

UNITED STATES ARMY

ARMY ORAL HISTORIES

INTERVIEW WITH COMMAND SERGEANT MAJOR (RET.)
CYNTHIA A. PRITCHETT

MacDill Air Force Base, Florida
May 3, 2018

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Interviewee:

COMMAND SERGEANT MAJOR (RET.)

CYNTHIA A. PRITCHETT

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I N T E R V I E W

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Our recording devices had changed.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, good morning. My name is Sergeant Major Brett Waterhouse of the United States Army Heritage and Education Center and today I am interviewing Command Sergeant Major-Retired Cynthia A. Pritchett for the Senior Non-Commissioned Officer Oral History Program.

Today's date is May 3rd, 2018 and this interview is being conducted at MacDill Air Force Base, Florida. Sergeant Major can you please tell me your date of birth and where you were born.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: 11 May, 1955. Concord, New Hampshire.

SGM WATERHOUSE: And would please talk a little bit your childhood, you know, growing up, your hobbies, interests, up maybe through high school?

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: So, I have been -- I am Navy brat. My parents were both in the service. My mother was a Navy Storekeeper and my father was a Navy Airdale. He worked aircraft maintenance. Of course,

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when my mom got pregnant, you know, she had to get out. So, back in the day. So, we kind of grew up all over. So, you know, West Coast mostly but Hawaii, also in Rhode Island.

So, spent most of my time as a Navy brat. My father ended up -- his last assignment was in Mount Clemens, Michigan at Selfridge International Guard Base. And so, I went to high school, all four years there, graduated. And then joined the Army out of there. My biggest -- things I liked to do is I was big into sports. I played volleyball four years in high school. Played softball all four years in high school.

And then my father and I didn't quite get along and we had a big argument over college, where I was going to go. I wanted to, kind of, go to a local state University, though I had a scholarship to -- I had a partial scholarship to Purdue University for Science.

SGM WATERHOUSE: That was in Indiana?

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Yeah, in Indiana. But really not my cup of tea. I am good at it but it wasn't really my cup of tea. My goal in life was to be a PE teacher.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: But when my father and I, kind of, had our fallout, I just went to my mother, saying you know what, I am going to down and talk to the recruiters. And so, she was really surprised because in high school when we had to do, I think, in my sophomore year, it was called the vocational notebook, what did you want to be when you grew up?

So, I actually was torn between being in the military or being a PE teacher. I, kind of, researched both of those. So, my mother wasn't really surprised when I said, I was going to go down to talk to the recruiter. So, I went down. I talked to all the branches except Navy because I already knew I wasn't joining the Navy. My father had just retired. I didn't want to join the Navy where any of my daddy's friends would be able to keep an eye on me.

So, after them all, I just, kind of, thought the Army at the time allowed me to, you know, not be behind the desk necessarily. I mean, I am kind of a tomboy. So, I didn't want to be a clerk, I mean, you know, stuck behind a desk, wanted be able to drive trucks

or do whatever. So, I went down to the MEPS and -- I went down to the recruiter, took the pre-test. Then got the appointment. Went down, took the test down there. Talked through things. So, I ended up picking Unit Supply because I could drive a truck. You know, I mean, there is some paperwork and stuff, as with anything. But I just thought it gave me a more of an opportunity to not just get stuck.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, you knew before you went to boot camp what job you are going to do?

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Yeah.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: So, I had decided to be a Unit Supply Clerk. So, I did that in May and graduated from high school. And so, on 2 May, I showed up at Fort McClellan, Alabama to the WAC [Women's Army Corps] Basic Training Center there at McClellan. Ended up going to Bravo Company 2nd WAC Basic Training Battalion to do my basic training. So, this is, you know, the Women's Army Corps and so, at the time it was still -- this is 1973, so, it's all women. All your drills are women. You Company Commander, your leadership is all women. So, that

it was -- I want to say it was eight weeks.

SGM WATERHOUSE: You had been drafted just officially end of that year.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Right that drafted just officially --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: -- and, you know, it's the drawdown of Vietnam. So, you know, we are still, kind of, Vietnam era but we are -- but you are at the tail end of Vietnam.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: And it's the beginning of All-Volunteer.

SGM WATERHOUSE: All-Volunteer Army.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: All-Volunteer Force.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: So, enjoyed basic training, you know. My Drill Sergeants were Drill Sergeant [Siddens], Karen Siddens and Drill Sergeant [Mary K. Allen] and I -- Drill Sergeant Siddens, just impressed me so much, I just knew I wanted to be like her one day. I want to be like her -- I want to be like that. That's

what I want to aspire to be. So, did my basic training there, graduated, you know, in the end of August and got to -- instead of going to Fort Lee for AIT, which most everybody went to their MOS producing schools, I ended up going to OJT at Fort Knox, Kentucky at the WAC Detachment to learn unity supply. Staff Sergeant Bobby [AG] was the Supply Sergeant. She was this big old black woman, afro with little blonde streak through her hair and a big gold tooth. Scared the bejesus out of me.

You know, but -- you know, I did the Unit Supply stuff. You know, First Sergeant [Sharkey] was the WAC Detachment First Sergeant. So, the WAC Detachment, we all lived at the WAC Detachment. I happened to be the Unit Supply Clerk at the WAC Detachment but others that lived were, went and worked in different offices as Admins or whatever on the installation but at night they came back and they lived at the WAC. Our building was the WAC Detachment, so we were separate. And, so, you know, this is Fort Knox, Kentucky, the home was Armor at the time.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Armor at the time, yeah.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: So, one of the guard duty posts, they actually had guards outside the WAC

Detachment, you know, because that's where all the women were. And, you know, there were incidents where the guys would try to get in and this, that and the other. So, I did that till -- I want to say it was October-November timeframe. And it was like, okay, you have been awarded your MOS. I got promoted to PFC. And I ended up on orders back to Fort McClellan.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Sorry can I back up for just a second? So, you know, Advanced Individual Training or AIT and then you had OJT. So, how was it -- I mean, I don't know if they told you but looking back, how was it determined who would get regular School House and who would go work?

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: I have no idea.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: You know, I just came down and then I had the little job book and they did it all and then awarded me my MOS. And later on I ended up -- when I ended up -- when I finished being my time McClellan, when I went back out into the Army, I actually ended up going back to AIT.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Oh, yeah?

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: I will explain that.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: I will explain it further on. So, I go back to Fort McClellan, I end up back in the same Company that I took basic training in, as the Unit Supply Specialist. You know, and, you know, PFC doing my thing, you know. All my Drill Sergeants are still there, Drill Sergeant Siddens still there, Drill Sergeant Allen still there. First Sergeant was still there at the time, (inaudible). And then -- so, you know, doing the Supply work. Ended up being a Mail Clerk, some additional duties and then back at that time, in WAC basic training, you only had five Drill Sergeants, one per Platoon and a Senior Drill. And then all the classes like first aid, NBC, were all taught by a Committee Group. So, they had a set of instructors they called Committee Group --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: -- that did all those -- were the instructors for all those type of programs. Drill Sergeants did drill and ceremonies, weapons training -- oh, we didn't do weapons, sorry. Drill and ceremonies, you know, stuff inspections in the barracks and that was

pretty much it.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, the Drill Sergeants would hand --

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Hand us off.

SGM WATERHOUSE: -- hand off to the Committee.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Committee Group. And then they go back and do like room inspections or whatever else, you know. And then they come back and get you. But they would always leave two Drill Sergeants there with the Committee Group, you know, because the Drill Sergeants were the disciplinarians --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Right.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: -- not necessarily the Committee Group.

SGM WATERHOUSE: I did have some questions, just to go back a little bit. So, the Women's Army Corps, now did you guys had different uniforms, different insignia when you joined still?

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Yeah. So, I mean, yeah. So, when you joined -- so, when you joined you were a member of the Women's Army Corps. I don't think you really joined the Women's Army Corps.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: You joined -- you joined the Army --

SGM WATERHOUSE: The Army.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: -- and you were in the Women's Army Corps. So, you wore the US and wore a Pallas Athene. But you were enlisted for an MOS. You didn't enlist to be in the Women's Army Corps and then they just, kind of, put you willy-nilly. You know, I mean, you knew what specialty, occupational specialty --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: -- you were going to do. And then, I mean, our uniforms for basic training were -- when I went in -- were -- it was a blue shirt, blue shorts, with this wraparound skirt with this line of buttons. And the skirt had to be -- was so starched so they had to be able to stand up in the corner. This was, you know -- so, you had this gig line from here. Your buttons down to the -- so, you took the skirt off and it used to be able to stand it up in a corner and then you had your shorts for PT.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Because I have seen some

pictures of people doing PT.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: And you wore black -- we had black bobby socks and white ked tennis shoes. That was our uniform. The dress part of that was even -- that was your daily, kind of, like -- what would we call our fatigues or BDUs or ASUs today.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: I mean, ACUs today or OCPs --

SGM WATERHOUSE: OCPs, yeah.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: -- today. So, that was kind of like that class of uniform. You, kind of, dressed it up a little bit. We would wear nylons with our low quarters or little black granny shoes. Then we had cords which were this light green pinstriped -- and I would say that was more of our Class B uniform.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: But it had to be starched. And then we had a Class A uniform which was the, kind of, the green but the pocket -- the design was different.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Different, yeah.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: You know, we had pocket --

pockets down on the bottom, box pockets down on the bottom, it was pretty ugly. It was a skirt. We didn't have pants till later. And then we had -- we had garrison cap, we had a pot hat. At some point in there we ended up with this a black beret but not the black beret that you know today. It was kind of the one that sat on the back of your head --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: -- type beret. And then, even during the course of while -- while it was still the Women's Army Corps we got this, like, one-piece dress that was lime green that I never bought or wore. I wouldn't be caught dead in it. So, I mean, you know, just uniform changes. And then we had fatigues, like at basic training, when we went out to the field, we would road march out to the field. We would have our black low quarters on. We would be issued fatigues. These fatigues, buttoned up on the side, had four pockets and we were issued them prior to going on the field and then we got back, we would clean -- wash them and we then turned it back in. We didn't get to keep them.

So, that was when we go out to do our little,

three day -- three day bit at WAC. So, those were kind of your uniforms in basic training.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Now the training back then in the Women's Army Corps, I don't think at that point you went through basic, I don't think you guys and gals -- or gals at this point, were doing rifle training or any of it.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: No. All you got was, kind of, like a weapons demonstration. You know, they would take us to the range and then they would show us -- they would do like a weapons CALFEX, you know, they would show us --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: -- you know, people would shoot of the M16, they would shoot of the 60 and 50 cal and -- or a grenade launcher. They just showed us what weapons could do but we did not fire weapons. And you know, field training, you know, you went out to the field, we have set up our shelter halves and our pitched our tents. I think we did a little land-nav. Yeah, that was pretty much it. Land-nav and what else did we do? I think maybe a -- not really a STX Lane but, I mean, there

was some opportunity to do first aid training and stuff out in the field and then we walked back in.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, as a Private and as a Drill Sergeant, you know, a little bit later, what were some of the classes or topics and stuff you guys taught back then that you don't or we don't today?

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: So, initially as a WAC, we all learned how to wear make-up. We wore -- we learned how to have correct posture. So, we had a class on, you know, how to walk where you put the book on your head. So, you learned how to walk. You had classes on how to be a lady, how to sit.

SGM WATERHOUSE: How did the -- how did your average person take these classes?

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Most of the ladies were okay with it. Me -- and obviously I tell people it didn't work. I don't wear make-up today. You know, I mean, unless I am in my dress uniform or my mess dress, I will attempt to put it on. But day-to-day work it's very --

SGM WATERHOUSE: But this is the stuff that the Women's Army Corps came up with.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Yeah, I mean --

SGM WATERHOUSE: It's not like the men came up with it.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: No. No. No. This was, you know --

SGM WATERHOUSE: It seems, kind of, demeaning now looking back.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: -- yeah. Women in the -- when you were in the Women's Army Corps, you were there to be a lady. You know, I mean, we were all going to be ladies. Kind of, like, if you think back, to a league of their own and --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: -- you know, about women baseball players, you know. They wanted people to look good and be ladies. And you are like, you are playing baseball. But anyway, I digress. So, yeah. So, I mean, I am like okay, whatever. And then that's kind of gone away. But, I mean, first day NBC, drill and ceremonies. Now we do the -- you know, we transition to the weapons training. You know, we didn't do a lot of road marching then. You know, the PT test changed dramatically. I mean, we used to do run, dodge and jump. We used to do

the shuttle run.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Still doing that when you were a Drill Sergeant?

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: It transitioned a little bit.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: From away from that because -- but when I first started, yeah. We were still doing run, dodge and jump, shuttle run, sit-ups, push-ups on our knees and then we transitioned to, like, the half-mile run to eventually -- you know, so, it was a process over time and in 1976 we introduced weapons familiarization.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Not really qualification but weapons familiarization where women would fire the M16 but they didn't have to qualify. And then by the time I left, we were doing weapons qualification.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Now is -- were you -- you know, your Drill Sergeants -- I know the Women's Army Corps wasn't disbanded or females integrated into the Army with male units until '78 but was there talk back in '76, hey this is why we need to do this because it's coming or

--?

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Well, I don't know. You know, for us down below, all we know is these were the changes.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: And, you know --

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, it wasn't explained to you why we were doing all these changes?

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: -- yeah. Nobody really explained why. I mean, we kind of knew we were going to this All-Volunteer Army and all this and that. Times were changing. That, you know -- as to why all this was happening, I don't think anybody down at my level, you know. And, you know, so I was, kind of, coming into the tail end of the Women's Army Corps. So --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: -- a lot of the younger Drill Sergeants, like Siddens and Allen and those guys, you know, I mean, they liked -- you know, they really didn't have an opinion one way or the other. I think they -- most people still wanted to keep it pure women in basic training and not really integrate. There is a little

angst when they started bringing male Drill Sergeants on board and we started getting male First Sergeants. You know, just the whole male dynamic of males with -- men with women.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: So --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Was it explained why that happened at that point? Why male --?

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: I think it was part of the integration. It's just -- to get men comfortable with women and women comfortable with men.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Well if it was '76, that's the same year --

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: We decided to do the integration of West Point.

SGM WATERHOUSE: West Point. And got the first class of women came along.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Right. So, the whole problem with it is, you know, you got men trying to decide how to integrate with women and not asking women how you should deal with women. But -- because like, you know, when I was a Drill Sergeant, you know, a couple of male

Drill Sergeants were, like, what are you doing there crying? I am like, do you have daughters? Well, yeah. So, what do you do when you daughter cries? Tell her to stop. Well, same thing here. You know, well, you know, what if it's that time of the month? I was like, are you married? What happens -- does your wife have that time of the month? How do you handle it? I said, if you show them fear, they will capitalize on it.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: You know, I mean, if they cry, you know, hand them a tissue, tell them to, you know, stop. Or, you know, if they cry with me sometimes, I will tell them to leave and come back and when they are composed themselves. You know, if it's that time of the month, they will fall for it. There, take two Midol, have a nice day, come back. If it's really bad, go on sick call. You know, I mean, so the guys were nervous about stuff like that. You know, our Senior Drill at the time, guy named Drill Sergeant Bobby [Odin], Sergeant First Class. He was very nervous about it and I said, I will make a deal with you. I will get you through this part of how you deal with female trainees, if you teach me everything you know

about the Infantry because I am tomboy, you know. When I went to Drill Sergeant School, women didn't have to fire weapons. We didn't have to throw the hand grenade. We didn't have to do the obstacle course. It was all volunteering and my hand was like a --

SGM WATERHOUSE: And what was -- what rank were you when you went to Drill?

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: I was a Corporal.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Corporal.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: So, back in the day women could volunteer for Drill Sergeant School as a Corporal.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: So, I went to Drill Sergeant School in April-May of '75 --

SGM WATERHOUSE: '75, yeah.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: -- as a Corporal. And when I graduated I was in the top of the class and number one of the women. So, I had a -- got a merit promotion to Sergeant. So, I came back to McClellan as a Sergeant to this -- again, to -- all my Drill Sergeants were there. So, Drill Sergeant Siddens had the Third Platoon and now Drill Sergeant Pritchett had the Fourth Platoon. And --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Were they surprised when you got there?

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: -- yeah. When I came back, I was actually surprised by them because they, kind of, shunned me. Well, Karen was like, well you just think you are a big shot. You just think -- you know, you just think you are hot stuff. I am, like, no Drill Sergeant. I think you would be proud of me because I am a product of your leadership and training. Well, when it was presented like that, then it was like, you know -- you know --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Because you were in the Supply and then next thing you know you go to School and --

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: -- yeah. I mean, because what happened while I was there was, every time they needed to do something collectively as the Drill Sergeants, you know, the Senior Drill with the other Drill Sergeants, they would just go, well, go and ask PFC Pritchett and then --

SGM WATERHOUSE: She can do it.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: -- or go get Corporal Pritchett she can march them.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, you were basically being a

Drill Sergeant.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: I was being a Drill
Corporal --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: -- /Supply Clerk/Mail
Clerk. And I was like, well, if I am going to do this, I
might as well volunteer to go to Drill Sergeant School.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Might as well get the patch in
the hat.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Patch the hat and my 50
dollars a month pro-pay --

SGM WATERHOUSE: All right.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: -- at the time. That's
what we got back in the day. 50 dollars a month.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Now was the hat in the same
shape as it is today for the field --

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Yeah. Except it was white.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: So, I had it. It was the
white one and then we transitioned. I can't remember when
they transitioned to the green one. I don't know if they
are ever going to transition to the Smokey the Bear hat

for males and females. I mean, I don't know.

SGM WATERHOUSE: It's been pushed out there.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: It's been pushed out there a couple of time over the years. But, yeah. So, we -- so it was the beige Australian hat.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, your -- what kind of uniform would you wear as a Drill Sergeant?

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: So, initially when I became -- when I re-transitioned from those blue PTs, that I described, to a green set, which was light green shirt, permanent pressed shorts and a permanent pressed wraparound skirt and then --

SGM WATERHOUSE: How do you climb obstacles with those skirt?

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Well, you take the skirt off.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Fold it up neatly and then you --

SGM WATERHOUSE: I have seen some photos online --

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: So --

SGM WATERHOUSE: -- of people trying to do that. I don't know.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: -- so, the skirt comes off. It was a wraparound --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: -- velcro. You take it off.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, you had shorts under it.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: You had shorts underneath.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: So, the uniform was the shirt, the shorts with the wraparound skirt.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Because some of the photos were of women climbing big log obstacles with the skirts on.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: I don't know why. You were supposed to ground the skirt. I mean, we used to, you know, ground, you know -- you know, like how we ground equipment now.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah. Or I don't need this jacket, it's too hot. Put that over there.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Yeah. So, you ground the

skirt and everyone tend to be dressed, right dressed.

SGM WATERHOUSE: And you said it stood up on its own?

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Well, the blue one did because it had to be starched. The green ones were permanent press.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: We got smarter. And so, that. And then, I want to say in '76 we transitioned to starting wearing fatigues.

SGM WATERHOUSE: The same thing the men were wearing?

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: No. I think we were still in the WAC fatigues.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: The button up on the side. Then we eventually transitioned to the -- not so much the trainees but the permanent part, we transitioned to the pickle suit, kind of, the Vietnam era button down, tuck it in your pants. And then we transitioned with everybody else to woodlands. And -- but most of the time I was there it was either in the old WAC one or the pickle suit,

kind of, at the end.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Now the Drill Sergeant School, was that integrated or was that separate?

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: No. Drill Sergeant School was at Fort Jackson, South Carolina. It was integrated --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: -- in '75.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, you went to Drill Sergeant School with men --

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Yeah.

SGM WATERHOUSE: -- just like it would be today?

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Yeah. Just like you would be today. So, it was Fort Jackson, South Carolina. Graduated, came back to McClellan and stayed there, I think, till July, July of '78.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, what are some of the takeaways you had from, you know, Drill Sergeant School and I would say AIT, you know? What were some of the things that were difficult and how do you get through them?

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: The thing at -- the thing

at AIT was I am just not good with being in a room with a lot of women. So, even when we were at AIT, we didn't have private rooms. We, kind of -- it wasn't quite as open bay, you know. They, kind of, gave us wall lockers where could, kind of, set up, you know, your --

SGM WATERHOUSE: There was still like eight people or so --

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: -- yeah. And, kind of, set up like a little cubicle, you know, section yourself.

SGM WATERHOUSE: No privacy.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Self off. You know, I think, part of -- the biggest challenge for AIT was, you know, just -- to me, being at the WAC Detachment was just very confining. You know, because after dark you weren't really supposed to go out alone. You always had -- I mean, battle buddies are not a new thing. I mean, we were doing them back in the day. Especially, you know, at a place like Fort Knox. I remember one time at Fort Knox, you know, they had male guards outside, you know, to prevent whatever. But this guy was trying to sneak in to see his girlfriend. He went through the wrong window. Came in and tried to crawl into the wrong bed. He just

got turned around at what window he was supposed to come in. You know, so all the women --

SGM WATERHOUSE: This is a soldier?

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: -- this is a soldier. Male soldier trying to come and see his WAC girlfriend.

SGM WATERHOUSE: In basic training.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: No, in AIT.

SGM WATERHOUSE: In AIT, okay.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: In AIT. And, you know, we had those old bunk beds, you know. And we had those bunk adaptors, you know, the steel bunk adaptors

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: -- that -- we all had bunk adaptors. All of us had a spare bunk adaptor. And we came in and just beat the living shit out of that guy. I mean, till where, you know, we finally realized who he was. I mean, we knew him. He was the boyfriend of somebody but, you know, when you crawl into the window in the middle of the night and get in the wrong girls bed and she is screaming. And it's dark, everybody runs in and they are just beating the crap out of this guy.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Was this guy in some kind of

uniform?

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: No. He was just in his civies. He is coming to see his girlfriend. You know, so the guards come in.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Not too smart.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Yeah. Not too smart. Guys -- you know, the guards come in. The MPs show up. You know, they take him away. I mean, he survived. I mean, you know, he has got cuts and bruises. I mean, it wasn't -- we didn't beat him to death. But then they were like - - we were like, oh, we are not sure we need to have a guard outside the Women's barracks anymore.

SGM WATERHOUSE: They are obviously not doing anything.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Well, that and it's obvious that the women can protect themselves.

SGM WATERHOUSE: I would think -- yeah. You know, I am just thinking back. I mean, with cadets these days. Or you would have, at least, integrated or some female of our own class out. You know, the AIT students out there --

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Yeah.

SGM WATERHOUSE: -- guarding themselves.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Yeah. We were guarded -- it was guard duty for whatever.

SGM WATERHOUSE: It was Fort Knox Permanent Party folks?

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Party -- for our guard duty.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Or I don't even know. It could have been AIT guys. Because, you know, they used to have the trainees pull guard.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah. So, as far as the women, you guys just did indoor guard, like, fire guard --

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Yeah. Fire guard

SGM WATERHOUSE: -- and hallway guard.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Or hallway guard. I mean, it was just a regular barrack. So, you know, my biggest takeaways from there was, you know, I mean, I just thought it was very confining. I was ready to go back anywhere. You know, back to -- go to a unit where -- you know because for me, I spent all the time in the WAC Detachment. Whereas the others got to get up in the

morning, leave, go to work, come back. You know, I was downstairs in the basement in the WAC Detachment in the Supply room. You know, I was always in the building. You know, because we were responsible for repairs or supply.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: I mean, yeah. I got in the truck and took stuff to the laundry and went to pick up supplies and process all that. Yeah. I did all that. But at the end of the day I was always in the WAC Detachment.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Now, as that Private, later Specialist in Corporal, who did you look to mentorship and stuff in that unit?

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: So, my Supply Sergeant Bobby AG, I mean --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: -- even though she scared the bejesus out of me. I mean, she was a great mentor. I mean -- so, when I got to Fort Knox it's where I got my first pair of boots issued to me. And we were issued fatigues and for our -- I mean, a lot of the women still wore the -- their cords. But we wore fatigues downstairs.

So, I got my first set of fatigues -- got my fatigues issued to me and I got my first set of boots. Well, my first set of boots were from an AWOL soldier. They weren't the female boots. Sergeant [Adgie?] got them from one of the male units of guys that had gone AWOL. So, I am a size eight and a half, nine. These were size ten. She is just like, make it work. And then they were pretty ranchy. So, she is like, I expect to see those things shining like glass in the morning. Roger that, Sergeant. So, I had stuffed the toes and I stayed up all night trying to get those boots to shine like glass.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Now you had been -- I mean, you didn't have those in basic, right?

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: But we had low quarters. So, we knew --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay. So, you knew how to shine.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Yeah. We knew how to spit shine because low quarters -- our ready shoes are low quarters were leather.

SGM WATERHOUSE: made of leather.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: So, I mean, I worked and I

worked and I worked. I mean, I got the toe pretty good and I came down that morning. She looked, not half bad, she goes, how long did you spend on these? I said -- I told her, I said, all night. I had just finished. And so -- and she could tell because about two hours into the morning, I was like --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Falling out.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: -- so, she had sent me upstairs to go take a nap. I mean -- but the fact is, she gave me -- but, I mean, you know, she taught me about wearing appearance. She taught me -- I mean, I learnt a lot about supply. I mean, she could have just, you know, did check the block but, you know, she had a job book for me. She went through --

SGM WATERHOUSE: And she is the one that had -- well, I guess Commander probably had to sign off the --

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Yeah. She -- they had to sign off.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: And then she recommended me for promotion to PFC when I left. She was a little surprised when I was going back to Fort McClellan. She

goes, you -- and I looked at the orders and I am like, B Company. I just came from B Company. You know, but I showed up, went down to be the Supply Clerk down there and the rest was history, as far as that goes. I mean, and then at McClellan -- you know, I valued the fact -- I mean, I really -- Sergeant Siddens was just the epitome of professionalism and -- you know, and really showed me what being a good leader and a teacher was.

I mean, she wasn't yeller. I wasn't really a yeller as a Drill Sergeant. I am one of those people, you know, if I am yelling, you are okay. The madder I get, the quieter I get. They quieter I get, the worst it is. And if, I am not speaking then it's really bad. So, I mean, I kind of learned that from her. I mean, she was kind of that, you knew something was really wrong when she was really quiet.

And then, Sergeant Odin -- Drill Sergeant Odin, I mean, you know, just working with this guy. I mean, he mentored me. He -- I wanted to learn everything I could about weapons training. I mean, he took the time with me to learn how to disassemble and assemble every weapon that we were responsible for, showing the women. And so, the

women all fired M16s but we did teach them how to assemble and disassemble the 60 cal. And they got --

SGM WATERHOUSE: You had the 60 machine gun?

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Yeah. They have 60 machine gun. I am sorry.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: So, the 60 machine gun and they actually got to do a familiarization fire with the 60. But they had to qualify by the time I left McClellan.

SGM WATERHOUSE: On M16.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: On the M16. We started out with familiarization then we worked to -- at the end, qualification before I left. But, I mean, you know and then -- you know, so, he taught me how to be a soldier in this man's Army. I mean, out in the field. I mean, he taught all the -- you know, the stuff he learned as an Infantryman and all the shortcuts Infantrymen take on certain things. You know -- by then we were teaching women how you dig a fox hole. Not everybody dug a fox hole. But you dug one and you know -- so, I mean, I learned all those basic soldier skills that soldiers in the Army today learn. I learned that from this guy.

