just because I went to Fort Sill, Oklahoma and got an MOS and I come to Fort Bragg, North Carolina and they asked me and put me in an OJT Infantryman. I'm going to get additional credits my whole life for an additional MOS. Was it 15 points, for every promotion that I do.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Just because I was lucky.

Just because I got the opportunity.

SGM WATERHOUSE: I just like to ask that question because that's something that's hotly debated all the time.

CSM(R) LACKEY: I think that 100 points is probably a little bit too much. I think, you know, like me, I was given five points because I had military preference. I think they ought to make it like --

SGM WATERHOUSE: I don't know if it's 100 points, I'm just throwing that number out there.

CSM(R) LACKEY: That number out. But, you know, I think that having civilian education is a plus if they used it properly. But what degree did they get, you know, were they going in a business degree or was it some kind of degree like men and women studies.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah. How does that help the Army or how does that --

CSM(R) LACKEY: I mean at least it needs to be something that, you know, finance, if they're going to be in the finance. I think everything being equal,

that you consider what kind of degree it is and, you know, what they're going to, yeah, what have you done for me lately? How's it going to help the military?

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, Sergeant Major, what advice would you give to NCOs selected to serve in their first Battalion level Command Sergeant Major position?

CSM(R) LACKEY: In the first Battalion Command Sergeant Major level position I think that just like me, when you go into that position you need to evaluate the Unit readiness. You need to sit down with your Commander, you need to find out what his goals and objectives are for you, he's probably going to tell you that anyway. You need to know who your First Sergeants are, can you depend on them? You need to know the physical fitness of the entire organization. You need to know, like I've been looking at all my life, you know, is your Arms Room and weapons ready. If you were deployed tomorrow can you use each and every weapon in your arsenal, you know, individual and crew served weapons, you know.

It doesn't matter if it's the FB-92 or the new M-17, you know, that's the importance of this issue. And I think that a Sergeant Major needs to be cognizant of the fact that he has a Brigade Sergeant Major and Division Sergeant Major that he can rely on. And that those people are going to be mentoring him and also, you know, making sure he's on task.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, Sergeant Major, moving up now to the higher level. What advice would you give to those Sergeants Major that are preparing to serve in their first Nominative Sergeant Major or Nominative Command Sergeant Major position?

CSM(R) LACKEY: You know, I think that basically going forward, and I'd have to say there is a distinction. You know, when you're working for an 0-5, 0-6, those guys, great people. I mean one of the best Commanders I ever had in my life, 0-6. But when you go to work for a General Officer, and it doesn't matter if it's Active Duty or Reserve components, those people have dedicated their lives to accelerating the advancement of the Army. Not to



accelerate the advancement for themselves. You know most people who make General Officer are making a career out of getting promoted. You know, they've done something along the way that has distinguished themselves. Because I've talked to people on the GO Boards there at OCAR and different places, you know. And it could be just one factor. But those people have made a difference. And going in there you need to know that, who your boss is.

Like every boss I ever worked for, I knew their bio, I knew their background, I knew what they had done, I know what their strategic, like the Chief of the Army Reserve. When I sat down with him for the interview I knew everything that he wanted the Army Reserve to do. Why? Because I read it. And I think that anybody going into a position either for an interview or to serve with them, need to understand their boss.

And then with that said, then they know what direction that they can take moving forward to, you know, to make the Command Team cohesive and to ensure

that, you know, they're accomplishing that mission. Because the General's probably not going to have the time to sit down, like he has with us, like you said, with other bosses. You know, it's not going to be that one-on-one time as you have had with the First Sergeant Commander or the Battalion Commander and Brigade Commander.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Right.

CSM(R) LACKEY: It's going to be a whole new different ballgame.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, Sergeant Major, it's a struggle sometimes for, you know, Sergeants Major out there when they, you know, you still want to touch point, you know, those tactical things and fix things like weapons or identify, hey, those weapons. But also you have to be able to operate in the operational and strategic level environment, especially as high as you went. So how were you able to make those, you know, what are some of the ways you were able to make those transitions and be able to speak and look at all three levels, not just, you know. Tactical is the

easy one to identify because that's how we grew up. But we rarely think about operation level or strategic level mindedness, or whatever you want to think about it, you know, effects, until we get up into those Nominative level jobs.

CSM(R) LACKEY: And I agree with you. And I think that most importantly, my time as a Battalion Operations Sergeant and my time in those other positions helped me to get there. Because I was not a strategic thinker, you know. When I went to be a Battalion Operations Sergeant I had to learn to do the planning for our training and things. And when I got to be a Battalion and Brigade Sergeant Major, you know, I got better and better at doing those things. When I became a Nominative Sergeant Major, the strategic thing that we did then, and even in OCAR, we were doing more things. Like I told you I'm doing today, you know, I'm working on helping Kentucky pass a bill that requires the AS LAB to require to be given to every student in high school in the entire State of Kentucky.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Divisions that affect everybody.