SGM WATERHOUSE: You had personal Sergeant's time.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Yeah. I had my own personal -- he was going to -- I told him, you teach me how to be a good Infantryman, I will teach you how you deal with women trainees.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Sounds like a good plan.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: You know, so, I mean, you know, so -- that's, I mean, I think he set me on the path, so that when I left McClellan and went to my first duty assignment in Europe -- working with a guy was not a big thing for me. I mean, a lot of women were very skeptical. But the younger ones, I mean -- you know, for me, I came at the tail end. So, we were just starting to do all this transition. And I didn't really join the Women's Army Corps. I just happened to be in the Women's Army Corps. I was joining to be a Supply person. You know, and biggest thing that happened, the day we made that transition. I went from wearing the Pallas Athene to wearing --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Quartermaster insignia.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Yeah. I went to wearing

Quartermaster Regimental Brass. You know, the Quartermaster Brass. I mean, so, I think for all of us at the lower level that transition was very transparent. I mean, we knew where our records were to begin with. I mean, so you know, now you don't go here. You go to MILPO. I mean, okay. You know, so that for -- I think for 99 percent. I mean, for the older ones -- I mean, the ones that there the Sergeants Majors and the First Sergeants, that their whole career was the Women's Army Corps.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Colonel and --

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: The Colonels, you know, the General Baileys, the Generals -- oh god, I can't recollect her name right now. But, I mean, for them I think, you know, this was a pretty big transition. But, I mean, the one General at the time [Mary Clarke] was still there when I was there. I mean, she embraced it. She, you know, helped make this transition, you know, as the Commander. She embraced it. I mean, she was a WAC Center Commander as a Colonel. And she -- you know, she ended up coming back being a two-star Commander at Fort McClellan with the MP School there and Chemical School there. So, you know,

it's leaders like that that -- but those that had the transition, you know, decided, you know, time to retire, not for me or enlistments up, time to go.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, I just want to step back real quick. So, as a Drill Sergeant there and your -- in your old basic training company, how many solders or trainees did you have?

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: So, each Drill Sergeant had 40 per Platoon.

SGM WATERHOUSE: 1 to 40.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: 1 to 40 and then when we had WAC expansion, which was a -- well, I want say -- it was right, like, in '76.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah. Yeah.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: I think WAC expansion happened right around '76. There was this big push to get more women in the Army and --

SGM WATERHOUSE: With the Volunteer Army.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: With the Volunteer Army.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: We went up to like 60 per Platoon. And that's when you started seeing the male

Drill Sergeants come on because we needed more than one Drill Sergeant per Platoon.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Right. Makes sense. Yeah.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: So, initially for a while, you were like 1 to 60 and then we started getting the second Drill --

SGM WATERHOUSE: How did you sleep? Did you sleep?

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Well, you know, back then we actually lived in the barracks.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, there was no going home and --

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: No. So, mine -- so, the way the barracks were setup at McClellan, I can speak to -- I can't speak to Fort Jackson. So, the Platoon wing -- the Platoon's were at each end of the building and then our offices were in the center and then the cadre rooms were all along the -- on one side.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, whether the guys and gals Drill Sergeants, married or not, they lived there?

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: The male Drill Sergeants -- those who were married didn't live there. It was just the

single Drills.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: So, I was single. So, my room -- so, my Platoon was on the second floor but I lived on the third floor.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: So, they tried to not have the Drill Sergeant live on the same floor as their Platoon. Kind of give you a little bit of separation.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Right.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: But you --

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, if you were a married Drill Sergeant and a single, I mean -- how did you work out --well, I'm here, so I get the stuck with the --

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Well, we had what we call Duty NCOs. So, he had a Cadre Kitchen downstairs and that's where whoever the Drill Sergeant that was on duty after hours --

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, it's just a rotation.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: -- yeah. So, it was like a --

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, single (Drill Sergeants)--

or people like you --

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: -- like staff duty.

SGM WATERHOUSE: -- didn't get hosed all the time.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Right.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: So, like -- like the first couple of times that the male Drills had staff duty, you know, there would be some incident. They would usually always come find one of the female Drills that lived in the barracks because they -- you know, because when they do like bed check and stuff, we had CQs which were usually trainees or two trainees on CQ, and then you had the Drill Sergeant. So, when they would -- and even with the female Drills, we used to take one of the trainees with us to do bed check. Because you just never know.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Have another witness there.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Yeah.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: You know, so, you would send the trainee and just say, the CQ in to say, male on the floor for the Drill Sergeant to come in and do bed

check.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Just like we do it. Yeah.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: And then, you know, sometimes you get the -- the female Drill Sergeants would send the CQ and to tell them, make sure they are all in bed because, you know, people are crazy. People do stupid stuff.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Or make sure you have got --

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: I mean, you know --

SGM WATERHOUSE: -- something on because the male is getting ready to come over.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Right. I mean, like -- so, one of my buddies was on CQ -- was scheduled for staff duty that night and then there was an accident and he had to go home. And he came up and said, can you cover for me? My daughter needs to go to the hospital. My wife is in -- I mean, like, yeah, yeah, go. I got it. But all the trainees knew that Drill Sergeant so and so was on duty that night. It was a male. So, normally you send the CQ in first. Well, I didn't because I am female. So, I --

SGM WATERHOUSE: To kind of warn everybody.

Get your shirt on. Wear your PT.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: -- so, I walked in. I opened the door to this bay to walk in. And there is this girl trainee, opens her bathrobe and goes -- you know, she is stark naked. She flips over her bathrobe and says -- does nothing for me. Put your clothes on and report back.

SGM WATERHOUSE: She did this to you?

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Yeah. But she thought it was the male Drill Sergeant coming through.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Oh, I got you.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Because --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Wow,

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: -- they knew who was on duty.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, they felt this male Drill Sergeant --

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Right. They did -- you know, the CQs weren't able to warn them then. Oh, no, Drill Sergeant Pritchett is doing bed check tonight. So, I opened the door to walk in. She was, like, flash. I mean, like --

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, what kind of corrective

training did she get?

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: I was, like, does nothing for me. Get dressed and report down to CQ desk.

SGM WATERHOUSE: You now have got stepped in your CQ.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Well, no. I wrote her up, counseled her.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Pretty interesting story. So, why did you --

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Yes. Wrote it up, counseled her. Handed on the senior Drill's desk.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, she was just waiting for -
-

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Yeah. And then she saw the Company Commander in the morning. And we gave her -- I don't know what they gave her.

SGM WATERHOUSE: You get to recycle, no?

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: They didn't recycle. But they did punish her. I mean, they -- you know, we didn't have -- we didn't have summarized Article 15s back then but --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Oh, there wasn't, huh.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: No. Not back then. Yeah. It came much later. You know, but we didn't give her an Article 15 but, you know, Company Commander did whatever she was going to do. And I was just like --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Now --

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: -- and that was the fear for the guys. I mean --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah. I mean, wasn't there -- I mean, just like today with Cadets at Fort Knox in the summer. I mean, there is minimal uniform standards. The female --

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Yeah. They were supposed to be sleeping in their PT [uniforms].

SGM WATERHOUSE: -- they were supposed to be in their PTs.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Yeah.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay. That really hasn't changed.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Yeah. They were supposed to be sleeping in a t-shirt and a pair of shorts because their PTs was actually the blue shirt or the green shirt and your shorts. So, their -- they didn't have PTs like

we have today but their -- they had to sleep in a t-shirt and a pair of shorts. As -- or as back then, women could even just wear pajamas. But whatever your pajamas were. But you were supposed to have clothes on.

SGM WATERHOUSE: That's right. So, I understand you re-enlisted in '76, right?

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Yeah. For six years.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, was that before or after Drill Sergeant School?

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: After Drill Sergeant School.

SGM WATERHOUSE: After Drill Sergeant School.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Yeah. So, my enlistment was up and I took my first oath was six years. It was like, I knew I was -- I knew I was going to make it a career.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Oh, you did. Because I was going to ask you, you know, did you --

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Yeah.

SGM WATERHOUSE: -- what inspired you to re-enlist?

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Karen Siddens. I wanted to

be like Drill Sergeant Siddens. And I liked it. I loved being a Drill Sergeant. I just liked training and I -- because it wasn't behind a desk. You were always out doing something. So, I --

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, it was no longer get back at dad at this point.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Right. It was no -- yeah, I joined -- yeah. Why I joined the Army and why I stayed are two different things. Yeah. Most people say, you know, you joined the Army to -- you know, to spike the nose on your face. But I am like --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Well you were kind of being a PE Instructor but then got as a Drill Sergeant, right.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Well, exactly. I mean, so the reason why I joined, you know, was the -- you know, I joined there for all the wrong reasons but it was the best decision I ever made in my life. You know, and I think my mom knew that -- you know, that I was, kind of, cut out to -- because my mother will tell me, she would go, you are just like your father. Which, of course, when you don't like your father, it's not something you want to hear.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Wrong answer, mom.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: But when -- but when, you know, she goes, you are just like him. I mean, my father had impeccable personal appearance. He enjoyed being in the Navy. He was very good at his job. He was very studious.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Now did you say he was an Officer or NCO?

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: NCO. My father retired as a Navy Chief in E-7.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Of course, I retired as an E-9. So, that's the rest of the story. Unfortunately, he didn't live to see it. But --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: -- he did live to see me make E-5 but -- and then Drill Sergeant but unfortunately he passed away very early on after he retired. But, you know -- but, it was just like, I just like it. And I like being a teacher. If they had told me I could be Drill Sergeant for 20 years, I probably would have done it. I mean, because I just -- I like teaching. And there is always something different. Every day is different. I

mean, yeah you got drill and ceremonies, you got weapons training, you got this. But you got 40 trainees. It's never the same. There is always something new and exciting. So, I really enjoyed it and I just liked it. And then -- so, I did my CQs.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Last question about drill stuff. The kids that were joining back then and in this case, women in your realm. They are the women that were coming in, were they younger or older?

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: So, I was -- so, I joined the Army at 18. I was a Drill Sergeant by the time -- before my 21st -- my 20th birthday. The average age of my Platoon was 25.

SGM WATERHOUSE: The trainees?

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Yeah. The average age of my Platoon -- of my Platoon.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Why do you think that was?

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: You know, I am not real sure. I mean, I think, you know, women were looking for something different. You know, this opportunity --

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, were these post-college grads or just kids -- kids --

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Some were post-college grads. Some were, you know -- I think, you know, we were offering money for school back then. So, some needed money for school, whatever. I will never forget I had one trainee who I was disciplining, who was, like -- she was, like, 30. And we ended up chaptering her because she had some issues. But I was correcting her and counseling her. And she goes, you know, you should stand when your elder walks in the room. And I am just like --

SGM WATERHOUSE: You don't want a Sergeant giving orders to you.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: I was, you know, young lady -- I said, you know, you may know a lot more about life than I do but I know everything that you need to know about being in the Army at this point of time and place. So, please sit down.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Wow. That's an interesting demographic. I mean, average age 25.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Yeah. Average age of my Platoon was 25. Most of my platoons were 25. Yeah. So, that was a dynamic, you know. Joined the Army at 18. Haven't lived much of life. Haven't really lived a lot in

the Army because I went from Trainee to Drill Sergeant, in essence. So, you know -- but I know what it takes to get you through this program. I do know that.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Now, were these married and single women?

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Married and single -- no, mostly single.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Mostly single.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Mostly single.

SGM WATERHOUSE: And that was --

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Still.

SGM WATERHOUSE: -- I forgot to ask before. I know it changed in mid-70s but when --

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: I want to say probably around '76, '77.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Because if you got pregnant you had to get out.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: You had to get out.

SGM WATERHOUSE: And that --

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: It doesn't mean you could be married, when you came in. So, I want to say probably around '76, we were allowing more married women in. But

if you got pregnant at the time, it wasn't -- it wasn't optional. You had to get out.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: I think one change -- and that's something that changed after the Corps was just established.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Right.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: You know, then was the whole pregnancy counseling. You could -- you were -- it was up to you. You could opt for a Chapter 8 but we couldn't force you out.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay. Because from what I -- the reading I did, you know, prior to the mid-70s, you know, I don't think you had a choice, if you -- which sounds kind of harsh. Let's say you are Drill Sergeant and get pregnant by your husband --

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Yeah but --

SGM WATERHOUSE: -- you are forced to get out.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: -- I want say everybody would -- the male Drills were married but I think most of our female Drills, we were all single.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: When I think back to it all, I think, all of us were single.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay. Boyfriend gets -- I mean, I think --

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Right. Right. Yeah.

SGM WATERHOUSE: -- you have to go home.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Yeah. You got to go.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Wow.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Got to go. I mean, it wasn't until '73, '74 or '76. If you look at our history, there was actually a female soldier was married but actually had a -- we had a -- there was a lawsuit, I think. And Ruth Bader Ginsburg was actually, at the time -- the person that -- I don't know if she was the attorney or the lower-level judge. But a lawsuit was brought because, if you and I were married and I am the Service Member and you are not, I couldn't claim you as a dependent -- yeah, I didn't get paid for you as a dependent. So, I didn't get BAH or any of that. And you didn't get any of the benefits. And we had to go to court. She had to go to court to get that privilege that -- or that right, I don't know --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Right.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: -- if it was privilege or right, that the same as her male counterparts. But women in the military had to go to court. So, that becomes that whole difference between Women's Army Corps being in the -

SGM WATERHOUSE: And in that rule of, you have to get out if you become pregnant, was a Women's Army Corps rule?

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Yeah.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, it was a self-inflicted rule.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Pretty much, I think.

SGM WATERHOUSE: I am just thinking of senior level officers and NCOs, that sounds, kind of, crazy.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Yeah. I mean, it was --

SGM WATERHOUSE: I mean that's --

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: I know First Sergeant [DG] was single. Betty Pruitt, my Company Commander, when I was a Drill, I think she was married. Yeah, Pruitt was married. Trying to think back.

SGM WATERHOUSE: I am just thinking

psychologically how that would affect, you know,
careerists --

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Yeah.

SGM WATERHOUSE: -- in the Women's Army Corps.
If you were making it a career. Well, I hope I don't get
pregnant.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Yeah. Really, yeah. I
mean, never crossed my mind. But, yeah.

SGM WATERHOUSE: I mean, I am just --

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: I mean, I knew the rules.
So, yeah.

SGM WATERHOUSE: It may have been a part of a
disintegration. I was, like, we can't sustain an All-
Volunteer Force --

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Yeah. You can't.

SGM WATERHOUSE: -- by taking people out --

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Right.

SGM WATERHOUSE: -- because you get pregnant.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Right. I mean, and even
today, I mean, pregnancy, even in today's Army is such a -
- or even in the military, it's this topic, I mean.
Especially with all the new -- all the deployments and

everything.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Single parents.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: You know, probably it's like -- I am, like, pregnancy is a temporary condition.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Right.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: You know, no different than if I break my leg in an airborne jump. It's going to take time for it to recover.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Or your Achilles, that's a good year probably, yeah.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: I mean, you know -- so, I mean, I get the whole thing about deployable -- we need an Army that's deployable and everything. But -- yeah, pregnancy is a temporary condition. I mean, but it was challenging those first years, as we did the integration because we did have a problem with a lot of women becoming pregnant.

SGM WATERHOUSE: All purposely?

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Well, not purposely. I just -- I mean, I just know we had a lot of women becoming pregnant, you know, when we had this initial integration.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Oh, after the -- when the --

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: After the integration.

SGM WATERHOUSE: -- integration started.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Yeah. I mean --

SGM WATERHOUSE: I mean, you were in Germany by that time.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Yeah. I -- so, I went from McClellan to the 37th Transportation Group in Kaiserslautern in Germany.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Kaiserslautern, yeah.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: At Kleber Kaserne.

SGM WATERHOUSE: I knew it was in '70. I just didn't know where about.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Yeah. So, I want to say, July --

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, before it was officially -
-

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Before it was just established. But we were on that way. We knew it was happening.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: So, yeah. I ended up at the headquarters of the 37th Transportation Group. So, I

was the Unit Supply Sergeant for the headquarters. S-4, kind of, oversaw the supply room with the Company Commander. So, when I got there, I was the only female Non-Commissioned Officer. There were other females in the unit but mostly Specialists. Of course, their first reaction to me was, you are longer a Drill Sergeant. I am, like, yes I know but I am still a Non-Commissioned Officer. So --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Did you have the Drill Sergeant patch?

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Yeah, sure. I had the Drill Sergeant patch.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: But, I mean, their whole thing was, she is just coming off the trail. So --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Watch out.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: -- watch out. You are no longer a Drill Sergeant. Just remember that. I am, like, yes but I am still a Non-Commissioned Officer.

SGM WATERHOUSE: I don't see that as a change.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: And standards still apply.

SGM WATERHOUSE: All right, Drill Sergeant tone

it down a little bit. You are not in the --

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Yeah. You are no longer a Drill Sergeant.

SGM WATERHOUSE: -- you are not your Private. Yeah.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: I am, like, yeah. Yeah. But --

SGM WATERHOUSE: You are my Private. So, I am just -- don't have time.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: By being an NC -- I am still a Non-Commissioned Officer and standards still apply. So, I had my Supplier on my head. Two males and a female. And then I was, kind of, the S-4 Sergeant, Master Sergeant McKenzie, was kind of like -- took me under his wing. I was like his bender -- so, I was basically just Unit Supply for the headquarters. The headquarters, the Battalion, the group headquarters. And then eventually ended up Property Book Sergeant and then also helped work the property book for all the rolling stock of the 37th Transportation Group. So, 37th Transportation --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Semi-trucks.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Yeah. So, 37th

Transportation Group was responsible for all the big line haul.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, bringing tanks and --

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Yeah. So, they did all the big line haul. So, you know, down in the units, so you had -- we had units in Mannheim and everything. There were these big truck units that, you know -- to haul tractor trailers, had hats and the helmets. I mean, the hats that would do the trains -- the tracks -- the tanks to the railhead and -- or rail or drive them all the way up to Graf [Grafenwoehr]. So, I was trying to keep track of that central trailer fleet because, you know, if sometimes you take the trailer because it's full of stuff and you drop it off at, like, AAFES [Army and Air Force Exchange Service] and they don't unload it right now. And you pick up an empty trailer. So, it's just trying to keep track of where all these trailers are.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Almost like a dispatch job, right?

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Yeah. But the units do but you just, kind of, kept track on the property book about where were they at.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Oh, where are they?

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Yeah.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, who was responsible for --

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: The inventory. I wasn't responsible for but -- the inventory like and if -- when you are doing the inventory, you are like, oh, we are missing trailer bumper number, whatever. You would put a call out and then you would ask -- then you put it out to all the Truck Companies. And as they are on the road, they ask them, you know -- when you see a 37th Group trailer go by, if you look at the bumper number. Because sometimes you would find that trailer because -- or, you might go drop off something to Graf or drop something off say down in Garmisch. And then when you go back down to pick up, oh, there is that empty trailer.

SGM WATERHOUSE: It's just sitting there.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: It's just sitting there.

So --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Or some Commander signed for it.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Right. And I would -- I just managed the -- we had the fleet but it's the

Commanders that own these Truck Companies.

SGM WATERHOUSE: You would hope they would know where the trailers are.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Yeah. But there are so many and they would just move it all around.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: So, that was -- yeah. So, I did that for three years but Master Sergeant McKenzie was, kind of, my mentor. He obviously saw something in me. He nominated me to go before the Sergeant Morales Program. So, I got inducted to the Sergeant Morales -- got inducted into Sergeant Morales. Made Staff Sergeant while I was there.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, those folks that read this that aren't in the Army or looking to -- can you explain the Sergeant Morales?

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: So, Sergeant Morales in Europe is a fictional leader that -- like the Audie Murphy Club in the US. Though Audie Murphy was a real guy. You know, it epitomizes leadership in taking care of soldiers. So, for the Sergeant Morales Program, you have to go before a local Board of Sergeant Majors at your level.

And then if you make that level, then you go up to the next higher level. So --

SGM WATERHOUSE: And they are asking you questions about taking care of soldiers.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Yeah. So, job book, taking care of soldiers, you know, basic leadership. And, you know, soldier skills, basic soldier skills. But, you know, it's a Board of -- at the local level, it's usually like the Sergeant Major and then the Board of First Sergeants. But the thing was, it was a unanimous vote. Everybody had to say, yes. It wasn't, kind of, like a Promotion Board where, you know, if three could recommend you and one didn't and you still get recommended.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Still get recommended, yeah.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: So, you -- all of them had to recommend you. So, you know, the first level is, kind of, First Sergeants. Then the next level is, you know, it's like the Battalion level Sergeant Majors. Then it's all the Brigade guys.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, it's a series of these panels that are grilling you and questions --

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Yeah. And they go up to

USAREUR and --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: -- you know. So, I was I think the second female in US Army Europe to be inducted into the Sergeant Morales Club. And a funny story. I got a email. I -- no I got a Facebook post about six months ago from Sergeant Major Dennis Webster, Retired. He used to be out at III Corps. And he shows me -- and he goes, Cindy, I didn't realize that you and I knew each other. We were both inducted in to the Sergeant Morales Club at the same time and --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Wow,

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: -- in the photo, you see this picture of me. There was only two women at the time. Myself and then there is Sergeant Webster at the time. She is Sergeant Major now, Sergeant Major Webster. I am, like, wow, that flashbacks. You know, so -- you know, but the thing about Sergeant Morales, when other NCOs in Europe start meeting you, then you have this kind of credibility. It's kind of --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Right.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: -- kind of, like, street

cred. Oh, okay. You are a Sergeant Morales member.

SGM WATERHOUSE: And you have to compete for
and it's hard and --

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: It's hard and -- you know,
and if you make it through the wickets, nobody gave it
you.

SGM WATERHOUSE: That's right.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: You had to know what you
were doing. So, yeah. But basically that was just basic
supply work, making Staff Sergeant and then --

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, how did you end up getting
that assignment?

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: It was just an Army
assignment.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: You know, just came down on
regular orders to Europe.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Back then you didn't call --

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: No. Back then --

SGM WATERHOUSE: -- someone and said, hey I
want to go here.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: -- no. Back then I just

got orders saying, you know, you are going to Europe, you are going to Germany. I am, like -- and I was pretty excited. I mean, I was, you know -- you know, going overseas. I wasn't really that scared. I mean, traveled as a kid, lived in Hawaii. So --

SGM WATERHOUSE: And you hadn't been to Europe before?

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Never been to Europe before. So, you know, and K town is, kind of, like little America any way. Even back then in the '78 --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Lot Americans there.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Yeah. A lot of Americans. I mean, you had Ramstein, Vogelweh, you know, Landstuhl. I mean, that whole area. I mean, you know, my biggest surprise, got there and there was a McDonalds. So, there you go. Probably drank a little too much, when I was there at the time. Because, you know, young Sergeant out on her own, you know, going down there. You know, Oktoberfest, I mean. You know, but it was a good time. I played softball while I was there. And actually, one year, while I was there, I got selected -- excuse me -- to go try out for the All-Army Women Softball Team. I would

say, it was '79. Made the cut. So, I was a member of the All-Army Women Softball Team. So, that summer I got to play softball for the Army.

SGM WATERHOUSE: And that was what you got paid to do.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: And that's what I got paid to do.

SGM WATERHOUSE: How did you guys do?

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: We didn't win the tournament but I did get selected to the All-Service, the Inter service Team. So -- and then went and played in the National Tournament in Garland, Texas. Army didn't win -- the International Team -- the Inter Service Team didn't win but it was a great experience. And then -- then I came back and -- being a Sergeant Morales, you know, when there is dignitaries visit, you get to be escorts. So, I got to escort the Sergeant Major of the Army.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Was there any special thing you wore to the --

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: I mean, you had a medallion but in uniform, no.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Just regular fatigues.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Yeah. Just regular fatigues. But so, Sergeant Major of the Army Conley was coming to visit the 37th Group. So, I was his escort.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Nice.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: And, you know, we were talking and -- it was coming up towards -- this was like in '80 and I had just gotten my assignment, my next assignment. And I had gotten a letter and it was from Department in the Army. And I had been -- I had actually -- had been back to Fort Branch. I wanted to go back to Fort Lee, Virginia.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, at that point you had started talking.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Yeah. I wanted to go be an Instructor at Fort Lee. And -- so, I got my letter. I am, like, okay. So, I open it up. And we were at lunch. And I opened it up and I am just sitting there, staring at the letter. So, Sergeant Major of the Army goes, so, are you going where you want to go? I am, like, no Sergeant Major. He goes, what's the matter? I am, like, I don't know whether to laugh or cry. And Sergeant Major Walt Krueger, who is the USAREUR Sergeant Major was there.

Sergeant Major -- Master Sergeant McKenzie was there. The Group Sergeant Major, I can't recall his name was there.

And I am looking at it. And he goes, well, so where are you going Sergeant? And I am, like, it says, congratulations you are in the top 10 percent of your career field. You have been nominated for an assignment as a US Army Recruiter.

SGM WATERHOUSE: I felt the same way.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: And I am, like, I don't know whether to laugh or cry. All, Sergeant Major of the Army Conley said to me was better you than me.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Oh, thanks.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Thanks. Exactly. And I mean, I did try to get out of it. I am like -- I called back to branch. I am, like, I am --

SGM WATERHOUSE: And this is after the Army had integrated?

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Right. I said, look, I have already been on a Special --

SGM WATERHOUSE: A Drill Sergeant, yeah.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: -- been on a Special Duty assignment. You know, I have already been a Drill

Sergeant. He goes, well who better to put people in the Army than somebody has already trained them. I am, like, thanks a lot.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah. Because normally, even today you do one or the other, not both.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: So, I am -- I had done both. So, you know, so I PCS, go to Recruiting School.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Can we back up before we get to that?

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Yeah.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, because -- I mean, this is a historic moment. So, in Germany, you get there. In that same year, the Women's Army Corps is -- I don't know if disbanded is the word but after 36 years in existence, it's now gone. Women are -- and I am sure it didn't all happen on October '78 but --

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Right. Like I said, when I got to my unit, I was the only female Non-Commissioned Officer.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, it probably took a couple of years after.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Yeah. Yeah. There was

only like -- I mean, five or six women in the unit. I mean --

SGM WATERHOUSE: But all of a sudden you got new uniforms, right?

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: No, we didn't -- I mean --

SGM WATERHOUSE: No?

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: -- our uniforms, kind of, stayed the same. We eventually transitioned -- as they updated uniforms, we transitioned.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, they didn't automatically give you whatever the guys were wearing?

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: No. No. No. So, I mean, other than fatigues, which was the only thing that really changed.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: You know, we got out of PTs, we got out of the cords. So, we basically were in Class A Greens.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Or fatigues. Even our cords went away. So, we were -- so, you know --

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, they have to integrated

you, they need to give you their uniform.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: No. I mean, our Class A was our Class A. So, until they made the next change to the Class A uniform, which they did for men --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: -- is when we adopted our new Class A uniform. So -- and I think the only other uniform that we had was that lime green dress. It was an option. Which -- it was optional, so I never bought up because I would never wear it. I mean, but you could wear it, like, if -- yeah. So, we basically we had Class A, blouse and we had trousers at the time. We did have trousers or skirt. So, and then we had fatigues.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Now in that unit -- was it the 73rd Group?

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: No. 37th.

SGM WATERHOUSE: 37th Group. How was that unit -- males or females before that change -- how was that unit configured, I guess?

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: So, the group headquarters basically --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Or were they segregated still?

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: -- I -- they had -- the women were -- I don't know where the women lived. But when I got there, we had the women on one floor and the men on the other floors. So, we had put all the women on one floor. So, the -- because --

SGM WATERHOUSE: But the unit itself as an Operational Unit, men and women were working together already?

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Yeah. Men and women --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: -- yeah. So, because we were in the S-4 and S-1 and all that. So, we had the barracks. The married people lived wherever they lived. And then, those of us who lived in the barracks -- basically, they had initially put all the women on one floor. And then the men were on the other two floors.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Because of the integration --

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Because of the latrine issue.

SGM WATERHOUSE: -- not only integration. I am thinking the work environment too was segregated.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: No. No. Work environments

were never separated.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Even when I was at -- we were at Fort Knox, you know the WACs, when they would go work at the Armor Center School Headquarters. They were working right alongside men.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: They just lived -- and they lived separately. So, that we had --

SGM WATERHOUSE: It's just kind of misconception is the Women's Army Corps had - this transportation unit is-- all females over here and there is --

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: No. No. We were -- not, no. No. No. I mean, just the basic, the WAC Detachment. So, you worked your WAC Detachments but you worked in Army units. You were just accounted for. I mean, you had your own -- we had like our own personnel system.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Own promotion system.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Own promotion system. I mean, so we were -- we weren't on any of the integrated lists like the Army had with -- under the MILPO at the

time. So, but once we integrated, then we fell under all those systems. You know, all our records went from the Women's Army Corps Directorate into our branches to be managed, instead of managed by the WACs.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, when you and some of your peers, you know, I think it was March of that year and Congress and passed and said, yes, it's going to happen. We are going to integrate and the Women's Army Corps by October is going to be -- is no longer -- what were some of the opinions and you know --

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: I think for most of us young ones, that nothing.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Didn't feel anything.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: That, you know, but -- but my Battalion Sergeant Major, a couple of the First Sergeants --

SGM WATERHOUSE: In the 37th?

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Not in 37th. I mean, the 37th, I think because I -- I think there was like five or six of us. But we are all junior. We are all Spec-4s and one Sergeant.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, you -- you --

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: I mean, I was the senior. I was the senior. One Sergeant and a female Captain. Or was she a Lieutenant? No, Captain Karr. She was a Captain. Other than that --

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, she had probably been in four or five -- five years.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Yeah. So, other than that -- those were the only women there. I mean, so it was very transparent to us. You know, and for the units, now you have female truck drivers right alongside male truck drivers.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Right.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: But they were always there. But they weren't probably driving the big rigs and all the stuff like they were doing before they were, like, the driver for the Commander or the driver for this.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, not totally integrated.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Not totally integrated.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: But after that transition, I mean, you know -- you know, we started getting, you know, more officer -- female officers in the group

headquarters. You know, we were a headquarter. So, you know, the S-1 had a lot more women in it. But when I went down to Mannheim to the Truck Company, you started seeing more female truck drivers.

SGM WATERHOUSE: But the transition was pretty much transparent as far as the working --

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Right.

SGM WATERHOUSE: -- it's just the working all the system.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Yeah. And it's just you started seeing more women, you know, in the units.

SGM WATERHOUSE: And more MOSs were opened up for women? Or was it pretty much the same?

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Relatively the same. I mean, the big transition -- we could do everything except combat arms and --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah. I think by the mid-70s that was --

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Yeah. Pretty much. Whatever wasn't coded combat --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Right.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: -- arms or combat -- some

combat support, we still couldn't do.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Military Police was one that -
- was that --

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: No. Military Police ended
up opening up.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: But, you know, anything
like with artillery, like --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Armor, infantry.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Armor, infantry, artillery.
None of the Special Forces stuff. None of Special
Missions stuff, officially. I mean, we have always done
that as needed. Just nobody was being told about it.
Yeah. So, I mean, to me it was very transparent. I mean,
I just -- all I noticed is I just started seeing more
females being assigned. So, I think it was very
transparent for --

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, you didn't have any
concerns, well, now I got to compete with men for
promotion or anything like that.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: No.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Is that a common argument

against it?

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: You know, I --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Not that you guys had a choice
but --

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: -- I don't know, I mean, I
didn't look at it that way. I mean, I guess, a lot
probably did. I mean, there are still days, today like I
come around a couple closed chat rooms of women veterans.
You know, there is still the -- people today, they still
long to go back to segregated, whatever. I mean, because
that's what they knew and that's what they were
comfortable with and I will never -- yeah. General
Hoisington and I will that story later on --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: -- in my CAG day. But --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah. This is unclass.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: -- yeah. Oh no, though I
can tell you about it. It's just -- it's a story that, I
was at Leavenworth as a Post Sergeant Major, we were doing
the Women's History Month thing and what I wanted to do
from Women's History Month was have a panel discussion but
I had one of the new young soldiers that had just joined

the Army and I got General Hoisington, who was one of our first female Generals and one of the WAC Directors. And then -- on this panel. And then I had General Velma Richardson, who like me came in as a WAC but transitioned.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Transitioned.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: She was the Commander of the Signal Center in School. Then you had me and then you had another young Sergeant, I had like the youngest one who had just joined and had some who had been in for a while. And then, I think, I had -- so, I had General Hoisington and General Richardson and myself, this young Sergeant and then this young Private. And, you know, we all told our stories. And, of course, I have known General Hoisington for a while and, you know, but General Hoisington was about the WAC and how we were supposed to be ladies and she was very opposed to us -- the integration. She was very opposed to us wearing the fatigues. She was very opposed to all that.

And this time, you know, of course, she is -- she is in her -- my god, I think she was in her 80s. So, anyway, we had all told our stories and then we were taking questions from the audience. And -- but when she

was talking, she up to me and she was like, you know -- it's tough, you know, well, how, you know, about this whole integration thing and she just slammed and came down in front of the table, in front me about -- because I was in fatigues and she couldn't stand it. Slammed it down.

SGM WATERHOUSE: What year was it?

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: This is, oh gosh, '98, '99.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Because I was at Leavenworth. And I just looked at her, I said, ma'am I just here to tell you it's going to be all right because I have had -- I have lived -- I have a foot in both worlds.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah. You have lived in both worlds.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: I said, I had --

SGM WATERHOUSE: You were what, six years I think in Women's Army Corps.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Yeah.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Like, six years.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: I said, so -- I said, I have lived in both worlds. I am just here to tell you, it's going to be okay.

SGM WATERHOUSE: And it has been okay.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: And it has been okay. And then General Richardson, she is -- she is like you handled that like a pro. But I have known General Hoisington. But, I mean -- and I know where she comes from, I mean --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: -- she was vehemently opposed to this whole thing. And especially, when we went to fatigues. Because that is, to her, not lady like. Was not lady like. Was not happy for it. So, yeah. So, you know, so Germany was --

SGM WATERHOUSE: And you were at Germany for three years, I think.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Three years. Then went off to Recruiting School.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, looking back at that time in Germany, any lessons learned as we say today? Any key takeaways from that assignment? Or you experience in --

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: You know, I think my key takeaways is, my early on success was because of male mentorship. I mean, because if you think about -- when you look in the unit, other than Captain Karr, I mean,

more than she probably did, you know -- I had probably been in the Army longer than she had been in the Army. But everybody around me that gave me opportunity or saw something in me, were male leaders. My role models were all male leaders. So, early on, I didn't have this, like I got to have a female mentor. I mean, when I look back on what I -- about role models of women, I look back and think about Sergeant Siddens. Or look back and think about First Sergeant (inaudible). Or I look back and think about Command Sergeant Major Helen Johnston. Those were my early role models, when I first came in. And I still aspired to be like those women.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Right.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: But to get there, they were there to help me. It's now my male leadership, you know. If Matt McKenzie hadn't given me an opportunity to go before the Sergeant Morales Board, who knows. I mean, so, you know -- so, it's always kind of been, you know, when I hear women in the military saying, well, we got to have female mentors and everything, not necessarily. You have to have people that recognize something in you, that you have a relationship, that you are willing to confide in,

that you trust, that will help give you the guidance that you are looking for and that will be honest and truthful with you about where you are at and what you should be doing.

I don't -- you know, I mean, we may be able to feel more comfortable if you have a women around. But as I progressed through my career, I find that women aren't very nurturing to other women. We are very competitive. You know, and sometimes I have seen it -- I didn't really experience but I have seen it where they are so competitive that they won't help somebody else out because she might get ahead.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Oh, yeah.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: I mean, because it's different. And I don't know if it's because we are now thrust into this competition where we are also competing with the men. So, now we got to compete with men. Now we got to compete with women and how do you get ahead. I don't know because I never really looked at it that way. I am just, like, just do your job, do it to the best of your ability. Because even Matt taught me early on. He goes, if you are always looking for what's next and you

are not reaching down and helping those below you, he goes, then you are losing sight of why you are a Non-Commissioned Officer. And I always, kind of, held that, you know, that -- he goes, if you do what you are supposed to do, good things will come. Of course, when I got the assignment to Recruiting Duty, I said, this is not what I think is a good thing.

SGM WATERHOUSE: You lied.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: No. He was there at lunch. I am, like, this is not what I think is a good thing. But, okay. You know, so I ended up going to Fort Ben Harrison for Recruiting School and being an Army Recruiter.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, I want to back up a little bit. Did you -- now there is, yeah. I mean, it started in 1973. So, you know, we started -- and in the Women's Army Corps I am not sure how this work but -- so, in the, you know, in the regular Army -- I am not sure about the Guard or Reserve where they had the Primary Leadership Development Course.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: We didn't do any of that.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Didn't do any of that.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: My first --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Did you do the Non-Commissioned Officer Course?

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Not so -- you know, I don't -- because -- and I am not probably the best person to ask because, you know, I went from --

SGM WATERHOUSE: I mean, you were a Sergeant, next thing you knew it.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: I mean, I was a Drill Sergeant.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, when --

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: So, when I left Drill -- so, when I left to go to Germany, the question wasn't whether to send me to Drill Sergeant -- to send me to BNCOC [Basic NonCommissioned Officer Course]. Actually they sent me back to Fort Lee to go through AIT.

SGM WATERHOUSE: That's right.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Because I was OJT'd. And because I was OJT'd in '73 in a WAC Detachment, branch thought it would be in my best interest to send me to AIT Supply School because the systems had all changed and --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: So, I left being a Drill Sergeant to go to AIT as a Sergeant with Privates. Some of who were --

SGM WATERHOUSE: That's an interesting dynamic.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: -- some of who were my trainees. Think about it.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Wow.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Because I left McClellan to go to --

SGM WATERHOUSE: And how long was the AIT?

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: It was eight -- it was eight weeks.

SGM WATERHOUSE: It was not your eight weeks with some former Private --

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Yeah. I mean, I ended up like being the Platoon Sergeant. Go figure. You know, so basically, I just went to class. I didn't -- I mean, the permanent party there, Drill Sergeants at AIT, kind of, cut me some slack. I mean, I didn't march to school with the AIT students. I had -- I was told where I was supposed to be. And actually -- I actually accelerated that. I think I finished in six weeks because I was able

to take some test and do some things and --

SGM WATERHOUSE: But in the Women's Army Corps to make Sergeant, you didn't have to go to an NCO-type school to be --

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: You know, I don't recall.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Because, you know, I graduated from Drill Sergeant School, I had a merit promotion. I couldn't tell you what the process was. I mean, for a Corporal -- for E-4, I was just like E-4 today. I mean, you get --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah. You get lateral promotion.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: -- lateral -- you get recommended by --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Company Commander.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: -- Commander --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: -- and then, I mean, I do recall them having to go before a Board but, of course, I didn't. So, when it came time while I was at -- in Germany, whether I was going to be sent to PLDC at

[Battles]. You know, everybody is like, she has already been a Drill Sergeant, why would you send her to PLDC?

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, you had the option but you didn't have to go.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: So, they didn't send me.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Army didn't send me. They were like kind of waived because I had already been a Drill Sergeant for -- I had been to Drill Sergeant School and I had been a Drill Sergeant for three and a half years.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: And then, I don't know why I didn't go to BNOC. Well, I think, because I was in Recruiting Duty. So, when I --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah. Because you were a Staff Sergeant already.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: I was a Staff Sergeant already. I was --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Because you were doing Recruiting.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: I was doing Recruiting

Duty.

SGM WATERHOUSE: In Philadelphia? Is that where you were?

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: So, I was in the Philadelphia District Recruiting Command but I was actually in Trenton, New Jersey.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay. Right across the water?

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Yeah. Right across the water. Which -- Recruiting Duty was an interesting experience. So, I was the only female recruiter in the station. So, we were a multi-station and then we had a black recruiter. So, I was given and all black high school that really didn't want me there. They gave the black recruiter Princeton, New Jersey that every time -- because this the '80s. Every time he time drove to the city limits, the cops would escort him away from the town. So, they -- you know, I am just --

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, the Schools weren't exactly integrated.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: No.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Because there was -- integration in the Schools started in the mid-70s but --

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Right. But, you know, --

SGM WATERHOUSE: -- not necessarily were --

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: -- everywhere.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: So, I did -- I went and did a high school program. You know, I am in my blues, it's pouring down rain, go in and then I do my school program. I come out. The tires on my car are slit. My license plate has been stolen. It's the pouring rain. I call GSA to get the car towed. I call the office, somebody come pick me up. Then I went back and told my Station Commander, I am not going back to that school unless I am carrying a 38 and a billing club, sorry. This isn't working. So, they ended up giving me the Princeton Hightstown area and they ended up giving the black recruiter, the all black high school in downtown Trenton. Initially when they were going to assign me there --

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, whose decision was it? That was the Station Commander, like the Sergeant --

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Yeah. I guess. I don't know whose idiot idea it was. But anyway, before that initially they were going to put me in downtown Philly on

Cherry Street. And I just looked at him and said, there is not enough color in this face to put me in downtown Philly on Cherry Street.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, that was an African American area?

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Yeah. I mean, I -- he goes, well, we are an integrated Army. I am like, yes, but society is not quite there yet. I mean, why you -- I mean, why you got set people up for failure. I mean, because I was struggling to make mission. The other guy is struggling to make mission. You flip us. Oh, gee, all of a sudden, we are both making mission. And then, I got moved to be a On Production Station Commander at the Hightstown Station because one of the recruiters did something on mission -- you know, got involved with a female applicant and -- so, the rest of it is history but -- so, went down -- and I actually hated Recruiting Duty. I couldn't stand it. I hated it. I mean, I made mission. As a basic recruiter, I was -- I just -- it wasn't my thing. I think sometimes recruiting is like, you know -- I am borderline introvert, extrovert depending on what I am doing.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: You know, if I am playing softball and that, then I am very extroverted. If I am this whole other thing, it's like -- you know, I am better salesman for the Army and a Recruiter for the Army today than I was when I was an Army Recruiter.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Now work -- did your Station Commander, I think that's what we called them back then, now like Center Commanders but --

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Yeah.

SGM WATERHOUSE: -- did he or she, you know, like hey you need to go and recruit females. Was that kind of like --

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: No. No.

SGM WATERHOUSE: -- or was it just go recruit?

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Just go recruit. I mean, if they were -- if the other recruiters had females and they wanted to talk to a female soldier, I would talk to them. But, you know, it was just whatever. I mean, I put in about an equal amount of men and women. But --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Because I don't know if the push to -- you know, by the Army did --

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: I mean, we still had quotas. We still had quotas. And we had --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Of female soldiers.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Yeah. We had select quotas of female soldiers --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Of female recruits, sorry.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Yeah. Female recruits but, you know, my biggest challenge is, I would look and interview somebody, I am like, now way in hell are they going to make it. That was my biggest challenge having been a Drill Sergeant.

SGM WATERHOUSE: It wasn't that they weren't qualified they --

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: It looked -- they were totally qualified.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: You know, but you just -- as a former Drill Sergeant, and you have just get -- you know, that gut.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: I am just like --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Because some recruiters have

areas where nobody -- you know, they just can't pass the test or what?

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Well, that was Trenton too.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: If you could get them to pass the test, then you were hoping that they didn't have a rap sheet a mile long.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Well, it sounds like you had the propensity of joining this whole talent but they just don't have the scores or --

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Yeah. So, if you could get them to pass, then it was, like, do they have a rap sheet a mile long. I mean, I was up in the Princeton area. So, that wasn't so much. It was just trying to convince that ilk of people that they wanted to serve. You know, because Princeton is, you know, upper -- you know, they could buy things.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Well to do.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Yeah. My son wants a tank, I can buy him one. Yeah, well. It's different -- it's whatever. But I just didn't think I was cut out for recruiting. Do you know what I mean? But once they made

me a Station Commander, of course, I am not going to fail. So, you know, once you put in me charge then I am really not going to fail.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, challenges in that job, you didn't like. It, kind of, went against your personality.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: It went against my personality. And I became to despise 'be all you can be' commercials. I used to them --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Really?

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: -- ping pong balls in my living room. And every time one would come on, I would just --

SGM WATERHOUSE: And it's real popular. Ever since it's been gone away, it's now really popular.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Yeah. I mean, it was probably --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Not necessarily the commercial but the saying.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: I mean, it was probably the best jingle we ever had.

SGM WATERHOUSE: And the motto.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: And the best motto.

SGM WATERHOUSE: And it came out in 1980.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: You know, I mean, I still, you know --

SGM WATERHOUSE: And a lot of people think that goes back to like the '50s. No, it's 1980s.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: No. '80 and we do more before nine than most people. I mean, I like that one too. I mean, so -- but, I mean, it just wasn't my personality. But, I mean, I became a Station Commander. I was very successful but, you know, it's just like in -- you know, in recruiting, you know, how you have your silver badge, then you get so many stars. Then you can turn them into sapphires, then you turn your badge gold. So, I ended up getting selected for E-7 while on Recruiting Duty, provided I was willing reclassify from Unit Supply to Warehouse, 76 Victor.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, a different MOS and the same CMF?

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Same CMF but a different -- I said, I don't know what it is but yes. I am already classified below this --

SGM WATERHOUSE: It might be -- you know, today -- well, I don't know about today but when I was a Recruiter and you are a Staff Sergeant, they were like, hey if you want become a permanent recruiter --

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Oh, I was asked.

SGM WATERHOUSE: -- we can give you Sergeant First Class tomorrow.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: No. They asked me that too. I am like, no. So, we were still DRCs and the DRC Sergeant Major and I didn't get along.

SGM WATERHOUSE: What is DRC?

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: District Recruiting Command.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Before they became like they are today Battalions and --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: -- Brigades.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Brigades.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Right. So, we were back to District Recruiting Command. Then we had Area Commanders instead of Battalion Commanders. So, the dynamic of

Recruiting changed a little bit. So, the CSM came down because I had come down on orders. And I was leaving Recruiting actually like seven months -- six months early. Because the --

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, it was a three-year gig and now you were going to get there --

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: I was going to be able to leave early because they wanted to promote me and send me to Korea. And he is, like -- well, he told me how it goes but you can't leave early. And she was just like, last time I looked the Department of -- Recruiting Command was part of Department of the Army, not the other way around. And I -- look, I was a smartass when I was a younger soldier. I am sorry. I had a smart mouth, I had a quick mouth. Got me in trouble sometimes, like that day. And then -- you know, so he went to fight it and it didn't happen. Then he came back to me, he goes, well, you know if you finish these six months out, you make mission, your badge will turn gold. And I am, like, you know, Sergeant Major I already have a gold badge.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Your Drill Sergeant badge.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: We did not get along.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, did you actually make Sergeant First Class before you left or you were --

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: No. I didn't make it. I got promoted after I got here.

SGM WATERHOUSE: But you came down on orders that you are promotable.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Right. So, I reported and then I went to Korea, to US -- what is it --

SGM WATERHOUSE: United States Materiel Support Command --

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Materiel Support Command, Korea.

SGM WATERHOUSE: -- Korea. Yeah.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: So, yeah. So, for those -- so, that location down in Waegwan is where all the rolling reserve war stock and most of the supplies that come in for the Korean theater are transferred through. So, you had different types of warehouses. So, I was there. I was there for a year. Got promoted there. So, I was at the warehouse in [COSC] but also, you know, additional duty as the Platoon Sergeant, in those days. Re-enlistment NCOs in additional duty.

SGM WATERHOUSE: And this was in 1983?

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Yeah. '83 to '84.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: You know, Korea was interesting in that as a -- I was the only -- I got promoted in like two months after I got there, so I was the only female Senior NCO there as a SFC. We had a lot of Staff Sergeants and lot of Sergeants. But I was the only female SFC. And after the Korean -- the Korean workforce having a senior female Non-Commissioned Officer was also something new. You know, so the local nationals that were --

SGM WATERHOUSE: They didn't have female NCOs?

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Right. You know, it's like, [Honcho] you don't understand. You know, I would tell them I want to do something one way, no, no, you don't understand, it needs to be done this way. No, you don't understand. I am charge. So, I mean this -- you know, this was a dynamic that, you know, went back and forth. You know, I had filled in -- I got opportunity to fill in as the Acting First Sergeant a couple of times. And it was also my last opportunity to -- I actually got

selected to go back and play Army Softball one more year. So, Korea was a very short tour. And it's -- in and of itself, it's only a year. But when you get to take two months out of it and play softball --

SGM WATERHOUSE: That was a good gig.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: -- it's an even shorter tour. And my mother passed away during that tour. So, I had gone back for her funeral. But, yeah. It was -- Korea was just a very interesting tour. I mean, you know -- I think maybe I did, what, nine months out of actually as --

SGM WATERHOUSE: 13 of out normally.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Yeah. Out of 12, 13.

SGM WATERHOUSE: One month to a year.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: So, that, you know -- that one just gave me a lot of different opportunities. One to, you know, to learn my MOS, you know. But the thing about being a Warehouse Supervisor --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Which is a new MOS?

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Yeah. But really, you are -- as the Warehouse Supervisor, I mean, you got to know what the system is doing, make sure that your soldiers are

not BS-ing about what's not working and what can work.

But you are not really running any of those systems.

SGM WATERHOUSE: And it's not like you had go through extra training for that.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: No. No. No.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: I mean, they didn't -- I mean, I went -- when I came out there, I did go to ANOC on my -- enroute to my next assignment.

SGM WATERHOUSE: For that particular MOS.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: For that particular MOS before I went -- when I left.

SGM WATERHOUSE: But not before you did the job.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Yeah. When I left Korea, I went to Fort Bragg and enroute I went to ANOC for warehousing. So, that's, kind of, where I got the stuff. But, you know, you are a supervisor. So, you know, you are just making sure that people are doing what they are supposed to be doing, where they are supposed to be and not mess and crap up.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, before we go to the next

unit -- I know you didn't like recruiting any more than I didn't like it. But, you know, there was always good or, you know, there is lessons learned. There is -- like I can take positive stuff from my time as a recruiter, even though I don't like to admit it. But looking back at your time in Korea, you know, for a year and that time as a Recruiter, what are some of the --

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: The thing that I get out from the Recruiting Command because I am not a very structured person, I learnt a lot of good things about time management. And -- I mean, and it did brought a little bit out of my shell even -- I mean, I am not a person that likes to talk on the phone. You know, so when you had to deal with phone power and do your phone call --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Next three hours, that's what you are doing.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Yeah. I mean, so --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Cold calls.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: -- yeah. So, I think it brought me out of my shell a little bit. I mean, but it really did taught about time management. I mean, a lot of people were like, how can you become -- eventually become

a Sergeant Major and you are not very structured. And I am not. I mean, if you do Myers-Briggs, my personality type is borderline EINFP. So, you know, most senior NCOs --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Extrovert/introvert.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: -- yeah. So, I am an introvert who tries -- but I am intuitive. I am perceiver and a feeler. Where if you think most senior NCOs, they are either introvert or extrovert but they are structured judgment and --

SGM WATERHOUSE: NTJ.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: -- yeah. They are NTJs.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: ISTJs. So, it -- so, you know, it kind of gave me that structure. I mean, if you ask me directions to my house, I will give you landmarks. I mean, I have to learn the roads. I mean, I have to really study what all the street names to how you get there. But, like, giving you directions here, I mean, I had to literally sit down, look on the map, okay, this is a left, this is right, this is the road, this is the number of traffic lights. How to give him the directions

to get here.

So, you know, so, that's what I took away from that. And then I could be successful at something I didn't like. You know, that as much as I didn't like being a Recruiter, nothing in the Army -- there is no job in the Army that you should -- that you can fail at. I mean, they give you everything you need. I mean, they sent me to a school, they gave me the tools. As much as I didn't like it, there is no reason why you should fail.

I mean, you fail because you choose to fail. I mean, everybody that I know that didn't make mission or whatever, is because they chose not to. They wanted to get out of it. Now I could have gone that route probably but I am like, I am not a failure. I don't fail. So, I mean, as much as you don't like something -- so, it's like today where, you know, people get told, you know, well, I didn't volunteer for Drill Sergeant School. Well, no, it's just another assignment. You know, or I didn't volunteer for Recruiting Duty. No.

SGM WATERHOUSE: It's a broadening assignment.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: It's a broadening assignment. I -- you know, I didn't -- I volunteered to be

Drill Sergeant. I didn't volunteer to be a recruiter. However, I didn't volunteer to go to Germany either. And I didn't volunteer to go to Korea. So, you know, it's just what the Army thinks is next in my progression.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: So, I don't fall in to that, you know, well, I was -- you know, I didn't volunteer for that therefore --

SGM WATERHOUSE: I am not going to give my all.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: -- I am not going to give my all.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: So, I mean, I think that's what I learned about myself. And, you know, that -- well, you are right, I didn't volunteer for it but it's just -- was my next assignment. So, you know, suck it up, buttercup and move on.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, Sergeant Major in 1984, you were assigned to Fort Bragg, North Carolina, where you served with the 406th General Support Company, which was part of the 530th Supply and Transportation Battalion or S&T Battalion. 1st Corps Support Command or COSCOM and

you also served with the 1st COSCOM NCO Academy or NCOA.

What led to that assignment?

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: So, just coming out of Korea --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Is that your choice?

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Going to Fort Bragg was my -- well, actually when I got my assignment to Fort -- to Korea, I already knew what my return assignment was.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: They were, kind of, telling you where you -- for those short tours, they kind of told you where you were coming back to. So, I was okay with that. I mean, my mom had been really sick. So, she had cancer and basically I had told her -- my little sister was, kind of, taking care of her. So, I told my mom, you know, what -- when I found out when she was sick. So, enroute to Korea, I had, you know, taken leave, gone and seen my mom and everything. Got to Korea. And got me up by my First Sergeant to tell my -- that my mom was in a coma. So, I immediately flew back home and when I got there -- and initially I was going to try and get out of the assignment, you know, because they told me she had

terminal cancer. Blah, blah, blah, blah.