CSM(R) LACKEY: You know, that affects -- and why are we doing that? Because, you know, if you look at it from a non-strategic level, it's like "Oh, you know, the Army just wants them to do that so they go in there and harass them, get people to come in the Army." But, you know, the point is that 25 percent of every high school student in the United States can qualify to go into the Army Forces. Only about 25 percent. That's crazy. And out of that 25 percent, very few of those are going to come into the Armed Forces. So we want to give other people an opportunity to say "Hey, if you score well on this test, you know, you get your height/weight down, you do this, you do that, you can become a part of a bigger person, be a part of an Army." And also target the ones that aren't qualified. But, you know, when we look at the strategic level, and I go back to what I said about the War Room.

You know, seeing that Board and seeing every

one of those aircraft up on that wall and every one of the deck of 52, I never dreamed stuff like that existed. Did you? I mean before I became the CSM of the Army Reserve I never dreamed that stuff like that even existed.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So how would you advise somebody when do they need to start thinking of stuff outside of their box?

CSM(R) LACKEY: Well, when I became a Division Sergeant Major I knew most everybody in my scope, the Brigade Sergeant Majors, the Units.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM(R) LACKEY: We had two new Brigades, you know, four new states. But when I really became cognizant, and I'm going to talk about Ray Lackey's strategy and strategic stuff. And, you know, I'm working around this thing, maybe making it a little more difficult. But one of the things I had a hard time grasping was, you know, I had a lot of soldiers. And not just my Nominative guys, but Fort Dix. You know how I was able to put a handle on that? Because

I'm a thinker and I deal with my hands and my eyes, I'm a visual guy. And I used to be one of these individuals, I see something I can remember it. I got my own deck of cards. I had three by five cards. I put the pictures, took them off the website or wherever I could get them, of the Sergeant Majors and the Commander for each Command in my organization, what they did, where they were located. Then I separate those and I grew as I knew who everybody was. I knew every mission, I knew every location, I could tell you where every organization was in the Army Reserve. But I had to learn that. And that for me was my strategic part. So when the boss says "Okay, we're going to go to such and such to visit so and so." "Oh, General so and so and Sergeant Major so and so. He works for so and so and the General works for so and so. And oh, by the way, they've got this many soldiers, their Units do this." And I got so good at knowing my people and what the Units did, I branched out and I'm like "I knew who their spouses were, I knew, you know, because they'd be at the functions and

doing things. And for me personally, it allowed me, like when I went to AUSA functions or when I went to go see the Chief of Staff of the Army, General Sensaky or Jack Tilley, you know, I could walk into the room and, not just thinking strategically about what was going on with the Army, but people. Because, you know, you walk into a room and, and you know, you know General Sensaky and you know what's going on with the Army at that strategic level. You know that his wife's Patty, where she's from. You know Jack Tilley and you know his wife, Gloria, and son, Brian. And everything that he's working on, like the Sergeant Major of the Army Referral Program. For me it's just everything. You know, if you're looking at Ray Lackey, talking strategic, I had to learn my people first, and then had to learn my missions. And then I had to learn like the future. You know, we transition to war.

Now that's probably the reason you're here today is because Ted Copeland said "Hey, you know, you're the guy. There's a couple of guys I want to

interview but you're the guy that took the Army Reserve to war after 911 and I thought you'd be a good person to do this interview." Now was I ready for the Army Reserve to go to war? No. Did we ever think that that was going to happen in the wink of an eye or an instance? No. But somebody out there was thinking about it to have all that stuff planned and coordinated and things.

So I don't know if I answered your question correctly but.

SGM WATERHOUSE: I mean now we have a Nominative Leader Course that we, you know, send Sergeant Majors to before they go into those billets, ideally.

CSM(R) LACKEY: I've got a couple guys that teach that.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah. And before that it's really, you know, OGT or you talk to people who've done it before.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Out at Leavenworth?

SGM WATERHOUSE: Ours is actually at



Carlisle.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Oh, is it?

SGM WATERHOUSE: Carlisle Barracks.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Oh, really? Because I knew they had a -- maybe that's Brigade and Battalion.

SGM WATERHOUSE: That's Brigade and Battalion. We have those courses. And it's supposed to be before you go into a Nominative level assignment, we have a separate Sergeants Major Course, two-week course. As a matter of fact we just had one last week, for the last two weeks. And that gives these guys, starts thinking. Hey, you gotta start thinking about strategically, you're at that level now. You gotta speak for the whole Army.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Exactly.