So, when I went to see my -- when my mom regained consciousness, the first thing she told my sister was, don't call your sister. Unfortunately they had already called me and I was downstairs in the lobby. So, I went up to see her and, kind of, told her Korea was a nice place to visit and I want to live there. And I had already worked out with MILPO that, I had just come out of Recruiting Command. You know, could you assign me to Recruiting, you know, in Michigan. And -- but just not as a Recruiter.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Like, in Supply or whatever. Had the letter from the doctor and everything. So, when I told my mom, you know, she was like, oh you are just coming back home to wait for me to die. I mean, like, well what do you want me to do? She goes, I want you to do your assignment in Korea. So, I went to Korea, under the condition that when I returned, she would come and stay with me at Fort Bragg. So, it was kind of something for her to look forward to.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: And then unfortunately, she passed before I returned. But it was, you know, kind of, give my sister some relief to think that they weren't going to have to deal with this the whole time. You know, I am the oldest. You know, if I bring her to Fort Bragg, you know, I was already looking at the procedures of how I can get her as my dependent. I mean, so all that was working. But unfortunately she passed before I got back.

So, I ended up at Fort Bragg because that was my next duty assignment. But going to down to the 530th Supply and 530th Support Battalion and going to the 406th, just General Supply Company wasn't as easy of a transition as you would think. So, when I arrived at Fort Bragg, you know, you go to the replacement Battalion and, you know, I had an assignment. You know, and they said, now you are going to be a, you know, Warehouse Supervisor in the 406th/Platoon Sergeant. They said, but before we cut your order Sergeant, the Company Commander wants to talk to you and wants to interview you. I am like --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: -- okay. So, you know, I am a Class A, Drill Sergeant badge, Recruiting Badge. You

know, all my (inaudible) stuff and I go down there. You know, report in and, you know, get there and saying the Company Commander and First Sergeant wanted to see me. So, I walk and they -- oh, nice to meet you. Well, we just wanted to interview to -- you know, to see if you could handle soldiers. I am like, excuse me. You know --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Were these two male folks?

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Yes. Two males.

SGM WATERHOUSE: And this was a female thing?

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Well -- and I am only -- I am the first female SFC in the entire Battalion.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, this is more directed at your gender.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Right. So, I just was like --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Wow.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: -- so, I was like -- I said, well, I don't know, sir. Been a Drill Sergeant, been a Recruiter. Been a Platoon Sergeant in my last assignment.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, in their head, the Army wasn't integrated yet, I guess.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: I am not sure if I can handle soldiers. I mean, I was just really flipping.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Wow.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: And I said -- and I did ask. I said, if I was a male soldier, would you be asking this question?

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Well, uh, no -- I said, well if, you know, if this is how you deal with senior NCOs in your Company, I can already see that we are going to have a problem.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Wow.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: So, obviously I --

SGM WATERHOUSE: I mean, today it sounds unheard of but back then --

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: You know, this is 198 --

SGM WATERHOUSE: 4.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: -- 4.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: So --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Six -- five or six years.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: So, I mean, I get my

assignment. I come to Battalion. I mean, I come to the 406. I am given the Knox Street Warehouse. Platoon, so I am the Warehouse Supervisor/Platoon Sergeant. You know, Platoon leader was fine. You know, I had a mix of male, females in the unit in the Platoon. You know, so things went along swimmingly. I mean, that Company Commander ended up leaving. The First Sergeant ended up being relieved at some point while I was there. I ended by being the Acting First Sergeant until the new guy came in.

And then, while I was there, the other thing that happened was I got moved from the Platoon, from the Warehouse to the motor pool because -- the reason why the Company Commander and First Sergeant were relieved there is just all this -- my Platoon was running fine. The Warehouse was running well. Our -- and so, you know, you had the Warehouse and you had the trucks and tankers and -- so, the fleet was just a mess. A lot of things were deadline, that shouldn't -- you know, we had a very bad ER rating.

SGM WATERHOUSE: The operational rating?

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Yes. Everything was just -- so, they are like, successful Platoon Sergeant over

here. So, we are going to make you the Motor Sergeant. I am like, excuse me. I am not a mechanic.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah. Last time I checked --

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Ah, nope. We are going to move you to the motor pool. But we are going to make you the motor pool Platoon Sergeant/Motor Sergeant.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Was it 63 or 91 series back then?

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: 63.

SGM WATERHOUSE: 63 series.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Well, now the Staff Sergeant down there was really good. So, I am like -- so, I got him aside, I said, you are the Motor Sergeant. I may be in it in name.

SGM WATERHOUSE: And that was the Staff Sergeant.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Yeah. But you are the Motor Sergeant because I don't know crap about -- other than tenth level PMCS.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: And the Platoon leader, you know, the new Platoon leader. So, but they just had no

control on the Platoon. I mean, the Mechanics, they were just willy-nilly everywhere. So, I said, look, I don't know a thing about maintaining other than, you know, dash ten maintenance, maybe a little dash 20.

SGM WATERHOUSE: User level, yeah.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: I said, but I do know how to manage people. So, I told the Platoon leader. I said, this is how it's going to work. That front gate after formation is getting locked. There is a walk gate. You know, but the big gate that's being locked. He goes, what if there is a fire. They can -- our motor pool is so large, they can run to the other damn end.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, there is vehicles coming and going without any kind of accountability and --

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Right.

SGM WATERHOUSE: -- that kind of stuff?

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: You know, and people coming and going without any accountability. So, I got the squad leaders and told -- you know, laid the law down to them. I said, you are not going to drive me crazy like you drove the last guy crazy. You know, blah, blah, blah. And, you know -- so, it was a really hard --

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, the unit wasn't doing maintenance, they weren't --

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: No.

SGM WATERHOUSE: -- tracking parts. Or doing the basic stuff.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Oh, it was terrible. It was a nightmare.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: You know -- and the Staff Sergeant, he was a really good guy and he appreciated the support. And then the other thing I did was, like, okay, I don't know crap. I don't know what they are supposed to be doing. And in the -- I mean -- and they were just a mess. I mean, when they would leave the motor pool, they would leave in their coveralls and go do crap. Well, no. You put your uniform back on. You don't wear your coveralls outside. You know, I mean, it was just the whole thing. You know, they would show up for morning formation. No -- boots weren't shined. Well, we are at the motor pool. I am like, no. First formation after PT --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: -- you are spit shined and polished. You have work boots and you have coveralls. And you can switch into those. But when you leave this motor pool for lunch and when you leave this motor pool at the end of the day, you are going to looking like you are a damn soldier, not you know --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: -- Joe shit the ragman. So, you know, this whole locking the gate. And, I mean, I told the Company Commander what I was doing and I had said, sir, please do form Battalion. As you know, the IG is going to call. You know, but we have -- I did the risk assessment, all the safety, I knew what to do in case of fire. I wasn't the only one with the key. And I --

SGM WATERHOUSE: On Staff Duty would always have a key.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Yeah. But after like three weeks, the gate became unlocked and nobody knew it. But, you know, people were accounting for their people. People were signing out. And the other thing I did is, I put on a pair of coveralls and I would go out there and I would get on a little thing. And I would say, okay, explain to

me what you are doing.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Basically, having to change the culture of that unit.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: You know what, I am not a mechanic. So, what are you doing and why are doing it? Also, I mean, the other problem was, the unit in and of itself, the other Platoons weren't sending down their operators to support the mechanics.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, they weren't doing maintenance or checking for faults.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: You know, other than just doing regular PMCS [Preventative Maintenance Checks & Services]. But everybody was always complaining. I can't get a vehicle. It's deadlined, it's this, that and the other. I am like, well, now we know the problem. So, you know --

SGM WATERHOUSE: If you don't work on it, it's not going to get fixed.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: So, I became the Motor Pool Platoon Sergeant.

SGM WATERHOUSE: How long was that?

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: I did that for eight

months.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, you probably got a
evaluation as --

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Yeah. I got evaluations as
a Motor Sergeant. And then, so one day I was in the
barracks doing a, you know, barracks inspection. And the
COSCOM Sergeant Major came in the building and, of course,
I didn't know. I heard somebody come in. I am like,
whoever is in here, you know you are wrong. Because I was
in a room down the hall but I heard him come in. And --

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, you thought it was
somebody that is --

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Yeah.

SGM WATERHOUSE: -- supposed to be inspected.
They are coming to take something out of the room.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Yeah. I thought it was a
trooper. I didn't know it was the First Sergeant with the
Division -- it was the COSCOM Sergeant Major. So, of
course, I still hear them rumbling. I am, like, when I
come out of this room, you might have been gone. So, I
come out and they are both standing there, like -- crap.
And he is like, who are you. I am like, I am Sergeant

First Class Pritchett. I am the Platoon Sergeant for the motor pool. You are a woman. Yes, Sergeant Major, I am.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Wow, you figured that out all by yourself.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: He goes, how long you have been in the Battalion? I am like, year and a half, almost two. How come I never knew you were here? Nobody told me I needed to do an in-call with the COSCOM Sergeant Major. So, we were talking and everything. And next thing I know, two weeks later I am told I am going to be the Commandant of -- actually it's the Basic Leadership Course at the -- in the 1st COSCOM.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: So, 1st Corps Support Command had a Basic Leadership Course because they were having such a high failure rate in Division -- in the Division's BLC, PLDC.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, back then PLDC --

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Yeah. So, back then in PLDC, they were having such a high failure rate for soldiers coming out of the COSCOM, they developed this Basic Leadership Course which was two weeks.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, of course, to get them ready for the --

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Like a pre-PLDC for the --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: So, we did basically land-nav, you know, some leadership but it was, you know, most of the hands on stuff to -- because we had a high -- we had a high failure rate in land-nav.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Preparatory course.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Kind of like a prep course.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: So, I became the Commandant of this Basic Leadership Course for the remainder of my tour. And then I got picked up for 8 while I was at --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Or the Master Sergeant -- selected for Master Sergeant.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: So, I was selected for Master Sergeant. Came down on orders for Germany. And then PCS to the 299th Support Battalion 1st Infantry Division Forward grouping in Germany. Went there. I was supposed to go there to be the Division Materiel Management Center Chief. But the guy that was there

decided to re-enlist. So, when I got there, there wasn't a job for me. So, of course, you know, the Battalion Sergeant Major interviewed me and he says, well, you know, what do you want to do? Well, what does any E-8 want to be?

SGM WATERHOUSE: First Sergeant.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: A First Sergeant. I would like to be a First Sergeant. Well, I don't have any openings now. I said, well, I don't mean right now. But I mean during my tour --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Right.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: -- if the opportunity presents itself, I would like to be a First Sergeant. This particular Sergeant Major -- so, when I got there, there were other female NCOs there. But I -- apparently him and I just didn't hit it off, I guess. I don't know. Because he goes, well, we will put you in the DMC -- DMMC but you won't be the Chief. So the Division --

SGM WATERHOUSE: What was the DMMC again?

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Division Materiel Management Center.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: So, I go over there. I am like, you know, I got to find a place to live. You know, so the first month I was like, whatever. So, when I got there, all I am doing is E-4 work basically, as an SFCP. Because I wasn't promoted yet. So, I went to the Materiel Center Sergeant Major and I said, look, you know, there is other E-7 slots available. So, you know, put me in one of those.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Right.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Well, I got to run that through the Battalion Sergeant Major. I am like, well whatever. Okay, whatever. I said, but you know, at least put me in another SFC billet. I was billet in the E-4 billet. I am like, so --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Probably didn't take me to BMS and work as a Specialist.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: So, the Sergeant Major is saying -- he is like, you go where I tell you to go and you are not an E-8 yet. Okay. So, I make E-8. I make E-8. Still squirrelling around with this craziness. So, I went back to the Sergeant Major and said, okay, I am an E-8 now. If nothing else, I want one of those E-7 slots.

Slot -- you know, one up, two down.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: And I don't know what he said. He said something really inappropriate. So, I went to the Company Commander and said, I just want to give you a courtesy notice, ma'am. Because I was -- there is [hand boards] coming. So, I am just letting you know, I am going to the IG. I am just letting know because now I am an E-8 and this is unacceptable.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Right.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: And she is like, no, no, no, let me talk. So, goes over and she talks to --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Could have gone to EO?

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Yeah. Could have done a number of things. So --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: -- she goes, no, no, don't do anything yet. I am like, okay. So, she goes to the Battalion Commander. Battalion Commander wants to see me. He goes, well why should -- he goes, I want you to write down why you should in a E-8 position. I am like, really? I am like, okay. I am like, okay. I will play your silly

little game. I wrote it and I gave them a copy and I gave the IG a copy.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Why should you be -- wow.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Why should I be in the E-8 position?

SGM WATERHOUSE: Really?

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: You know, what -- I mean, the female Company Commander, you know -- I know what she was trying to -- and, you know, no Company Commander wants IG complaints. You know and -- and, I mean, I think she was trying to do the right thing in her own way. But I am just like, you know what, I do -- I have been in the Army entirely too long now. I do not have to put up with this BS.

You know, so, when I gave it to the IG, I said, this is what the Battalion Commander asked me to do. I have done it. I think it's wrong. And I am sharing it with you. He goes, well, let -- so, the IG was like, well, let us know what happens. So, the XO called me in and the Battalion XO called me in and he was a Quartermaster guy. And he was like, Master Sergeant, I am so sorry. He goes, this is wrong. He goes, I am going to

make you the S-3, the Operation Sergeant. I am like, fine. It's an E-8 position.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: I am like, sir, I just want to be treated like a senior Non-Commissioned Officer and being in an E-4 slot is not it.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Right.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: You know, because here is the deal. If I am USAREUR [United States Army Europe] and find out I got an E-8 in a E-4 slot, I am coming down and taking her.

SGM WATERHOUSE: I am going to reassign her.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: At some point.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: So, the XO and I got along fine. And I went down to be the Master Sergeant, the S-3 Sergeant and then we were getting ready for a reforger. This is 1988. And the Battalion Commanders left, the Sergeant Majors left.

SGM WATERHOUSE: And that was an exercise, for those who don't know --

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Return of --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Forces to Germany.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: -- Forces to Germany.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, it's kind of like a --

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: It was the last war.

SGM WATERHOUSE: -- big cold war type.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Yeah. It's the last big --
one we are going to do in Europe.

SGM WATERHOUSE: An exercise in case the Soviet
Union --

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Yeah. The end of the Cold
War.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: You know, last big one.
So, I am running around down in the hallway and the new
Sergeant Major, he has been on board for a while. They
are having problems down in their A Company. They took
the DAO Sergeant -- the old Sergeant Major had taken the
Sergeant Major from the Division Ammo Office and put him
in to the 76th Zulu E-8 position in the Alpha Company.
So, the Division MO Office goes to hell in a ham basket
and fails an inspection. The new Sergeant Major is trying
to figure out why he is got his MO guy in a 76th position,

when he has got a valid 55 Zulu position for him.

So, he sees me in the hallway. And he has been on board, I guess, a couple of week. And I don't know, I am raising cane or something in the hallway. And he finally comes and goes, Master Sergeant Pritchett. I am turning around, yes Sergeant Major. He goes, why are you not a First Sergeant and everybody in the hallway is just clear out. And I spun -- I am like, I don't know Sergeant Major. Why am I not a First Sergeant? He goes, is there a back story? I said, oh yeah. So, we go to lunch. The DFAC, I tell him the whole story.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Just show him the letter?

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Yeah, I go show him the letter. Well, I told the back story and he is like, unbelievable. He goes, I want you -- I am moving you to A Company and I need you down there before we go to Reforger. I am like, yeah but what about the 3? I mean -- he goes -- he goes I am moving -- he already -- and he already had his planned.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: So, he moved one of the Sergeant First Class over there. So, I went to her --

Sergeant First Class [Bokody] and I said, I will not let you fail. Even though I will be down in my unit, I will not let you fail.

SGM WATERHOUSE: You were close enough.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: I was close enough and --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Phone call --

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: -- it's the A Company First Sergeant. I am on the road a lot. So, I was able to always swing by Battalion. You know, so -- I mean it worked out but -- so, then I went down to A Company and I was the Alpha Company First Sergeant for the Supply and Transportation Battalion. So, we had water purification, petroleum, line haul and trucks and we had all -- yeah. That was pretty much it, you know.

SGM WATERHOUSE: And you were the First Sergeant for a couple of years.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Yeah. I was First Sergeant for a couple of years.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Like a '88 to '90 or --

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Yeah. So, the -- but the thing about that as a whole, that thing was just crazy. But my time in the 3 -- we actually had a Infantry Major

that was our 3. This little red-headed guy. I don't recall his name. But it turned out that -- so, you know, we are still -- even though it's the '80s, you are still struggling with this whole women --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: -- in, thing. So, the 1, the 2, the 4 were all women, females, Captains. 1 was a Lieutenant. I think the 2 was a Lieutenant. So, you know, we were in there getting ready for, you know, all this planning and stuff. And the S-3 Infantryman, god love him, you know, he had a different vocabulary for most things. So, the swearing so much wasn't bothering the women as he had two phrases. Everything was either broke dick or tits up.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yup.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: All the time.

SGM WATERHOUSE: You still hear that once in a while.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: So, the officers came to me and said, you know, Master Sergeant -- you know, Sergeant Pritchett, this is just really making us uncomfortable. So, I talked to him about it. I said, look -- sir, hey

look, you know, you -- you know, it doesn't bother me. I am thick skinned. I said, but you know it's bothering the other female officers and NCOs in the headquarters that when we are in these sessions, that you are using these two terms. Tits up and broke dick. So, it kept happening. Kept happening. So, one day it was just the female officers and myself and him in this room. We were in a conference room and he made the comment about things being tits up. I am like, sir, I want you to hold that thought. I took the stuff on the conference room table. I cleared it away and I laid down, face up. I said, we were not -- continue, we were not before but we are now. So, you can continue. And I mean, his face got --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Did he get mad or did he get embarrassed?

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Both.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: His face got as red as his red hair. He did walk out. The female officers were just as, I think, as appalled as he was.

SGM WATERHOUSE: But you jumped up on the table.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Yeah. I jumped up on the table, laid down and said, we weren't before but we are now. So, continue. He goes down and gets the XO. The XO comes to see me. I explain everything to him. He is laughing his butt off. And he goes, but he never said it again.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, it worked, yeah. I mean, you didn't have to give him that second chance. You guys could have called the EO many a time.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Right. Yeah. But --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Could have ended the guys career with it.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: I am like, I mean -- I mean, he got as -- and then, of course, I moved down to the -- he was so glad when I left the Company. But I am just like -- you know, so -- you know, so for me everything doesn't have to be a formal complaint.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: There are ways to handle it. You know, people say, well that was just inappropriate. I said, no more inappropriate than what he was doing. I said, but he didn't really understand the

problem.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Words matter.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Words matter.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: So, he said his words and I put his words into action and then he is like, oh crap. I said, he never said it again. The Captain -- the young Captains were like, I can't believe you did that. I said, I guarantee you, he will never say it again.

SGM WATERHOUSE: At least not in front of you guys.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Not in front of us anyway.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah. Hopefully he did never.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: I don't -- I don't, you know, I mean -- I mean, we got through the exercise and I, you know, was okay down at the Company and did my thing. And, you know, I don't know -- I don't think word really got out. I mean, I don't think they really told too many people. The Sergeant Major, he found out about it. And he came and he was like, I cannot believe you did that. I am like, I have talked to him, Sergeant Major. I have talked to him, Sergeant Major. I have talked to him,

Sergeant Major.

SGM WATERHOUSE: It's going in one way or the other.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: You know, he is an Infantry guy. I get it. But at some point, you got to understand -- you are not down in 416 and down in the Infantry Battalion and Brigade. You happen to be in this S&T Unit, which got a lot of women in it.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: And you are offending a lot of people. I don't really want to ruin his career because I just -- he is an Infantry man, I get it. However, you know, he also has to -- we are a learning organization. He has to learn.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: You know, so, I mean, so the XO was like, not quite how I would have handled it but effective. I am like, thank you.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, as the First Sergeant, you were there a couple of years. So, you know, as First Sergeants and Sergeant Majors, you like to -- we normally would take what we call the assessment of the Company or

the Battalion. You know, you go around you, kind of, see what's happening, what's good, the bad, the ugly. So, in that particular unit after you had been there a little bit -- and you were coming from the three shop, so you probably knew about the Company already. But what are some things you set out, you know, between you and your Commander to kind of --

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: So, our biggest challenge, you know -- our biggest challenge was that this is -- you know, this is the time when you are now -- you know, we were kind of fully integrated. So, I would say my unit was like 60 percent male, 40 percent women. And I had a lot of female truck drivers. I had a lot of female mechanics. And the challenge we would have is if you let women use their womanly ways, they will. But the other problem we had is, I ended up with like ten women pregnant in my unit. And, of course, they are all single. Not married women, I mean, you know -- and, of course, you know, they all want to put them in the orderly room. Not --

SGM WATERHOUSE: All their supervisors?

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Yeah.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Oh, you know, they can't be in the motor pool, they can't be there. We will just put them up in the orderly room. I am like, not. You are not putting ten pregnant women with the First Sergeant. I think, not. No way. Ain't go to some --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Not this First Sergeant.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Not this First Sergeant. They can go work in Supply, we will farm them out across the Battalion. You they ain't coming to work for me. But, you know, the first reaction was, well you got to talk to all the women about this issue. I am like, no.

SGM WATERHOUSE: I am pretty sure they know how it happened.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Last time I looked, there was only one Immaculate Conception. And I drink the water here in (inaudible) just like everybody else. And I am not pregnant.

SGM WATERHOUSE: That's right. I think they --

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: I said, so if I am going to talk to the unit, I am going to the unit. I mean, so I --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Everybody.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: -- I mean, I talked to everybody. I said look --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Takes two to tango.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: -- I said, look married guys, I know -- you know you might not think this is appropriate for you but oh, by the way, you know, you are supervisory soldiers. So, you need to hear it too. So, you know, so I had the discussion. But I had a prop. The Company Commander's wife was there with -- they had just had.

SGM WATERHOUSE: You said, a prop?

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Yeah. A prop. So, the Company Commander's wife just had a baby -- to come by the unite for something, that was a Friday afternoon. So, I asked if I could borrow the little infant. And I am holding the infant in my arms. And I am like -- you know, so I did the whole drinking and driving thing. I said, now, you all -- I said, you all know that we have had a rash. I will call it a rash. I said, of a number of our female soldiers who have become pregnant. And I had heard a lot of grumblings.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Were they in the audience in

some --

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Yeah. They were in the audience too. I said, and there has been a lot of grumbling. Like, I am not here to pass moral judgment. I said, but in order to create this little guy, it takes two to tango. And I would guarantee, though I don't know for a fact, that I would guarantee of the ten women that are pregnant, at least eight of the guys were from the -- eight of the fathers are from this unit. Even though I can't --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Probably, I am probably talking to your right now.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: I said, so, it takes two to tango. I said, but here it becomes the problem. You are now all complaining because they are not pulling their weight. They are not doing this. They are not doing that. First Sergeant didn't do that. Captain [Bell Nat] didn't do that. Your Platoon Sergeant didn't do that. You guys have got to, you know, police up on yourselves. You had to take responsibility. Look, you know, there are plenty of things you can do to avoid from becoming pregnant, okay. I am not here to, you know, to give sex

education classes. But I am also not here to say that it's a female problem or it's a male problem. It's a unit problem and we need to come to grips with it. And the First Sergeant probably just thought I had lost my mind. But, you know --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Well, ten women. How many -- how much percentage of your Company you --

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: 40 percent of my women were -- 40 percent of my Company was women.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, ten percent of the Company. That's let's a lot of --

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Ten women is a lot.

SGM WATERHOUSE: That's a lot of workers.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: And then the other thing, you know, and our Battalion was like, my women actually hated me. Women in my unit hated me. I mean, they liked me but they hated me because like down in the motor pool one day, I was going down there and there was a couple of them were like, well could you carry my toolbox. I am like, no. It's your toolbox.

SGM WATERHOUSE: They asked you?

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: No. Not me. They asked

the male soldier.

SGM WATERHOUSE: But you witnessed it?

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Yeah. I am like, no, no, no. It's your toolbox. Carry it to the truck you are going to go work on. Oh, First Sergeant it's heavy. I said, well, there is a dolly right there. Put the truck up. Put the -- I said, because here is what is going to happen. He is going to do this for you a couple of times and then you are going to do something that pisses him off. And then I am going to get all these complaints that the women aren't carrying their load. And I do this and I do that.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Like, literally hearing a little now.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: I said, we are not going to do that. You wanted to be a mechanic, you are required to carry a toolbox. It's your toolbox. You don't do it. And if you do, I don't want to hear about it when she makes you mad and then you are complaining she doesn't carry her load. Look, it takes three people to change a head tire. I get it. Okay. You all need to work together. But that's her toolbox. She can carry it all

day, toolbox. But if she can't, there is a dolly. Put on the dolly, wheel it down to your --

SGM WATERHOUSE: You have your equipment, use it.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: And people are just -- they are just like, oh my god. I am like, look. You complain about not being treated fairly, part of it is your own doing. You know, I expect you all to carry your own weight. You know, if you want to help, fine. I am not saying people can't help people out. I am like, but, you know, they will be bat knives and -- they were just, sort of, like I don't like this First Sergeant. You know, I am just like -- you know, but I coached the softball team when I was there. I mean, you know, it's just -- you know, it's just, you got to hold people -- and my whole thing was about standards.

You know, even as we have talked about this whole integration thing, about whether women should be in combat arms and this, that and the other. I have always been a person of -- whatever the standard is, whoever can meet it, should be able to do the job. Don't change the standard. Just put the standard out there and let water

seek its own level. I said, you know, there are people, you know -- I mean, we have had this debate even as I was coming up in, you know -- I mean, I was in the 1st Infantry Division Forward and, I mean -- you know, they are like -- and the other thing that Sergeant Majors said, well I don't know if we are ready for a female First Sergeant in the 1st Infantry Division Forward. I mean like, what does that have to do with the price of eggs. What do you mean, don't know if we are ready?

SGM WATERHOUSE: Didn't we already have women in Germany already?

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Yeah. What do you mean, I don't know if we are ready? You know, it was just -- you know, then there I got picked up for the Sergeant Majors Academy. Just as Desert Storm --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Shield.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: -- no, Desert Shield, Desert Storm was taking off. So, I had just given up my unit --

SGM WATERHOUSE: In Germany.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: -- in Germany. And they were like, you know, your unit is deploying to, you know,

to go to the -- to be -- you know, to do offloads ships and stuff.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: But because you are going to the Sergeant Majors Academy, of course, nobody was deferred from the Academy. We were going.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, you didn't have a choice.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: So, I didn't have a choice. And -- but what came out of it was, I got a call and said, oh, you got to meet the Commander and the Division Sergeant Major at the NCO Club for lunch. I am like, okay. I mean, I was clearing. I only had like a couple - - I only had like two weeks left. And so, I went to the Club for lunch. And all these -- so, it's the Family Support Group sitting there. And Sergeant Major goes, oh Sergeant Major come sit right here. First Sergeant come sit right here. I am like, okay. So, it's you know Division Commander, Division Sergeant Major and myself. And then all the Family Support Group.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay. I am a First Sergeant. Why am I here?

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Yeah. All of that -- why

am I here? So, you know, he is telling them all about the deployment. And, of course, it's, you know -- he goes, the First Sergeant here is going to stand up our Family Support Center. I mean, there is no pre-conversation. When they got told, I got told. So, I kind of look at Sergeant Major. I said, well I guess I should start taking some notes. So, we finished it all up. I mean, I knew most of the women. And talking to the Sergeant Major, I said, and why is the single female First Sergeant setting up the Family Support Center?

SGM WATERHOUSE: And you know I am leaving right?

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: He goes, I said -- well that was my big concern. I am like --

SGM WATERHOUSE: You know I am clearing right now?

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: I said, how does this impact my assignment?

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: He goes, no, no, no. You are still going to go. But we want you to -- we already got the building set up, blah, blah, blah. I am like,

okay. So, I sat down with the ladies. And I am like, you know, what is it that you think you would -- you need. So, they had us a nice space and -- so, we got it all renovated and, you know, they needed me to put in all the work orders. It was, kind of, what they wanted. And then what the requirements were. So, it still didn't happen to go to Finance and all those places. It was kind of like a one-stop shop. There was somebody on duty every day from, you know, Division, G-1 and --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Did they explain to you why you were -- was it just because you were out of position and you were leaving? They thought you had more time or --? Or just because you were --

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: No. The Commander

SGM WATERHOUSE: -- the First Sergeant Major, they trust you to do it?

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: The Division Commander thought I was the best First Sergeant in the Division. So --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Well, that makes sense.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: -- that. And I was getting ready to leave and everybody else was getting ready to

deploy. And they trusted with me it. And I was like, fine. As long as I get to PCS -- I mean --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Long time, leave on time.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: -- well, I was like, I was hitting a half panic because I had just shipped my car.

SGM WATERHOUSE: And the classes, they got to wait on you --

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Right.

SGM WATERHOUSE: -- in the Academy.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: And I mean, I was taking leave enroute. So, I mean, even if I had ended up staying past two weeks, I would just had a shorter leave.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, you still could have got there on time.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Yeah. So, I can get there on time. They promised me -- both -- the Commander looked at me, he goes, I just need you to get it up and running. You know, and then whoever is rear detachment will take it over. I am like -- he goes, well we have got everybody else trying to get ready to do other things. I am like, fine sir. I -- just a little heads up before you introduce me to the --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Would have been nice.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: -- the masses, would have been nice but fine. You know, so, I mean, we got it all set up and General Franks came down for the grand opening. And, you know, I mean, there was a big article done on it. And I got an AAM out of it. So, at the end of the deal, I mean, I PCSd, couple of days late but --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Army Achievement Medal for a couple of weeks work is not bad.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Yeah. I mean, you know, got up and got running and you know I got to South Carolina to get my car before the fee started, you know, kicking in. Because that was my whole thing like, well if I stay -- if I don't get there by this date then they are going to start accumulating fees for the car being in store. I mean -- and Sergeant Major, Division Sergeant Major was like, you are not going down -- you are going to be able to go, you are going to be able to go. He knows he can't keep you from the assignment, blah, blah. I am like, okay. I will do it. He goes, plus all the ladies like you. I am like, fine. Fine. You know, so the whole thing about, worrying about whether a single person in

leadership can --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: -- run Family Support Group Networks or are going to be received favorably by spouses, kind of went out of the window. Because it's all about how you treat people and personalities and making sure, you know, you listen to them and understand what their needs, wants and desires are. And then what you can -- what you can provide within those categories. And what you can't.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, when you found out you have been selected -- was it selected to be promoted or selected to go the Academy?

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Just to go -- just selected to go to the Academy.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, back then it was just to go to the Academy.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Yeah. So, it was just to go to the Academy. So, get to the Academy in January. It was still the six-month course then. Out of -- there was a student body of 500, only 17 of us were women. So, that's not even one per group room.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah. I can't even do the percentage when it's low.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: It's very low. So --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Less than five probably.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: -- yeah. So, you know, so we were pretty much spread out. I mean, we used to get together as a group and have lunch or dinner or whatever, as the women of the class. And then, I think in May -- yeah. We graduated in July. So, I think in May is when the list came out. So, when the list came out, I made not only a Sergeant Major but I made CSM at the time, which we don't do anymore. So, I got selected for both. And, I will never remember, one of the guys in the class says, when I got -- in my base group said, you know a lot of good men didn't get selected for promotion today. And I said, yeah, and a lot of good women did. It was the insinuation that I had taken a promotion from a guy.

SGM WATERHOUSE: From a guy, yeah. Yeah.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: I am like -- I think three of us out of the 17 got picked up. And we had a couple of Navy folks. Navy women in there. So, I would say, there was like 14 of us that were Army and then a couple of them

were Guard Reserve. So, active duty wise, I want to say three of us got picked up for a 9.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Now back then, in that time frame, you know, early '90s, I guess, when folks are selected to go they -- because I know there was a time period and this may be it when Master Sergeants or First Sergeants were selected to go to the Academy and then they came back and -- they weren't necessarily going to be promoted. They just send them to the Academy, have a bench --

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Right.

SGM WATERHOUSE: -- and then they go back and be First --

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Right. It was long before our whole select, train, promote thing --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah. I mean, was it still the case then --

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Yeah. Yeah.

SGM WATERHOUSE: -- somebody would get promoted and --

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Yeah. Some were, some of you just went back to the --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Some would go back to the force.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: -- someone you just, you know -- so, 500 -- I don't know how many got selected that year, I mean. So, I got selected for E-9 and CSM but it was still the old merit list. So, it was like, you know, one to end. You know, it wasn't -- it wasn't even broken down by your career field. It was just like, number one to number --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Based on, you said --

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: I think it's your date of rank.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Date of rank.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: I think it's how you got your sequence number. I couldn't be for sure. You would have to go back and ask an old personnelist. But, so I would -- I mean, so it was not like it was before. You know, like today it's now -- it's by branch. You know, and however the sequence numbers are. But -- so, they didn't really have -- so, I graduated in July. They didn't really have an assignment for me because they didn't have any Battalions open. So, they were going to

move me as an E-9, whatever the Quartermaster Regiment was going to do. So, I ended up being an instructor at the Academy for Class 38.

SGM WATERHOUSE: 38, yeah.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: So, during Class 38, the Regimental Sergeant Major came down, Sergeant Major Hazzard and -- to visit and talk and do whatever. So, I was there. I went up to him and I asked him, you know, hey Sergeant Major when am I going to get an assignment. Either as an E-9, waiting to be frocked -- waiting -- or, you know, Sergeant Major is an E-9 and then when a Battalion opens, fine. But back then they didn't quite do --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Like put me in an Ops Sergeant Major position?

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Yeah. Something like that. He goes, no, no, no. We are working on something. You know, just -- you know, leave it to me. I mean like, okay, whatever. So, I taught Class 38 and went to the Master Fitness Course while I was there. And then just at the beginning of Class 39, the assignment came and said, you are going Fort Campbell, Kentucky to the 561st Corps

Support Battalion. I am like, okay, great.

So, but a story about Class 39 is, as I told you, Drill Sergeant Siddens, you know, was a mentor, by inspiration. So, I ran into her twice during my career. Once when I was at Recruiting School and she was going to ANOC. The second time I ran into her is I was in my car, getting ready to leave and see this person walking across the parking lot at USASMA. And I am like, I know that walk, I know that walk anywhere. So, I called out to her. Called out her name and she turned around, came over, she goes, oh, hey how are you? Haven't seen you in a long time. She goes, are you a student? Are you a student? I am like, no I am an Instructor here.

SGM WATERHOUSE: And she was a student.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: And she was coming in to be a student. And she was a promotable. But -- and she was -- computers.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Different MOS.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Different MOS. So, you know, so the class was going on. So, in February -- so, in February it's time for me to go my assignment. So, I going to be appointed, of course, frocked to E-9. So, I

asked her, I said look, I had really like you to, you know, pin on one of my CSM stripes. But if you don't want to, I understand. I mean, you know, you might be embarrassed or whatever. She goes, no, no, no. I am very proud of you. This, you know, this is -- you know, I said -- and I said, you should be very proud because I am a product of your leadership --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: -- and your mentorship. So, you know, we did it in front of the class. So, a lot of the students came up and said, why did you have Master Sergeant Siddens promote you? I said because Master Sergeant Siddens was my Drill Sergeant. And even the Commandant asked me. I said because she was my Drill Sergeant. And everybody is just like, wow. I mean, like how many people can say that their Drill Sergeant who promoted them to E-2, now can promote them as E --

SGM WATERHOUSE: I think then she promoted you to E-2 or E-3.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: E-2 and then --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: -- then she promoted me to

E-9. So, you know, so I thought that was pretty cool. So, I PCS. I go down to Fort Campbell, Kentucky to the 560th -- 561st Corps Support Battalion. So, I went down there, put in some TDY, looked for a place to live. Decided -- well, as long as I am down here, I will swing by the Battalion. You know, put my head in. Because they had been without a Battalion Sergeant Major. One of the First Sergeant's was the Acting -- so, I walked into the headquarters, introduced myself to the XO. And he says, well, let me take you in and meet the Battalion Commander. I said, my goal is to sign in early but I already found a house to live because I wasn't going to live on base. So, I walk in to meet the Battalion Commander. The first words out of his mouth is, what did I do to get the girl? 1992.

SGM WATERHOUSE: 1992.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: '91, '92. 1992.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: I am like, I don't know, sir, but I didn't pick you either.

SGM WATERHOUSE: This is the Battalion Commander?

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Yeah. I am like, I don't know, sir, but I didn't pick you either. That's not how this works. So, of course, I left, you know, like great. You know, so I go back, I PCS, I come in and you know it would -- I mean, we just had a very rocky relationship. Not most -- mostly because of that first encounter. You know, and I basically told him, I said, why don't you wait to see what I can do before you judge me. You know, but that had already kind of established it. And then, you know, his attitude permeated to his Company Commanders. You know, because I would tell them things to do. Well, unless the Battalion Commander tells me to do it, I am not doing it. I am like, okay.

SGM WATERHOUSE: These were the First Sergeants?

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: No. These are the Company Commanders.

SGM WATERHOUSE: The Company Commanders. Yeah.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: First Sergeants, you know, most of them were okay. I mean, I had one that found out that I was frocked and, you know, tried to say that he outranked me. And I was like, no, First Sergeant.

Doesn't work that way. I am the Command Sergeant Major, I have been appointed. So, I am just going to go back to doing what I was doing. And when I look up, you just want to be gone, if you want to remain a First Sergeant in this Battalion.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Or you can come work for me at Battalion.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: You know, you can't fire me. I am like, no, I can't but I know who can. And I wouldn't fire you, I would just reassign you.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, in the 561st Corps Support Battalion for folks like me, I haven't been there for 20 years, I don't know -- what was, you know, basic job --

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: So, the --

SGM WATERHOUSE: -- or mission of that unit.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: So, the Corps Support Battalion supports the 101st. So, we had --

SGM WATERHOUSE: 101st Airborne Division?

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: -- yeah. The 101st Airborne Division. So, we were actually assigned to COSCOM but we were at Campbell. So, we had water purification, petroleum, bulk and line haul.

SGM WATERHOUSE: These are your Companies?

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Yeah. These were my Companies. We had a maintenance -- not depot level but below.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Organizational?

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Yeah. Organizational. And then the headquarters -- headquarters, the maintenance, petroleum, water dogs and S&T, the truck company, the truck Battalion, the truck company. And now I had our -- we had our own DFAC.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Dining facility.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Our own dining facility. So, that was our mission. So, we augmented whatever, augmented the DISCOM. But we were, kind of, a little bit higher level than the DISCOM Support. So, we augmented the 101st Airborne Division Air Assault. So, I was the only female CSM in the entire 101st Airborne Division Air Assault footprint. We did have a female Sergeant Major of III in, I think, the DISCOM or the Division Support Command.

So, you know, so that whole dynamic between my Battalion Commander who didn't want a woman, the DISCOM

Sergeant Major who -- he had his issues. But it was like, you know, if he would see me, he goes like -- like we have the Division four-mile run, just like you do at Bragg, he is like, I will be looking for you at the end. I am like, I will be there Sergeant Major. You know, or he would have like -- we would have Sergeant Major runs. And he, you know, of course I am the only one there, I can't get out of it. I mean, he knows when I am not there. But other people cannot make it --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Some of your peers weren't there.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Some of my peers weren't there. But, you know, they go missing but nobody would say anything. You know, this one particular day we did PT. He had sent out a note saying, we are going to do a five-mile run. Okay, whatever. So, he goes -- we are going to do a five-mile run but we will do it at the Division standard, which is the nine-minute miles. I am like, yeah, whatever, fine. I make four-mile runs, you can five-mile runs. So, he get there, he goes -- he says, how far did I say we are going to run this morning. I said, you said, five. He goes, yeah. But it's not going

to be at Division standard but we are going to run.

I am like, whatever. So, we did the run. So, I am pretty good. I mean, I was a decent runner. But, you know, I am not -- you know how -- so, you got the Division Sergeant Major, you got all the Infantry guys and the Airborne Assault guys. You know, and it's like -- so, the Sergeant Major is running in this like, well you can't smoke me. So, then they pick the pace and they pick up --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: -- the pace and they pick up the pace. And then all of us Support people -- I mean, I am not the only one. I mean, you know, you got the Signal guys and everybody else that are not in the Division, in the Brigade.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: So, my whole thing is, never fall out before two miles. So, we are running along. And I always used to start up in the front. Well, I think today -- that day he had me starting as running right guide. So, you know, I am upfront, I am having my watch on and we were running. So, the first mile, I think, we come in at like seven minutes and 30 seconds.

And I was about a eight-minute miler.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, they just kept speeding up.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: So, we were in like seven and a half minutes. And I am still there. But, you know, I am like, I am huffing and puffing. And so, we get to the second one and we are about a little bit faster but still -- we are still like 7:15, 7 -- so, but now I am starting to fall back. So, about at three miles, I am at the very end of the formation but I am still in formation. And then they just took off. And so, I came in at five miles in like, I don't know, 38 minutes, which in essence, is not that bad, when you consider we do four miles in 36.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Right.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: So, when it gets -- and so, in the meantime I was not the first one to fall out. There were like a whole other bunch of other guys that were falling out before me. The Signal Sergeant Major, the Signal Battalion Sergeant Major --

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, they didn't even make the run, finish the run?

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: I don't know if they

finished the run or not.

SGM WATERHOUSE: They weren't there when you got across?

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: They weren't there when I got there. Well, so when I came across, he was standing there and he goes, what's your problem? I am like, I don't have a problem, Sergeant Major. Five miles in 38 minutes is not bad, as far as I am concerned, because you didn't do this, what you said you were going to do. He goes, well, you got to go over there and run three wind sprints and then do eight pull-ups. I am like -- I said, Sergeant Major, I sprinted for five miles. I am not running another step. But I did go over to do my pull-ups. I got three done. Then one of my buddies came over and he is like, cross your legs and I did my other -- you know, then he proceeded to lecture us about how we are cheating our bodies, this, that and the other. I am just like, really?

SGM WATERHOUSE: And this is the Division level?

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. I mean, he was just a -- then our Division Commander. Well,

I had two Division Commander while I was there. I had a Major General John Miller and then I had General [Hideki]. So, while we were there, I mean, you know -- I mean, it's just the silliness that goes on when you are only one. So, one day I get a call from -- so, also at this time in the Division, they are now starting to integrate women into Infantry Brigades at the Brigade level, you know.

SGM WATERHOUSE: At the Corps.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: In this headquarter staffs. So, I one day I get a call. Division Command Sergeant Major had told one of the Battalion -- one of the Brigade Sergeant Majors to call me because he was having a problem with a female soldier, that was integrated into his group. So, he called me. And I am like -- my response to him was, I said, Sergeant Major do you call you when I have problems with the men in my unit? He is like, what? I said, why are you calling me? Well, the Division Sergeant Major said you might be able to give me some insight about how to deal with it. I am like, are you married? Again, getting back --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: -- to my time when I was a

Drill Sergeant. Yeah. You got kids? Yeah. You got daughters? Yeah. Same thing. Same thing, Sergeant Major. I don't know what you -- I don't know what you want to tell me. But I don't call and ask for help with my male soldiers. Please don't call me and ask. Just because I am woman doesn't make me a woman [expert] on dealing with female soldiers. You know, I mean, those were just the -- those things were just very irritating.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: As it's coming through this process. And then, I didn't go to Air Assault School because I wasn't actually in the -- because we were the Corps Support Command. We were actually a COSCOM unit. And, of course, so we are --

SGM WATERHOUSE: When you say it's Corps that's the Corps Support. I mean, that's the --

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: So, we were --

SGM WATERHOUSE: -- just having the word Corps come in.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Yeah. So, we were with COSCOM. We were actually under -- our higher headquarters was COSCOM, not the --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: -- the --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Not the 101st.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: -- not the 101st. So, none of our slots were coded Air Assault, number one. So, it - - that was our first -- that was one of our rubs because he said, you need to go to Air Assault School. I mean like, no. Don't think I am going.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Uninformed or --

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: I am 36 years old. When I wanted to, like, jump out of airplanes and do this crazy stuff, you guys wouldn't let me. I said, so I am thinking, now that I am 36 years old -- plus I have a bad back. And I still can run four miles, I can do obstacle course. I can make your PT runs. But if I get hurt in Air Assault School and get a profile, you are not going let me stay as a Sergeant Major. So --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Right.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: -- excuse me. So, I didn't go to Air Assault School and, you know, he always held that against me. I know he did. He was very upset about that. So, it's 1992. No 1993 and of course we get -- our

unit gets the call to deploy to Somalia. Of course, we are not sending anybody from the 101st. We are sending a Support Battalion. Wasn't, you know, that wasn't going over very well.

SGM WATERHOUSE: And this was in July of '93, right?

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Yeah. So, the Colonel that wanted who he got a girl, why he got the girl, is getting ready to come to of Command. And the new Battalion Commander was coming in. And apparently, he had -- the XO and him had talked and he had heard the challenges before with the current Battalion Commander about what we did to get a girl. So, he is in the XO's office. So, I got in to introduce myself. He goes, oh Sergeant Major sit down and close the door. So, he is sitting behind the XO's desk. I am sitting on the couch. And he looks at me with a dead face and he goes, Sergeant Major, I don't know how to tell you this. He goes, but I don't much care for Sergeant Majors. And I am just like, oh great. I said, well it's okay, sir. I am beginning not to care much for Lieutenant Colonels either.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Wow.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: And I just stood up. He was, no, no, no. Don't leave. He goes, I just wanted to see how you would react. He goes, XO told me about your whole problem.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Oh, he was just pulling a leg?

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: He was just pulling my leg. I was like, oh great. So --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Who is your Platoon Sergeant? That's what I have been thinking.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: So --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Because that must have been --

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: -- so. So, this guy, the guy's name is Al Gross, Colonel Al Gross, him and I got along famously. He and I got along famously. I mean, this guy, when we deployed, we ate breakfast every day in Somalia. I ran every morning. He was not a runner. But I used to run the perimeter to check the guard towers and the tankers to make sure they were grounded and --

SGM WATERHOUSE: The fuel tankers.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: -- yeah. The fuel tankers. You know, so that was just my morning routine but every morning I run in, there would be a big bottle of water on

my desk, you know. But he is like, why -- he was just -- he is like, why do you do that? That's just my thing, sir. I mean, he was -- I mean, we were in lock step.

But a funny story, prior to us deploying is, our Battalion wasn't initially the Battalion that was going to deploy. It was supposed to be sister Battalion, the 129th. But the Corps Commander, Colonel [Sam Chappel], we had gone to the change of Command for General Wright at Fort Bragg. And the requirement came down. And I had been stationed at Bragg before. So, I was the driver taking everybody around in the van. So, the Colonel handed me the thing. And he said, what do you think about this Sergeant Major? I am like, wow. He goes, I have talked to the General and I am sending the 561st instead of the 129th. And the 129th was strictly a Transportation Company. And -- strictly as Transportation Battalion.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, at this point, it's just a rotation or peacekeeping at that point.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Yeah. I mean, yeah. So, but it was a Transportation Battalion and because we were actually doing port POL bulk storage and petroleum

distribution, water purification, bulk storage and distribution. So, he -- and the 129th Battalion Sergeant Major was not one of his better -- wasn't considered one of the better Battalion Sergeant Majors. The Battalion Commander -- the Group Commander, you know, told COSCOM, this is what they are going to do. So, of course, Colonel -- my outgoing Battalion Commander gets it. And he is like, oh, this will be really great. I am like -- he goes, I didn't ask you. You are leaving. I am asking her. But he had knew the problem because --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: -- another vignette from my time with this particular Colonel is the E-7 list had just come out. We have several NCOs in the Battalion make E-7. So, I was making moves to put them in the right slot in the Battalion.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: So, some were down in the Companies, I need to move them up to Staff. Some people on staff didn't make it. I needed to move them down the Companies.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, had more Sergeant First

Class positions?

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: So, I had to get them all in SFC positions. Or the Division was going to take them and move them. So, before I made all the moves, I sat down with him and the XO. And the S-1. I said, these are all the moves we need to make. And here is all the reasons why we need to make them. So, before I announce as a Commandant Staff, I need to make sure everybody is copacetic with it. Yup, yup, yup. So, I announced these moves at Staff and this particular -- the S-4 Officer was not happy. Seeing that, well, he will lose his Staff Sergeant.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, let me guess, you were taking one of his --

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: I was taking his Staff Sergeant, putting him in a Company, moving somebody up -- so, I said but the move won't take place because this Captain is getting ready to change Command. So, when we do the change of Command inventory, we will send this Staff Sergeant down. They can do the whole change in Command inventory. Everybody will be on board and then we will move the SFC up to here. So, this -- he was a First

Lieutenant promotable. He was not happy. So, it's all the Company Commanders, all the staff and the staff NCOs and the Commandant Staff and he looks at me, he goes, you know the Sergeant Major you are just a meddling bitch.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Wow.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: And I am like, excuse me, sir. Battalion Commander didn't say a word. Battalion XO didn't say a word. I closed my book, I stood up and I walked out. I was so mad.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Wow.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: I go into my office and I mean, I am just beside myself. I am beyond words. So, I am just like, you know what, I don't have to take this. I don't have to put up with this anymore. You know what, I am young, I am just going to retire. Fill out my 4187. Take it in, tell him to sign it. Walk it up to the Group, Sergeant Major is not in. I drop it on at his desk. Tell his admin, I put something on this desk, have him call me when he comes in.

SGM WATERHOUSE: You actually went through with that?

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Well, there is a moral to

this story. Never make a decision when you are angry. So, Sergeant Major calls me up. He say, Colonel Shepell and I want to see you. Come up here. I am like, yes, Sergeant Major. So, I go up there. Go into Colonel Shepell's office. I report, sir, Sergeant Major. Sergeant Major Pritchett reports. He goes, Sergeant Major sit down. You know, because I am mad. I am just mad.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: So, I just prefer to stand. He is like, Sergeant Major, sit down. So, he goes, so tell me what did so and so do? I am like, sir, I am not here to rat anybody out. I am not here to drop dimes on the Battalion Commander. You know, it's just time. I just need to go. He goes, no Sergeant Major. You need to tell me what happened. He goes, I am not blind. What did he do? Because prior to this, when Colonel Shepell first came on board, we were at a QTB. I had only been his Sergeant Major, I guess, maybe for three months. So, you know how the -- he briefs his part of the QTB, I brief my part of the QTB.

SGM WATERHOUSE: The Quarterly Training Brief.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: The Quarterly Training

Brief.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: So, how I brief my part of the Quarterly Training Brief. So, the Colonel is briefing his part. And then he turns -- and the Commander, the Division Commander at the time was General Miller. He turns to General Miller and goes, and sir, I will be followed by my Command Sergeant Major, Command Sergeant Major and he couldn't call my name. Now there is name tag on the table right in front of me. I am wearing a uniform that's got my name tag. But he couldn't call my name to save his life. So, I just popped in there. I said, sir, I am Command Sergeant Major Pritchett and I will be briefing you on this. So, I briefed him. I talked about -- and this when we do -- Sergeant is trying to do whole cross walk of, you know, how I meddle and all that --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: -- you know. So, finish it. Do with the whole thing. So, at the end -- and General Miller is pretty cool. He -- at the end he is -- you know, he gives his remarks. He goes, first of all, I want you all to know, oh Sergeant Major what's your name

down there? She goes -- she really understands this Training Management and this cross walk. You all can learn a thing or two from her. Of course, you know, now he is puffing his chest. And like, oh, this is my Sergeant Major. So, I mean, it was those kind of things. So, I said, well, it's not so much what he did. It's what he didn't do, sir. So, I explained what happened. Of course, now, I thought Sergeant Major Nance was going to come out of his chair. And the Colonel is not very happy now either. So, you know, we talk it through. He goes, and oh, by the way Sergeant Major, even if you wanted to retire, you couldn't. You only have 18 years.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Back then you couldn't put your packet in two years out like that?

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: No.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Not?

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: I don't even think I had a full 18 yet.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: I think it was like at 17 something. He goes, but you don't even have enough time.

SGM WATERHOUSE: I am going to resign. You are

not an officer or something like that.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: So, I was like -- he goes, so just calm down. I will handle it and he so of course, he ripped it up. So, I go back to my office and -- because it was like 4 in the afternoon. So, I am sitting here. I am just doing NCOERs. You know, I am reviewing NCOERs and everything. Now this Battalion Commander never came into my office. He would stand in the doorway but he never came into my office and sat down on the couch, ever. So, he comes in and he sits down on the couch.

So, I stop what I am doing. I pull my hands. I am like, yes sir, can I help you? He goes, I have to go see the Group Commander in an hour. Do you know what this is about? I am like, I have an idea sir. He goes, well are you going to tell me? I am like, well, the Group Commander told me not to talk about it. He goes, well, I am giving you an order. I am like, sir, I said here is the problem. If I have to tell you what the problem is, therein lies part of our problem.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: So, I mean, he goes to see the Group Commander. He goes, will you be here when I get

back? I said, if you want me to be, I will be here, sir.
So, I was there when he came back.

SGM WATERHOUSE: You can't figure out why you
got to go see the Group Commander?

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: So, I was there when he
came back. He walked in. And you could tell, he was
upset. I don't know what he said to him. He goes, you
and I need to talk. I am like, so do you want talk now or
do you want to take time to process this. Or what do you
want to do? I said, but if we are going to talk, we got
to some place other than the headquarters because if any
one of your Company Commanders walk in, you will just
start talking to them like I am not even here. So, we got
to go to some place where it's neutral. He goes, well,
then we will talk tomorrow. I am like, fine. First I
need to go to Assault but I don't want to go down there.

So, the next day we talked. We talked -- after
all the meetings in the morning, we went over to the DFAC
in between meals and we sit in a corner and he apologized
and I just looked at him and I said, are you apologizing
because you know you are wrong or are you apologizing
because the Group Commander told you to apologize. I

said, if you are apologizing because he told you to, don't bother, sir. I don't really need the apology. I said, but what I do need is to be treated with respect. Like me, don't like me, that's immaterial to me. But I am an E-9 in United States Army, just like you are a Colonel and we are due by our position, a certain level of respect. And that's all I am asking. And that is what your S-4 did not give me. And what you and the XO did not do to defend me as the Sergeant Major. Not Cindy Pritchett but as the Sergeant Major.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Basically condoned it.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: You basically condoned it.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: You just took my legs out from underneath me, that no matter what I say or do means absolutely nothing in this Battalion. So, he had to publicly apologize to me in front of the Battalion and then the Lieutenant had to apologize to me in front of the Battalion. And then he basically told the Company Commanders and the staff, if you have an issue with the Sergeant Major, you need to talk her about it in her office behind closed doors. Couple of times, they tried

to bring it up in staff and he did shut him down. And then the XO came in. He goes -- and I loved the XO but he came in and he goes, Sergeant Major I let you down. I am like, yeah, big time, sir. Of everybody in that room that I thought would come to my defense, I thought it would be you. You let me down. He goes - he said, can you forgive me? I am like, I can forgive you.