SGM WATERHOUSE: You know, not just your Unit. So now, you know, in the past you guys didn't have that Course.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Right.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So that's kind of where that question came from. I mean how were you able to

make those transitions, you know?

CSM(R) LACKEY: For me personally, like, you know, when I went into the Pentagon. One of the first weeks I was there, they said "Oh, you gotta go to a PAO Conference. You gotta go meet the PAO." Well you know what meeting the PAO was? When you walking down the hallway they corner you and they stick a camera and a microphone in front of you.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Public Affairs Office.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah, Public Affairs. And they stick a camera and microphone in your face and start asking you all these questions, like five different people at one time to see how you're going to react.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Oh, yeah.

CSM(R) LACKEY: You know, so that --

SGM WATERHOUSE: And these guys get a training in that, for example.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah.

SGM WATERHOUSE: We have the PAO down at the Pentagon. Yeah. Actually one of the people there

gives them a class and then we give them a class and run them through exercise. So all those kinds of things we have a Course in place now that you didn't obviously get to have.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Right.

SGM WATERHOUSE: I think that was our ninth or tenth class, so. But that's something that's around now.

CSM(R) LACKEY: But I just, for me personally on the strategic. I'm one of these guys, I mean I'll go in with the General into the meetings at the Pentagon. I mean I've been to White House meetings, I've been to General Salvy, the Department of Defense, you know. I got pictures around here where I've been with Department of Defense, you know. And I won't say the name, but one, you know, can't even think now. But went to see the Sec Def, and me and the Army, Air Force, Navy, Marine Corps, and some of the other senior leaders from the Reserve Components. Treated us great, wanted to know what we were doing. Another one would come in when he'd

leave, and another Sec Def would come in. They wanted a photo op. "Oh, you guys want to take a picture with me?" Didn't care anything about what our initiatives were and what we --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Just wanted a picture.

CSM(R) LACKEY: -- needed to do. Wanted to know if we wanted a picture with him.

SGM WATERHOUSE: A picture for him?

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah. So that's where I see strategic. And I go back to see my boss and I'm like "Boss, you know, I still have a job, I kept my mouth shut." But I mean, you know, it's interesting how things work when you get to higher levels.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, Sergeant Major, you know, you were in the Army Reserve for two and half, three decades. I mean so there were some changes, and I'm sure we've discussed some of the Army Reserve changes, you know, some of the changes made over the time. But in your opinion what were some of those changes that, you know, benefitted the Army Reserve, and where do you see it, where do you see the Army

Reserve going in the next 20, 30 years?

CSM(R) LACKEY: And I looked at that question and I kind of drew an analogy that -- and I don't know if you knew General Talley or not, the previous Chief of the Army Reserve.

SGM WATERHOUSE: I've heard the name, but never met him.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Or if you've met General Lucky.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Lucky I have.

CSM(R) LACKEY: And General Talley, you know, his mission was, you know, we were a lifesaving, life sustaining force and relevant for the needs of the Army. And he knew that, you know, even with an Army Guard mission, we talked about this at lunch, was to protect life and limb, that he knew that he had assets, helicopters, vehicles and things that could save lives in the event of a national disaster, even though the states are responsible for that. And so he was able to get legislation passed to where if a community leader asks a local Commander -- I don't

know if you knew this, but that an Army Reserve Unit doesn't have to get permission from the National Guard or Battalion or anybody, to come in and give them resources for up to 72 hours. And so, you know, at that time we were drawing down, the whole Army was drawing down. And General Talley and his staff and the rest of the Army Reserves probably looking for something to be meaningful. We were still doing rotations, you know, overseas, but, you know, we were looking for things that we could do to help the Army and be a ready force.

Then he leaves and General Lucky comes in. And General Lucky's new mission, which General Milley, we got a totally different threat, you know that.

SGM WATERHOUSE: General Milley?

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah, General Milley. You know, we have a totally different threat. So his assessment of the Army Reserve is that we are a Federal force and that, you know, in addition to everything else, you know, we are a force to be reckoned with. You know, our primary goal is like

every soldier in the Army, to close with an event, you know, and support the military, and to be there to, you know, go to war. And that's what -- and you know I just had that briefing last week at Fort Knox. And that's, you know, and he's got Ready Force X. And you've heard of Ready Force X. And, you know, Ready Force X, he's got contingency Units, so many Units that are ready to go now. So many Units are ready to go -- and we can't talk about X, Y, Z days.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah, so many days.

CSM(R) LACKEY: And so many other days. And to be in different theatres and how to operation, you know, on multiple conflicts in the event we go to one theatre, you know, if there's a multiple conflict.