But, you know, I mean -- but will I ever trust you again? I am not sure. Yeah, I can forgive you. But I don't know if I will ever trust you again. You know, so, heads when General -- when Colonel Gross came in and this whole thing transpired, I was like, oh, great not again. You know, not again. You know, so -- then, you know, so we deployed to Somalia. We had a good -- we had a successful deployment. I brought back all my soldiers alive. I mean, we had a couple of injuries but we didn't lose any lives. And General Keene was the Division Commander at the time. He came over with the same Division Sergeant Major. So, they came over to visit and Division Commander says, I been hearing a lot of great things from you. From, you know, UNSOM to UN.

SGM WATERHOUSE: United Nations Operations in

Somalia.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Operations in Somalia.

SGM WATERHOUSE: II.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: II Mission. Heard a lot of great things about you. He goes, when you get back the DISCOM is opening up. I will make you -- I want to make you the DISCOM Sergeant Major. And I said, that's great, sir. I said, but you know with my back, I can't go to Air Assault School. You are just a DISCOM Sergeant Major, what do you mean by Air Assault School.

SGM WATERHOUSE: But it's part of the 101st.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: But it's part of the 101st.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: He goes but -- he goes everything is waiver-able. I am like, whatever. And, of course, the Sergeant Major is like, oh, you are going to have to go the Air Assault School. And I just look at the Sergeant Major, I said, you know, there are other DISCOMS in the Army other than the 101st.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: So, you know, but -- so, we did that and then Sergeant Major of the Army [Kit] was

there -- came over to visit a couple of time. And in his last visit he was talking me, he goes, hey Sergeant Major -- he goes, if I offer you a job, will you take it? I am like, yeah. Can't imagine why I wouldn't, Sergeant Major. He goes, well, you know, we just have -- we are trying to understand why, you know, we don't have a -- you know, DAC which was really active about the number of senior female Non-Commissioned Officers and --

SGM WATERHOUSE: He explained what that --

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: So, the Defense Advisory Committee of Women in the Services was established by -- I mean, it was like 50 years old, established by General Marshall about, you know, looking after how issues with women in the military. Not just the Army but women in the military, in general. So, this Advisory Committee was, kind of, looking at why you didn't have female Non-Commissioned Officers at the very senior levels like the General Officer levels or, you know, Division equivalents, not necessarily Divisions.

So, he goes, you know, I just can't get a lot of the senior women to want to move up. He goes, most of them are like getting out at Master Sergeant, Sergeant

First Class. I said, well -- I said, part of the dynamic is, sir, is -- you know, Sergeant Major is, you know, a lot of women at that stage, especially if they have families are like, you know, it's like how many more birthdays, how many more of this do I want to miss. And then if they are dual military, it's, you know, one or the other is going to make this decision.

And for them if they have made Sergeant First Class or they have made Master Sergeant or even if they have made Sergeant Major, you know, they have considered themselves successful at the end of 20 to 25 years and they choose to get out. So, I mean, so, you know, that's probably part of the challenge or the issue. I said, but, you know, I can't imagine me not taking this assignment. But part of me is like, you know, this is just that nice talk that you have when you are having these visits and deployed. And he is going to back pack to Washington and being bombarded with 20,000 other things Army-wide. And if this is just a blip on the screen, it made me feel good for a period of time in Somalia.

So, we get back, we redeploy, we get back and sitting in my office one day and the phone rings. And

it's Sergeant Major Ronnie Strahan from the United States Army Sergeant Majors Academy. He goes, hey, Sergeant Major, SMA wanted me to call you and talk to you about how would like to feel about coming back to the Academy. I said, well, Sergeant Major, you know when I left, I said I would be willing to come back and teach someday. But I am not quite ready to give up my [wreath] yet. He goes, no, no, no. He wants you to come back and be the Student and Faculty Battalion Commander. I am like, what? I said, you know I am really a junior Sergeant Major. He goes, nope. That's what he wants to do. I am like, well, if that's what he wants, that's what I will do.

So, you know, I PCS'd and went to the Academy to be the Student and Faculty Battalion Commander. Prior to that I actually attended the Battle Staff Course because it was my philosophy that if you are going to be the Student and Faculty Battalion Commander of the School House, you should be a graduate of every course that it teaches.

SGM WATERHOUSE: All the school's -- yeah.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: So, I was a graduate of the First Sergeant Course, the Battle Staff Course, Sergeant

Majors Course. Of course, I wasn't a graduate of the BNOC or ANOC, I mean BNOC. But -- or PLDC but that was way before my control. But, you know, but I wanted to make sure I -- that was my personal desire. You know, so they made arrangements for me to go through. And I am glad I did because it made me have a better understanding of all the courses.

So, you know, I went there and went to be the Student and Faculty Battalion Commander. I mean, there were a few little rubs, because a couple of faculty -- like, one of the faculty members who was one of the Senior Instructors was my Senior Instructor when I was an Instructor. So, now I am his supervisor, of course, you know that. It doesn't go well. And then they had gotten -- they got an exception to policy to make sure that I could rate everybody. Even though date of rank was some issues. But, you know, as I looked at all these Sergeant Majors, I am like, what is your -- if you are doing your job, what is the problem?

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, as -- it sounds foreign to NCO here and Commander, I am wondering, what's in the title? And then --

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Yeah. It's --

SGM WATERHOUSE: -- in that job what -- who did you have under you, I guess?

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: So, I had all the -- so, we had -- so, you had an A Company Commander, which was the United States Army Sergeant Majors Academy students body and faculty. You had B Company, which had -- so, they each had First Sergeants.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: They had Sergeant Majors as Company Commanders in title. But don't have the same authority as you would have as a Company Commander in a unit because NCOs don't command. I mean, so there were some more grounds. That we didn't have an O-6 Commandant. So, UCMJ and then we were all attached technically under headquarters and Headquarters Company in Garrison as a Company-grade Commander.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: You know, back in the day, early on. It's all structured differently now. But, you know, but we kind of ran that. So, B Company was the Battle Staff Course. So, I think we had A and B Company,

was all I had. And then, you know, I had the headquarter staff. So, you know, so, I was the -- so, what it did was, I ran the School day-to-day and the Battalion and the Commandant was the overarching, like, the Brigade guy. You know, so, worried about POM-ing and --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: -- financing and all that other stuff. And then -- so, you had the School Sergeant Major and you had the Commandant. So, you had Sergeant Major Strahan. You had Colonel [Van Horne] at the time. Then he had me as the Student and Faculty Battalion Commander that took care of, you know, all the course ware. And then -- and I had an HHC. So, they had the Staff and Faculty. So, all the training developers in the back and all that.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Now, you had two SGMs or CSMs under you?

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: I had two SGMs.

SGM WATERHOUSE: SGMs, okay.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Two SGMs. Well, three SGMs because even headquarters Commandant, HHC was an SGM. So, I had two SGMs and they all actually had B Company and A

Company, actually had diamond wearing First Sergeants. But, you know, everybody was really under everybody. It's was just more of a structure thing. But, you know, so, I mean, you know, that was what I did. And I really liked it and my claim to fame is I had to help to bring on the nine-month course. You know, the one that every --

SGM WATERHOUSE: The Sergeants Major Course.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: -- yeah. The nine-month Sergeant Majors Course. And we wanted to bring it on early which became problematic in and of itself, because we wanted to bring it on early for whatever reason. So, initially we had to take the current Battle Staff Course and revamp it a little bit and, kind of, just slide it into the curriculum. So, it wasn't perfect. It wasn't a perfect fit. You know, but, I mean, it was the beginning. You got to transition. You know, and there was a lot of grumbling by the Sergeant Major Corps because we are our own worst enemy.

SGM WATERHOUSE: I mean, what were some of the driving factor in make it a longer course?

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: At the time, you know, we were trying to make this pivot to say that we were

equivalent to like, either the Army War College.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Or CGSC.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Or CGSC. I think we were more equivalent to CGSC but a lot of people don't like to hear me say that. But I say that because when the Majors come out of their program and then our Sergeant Majors come out, they all kind of come back into the Army at the same level, at Battalion and Brigade.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Right.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Right. So, that to me is where the fit is. But they really wanted it. And I get it, the prestige of being equivalent to the War College. And it was about, I think, also getting better funding, you know, this push to, you know, they wanted to be able to be -- where we are at now. I mean, the whole degree producing thing, you know. So, you just had to make this switch. Also, you know, in an officer's career, they come in and out of Command. So, you know, they had this -- they had their high intensity of going to Command and doing all this and then they come into the Staff. Which is -- so, when you come into Staff, if you break a leg, it's not as devastating as if you break a leg --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: -- when you are in Command. But we just -- we as senior Non-Commissioned Officers, we don't really do that. So, once you get into the Command tribe, where you are a First Sergeant and a Battalion -- and a Sergeant Major, you know, until recently, we needed to come in and out of the program.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Right.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: So, you never had any downtime. You know, so, it's just like, go, go, go. You know, and you -- and so, I think, you know, there is some -- there is some wisdom in what the Officer Corps does. You know, which I think as we really started looking at this, that we, you know, made this final, this transition, you know, when Sergeant Major Preston was Sergeant Major of the Army. So, I did my time at the Sergeant Majors Academy, where we started looking at, you know, how do we change and we wanted to elevate, I think, the stature of Sergeants Major in the Army. So, you know, we made that transition and then I get this call to go be the Sergeant Major at Fort Belvoir.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Can I go back just a second?

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Sure.

SGM WATERHOUSE: I was looking at your bio in USASMA or the Sergeant Majors Academy's website. And it was also mentioned that you were there to help transform the Battle Staff Course and to make it something different than it was.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: So, the Battle Staff Course had a high failure rate. I mean, so the first exam was the graphics exam. And then the -- so, in the first -- within the first week or two weeks, we were losing over 50 percent of that class. And I am like, that's just crazy. Now, the faculty took great pride in that. I looked at it --

SGM WATERHOUSE: We did a hard course, yeah.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: I looked at it very differently. I said, I am not sure I would be proud of that number. I said, first of all, these kids that you have failed, these NCOs that you have failed, we are sending back to the Army to do a job that they now have not been given the requisite skillset to do.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Right. That's the purpose of --

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: That's the purpose -- we are -- the purpose --

SGM WATERHOUSE: They are still going back to the Staff.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: I said, the purpose for us is education or to train and educate.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, it was more of an evaluation than an education at that.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Right. I said, so if there is such a high failure rate, I would be looking in the mirror saying, what are we doing wrong?

SGM WATERHOUSE: Why aren't they under -- why aren't retaining?

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Why aren't they retaining it? Which is why I went through the Course. And when I went through the Course, I -- you know, I saw a lot of things. I am like, I question this, that and the other. And then it all came to a head when I became the Battalion Commander -- when I became the Battalion Commander and we had a such a high failure rate that out of one group, we had 14 out of 15 students fail.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Wow.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: I said that's just -- that -- you can't tell me that Instructor got all the rocks. I am sorry. I just don't buy it. So, I asked to see all their graphics. I wanted to see all the exams. And I laid them out and I went through every single one and I found the same error. I found two errors. It was a symbol error. But symbol was repeated X amount of time. So, for every time it was repeated, you got it wrong. Because you didn't just get wrong one time, you got it wrong for every time it was supposed to be on that sheet, right? I said, 14 people didn't learn this incorrectly. And the guy who passed, was an Intel guy. Everybody else that didn't, were some were Infantry, some were --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: -- other branches. But Intel guy got it. Because I talked to him. He goes, I knew it was wrong and that's why I did the right way. I am like, well did you ask the question? So, I called the Company Commander and the Senior Instructor in and I said, here is the problem. They learned this wrong because it was taught to them wrong. And they just didn't want to buy it. And it was a new Instructor. It was his first

class. I said, so this is what we are going to do. You are going to let him run the study hall with either the Senior Instructor or another Instructor in there with him. And we are going to see how this goes. All but one passed. Out of the 14 that failed. I said, look I am not here about zero failures. But the failure rate should be one percent, not 50 percent.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah. Or more.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Or more.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah. That's the zero defect kind of mentality.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: And, I mean, they just -- oh, you don't back the instructors. I am like, no. No, no, no. Don't go there with me. No, no, no. I am not calling him out. I am not saying it's his fault. I mean, he is a new Instructor, you know. Oh, by the way he is supposed to have somebody in there watching him. Senior Instructor. You know, I am not -- I am not throwing anybody under the bus. I am writing anybody counseling statements. I am not doing anything. I am just telling you, we got to find a better way. Got to find a better way. I said, because if you tell me it's a 50 percent

failure rate, I am going to say, Company Commander on your OER, your NCOER, needs improvement.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Our graduation rate should be above 95 percent. We are an -- we are an education training institution. The Army sent us -- the Commanders and First Sergeants and Sergeant Majors are sending their people here to learn, not to fail.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Right.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: You know, I am not saying a 100 percent. I am not -- you know, I get it. Some people just aren't going to get it. It's not in their wheelhouse.

SGM WATERHOUSE: But this isn't Ranger School.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: This isn't Ranger School. Come on. And even in Ranger School they get recycled as many times as --

SGM WATERHOUSE: You get recycled, yeah.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: -- as many times as they are willing to be recycled. So, somebody thinks it's a waste of money. You know, so we revamped it. We revamped, kind of, the order. We took some stuff out that

we didn't think was necessary. You know, and we were doing much better. You know, and then the other thing is I said, and at the end of the day, we also have to start teaching not just manual graphics but digital graphics, you know because --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: -- I said, when they go to the unit, they are going to be doing all the stuff on computers. I think you start out manual graphics because if the power goes out, you want to be able to know how they can put these little things together and move it around on a piece of acetate.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Right.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: I said, but at some point, you start there but you transition to the digital -- and, to me, the exam should be taken on the digital because that's how they are going to -- I want them to do -- the course should evolve to how you going to do in the unit.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: You know, so that was some of the -- you know, then when we moved it up to the -- when we transitioned the Sergeant Majors Course,

initially, we had a lot of Sergeant Majors that were already Battle Staff graduates. And the curriculum that was in the Battle Staff Course -- in the Sergeant Majors Course was basically the Battle Staff Program. So, we kind of used those guys as mentors and -- I mean, they still had to take the exam but they had a pad up --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: -- leg up. You know, until eventually we could go -- you know, get the curriculum. But they wanted it implemented. So, you had to take that little shortcut, knowing it was a shortcut. I mean, everybody, all the way up to the Army level to include the Chief of Staff, who wanted to implement it, knew it was a shortcut. You know, so, you know, we made those adjustments.

And then somehow my name got -- I got called to be interviewed for the Post Sergeant Major at Fort Leavenworth because in the military district of Washington, because of such high visibility with everything else that goes, the Installation Sergeant Majors there, they give [NBW] the opportunity to kind of hand pick the Sergeant Majors to put it at Belvoir, Meade

and McNair because we also do a lot of stuff with the Old Guard and help out with the MDW stuff. So, ended up getting interviewed and got told I was going to Fort Belvoir which was great. It was a nice transition to being Garrison Sergeant Major. Got to see a different --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Now this was like a Battalion or Brigade level position?

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: No. It was Installation. I was Post Sergeant Major. So, the billet was a one-star billet but --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: -- it was filled by on O-6. Because there were other things going on.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, it was really like a Nominative Assignment.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Yeah. It was like a Nominative Assignment. So, went to be the Post Sergeant Major at Fort Belvoir. You know, so I got to learn the whole Garrison side.

SGM WATERHOUSE: And this was 1996?

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Yeah, 1996. So, two things happened. Well one -- so, back up a little bit. So,

while I was at the Sergeant Majors Academy, we had the incident at Fort Bragg where the black couple got killed at - in Fayetteville. And the whole extremism thing. So, they put a big task force together. And Togo West put me on that task force. So, I have been around the Army for about six months trying to figure out if we had an extremist problem in the Army.

What we had was a leadership problem. Because if the leadership is not engaged and doesn't know what their soldiers are doing, it's not necessarily extremism, it's, you know, you got to be able to be involved and know what your soldiers are doing in order to curtail that kind of behavior. So, you know, I did the extremist task force and then when I was at Belvoir, of course, you know, it was basically just your basic Garrison Installation Sergeant Major duties. I mean, Fort Belvoir is a very unique installation because it has a lot of GOFO's that live there. General Officers, 26 General Officers that were on the installation. And your Garrison -- and your Installation Commander is an O-6. And your --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Colonel.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: -- and your Senior

Lieutenant is a four-star.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Four-star General.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Yeah. And you know you get calls every day like, why isn't the flag pole always -- why isn't the flag all the way at the top of the flag pole. You know it would be like, this, like four inches short. And I am like, I don't know but we will make sure it's taken care of. I mean, so you had -- you got a lot of advice and assistances to Installation Sergeant Major.

But while I was the Installation Sergeant Major, of course, the Aberdeen Proving Grounds happened, the Drill Sergeant, whole sexual harassment, sexual assault scandal hit the Army. So, again I was called on by the Army --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Special assignment.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: -- to --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Special project.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: -- special project to be on the Senior Review Panel for Sexual Harassment Task Force. And then, of course, as everybody knows the history during that task force. Then the SMA McKinney became a subject of that. So, that was quite challenging. You know,

partly because the task forces, when the news broke, they told me the night before it was going to break, in that a female Sergeant Major was going to make -- you know, be on TV and the General that broke it me, she goes, do you happen to know who that Sergeant Major might be? I am like, I might. I need to make a few phone calls to some friends. I think I have an idea who it might be but I don't know for sure.

So, I did make a few phone calls to some friends. Then I went back down the hall and said, yeah, it's going to be Brenda Hoster. Sure enough that morning on CNN, it was Sergeant Major Brenda Hoster. And I knew Brenda for a while. I knew her when I was at the Academy. I mean, Brenda and I are acquaintances. I wouldn't call us best friends. But, you know, as female Sergeant Majors you tend to -- you know who each other are. And, you know, I have never had an issue with Brenda.

But -- and, you know, she had called me up and told me she was going to retire. I am like, okay. That's kind of sudden. She goes, no, you just kind of know when it's time, it's time. I am like, okay. I said, well, you know, I am travelling around with this task force. So, if

you want to move out of your apartment early and not pay another month's rent. You are more than welcome to stay in this spare bedroom at the house while I am gone. So, she did. I didn't know anything -- you know, so -- but when I got back home, she was already gone. But after all this stuff broke.

So, I told them it was Sergeant Major Hoster. And they are like, what you do know? I said, look, I know her and McKinney had a rough time when she was his PAO. That's all I know. I don't know the details. I just do know they had some issues. So, of course, when I get back from my first trip, after all this breaks, you know, I get welcomed by two things. You know, this nonsense and then the fact that CID is at my door because they want to talk to me because Brenda Hoster has since been in my house for the last three weeks. And, did she not say anything to me? I am like, no she didn't say anything to me.

So, I mean, so, that was just a really rough dynamic. And then, of course, you know, he was still the SMA. He was, kind of, put off the task force. But, of course, he is still the SMA. So, one day he calls me up to his office and I -- you know, I talked to task force

folks, I was like, what do you want me to do? He is still the Sergeant Major of the Army. He goes, well if he asks about task force, you just tell him you can't talk to him about. I am like, fine. So, I did.

But he wanted and he goes, you know Brenda, why is she doing this to me. I am like, I don't know Sergeant Major. I mean, I know you two have issues. I know you guys didn't get along. He goes, well, you know I wouldn't do this. I am like, Sergeant Major, all I know is you have never treated me inappropriately when we have been alone together. But I have also known Brenda long enough to know that, anytime her and I spoke and she has never lied to me. So, somewhere in there lies the truth. And that is for the investigators to find out, not me.

You know, and it's basically what I decided to tell the NCOs on this task force. Because once it broke, you know, you had people splitting down the lines.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Everybody over here behind him and everybody over here behind her. And I am like, look, you just going to have to trust the Uniform Code of Military Justice and the system. And we have a mission to

do. And we can't let this influence what we do. You know, so, I mean, we finished it up.

Basically again, you know, it's not necessarily -- is there an issue in the Army, sure. But where leadership is not engaged, is where these problems have manifested themselves, where when people complain and leadership doesn't respond, is where you have the problems. So, that was the outcome of the task force. And then -- then I get the -- the Military District of Washington Sergeant Major, Sergeant Major Johnson, came to me one day and said, you need to apply for this Nominative position at the Combined Arms Center because it's likely to come open. And I am like, what's the Combined Arms Center, never heard of it.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Can we go back a little bit?

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Sure.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, I want to -- so, you mentioned DACOWITS earlier, and I have put some question here just to --

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Sure.

SGM WATERHOUSE: -- to highlight your work with those folks. So, I understand in 1995 is when you began

serving as a United States Army's Senior Enlisted Advisor to the Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Services or DACOWITS, a position you held until 1991.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: No. Let's see --

SGM WATERHOUSE: 1995.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: So, I began right after I -
- yeah. I began in '95. I didn't -- and I held it past that because I held it till I went to Leavenworth. So, '97.

SGM WATERHOUSE: '97?

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Yeah.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: So, yeah. So, I went in '95, so I couldn't have come off in '91. Yeah because I went off --

SGM WATERHOUSE: That's typo on my part.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Yeah. So, I think it was like '97, '98. Yeah, so --

SGM WATERHOUSE: It would probably just be 2001.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: It could be. I don't -- I mean, I was on it for three to four years. I can't --

yeah. So, might have even been '99. But I was on it for about four years, I think or five years.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, from their website, DACOWITS, what it says now, I am just going read what its mission is now and I want to, kind of, talk to what you did there. It's composed of civilian women and men who are appointed by the Secretary of Defense to provide advice and recommendations on matters and policies relating to the recruitment and retention, treatment, employment, integration, and well-being of highly qualified professional women in the Armed Forces. Historically, DACOWITS' recommendations have been very instrumental in effecting changes to laws and policies pertaining to military women. And that was a quote from their website. So, Sergeant Major, what had initially inspired you to be an Advisor?

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: So, I was actually approached by Army G-1 to -- they nominate who is going to be the --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: -- and I think they went to the Sergeant Major of the Army. So, they asked if I would

be the Army's Military Representative to the Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Services, to advise them on, you know, Army policy as it pertains to either Army women or Army policy, in general. So, as the Army's person so -- so at the time one of the big things was whether women should be in MLRS, Military Launch Rocket Systems, you know, in Field Artillery, whether that was -- so, this was the whole beginning -- during my time it was, you know, this whole thing about what's direct ground combat, what's co-location --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah. Because I think you were at the Academy, right, when you were --

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Yeah. When I --

SGM WATERHOUSE: -- as I recall.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: -- yeah, when I started. So, I started the Academy --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: -- served through it, Leavenworth. Served through at Belvoir and then a little bit while I was on Leavenworth. And when I got to Leavenworth I, kind of, said, the pace of this job, I don't know if I will be able to continue.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: You know, you need to probably find somebody more less active or, I mean, less busy because I traveled extensively for the CAC. So, you know, [AGR] was trying to help -- most of these people are either some former military but mostly civilians. You know, academics, people of business. But, you know, want to be supportive so -- you know, there are people that don't come with any, like, preconceived notions. You know, so you kind of have to, you know, we are kind of there to help, educate them. So, you know, the services would come and brief, you know, their policies, this, that and the other. And then we are, kind of, there to take it from, you know, military speak to help them understand what that just meant.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: What? Let me tell you what they just said. Let me help you understand what they just said.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Translate this for you.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Yeah. So, a little bit of that. So, every branch had one. So, there was somebody

from Marine Corps, the Navy --

SGM WATERHOUSE: But you were the only one for the Army.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: I was the only enlisted for the Army.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: And there is -- there was, I think, an O-6 on the Officer side. You know, so -- you know, so like we got into this big debate about co-location, this, that and the other, definition, blah, blah, blah. You know, and then positioning on the battlefield. You know, like well -- you know, trying to explain, well, this is how it used to be, you know. We were living a battlefield in depth and now it's more asymmetrical. You know, so there is really no real Detachment. You know, so -- you know and then this whole debate about, what exactly does co-location mean? Does co-location mean, in the same space, five miles, five kilometers? I mean, you know --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: -- you know, this whole co-location debate. I said, until you solve that problem,

you are not going to solve any of the other problems. You got to understand what that means. You know, women can't be co-located. Well, what does that mean? I mean, so, you know, so that was a big debate, you know. The whole women in combat thing. And then it was like -- so, this is just the beginning of trying to get women into these different combat arms, combat -- well, let's just start with combat support. Like, military -- multiple rocket launching systems.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: And stuff like that. You know, well -- you know, so you had the Field Artillery sitting there and -- no, it's not that women can't operate the equipment. Goes back to MLRS units are co-located with --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Field Artillery.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: -- Field Artillery or could be with an Infantry unit.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Infantry unit.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Well, but when you ask where they are located on the battlefield, well actually they are forward of the battlefield, they are forward of

the Infantry units. So, are they co-located or not? I mean, but -- I mean, this is the whole debate that goes on.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, this was one of the sort of things that you were working on and discussing --

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Yeah.

SGM WATERHOUSE: -- during your time in --

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: I mean, trying to help them understand --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: -- you know, the questions, you have got to answer and the things you have to understand are like, okay, this is how we array forces on the battlefield. Here is where the Infantry guys are.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Which would change after 2001, you know.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Here is where the Infantry guys are. Here is where the Artillery guys are and here is where, you know, the Support people are. Oh, by the way, you know, there are Support people that are with the Infantry units because, you know, I mean, you had the trains that bring up and drop off -- but, I mean, so you

are trying to help them understand how the Army functions when it's out in a battle space.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: And who is where, who does what and how things move in the battle space. So, I mean, so that was part of it. And then, you know, like after the Field Artillery School would come up to me and like, come and ask all the senior enlisted, yeah, do you buy what they are saying, you know, blah, blah, blah? Do you agree with what they are saying? You know, so, you had -- I mean, I was truthful, I mean. Like I said earlier, you know, I am like, just tell me what the standard is to be an MRL -- Multiple Rocket System Launchers Operator.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: And if I meet the standard, okay. You know, I mean and then, of course, you know, the typical, well, the hygiene and send me out in the field and, you know, the whole female problem. I am like, yeah, whatever. You know, we managed to survive, I mean. You know, it's really women deploy, you know. I mean, so, you know -- and even in some of these meetings, I mean, we would have Foreign Services women represented or come in.

I am like, you know, we have had the Jordanians there, we have had the Israelis there, saying okay, we have the Canadian --

SGM WATERHOUSE: How they do it.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Yeah. Canadians have women that are in command of Infantry units. That had had it for years. You know, and then, of course, one of the big topics was, you know, for the Navy, women in submarines. Well, first women on ships and then women in submarines. Which -- so, through all this, you know -- and what DACOWITS really does is it forces the services to look at their policies. And, you know, it -- okay, yeah. Okay, it's always been this way but now does it still need to be that way? Does it need to change? You know, and now that you are an All-Volunteer force, can you afford to exclude half the population in what you are doing?