So all that changed within a matter of one year.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM(R) LACKEY: And we went from being relevant, ready, life sustaining force to a Federal force that's ready to engage, close with, and to kill the enemy.

SGM WATERHOUSE: And where do you think it's going to go in the future? You think it's --

CSM(R) LACKEY: I think where it's going, and I hate to say this. But where it's going in the future is where it's been in the past. I think that the whole Army, I mean you look at the Army, you know, back in my day you had the DePuy Bunker, you know, you got the Abrams Tanks, you've got Bradley Fighting Vehicles. You've got my dad at Anzio Beach, you got my Uncle at Bastogne. You've got war fighters, you know, that went into Bosnia, Kosovo, they're in Afghanistan, they're in Iraq. You know, we're going to go and be wherever we're needed. And it doesn't mean -- it could be in Florida for a natural disaster, it could be overseas at our next contingency on a peninsula. And I think that, you know, in every scenario, you know, it's just like the Chief of Staff of the Army said. I heard the quote, and I didn't get it direct from him because I never met him personally, but he said "One of the things that we are good about in the Army," he said "We've been 100 percent right on



figuring out where the next war's not going to be at." You know, you train for the desert and you go to the jungle. You train for the artic, you go to the desert, you know. So we've been 100 percent right on not getting it correct.

So to answer your question, I think that the Army Reserve is going to do -- you know, we're a Federal force. We're the only Federal force that has that mission, you know, other than the active component. And we're going to do whatever the Army asks of us.

If next year we no longer have that threat and, you know, they have a meeting and all the nuclear weapons are disarmed everyplace in the world and they say "Okay, Army Reserve, we're going to make you a training organization and you're going to be training all the ROTC cadets. And you're going to do this." And then the next time a conflict comes up somewhere they're going to say "We need you to do this."

I think projecting out -- and that's why I go back to my strategic stuff. And it's always worked

for me. If every individual soldier you have under your command is trained, equipped, physically fit and mentally alert, you can do anything and everything that you're called upon to do regardless of the scenario.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, Sergeant Major, last question. Is there anything you would like to discuss, something I have not asked you or something we haven't addressed?

CSM(R) LACKEY: No. The only thing that I would like to say is that our conversation before we started with Sergeant Major Davenport, you know, assigning this task to you and you coming down and interviewing people, to include myself. And I'd like to, you know, the fact that Sergeant Major Ted Copeland asked for me to be interviewed. I find that an honor. But, you know, I think that the strategy, I think the vision, you know, you said they've been doing that since what year for the Army?

SGM WATERHOUSE: For the Officers? 1970, the year you joined.

CSM(R) LACKEY: 1970.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah. The year you joined.

CSM(R) LACKEY: Yeah. We're only 47 behind  
the Army Officer Corps.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Right.

CSM(R) LACKEY: So I think it's about time,  
I think it's needed. I agree you with it doesn't have  
to be a CSM, it can be, you know, a First Sergeant, it  
can be a Soldier of the Year, an NCO of the Year, the  
Best Ranger Competition. Anybody that made a  
significant -- somebody in the Pentagon on 911, you  
know, that helped rescue soldiers or pulled somebody  
out of a car. Anybody that has made an accomplishment  
for the Army or for someone in the community that, you  
know, is distinguishable and can help the next person.  
You know, we've been sitting here for several hours  
now and I hope that somebody picks this up and says  
"You know if I never learned anything else from Ray  
Lackey, you know, he always goes back to the basics."

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM(R) LACKEY: You know, and so if I stick

with the basics, and I do the minimum standards and, you know, exceed the standards from time to time, I'm going to get promoted, and I'm going to be more than I want to be someday. Because I thought my highest job ever was going to be an E-7 Drill Sergeant, you know.

And so, you know, with that said I'd just like to thank you and Sergeant Major Davenport, the Army as a whole, and people that are recognizing that this needs to be done. And I hope that, like I say, one day some young soldier will pick this up and look at it and learn something that will help them in their career.

SGM WATERHOUSE: And I know they will. And I appreciate you taking out the time out of your schedule to allow me to come up here and speak to you. Appreciate it. Thank you.

\* \* \* \* \*

## CERTIFICATE OF NOTARY PUBLIC

I, Carleton J. Anderson, III do hereby certify that the forgoing electronic file when originally transmitted was reduced to text at my direction; that said transcript is a true record of the proceedings therein referenced; that I am neither counsel for, related to, nor employed by any of the parties to the action in which these proceedings were taken; and, furthermore, that I am neither a relative or employee of any attorney or counsel employed by the parties hereto, nor financially or otherwise interested in the outcome of this action.

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