And, of course, you know, the Army has come full circle. Do I ever think I would see some of things today that under -- first of all, I didn't think I would see them when I was still on active duty. Secondly, I don't know if I thought I would see them in my lifetime. You know, from the whole thing with -- you know, gay

soldiers being able to serve openly. I mean, we have always known they have always been there. You know, but this whole thing that -- the whole Army are going to hell in a ham basket.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: All these kids wanted was not to be thrown out of the Army if somebody else found out about their lifestyle.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Not that they wanted to go publicize it to everybody in their unit. They just didn't want to have to be told, oh, we found out this thing about you, you go to go. And even though you are the best whatever, but because you got this little flaw over here, you got to go. Even though you are the best whatever. So, I mean, --

SGM WATERHOUSE: And now every job is open to women?

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Yeah.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: I mean, I have had a chance to meet --

SGM WATERHOUSE: This is about the Army's --
Women's Army Corps of '78.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: So, women in the Army.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Or just Army women. I mean
--

SGM WATERHOUSE: It's not --

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: -- I mean, I get --

SGM WATERHOUSE: It's pretty actual, it's not
that long a time.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: I mean, I am -- I was over
the moon to meet Shaye Haver and Christine Grice. I mean,
I was just like -- and I always said, early on I am like,
why can't women go to Ranger School? You tell me it's the
best leadership school in the Army. Why can't women go?
You let Signal leaders go, you let Quartermaster guys go.
I mean, so you let non-combat arms guys go because it's
the best leadership school in the Army. And I believe
that. Then why can't women go? If that's the standard,
if women can meet that standard, why can't they go? Just
let them try. And same thing with the Infantry. If
somebody wants -- look, if you gave me a choice to be in

combat arms, I would choose armor, I want volume, I want to fire a big bullet. I don't want to carry a 160 pounds of crap on my back.

SGM WATERHOUSE: That's what I thought too when I joined the Army.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: But, I mean, so it's about choices.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah. Yeah.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: I said, will there be a high failure rate initially? I said, no higher than the amount of men that fail out of the Infantry Basic. Men fail out of Infantry Basic every day and get set into another MOS before they get put out of the Army.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Or recycled, if they are lucky.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Or recycled, if they are lucky. If they really want to be Infantry. But my point is, not every guy that joins the Infantry makes it through Infantry Basic. And we don't necessarily put them out of the Army. We just put them in a new MOS. I said, so, you know -- I said, but where I think the Army did it right, and the Marine Corps not necessarily so initially, is we

help prepare the women to do it. Where the Marine Corps says, okay, we are just going to put these women and then see who it goes.

I mean, look, I think you can gender norm PT standards, a generic PT test. But at the end of the day, it's not about the PT test. I never understood what our PT test proves any way other than a standard that you want me to meet for some odd reason because it has nothing to do with the job that I do. If the enemy is firing at me, I am not running two miles anywhere, anytime soon.

SGM WATERHOUSE: I would hope not.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: I am running in short bursts to get wherever I need to be. So, to me, like a shuttle run is more effective to me than a two-mile run.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Which is why we are looking at bringing that in.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: You know, I mean, how fast can I go --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: -- short distances than how fast can I run two miles.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Come on. I mean, push-ups and sit-ups, I think, you can gender norm. But I used to always to tell people, I think women should have to do more sit-ups than men because that's where our core strength is. I mean, it's just a whole anatomy thing. You know, so, if women had to do more sit-ups and men had to more push-ups, it's a trade-off at the end of the day. You know, or you figure out how you find out what's the sweet spot for both. You know, where you are not lowering it too much for men but you are not making it unachievable for women.

Because in order to get that strength, then you have to train to get that strength. You know, so if you don't train me properly, of course, I am never going to be able to do it. So, I said, you know -- so, that was my whole thing. Just tell me what the standard is. So, if all guys get to go through pre-Ranger, then you need to send women through pre-Ranger.

And you report -- I mean, because I remember when we first started sending women to Airborne School, I remember we used to have the women to go over and do separate PT in the morning that we thought that they were

going to be, you know, to Airborne School so we could help them with their pull-ups and help them with their upper body strength. So, I mean, we had a special training program for them because you just don't send them --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: -- to take the Airborne PT test and go to Airborne School. You know, but we also did it for the guys because if it's not something that -- there wasn't not most of the stuff that you used to do all the time, then you got to train to do that.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Regardless of --

SGM WATERHOUSE: To get better at pull-ups, you had to do pull-ups.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Right. Exactly. You know, I mean, because even like when I was at the Sergeant Majors Academy, you know, everybody had to take the Army PT test. To kind of go back a little bit, when I was at -- you know, because we had some sister services in Battle Staff, and of course -- you know, if you are just thrown into a short course like that. Unlike the Sergeant Majors Academy we had nine months. You know, if you are told

that you got to come and pass the Army PT test and you haven't been doing the Army PT test, that's a problem. So, we were losing sister services. And I said, why aren't they taking their own PT test? But this is Army School. And? And?

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: I got Navy -- I got Navy Chiefs in the Sergeant Majors Course that can come over here and miss the PT test. You know, got Air Force people. You know, most -- we didn't have too many Air Force in Battle Staff. And then even at the Sergeant Majors Academy, I changed it. That the sister services took their own test. That's what they have been doing their whole career.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Why am I going to -- at 19, 18 -- 17, 18, 19 years of service, all of a sudden tell you, you got to do a different PT test.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Like, you know, telling our guys, you need to these many pull-ups.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Okay. You now have to pass the Marine Corps standard.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah. Three-mile run.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Now, the service we did at -- the Coast Guard, of course, didn't -- at the time, didn't really have a fitness test. So, I got what the -- I got what the MCPON of the Coast Guard and said, look, it's a requirement, got to take the fitness test. Here are the three fitness tests. Which one do you want the coastees to take. Your choice MCPON.

SGM WATERHOUSE: And what's MCPON?

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Master Chief Petty Officer of the --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Of the Navy.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: -- Navy. Or Master Chief Petty Officer of the Coast Guard.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Coast Guard.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: MCPOCG. But I mean, I gave the service the choice. You know, talk to the Sergeant Major of the Army.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, which one did they pick?

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: They picked Navy. They did the Navy.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah. Makes sense.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: But my point was, you know, we are -- this is about making people successful. Not finding reasons to fail people. People didn't -- the services didn't send them here so just you could fail them and send them home because they didn't pass an Army PT test.

SGM WATERHOUSE: A physical fitness test.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: That doesn't have any impact on their career when they go back to the service.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah. Doesn't mean anything to them.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Doesn't mean anything to them. You know, it's like, before we got all this change, we had a Coast Guardsman who was taking his final PT test -- I don't know, was 20 yards from the finish line and he just collapsed. He had spiral stress fractures of both his legs. And he ended up breaking his legs. And he was trying to crawl to get to the finish line. Well, he had plenty of time. And, of course, I stopped him. Had him taken to the hospital. But I went to the Commandant, said, we need to let him graduate. Oh my god, he thought we re-crucified Christ. He didn't meet --

SGM WATERHOUSE: But all his classmates, all his fellow students --

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Well, I think, half the student body thought I did the right thing.

SGM WATERHOUSE: And half didn't.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: More my faculty. I am like, really. The day this man graduates, it will have actually no impact on the United States Army. Really? If half the Army students showed the guts -- I mean he is low crawling in gravel --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: -- to try to get to the finish line. He had more than 10 minutes before he would have met his max [allowable] time. It's not like he was barely going to make it to the finish line in time. I mean, I laid it all out to the Commandant. I said, this is what I want to do. This is why I want to do it. I just -- this is what I think we should do. And I called the Sergeant Major of the Army and said the same thing. He goes, oh, I think you are doing the right thing. I mean, I had the School Sergeant Major behind me, had the SMA behind me and I had the Commandant. I mean, who else

do you want me to call?

SGM WATERHOUSE: Chief of Staff of the Army or Secretary of the Army?

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: I mean and I spoke to the Master Chief of the Coast Guard, and said, this is what we are going to do. This is why we are going to do and because I think it's the right thing. He has met all the course requirements. The only thing he is not going to meet technically, is passing -- at that time, because they were all still taking the Army PT test. And that's what -- that was the impetus that made me change it. That was the true impetus. It was like, okay, this is really crazy. Is if I am going to fail somebody for not meeting the fitness standards --

SGM WATERHOUSE: That they have never trained for.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: -- that they have never trained for, then it needs to be their fitness standard.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: And everybody was like -- of course, the faculty initially was like -- I think they just thought I was on drugs. I don't know. I mean, I got

-- I got -- I don't know, I don't think a lot of them. But it's the always small group that's very vocal. So, there was, you know, this small group that was very vocal. And I am like, well, you know what, tell the TRADOC Sergeant Major, the CAC Sergeant Major, the Commandant, the TRADOC Commander and the Sergeant Major of the Army to fire me.

SGM WATERHOUSE: This is how we are going to do it.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: This is how we are going to do it. When you are in charge, that's become my standard, you know -- well, when you are in charge then you can do it your way.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Or request to change it.

CSM (R) PRITCHETT: Or request to change it. But right now we are doing it my way.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, Sergeant Major, in 1997, you were assigned to Fort Leavenworth, as you mentioned earlier, which is in Kansas, where you served as a Combined Arms Center or CAC and Fort Leavenworth Command Sergeant Major. When did you find out you'd be the CAC, Sergeant Major, can you reiterate how that came about?

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: Yeah, so, the Military District of Washington, Sergeant Major, Sergeant Major Johnson, came to me and said I needed to submit my packet for the Command Slate, the Sergeant Major Slate for Fort Leavenworth. And initially, I was like, Fort Leavenworth, what is the Combined Armed Center? I had no idea. I had to go do a little research to find out what it was. And like, yeah, okay. So, I put my packet together, submitted it and I was a little skeptical at the time, because as I talked about earlier with DACOWITS, there was also this big push and study as to why there was not more Senior Non-Commissioned Officers at the General Officer and Flagged Officer level across all the services.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Female though?

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: Females.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: So, when this happened and I got put on the slate and got picked as one of the five to go interview with General Meigs, I was just like, okay, this is -- I mean, this was my though process, okay, this is the token female.

SGM WATERHOUSE: All these infantry guys.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: Yeah --

SGM WATERHOUSE: The armored school guy, I think --

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: So, Armor, Infantry, Intel, JRTC, NTC --

SGM WATERHOUSE: NTC. Those are all --

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: -- and then, me --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: -- the logistician and the woman. So, this is the token female, check the box. We put her out there. Blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. So, they brought us up to Leavenworth on a Friday. We attended Sergeant Major Naylor's retirement ceremony and then the next day, on Saturday, General Meigs interviewed all of us. I was the third or fourth person interviewed. So, all the other guys that were interviewed before me, they were in there for about an hour at most.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, this is in person?

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: Yeah, this is in person. So, they were in there for about an hour, a little over

an hour. I go in there and I was in there for 47 minutes.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Forty-seven. You remember the exact time?

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: I know the exact time. I was in there for about 47 minutes. I mean, we had a great discussion. General Meigs was very -- so, he said, at the end he would make his decision over the weekend and either way he would notify everybody whether they -- even if he didn't select you, there would be a phone call. I'm like, great. I was excited because I play softball off post back at Belvoir. My team was in a tournament that weekend, so, I was like, oh, man, I can get an early flight out --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Interview is done. I'm good.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: I'm good.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: I can get to the airport. I can catch an earlier flight back to D.C. So, I got back to D.C., and I went straight from the airport to my softball tournament, not thinking anything. So, I get home to like, 11 o'clock, 11:30 that night and the

phones blinking. You got like 11 missed calls answering machine messages. So, I just figure it's my friends calling and asking how it's going.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: How did it go? How did it go? What --

SGM WATERHOUSE: This is -- is this Friday?

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: Yeah.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Same day?

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: Yeah, this is Friday, the same day. It was a Friday night, no, Saturday night.

SGM WATERHOUSE: But it wasn't Monday?

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: It wasn't Monday. It was Saturday night. So, I didn't think anything of it. So, about eight messages in, it's Sergeant Major Naylor. Girl, I'm so proud of you, you got the job. And I'm like --

SGM WATERHOUSE: What happened to Monday?

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: Yeah. So, I'm playing it again, I'm playing it again. So, I pick up the phone and I call him because they're an hour behind, so, it's only 10:30 there. I said, hey, Sergeant Major, I

apologize, I said, I came straight home and went straight to my softball tournament.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: I just got home and got your message. I said, but, what do you mean, I got the job? I thought he wasn't making his decision until Monday? He goes, well, he finished his interviews, he made a few phone calls, he talked to, apparently, talked to Sergeant Major McKinney at TRADOC; he talked the Sergeant Major in the Army; he talked to a couple other people; he made his decision and you're it. I'm like, okay, do I need to call him or what? He goes, no, I'll give him a call and let him know your home. So, General Meigs called me at home that night and I apologized. I said, sir, I apologize for not being home earlier. I went straight from the airport to my softball tournament. He goes, priorities. I said, yes, sir. And he goes, well, first of all, Sergeant Major, I want you to know, I didn't pick you just because you're a woman. I'm like, that is really go to know, sir, because I don't think I can take the job if that's why you picked me. He goes, no, no. I don't -- you

understand training and leader development; I did those two panels. Big Army. He goes, I know how to fight the infantry. I know all that. I don't need a Sergeant Major that needs to help me do that or understand that. I understand all that. I need somebody that really understands the Army. He goes, and I think you're that person. I'm like, awesome. So, that was in October and he wanted me there in two weeks and I was like, okay.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Isn't that always the case?

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: Yeah. I said, because Naylor was retiring, I said, okay, sir. I can be there in two weeks, but here's the challenge. We were getting ready to the WIMSA dedication.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Can you tell me what that --

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: The Women in Military Service -- the Women's Memorial and Service to America.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: The big women's memorial dedication was on the 18th of October. I got this call like --

SGM WATERHOUSE: In D.C.?

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: -- in D.C. Lieutenant

General Kennedy was our senior female at the time. Deputy Chief of Staff for Intel on their Army staff. And I was the senior female E9 in the Military District of Washington area, as the Sergeant Major of Belvoir. So, I was an integral part of the ceremonies and all of the stuff that was going on. The Vice President was coming, I mean, this was a big deal. It wasn't just the dedication ceremony. There were a lot of events. We had a rose petal ceremony, we had a walk across the bridge. We had a whole bunch of stuff going on. So, I'm like, I'm kind of committed to that. I said, and then at the end of the month, I've committed to be a guest speaker at the Baltimore Recruiting Battalion. The Battalion Recruiting dinner or whatever, awards dinner and everything. I said, we're less than 30 days out and I would feel bad to tell them, "I'm sorry, I can't do it because I got to go do this thing." I said, I don't want to come out there and then have to immediately come TDY back.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: So, if you don't mind, and oh, by the way I am single, there is nobody to pack out

my household goods --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: -- but me. So, if you don't mind, I can report there, right after the speech on the 6th of November I can be there. I can drive out there in two days. He was like, no, no, you're right Sergeant Major, I mean, it's a little ambitious, but, you're right. I should give you at least 30 days to report. And normally, they do.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Mm.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: So, I reported to just before Veterans Day. I was able to almost do a door-to-door move. I had my stuff packed, by the time I got to Leavenworth, I think I spent one night in the queue and they called and said my household goods were here. So, over Veterans Day weekend, I moved into my house because they gave me designated quarters.

SGM WATERHOUSE: That's good.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: Unpacked what I needed to pack and I was in the office that Monday. Then I was just able to immerse myself into that without having to go back and forth. When they did my welcome ceremony,

because it wasn't really a change of responsibility because Sergeant Major had already left.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, you really didn't get a transition with him?

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: Right. I really didn't get a -- I've known Ed Naylor for a while, so, I mean, we talked on the phone --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Prior to you getting there?

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: -- prior to me getting there. And then I talked to the TRADOC Sergeant Major and the Sergeant Major of the Army and I was just kind of, okay, let's figure this out. But he did me a nice welcome ceremony, gave a nice speech and at the end of his speech, he goes, you notice not one time -- I remember this because I was very taken by it, that he said, you notice not one time did I mention that she was a woman. He goes, he goes -- she's a buddy boot soldier. She's been in divisions, she's done this and that's why she was selected. Of course, all the newspapers was, the first woman, female Sergeant Major of the Combined Arms Center; the first woman, female Sergeant Major at the three-star level; the first -- he

goes, she's a Sergeant Major who happens to be a woman. So, that always stuck with me about General Meigs and then -- so, that's kind of how it came to be.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, for folks out there that, like you didn't know, before you went there, the Combined Arms Center, if you could explain in laymen's terms what its mission is?

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: So --

SGM WATERHOUSE: It may have more between now and then.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: It has several, but I mean, so, it was responsible for all leader development in the Army. It had the overarching mission of all the leader development Army. But it also was responsible for all the Combat Arms and Combat Support Centers and Schools. At the time, the Sergeant Major's Academy fell underneath Leavenworth for, more for command and control, seeing how they were all the way out in Fort Bliss. They kind of needed a big daddy.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, it's TRADOCs Organization to take care of all that?

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: Yeah, and it also was the

home of the Command General Staff College.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Mm-hmm.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: It's the home of Battle Command Training Program, BCTP. It also has on its installation the U.S. Army Disciplinary Barracks, so, that was one of our tenant units. So, under the Fort Leavenworth part of my title --

SGM WATERHOUSE: When people think of Fort Leavenworth, the jail, that's basically the --

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: Yeah. Yeah.

SGM WATERHOUSE: -- the official title of it.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: Yeah. The U.S. Army of Disciplinary Barracks. And then you also had the TRADOC Analysis Center there, you had the Center for Army Lessons Learned.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Mm-hmm.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: The Center for Army Leadership. So, it was the Army's big -- the hub for all training and leader development. And then you had CASCOM, Combined Arms Support Command, which was all combat service support. So, those were the two that fell under the TRADOC umbrella. And then we also had

the Defense Language Institute. So, my charge was to go check out the schools; make sure that they're implementing the doctrine that's coming down; be a set of eyes and ears for the Commander. My primary focus was on Non-Commissioned Officer and Enlisted Leader Development. Though I also -- he said, but I also want you to concern yourself with Officer and Warrant Officer. And we also were responsible for looking at civilian leader development and then during my time there, we ended up doing a couple of big studies that eventually helped -- impacted, I think, started the ball rolling for the changes you're now starting to see today in, not only Non-Commissioned Officer Education, but across the board for Officer and Warrant Officer.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, for those Sergeant Majors that are not at that level now, or future men or women that become two or three-star level Sergeants Major, how do you, again, when, we and Commanders, we assess the organization. How do you assess an organization with that broad level of responsibility?

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: So, what I did was, I got a hold of all the Centers and Schools and I just said, I

did a tour and said, I want to you to -- I want to come visit your organization. I want to learn about what the Armor Center and School does.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Mm-hmm.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: Infantry Center and School and all of them were very receptive, except the Infantry Center and School. The Sergeant Major at the time was a guy name, Sergeant Major Mack Vareen.

SGM WATERHOUSE: That sounds like one of your challenges.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: Sergeant Major Mack -- he was interesting in part about Sergeant Major Mack Vareen and I. We had known each other earlier -- from earlier. I knew him from when we were in Somalia. I was in Somalia over on the U.N. side and he was in Somalia on the U.S. Mission Rangers side. So, I had known Sergeant Major for a while. So, when I became the Sergeant Major of Leavenworth, of course, the Sergeant Major of Leavenworth is a three-star billet.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Mm-hmm.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: The Sergeant Major at the U.S. Army Infantry Center and School is a two-star

billet. Now, I'm not going to rate the Sergeant Major.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Right.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: I have nothing to do with that. So, he wouldn't take my calls initially.

SGM WATERHOUSE: He wouldn't?

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: No, he wouldn't return my calls, he wouldn't take them, whatever. So, I think I talked to Sergeant Major McKinney and Sergeant Major Hall asked me how it was going. For the most part, it's going good, I said, but just one guy won't talk to me, is Sergeant Major Vereen. They're like, do you want is to intercede? I'm like, nope, I don't want you to do that, don't want you to do that. So, I could hold my protocol. I said contact their protocol and tell them I'm coming to visit.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Just say I'm coming, yeah.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: And this is what I want to see. And if the Sergeant Major wants to entertain me, fine; and if he doesn't, fine. The General said, do you need me to call him? I'm like, nope. I'll do this on my own.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, how did that particular

visit go?

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: So, I showed up and Sergeant Major met me. We went in the office call and I went in and said, Sergeant Major, what's the problem? What did I do to you?

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: What's the problem? I said, you know me. I don't understand what the problem is? I just think you moved too fast. I think you just moved up too fast. I'm like, excuse me? Then your problems not with me.

SGM WATERHOUSE: I don't make that decision.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: I didn't pick me to be where I'm at today.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Do you know how the system works?

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: I didn't pick me Sergeant Major. And, by the way, I don't believe I saw your name on the slate.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, what'd he have to say about that?

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: I said, look, I'm not here

to tell you how to run the Infantry Center and School. I said, I'm here to assess and give feedback to my Commander. I said, but here's the deal, I understand Training and Leader Development; and I'm really good at that. I said, so, something doesn't make sense to me and I offer a question and it's just an observation and you can take it for what it's worth. So, everything went. We went out and we were observing something with Infantry B-knock and I was talking to students about how they get tested and everything and one of the things is conducting a patrol or something. But, I'm like, how do you do that when you're in Garrison and they're not out in the field. Well, because they take -- we had issues with money and all this other stuff --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Especially at that time.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: At that time.

SGM WATERHOUSE: We weren't even cranking tanks. We were --

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: Right.

SGM WATERHOUSE: -- we were not doing gunneries, but once a year.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: Right. So, it's all --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Gunnery was --

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: Yeah. So, funding, it's all notional. You talk your way through it --

SGM WATERHOUSE: We were hurting in the Army at that time.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: So, explained it all and one of my things is when I went back, because by then General Meigs had left and Lieutenant General Michael Steele came in to be the Combined Armed Center Commander. So, I came back, he said, so, what did you think about -- I said, well, did you know that in Infantry BNCOC that they don't actually go out and do a squad patrol, or they don't do this and blah, blah, blah?

SGM WATERHOUSE: They just talk about it.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: They just talk about it. They tell you what the steps are, but they don't actually execute it.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Not physically do it, yeah.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: So, it was all this about how do we -- and the Army at that time was also like, how do we get back to doing these hands-on training.

SGM WATERHOUSE: I remember 1997, in particular was a rough year.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: Yeah. Everything is on paper. It's all tests, it's all verbal. It wasn't out in the field, out in the trenches. I'm like, how does that make sense? So, I said, I'm here to be your advocate. If you think something's wrong --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah, what else are you guys not able to do that --

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: What aren't you able to do? I'm able to be that advocate --

SGM WATERHOUSE: That spokesman for you.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: -- that advocate. So, after we did that, Sergeant Major Vereen and I used to talk every two weeks and the Center -- I was invited back out to the Infantry Center and School.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, the issue was like you personally took his job, is the way he was thinking of it or something that maybe him or something.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: I don't know if him. I just think he remembers me at this little battalion Sergeant Major running around in Somalia in 1993; four

years later he sees this Battalion Sergeant Major is now a three-star level Sergeant Major.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Mm.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: He thinks I didn't do enough in between the two.

SGM WATERHOUSE: You didn't pay your dues.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: Yeah. I guess. I mean, it was short-lived. Okay. We're just going to talk it out. I'm not going to let you ignore me.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Well, yeah, communication is key, right?

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: Yeah.

SGM WATERHOUSE: If you don't communicate then

--

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: So, then --

SGM WATERHOUSE: -- you did the right by, okay, we're going to communicate whether you want to or not.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: I was well received at all other centers and schools. I went down to the Armor School and Carl Christian, Sergeant Major Carl Christian, we had a lot of talks and then followed by

him was, Sergeant Major Dave LeVey. I don't know which order that was, but those two guys and I went out to DLI, the Defense Language Institute. They were having some issues and challenges --

SGM WATERHOUSE: That's in Monterey, California?

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: -- in Monterey. They were having some issues and problems and sat down with the Sergeant Major out there and said, okay, lay it out? What's the problem? Is it policy? Is it -- what is it? How can I help? What can my Commander do? Who do I get? Who do we need to go back and talk too?

SGM WATERHOUSE: Mm-hmm.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: So, that was kind of the mission and you just did that across all the combat arms and combat support schools. I would go down to USASMA, United States Army Sergeants Major Academy, because USASMA was -- even though Leavenworth was responsible for Army Training and Leader Development, the Sergeant Majors Academy is the guys that write the curriculums. All the common corps --

SGM WATERHOUSE: For all the NCOs?

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: For all the NCO Schools.
All the common part.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: They need Babble Staff Sergeant Majors Course and then at the time, the Army was going through is like, how can you marry up officer and NCO education to where there's more opportunities for Officers and NCOs to engage at the levels about the Command Teams. Just Platoon Sergeant, Platoon Leader, Company Commander First Sergeant, Battalion Commander Sergeant Major. So, there were a lot of things starting to go on in the Army at that time, to where, while I was there, we did eight Army Training Leader Development Panel Study, ATLDP. It was across NCO, Officer, Warrant Officer and it touched a little bit on Civilian Education and Leader Development. So, what are we doing? What do we need to do differently? Big study. Took a couple of months. Pulled in people from all across the Army. Had a lot of different recommendations because we were hearing that we were getting the education too late.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah. At the time, NCOES

courses?

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: Yeah, NCOES courses. I wish I had this, when I was a this, ow when -- even the common corps --

SGM WATERHOUSE: I had (inaudible) before I was a squad leader.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: Right. So, we were -- go back, do the whole select, train, promote --

SGM WATERHOUSE: From (inaudible) Sergeant?

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: Yeah, or the whole select, train, promote. So, that study went through a lot of things. Laid out a lot of different recommendations across both Officer and Warrant Officer and Enlisted Training and Leader Development. Somethings were implemented. Some things, even after I left the Combined Arms Center, they did another study, the RETO study --

SGM WATERHOUSE: There was one. I was looking at your bio again on the assessments website and it was saying that you served on the Objection Force Study Group. Is that something different?

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: Yeah, the Objective Force

Study Group was while I was there, was down at Fort Jackson, South Carolina and it was an Army -- well, I guess it was TRADOC, but I guess it was objective force solider. What do we want -- so, this is what, 1997, '98, '99? Somewhere in there. What do we want the solider of the 21st century to look like -- be, no do? What are they supposed to look like? What are the qualities? Is it different from here, do you know -- what are the qualities --

SGM WATERHOUSE: This is before the global war on terrorism?

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: This is before the global war on terrorism. General Dave Barno is the Commander at Fort Jackson, at the time, leading this study. I was there. I was just one of many that was there, but we were there to map out what would the solider of the 21st century need to be, know, do. And do they need any special skill sets different than -- what attributes did they need? This was, I guess, six, seven months, we got together and that fed into -- I mean, I brought that information back, as you're doing this thing, I said, you got this thing going on all the way over here --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: And how does that affect, or would it have an impact if this became something to influence or impact what we're doing here. So, the Army was trying to figure out -- the Army was trying to look long range, not just in modernization of equipment --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Not just equipment, yeah.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: -- but --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Skills, attributes --

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: -- skills and attributes because the Army is about people. You can have all the equipment you want, but if you haven't got people to do what it needs to do.

SGM WATERHOUSE: The Air Force and Navy, it's more about the equipment. Us, it's all about the people.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: Yeah, but they still have to have people to do -- to fly the jet --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: -- yeah, but they're --

SGM WATERHOUSE: The modernization, we're more -- people are crucial for us.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: -- is to the technical. Yeah, we're a ground force. People are crucial. So, that's what Objective Force Soldier 21 was, was about soldiers -- what was the soldier of the 21st century?

SGM WATERHOUSE: Now, that other thing you did. Another thing was highlighted by the Academy as far as your work there at the Combined Arms Center was, you helped shift the focus of warrior task and battle drills to adapt the combat role of soldiers serving in Iraq and Afghanistan after 2001.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: Right. After 9/11 [September 11, 2001], and we were getting ready to do all this deployment, it was like we end up doing the task -- we ended up relooking at everything and truly identifying... Because you remember you see how we used to have the soldier task list?

SGM WATERHOUSE: We used to call it combat --

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: Common skills.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Common Task Training every year.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: Yeah. Common Task Training.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: So, that Common Task Training ended up transitioning to those Warrior Leader Tasks and we put together those boards to bring people in and say, okay, what is it that all soldiers need to know as warrior leader tasks. Which eventually turned into the Warrior Leaders some of the basic tasks that were implemented at the Warrior Leader Corps --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Which took the place of PLDC.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: -- PLDC. So, it's all this transition to this more warrior culture thought process. Not that we didn't have it, it's just we never talked about in those terms.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Right. It was mandatory training you had to do to keep up the skills --

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: Right.

SGM WATERHOUSE: -- that every soldiers supposed to -- but it was only five or six every year that you had to mandatorily --

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: Right. So, this whole transition was to put the Army, and all of its solders into this warrior mindset.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Right.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: Yeah. So, we did those task selection boards for the Warrior Leader Task and then --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Was the Institute of Non-Commissioned Office of Professional Development implemented while you were there?

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: No, I don't think so. I think that came after my departure.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay. Because I know that, it's under Combined Army Center now and that was --

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: Yeah, I think, all this -- there's so much that was going on at Leavenworth. I had my niche. It could have been in birthing at that time, but I don't necessarily know. It probably --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Sergeant Major Sparks is the one helped stand that up.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: So, Sergeant Major Sparks took my place when I left Leavenworth.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay, so he --

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: So, when I left Leavenworth at the end of my tour to go to Afghanistan, John Sparks

became the CAC Sergeant Major.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay. So, it happened right after you left?

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: Yeah, so Sergeant Major Sparks took my place and then he spent a year there and then he moved on to TRADOCs.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: So, and then Sergeant Major Corey McCarty, I think, came in to take Leavenworth. But -- so yeah, this was the beginning of that change.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, you were the Combined Arms Center of Fort Leavenworth Command Sergeant Major from 1997 to early '04, right?

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: To April of '04.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, how many years?

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: Seven.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Seven years.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: Six, not quite seven.

SGM WATERHOUSE: I think we talked about --

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: So, November of '97 to April 2004. I don't know what, six years and --

SGM WATERHOUSE: I think we talked about it

off the recording yesterday, but you kind of explained how you ended up staying there so long?

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: So, when General Meigs selected me, after about nine months, he got selected for his fourth star and he went be the Commander of U.S. Army Europe. And then Lieutenant General Mike Steele came in and he's coming from Fort Bragg --

SGM WATERHOUSE: 82nd Airborne?

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: 82nd Airborne. Actually, he was Corps Commander.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Corps Commander, okay.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: But he's coming from, but he's coming from Bragg. Home of the 82nd Airborne. He's airborne, he's all that, he's got all those Hooah tabs, Pathfinder. I'm a logistician. Got my little quarter master regimental thing. Immediately my sense was, he's going to want to pick a new Sergeant Major. So, you know, I said, sir, here's the slate. He goes, no, no, I talked with Sergeant Major of the Army, you're doing a good job here. I'm just going to retain you as my Sergeant Major. I hadn't even been there, not even a year yet.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Well that makes sense, yeah.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: So, he opted to -- we had talked. I mean, we got along great.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Because for those people that are in the Army, we didn't have a Centralized Selection List back then, where you were limited to 30 months in position.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: Right. So, he kept me and then when he served as CAC Commander for almost three years. So, when he came in the next guy was Lieutenant General Jim Riley. And when General Riley got on board, I helped them all transition, told them, I said, sir, do you want a slate for a new Sergeant Major. I have been here about three and a half years. I've talked to the Sergeant Major of the Army and we're prepared to put a slate out for you to call for nominations. He goes, well, no, let's give it a couple of weeks and we did our thing, and he goes, no, I think I'm just going to ask Sergeant Major of the Army to let you stay on as my Sergeant Major. Will you stay? I'm like, yeah, okay, sir.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, how did you feel? Were

you ready to move on?

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: Sometimes I think you find that niche that your really good at and like I told the Sergeant Major of the Army when he talked to me about it, I said, if you think that I am being a roadblock; a toe to the road that I am hampering change and advancement, by all means, I need to go. But if you think I'm still value added -- and I had the same conversation with the TRADOC Sergeant Major, and I told them I said, you need to call and talk to the TRADOC Sergeant Major and the Sergeant Major of the Army.

SGM WATERHOUSE: And the TRADOC Sergeant Major was your immediate higher at headquarters?

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: Yeah. I said, if they're comfortable with it, sir, I'm fine with it. So, they did and they were like, nope. So, I stayed on with General Jim Riley. He served two years and retired and then General Scott Wallace became the next Combined Arms Center Sergeant Major and this is right after we've taken Saddam Hussein and all that, and his Sergeant Major was Sergeant Major Ken Preston in Iraq. So, when he came on board, I was like, okay, we're going to do a

slate. I've been here five and a half years, yeah. Five and a half, going on six. So, I'll do the slate and a couple of weeks ago, he had been traveling and a couple of weeks had gone by and I hadn't really seen him or talked to him, so, one day we're walking out of the headquarters and I said, hey, sir, I wanted to talk to you about doing a slate for you to interview new Sergeant Majors for the Combined Arms Center. He goes, no, I think I'm just going to ask you to stay on. I'm like, are you sure? I said, why? He goes -- I spoke -- because Ken Preston had just gotten selected for Sergeant Major of the Army. He goes, Ken Preston said, if I didn't keep you on, I'd be a fool. And I always listen to Ken Preston. I'm like, okay, sir. I'll stay. So, that's how I stayed there. Jack Tilly had me on slate, so, it wasn't like I was competing on other slates.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Your name had been put out there to move on.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: Yeah.

SGM WATERHOUSE: They weren't hampering further advancement.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: They weren't hampering me. My name was on other slates. I just wasn't getting selected. I was on the slate for TRADOC when Anthony Williams got selected. At that time, it was, you put in your packet, they review them. Commander picks out of how many were submitted, usually about four to five people that he wants to interview face-to-face, and then he figures out who, based on the conversation, who's next battle buddy is.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Mm-hmm.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: I never didn't take offense that I didn't get selected for other three- or four-star billets. I used to say, I must be doing something right because all my subordinates are getting those positions. Carl Christian moved on to be the Force Comm Sergeant Major; Anthony Williams went from the United States Army Sergeant Majors Academy to be the TRADOC Sergeant Major; Marvin Hill, who was a student of mine, went on to be the Second Comm Sergeant Major, as well as, MNFI, Multi-National Forces Iraq Sergeant Major. So, I said, I'm of the philosophy that some day the students will out do the teachers. Those people that I've mentored and

served with that were my --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Their doing well.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: -- subordinates, are now moving on. I never really served much with Sergeant Major Chris Greca who eventually became the Combined Arms Service Sergeant Major, well after, while, I guess, I was in Afghanistan. Then he came on to be CENTCOM Sergeant Major. When I first met Chris Greca he was a First Sergeant on the DMZ. So, you just see these people and people are like, doesn't that bother you? I'm like, why would it bother me? They talked to me that I was a good mentor. They looked at me as a mentor. I was very accepted for the most part, once we got over some rough patches, by my peers. During that time when I started, you had the first female Sergeant Major at the 2-Star level, as Mary Sullivan at -- she's a 2-Star Commander at Rock Island. She was our first GO/FO [General Officer/Flag Officer]-level female Sergeant Major. Then, I came in at CAC and then we slowly started to see them come on at MEDCOM at the 1-Star Level. Mary Sutherland then got a chance to go be the Commandant of the -- the Sergeant Major for the

Commandant of the Corps Cadets. First, female at West Point at that 1-Star billet. So, then you started seeing -- once you break that -- I always took it -- people ask me, well, how did you feel about being the first. I'm like, well, I really try not to dwell on it. Though it's always in the back of my mind. So, when I was a Battalion Sergeant Major I lived in a fish bowl; being the only one and only usually there. This little fish swimming around. So, then as I moved up, the bowl got smaller. Then, I was kind of like in --

SGM WATERHOUSE: A genie bottle?

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: Yeah. So, I went from a fish bowl to an eight ounce glass, at the next level. And then went I got up to the 3-Star Level, I said, my life is like living in a shot glass. Because everybody's watching.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah, yeah.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: And you're the first, and everybody's watching. So, if I screw up, it's my screw up, but women in the military, at that level, will all be painted with the same brush. Oh, we gave a woman a shot and she screwed it up. I'm like, if men, same

level, screw it up, it's a blip on the screen. Nobody coming behind them has a hard time filling in the spot. So, it was always in the back of my mind. I try not to let it define how I did my job, but I was always very conscious of it in the background that, okay, you might not want to do that. Something that I'd probably normally if I was a Battalion Sergeant Major, and I'm like, no, maybe I won't go do that. I just not do that. I just pass that up.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, after Leavenworth, we mentioned a little earlier in April of 2004, you were assigned to MacDill Airforce Base here in Florida, where you served the United States Army Central Command. How did that particular job come up?

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: So, I'm still at Leavenworth and I get a call from General Barno, in I think, February 2004, and I mean, I'd follow him, he'd just gotten his promotion to 3-Star. He was out at Tuzla Air Base training on something, but he's just gotten selected to go stand at this Combined Arms Forces Command thing in Afghanistan. So, he called me and I said, oh, congratulations, sir, on your promotion. I'm

glad to see your doing so well. He goes, yeah, how you doing? How do you like Leavenworth? I'm like, well, you know, I'm doing really well. I really like the job. There's always something new and different. He goes, well, how adventurous are you feeling this summer? I'm like, well, sir, I'm always up for an adventure. What did you have in mind? He goes, I'd like you to be my Sergeant Major in Afghanistan. I'm like, okay, well, I'm going to have to go talk to General Wallace about this because back in July of '03, he'd asked me to stay on --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: -- to be his Sergeant Major. I said, so, I'll have to get back to you. He goes, okay. So, next day, I go in and I said, he's got anything on the schedule? He said, oh, he's got some free time at this time. I'm like, okay, so, I went in, knocked on the door, I said, hey, sir, how you doing? We chitchatted. I said, I need to ask you a question. I said, I want to talk to you about this Sergeant Major position in Afghanistan that just came open. He said, what about it? The whole demeanor. I was just like --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: -- okay. I said, I'll tell you what, I'll come back a little bit later.

SGM WATERHOUSE: You might want to postpone that one.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: I said, how about I come back and talk to you a little bit later, because I have a phone call coming in. So, I'll come back and talk to you later. So, immediately, I go out and I find the aide, this aide, I said, is there something going on that I'm not aware of? He's normally not like -- I mean, his whole -- the whole thing changed. And he's goes, what did you say to him, Sergeant Major? What did you ask him? I said, well, I got a call asking me to be the Sergeant Major of this unit -- this unit they're -- this headquarters their setting up in Afghanistan. Oh, Sergeant Major, once he picks his team, he doesn't like change. I'm like, okay, fair, fair. So --

SGM WATERHOUSE: It hasn't even been a year, at that point.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: Right. It hadn't even been a year. But, I said, fair. So, I didn't bring it back

up. I went and email General Barno. I said, sir, I really appreciate your offer and the opportunity, however, out of loyalty to General Wallace, who was not overly enthusiastic or very receptive to the idea of my leaving. I mean, that's just what I took from his demeanor.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: I'm going to have to turn you down and here's the name of five Sergeant Majors I think will do a good job for you in Afghanistan, very respectfully, Sergeant Major Pritchett. I sent the email and didn't think anything more of it. Opportunity opened, door shut.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: I went on about my business; two weeks. Next thing I know, there's an email in my inbox forwarded to me from General Wallace and he never called me by my first name, but he sent me a note saying, "Cindy, come see me. It looks like you have a job if you want it." So, I print the email. Well, it's an email from General Barno to him, basically saying, hey, Scott, Dave Barno here, you know I

contacted your Sergeant Major about being my Sergeant Major in Afghanistan and as you know, she turned me down out of loyalty to you. But I want you to understand, here's all the reasons why I think she would be the Sergeant Major in Afghanistan. So, I printed that off, I went in and I said, hey, sir, you want to talk about this email? He goes, yeah, yeah, come in. We went over and he sat down in his chair and I was sitting in the couch, he pulled the chair around and we like knee to knee. If you know General Wallace, he's -- at that point, he can be like grandfatherly. It was like talking to a good friend or anything. So, we're knee to knee and he's like, Cindy, if you don't want to go to Afghanistan, I'll Dave Barno I won't let you go. And I sat back and I'm like, sir, first of all you have to understand, it has nothing to do with you and it has nothing to do with the job. I love my job at Leavenworth. I've been doing it for a long time. I think I'm really good at it, I don't think I'm a hindrance to progress or anything. I said, but all soldiers serve to be in the fight. I said, and when this is all said and done, and your retired and I'm

retired and your grandchildren or nieces or nephews say, Grandpa, Uncle, what did you do in the global war on terrorism, when their studying it in their history books? You're going to say you were the Third Corps Commander and your soldiers -- you were the Fifth Corps Commander and your soldiers captured Saddam Hussein and you liberated Baghdad. I'm going to tell my great nieces and nephews that I was a Sergeant Major in Leavenworth and I trained majors for seven years, while noble, is not how I want to be remembered in the global war on terrorism. And he just laughed and had this big old smile. He goes, well, when you put it that way. He goes, if you want to go, I'll let you go. He goes, however, we were working on this project -- they had asked us to take a look at NCOES again. Did it need to be revamped, whatever? Because you were still getting the same --

SGM WATERHOUSE: This is the Non-Commissioned Officer Education System?

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: Education System. We were still getting the same complaints that we heard from earlier --

SGM WATERHOUSE: The training's too late.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: Yeah, the training's too late.

SGM WATERHOUSE: I've already been doing that job.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: It's this and that. Also, because of all the deployments we were having such a backlog at NCOES. And all the --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Not being able to get guys and gals to school.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: -- get -- people are getting promoted, but they're not getting the schooling and by the time they get back, now their eligible for the next promotion, but they don't have the requisites school. We had that whole Non-Commissioned Office Education backlog.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: And how could we reduce it? And then your also have the reserve components talk about, so, we were doing this study, really kind of fell under the Center for Army Leadership, but Leavenworth was honchoing it. We had brought in not just Sergeants,

Majors and the NCOK. We brought in former Battalion Commanders, we brought in Company Commanders. We interviewed specialists. We interviewed folks that are in leadership positions, but without the training. People that had graduated from B-knock from PEEL, from the Warrior Leader Course, from the Basic Leader Course.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, all sides? All different levels --

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: This was really broad, it just wasn't the Sergeants Majors because we think sometimes we know all the answers to everything and we know best. They don't know what they don't know, but we know they don't know and we need to tell them how to fix it. So, we had a couple different courses of action that we had to brief, and all he said to me was, you can leave until this briefing has been given to the TRADOC Sergeant Major and the TRADOC Commander. I'm like, okay, that's a deal. So I -- he sent a note to General Barno --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Now, was General Barno already overseas?

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: He was en route. He got

there about two months before -- he got there in March.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: So, this is the end of -- I think, this is just the beginning of March, so, he got there mid-March to stand up --

SGM WATERHOUSE: And this was a brand new organization he was --

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: Yeah, so, the Combined Armed Center -- the Combined Forces Command Afghanistan was a three-Star Headquarters totally ad hoc. Made up of 100 percent augmentees. Unlike Iraq, where you had Multinational Corps Iraq, which was had augmentees to it, but its foundation was a Corps Headquarters. So, it came with a Commander and a staff that were already gelled and functioning as an organization.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Working together already, yeah.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: And then it was augmented with other individual augmentees to round out the organization.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, this was different?

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: This was totally -- this

was stand up 100 percent individual augmentees, which that's a whole other conversation. So, I had to do this briefing with -- so, what I'd said, I said, okay, I'll stay for the briefing, but you really need to have the Center for Army Leadership Sergeant Major Mike Lamb do the brief. For two reasons, sir. One, the TRADOC Commander doesn't like me. Well known fact. Him and I have butted heads a lot, and secondly, if anything out of this comes, he will be the lead guy to whoever my replacement is to have to take this to the next level. But I'll be here, so, I can answer the questions.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: I said, plus I just think it will go better if I'm not the one briefing it. And he said, yeah, I noticed you and him kind of irritate each other.

SGM WATERHOUSE: He just -- was it a personality -- he just didn't like you?

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: Yeah, it's a personality thing.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Oh, okay.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: So --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Hopefully, it doesn't affect your evaluation?

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: No, because -- funny thing you say about that --

SGM WATERHOUSE: I figured he'd be your senior rater.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: Well, in 1999 or 2000, 3-Star Level Sergeant Majors no longer got NCOERs.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Oh, so, you didn't have to worry about that.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: Three and 4-Star Level Sergeant Majors didn't get NCOERs anymore. We just got a letter.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: Your Commander wrote it.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Oh, okay. Like a level of continuity -- a letter -- like a letter of recognition, almost?

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: Well, yeah. So, 3 and 4-Star Commanders -- 3 and 4-Stars don't get OERs per se, they write a letter and say this is what they are going to do and then --

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, you didn't get an evaluation?

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: So, we didn't get evaluations. The last evaluation I got as a 3-Star Level Sergeant Major was I think, Jim Riley maybe? It could have been Mike Steel. I'd have to go back.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, the Army policy changed?

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: So, the Army policy changed. So, as long as I'm respectful I can speak my mind. So, anyway, we had these three courses of action. There's the old throw away, stand away, just tweak it around the edges. Dah, dah, dah, dah, dah. One of the others ones was, do we actually need four levels? Do you have to have a school for every promotion because you don't do one for Master Sergeant?

SGM WATERHOUSE: (Crosstalk 0:46:44)

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: I mean now, we do --

SGM WATERHOUSE: One percent (crosstalk 0:46:47].

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: Now, we do, but --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Now, we do, yeah.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: -- the rationale was see

how soldiers are going into these positions and they're doing positions earlier than later. Maybe you need to ban it that 5s and 6s, teams cruise squads, a little bit of platoon then it's more tailored to platoon, but more accompanied battalion. So you're banning them. So fives and sixes, sevens and eights and the nines. So he had these three bands a little bit spread out and you through this kind of structured self-development that everybody, when I initially brought it up, thought I was on drugs and whatever. So, we had that one and we had the National Guard Reserve. I said, but also what it does is it kind of spreads it out that they're not trying to, for the Guard and Reserve, it's also that with them being so close --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: -- it becomes problematic. We were trying to not throw the baby out with the bath water, take the best of it, but have it when -- because we didn't run all the numbers with the operational research guys, the ORSA guys to do the analysis. But it was like, so here's some options. And so when we finished the whole thing, even before he basically

finished saying, sir, this concludes my brief. What are your questions? The TRADOC Commander comes out and goes I just think I like things the way they are and I know the look on my face. Just said it all. And he looked at me and he's like, he goes, Sergeant Major Pritchett, I know that --

SGM WATERHOUSE: So he likes the backlog.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: So anyway, he looked at me, he goes, he goes, I can't exactly remember what he said to me. But basically, he was just like Sergeant Major Pritchett, I can see that you don't agree with my assessment that we just need to tweak it around the edges. And basically, what did he say to me? Because my wrist, my response was, oh, he goes, I know I frustrate you. I know you're frustrated. I can see that I frustrate you. I said, no sir, you don't frustrate me. You disappoint me. And you could've heard a pin drop in the room. I mean, it was all senior officers and my commander, he didn't stop me. What was he going to do? He didn't stop me. But what is he going to do, bend my dog tags and send me to Afghanistan. I was leaving.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: But I said, no, no, you don't frustrate. You disappoint me. I said, it was like you already had your mind made up. I mean, we didn't even finish the brief before you just say you -- doing nothing or tweaking it around the edges is what we've been doing.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: Forever. The soldiers are crying for something else. Well, they don't know what they don't know. Yeah, but they -- but my report -- my response was, but they do know what they don't like. They're not happy with this. It's not scratching their itch. Is that meeting their needs, tweaking it around the edges is just more of the same. General Wallace, to his credit, let me go. I mean, I wasn't disrespectful.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Did you get any feedback from the TRADOC CSM?

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: Oh yeah. I got taken out in the hall by the arm. You can't talk to him like -- Sergeant Major, I said, and if you're going to give me the same lecture, I will tell you the same thing applies

to you. I said, Sergeant Major, it's all there. From the training leader development study to what you were hearing when you were the commandant of the Sergeant Majors Academy to this, we went and did this study. Not because we thought it was a good idea. You told us to go do it.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: And then we do it and then you won't even give it any consideration or even send it over to the OPERA Research guys too. He goes, I just envisioned this costing more. I said, how is removing one level of NCOES --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: -- going to cost more. That doesn't even compute in my mind, but, okay, let's have the ORSA guys run the number, the OPERA research.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Especially when you talk about travel and TDY money and --

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: Right and then -- and the whole reserve component. I mean, so I was, I was disappointed. I was upset. I was more upset because I didn't think -- I think we did all this work and nothing

happened.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: It was just kind of like --

SGM WATERHOUSE: The work was all in vain.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: The work was all in vain
and it was like --

SGM WATERHOUSE: That's a waste of money.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: And it was like, well,
Pritchett was in charge of it. So I kind of did take it
as a personal affront.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Mm-hmm.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: Whether he intended that
way or not, I have no idea. And so I go off and then,
so I reported to -- did my household goods, did my
farewell, reported in the eight 19th, the 20th of April
to Fort -- to MacDill Air Force Base sign in at CENTCOM.
And I was one of those first ones where he didn't go as
part of a unit, so they didn't know -- so instead of
temporary change of station, me to Afghanistan, they
PCS'ed me to MacDill because they weren't sure what to
do. So and then I TCS'ed from here to Afghanistan for
the two years.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Which is how units typically now are -- go overseas.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: Right, so normally I would have stayed assigned to Leavenworth and just head to temp --

SGM WATERHOUSE: And just go on from there. Yeah.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: Right. Some of my household goods --

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, made you move here.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: Yeah, but all my household goods were in -- I mean I just put my household goods in storage --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Oh, okay.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: -- because I knew I was -- my stay here was just a Pcs sign-in --

SGM WATERHOUSE: And move out.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: -- move out. And so I did go to one of the first Keystone courses prior to going. So Keystone was the Joint Forces Command, the next level for Senior, Non-Commissioned Officers in joint. So I did go to that -- one of the first Keystone courses,

prior to going to Afghanistan, which was very helpful because I didn't know the world of joint manning documents and all that joint language. So that was very helpful for me. It was like a week long course and now, it's a little bit longer and it's more embedded. And along the line, I mean it's really transformed in a very --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Did it speak any strategic level stuff or more just joint level operations?

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: It was operational, strategic.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: It was both. I mean it was conducted at Joint Forces Command at the time, which no longer exist. Sergeant Major Mark Ripka was a Sergeant Major there at the time. So I mean --

SGM WATERHOUSE: I've heard a lot of good things about that course.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: Yeah, it was very good and it is very good then they still have it and now it's run out of National Defense University at the same place that runs the Capstone for the generals and all that.

So it's just gotten very much more robust. It's evolved and it's a good thing. I did that and then I came down here, kind of got all my stuff, got my gear, got my weapons qualification, all that stuff. And then got put on a flight to Qatar. And then from Qatar, I got drew my weapons and all my stuff for their, and then, took a C130 and two, and Bagram and they had a helicopter waiting for me to chopper me over to Kabul International where the commander's PSD picked me up and brought me in on the, arrived on the 5th of May.

SGM WATERHOUSE: For folks that don't know the history of that organization and you guys were standing it up, so the Combined Forces Command, Afghanistan or CFC-A and you were over there until April, 2006. You were over there a while.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: Yeah. I was over there just shy of two years. Well, actually, it was just two years.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So for that organization, in unclassified speak, what was the purpose of (crosstalk 0:54:57) together?

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: So it was the, Combined

Forces Command Afghanistan was responsible for the command and control of all U.S. and coalition forces in Afghanistan at the time. So --

SGM WATERHOUSE: How many countries were there?

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: You had the NATO countries. We had our NATO allies. So it's still a very small footprint when we were there because, of course, Iraq was going on.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: So we were still a very small (inaudible), so we had a joint task force underneath us, which before CFC Alpha was kind of the thing. It's just that as we started doing this more interagency, more building ministries and all that, you really needed a higher level headquarters so that the JTF commander could focus on what they need to be doing out at the operational and tactical level.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Right.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: We became the operational, strategic headquarters. So you have General Barno doing more interaction with President Karzai and the

Ambassador, the U.S. Ambassador and our allies, ambassadors and shaping and deciding the way ahead. We were instrumental as helping Afghanistan from the headquarters. How you're going to do this election; how are you going to plan it; how are you going to secure it and all that. So I also worked with the U.N. And then we also had we had the International Security Assistance Forces from ISAF there. So that was -- are they U.N., they asked -- who were they? International --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Security Assistance Forces?

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: Oh, yeah, ISAF, I mean --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah. International Security Assistance Forces.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: Yeah, they were the International Security Assistance Forces, so they fell under the EUCOM [European Command] commander was kind of their higher headquarters. So they were like a parallel structure to a CFC Alpha. But they had all the coalition forces - the Poles. Before, they were kind of eventually the only coalition forces that were truly embedded with the U.S. at that time were like Canadians, the U.K. We have some others, but it's that whole

command and control and who tells people what to do. So you, usually get synergy and I don't mean to disparage the other coalition forces, but when you're under like a NATO type organization, all As report to their national headquarters. You get 26 people trying to make a decision and you want to build consensus.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: In our headquarters, the deputy commander of CF -- of the command was a Brit. It was truly a joint in the coalition headquarters. RJ-5 was a British officer, the J-2 was, of course, a U.S. Intel officer. I mean, but it was a coalition headquarters. My job was to make sure that the commander's intent was being carried out and go out to the -- around Afghanistan to see the service members in the coalition to make sure they had the equipment they needed, to do what they needed to do. I also checked in on our training with the Afghan national Army. How was that going? What were we doing? Identify any challenges and concerns. You know, one of the challenges and concerns identified is over at the Cabo Military Training Center, this is where we're trying to

build an Army of soldiers and NCOs and officers all at the same time.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: And so those soldiers that show promise, you kind of fleeted them up to put them in the NCO kind of a track. And well, what I found out in going back and forth. So you had the U.S. doing kind of the basic stuff. You had the Brits doing like the NCO stuff and you had the French doing the officer stuff.

SGM WATERHOUSE: And these were like an academy?

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: They had a military training center --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: -- to do this.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: But, of course, they're on six-month rotations.

SGM WATERHOUSE: The Brits and the French?

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: Right. We had Task Force Phoenix, which was our training mission guys. Most of times it was guard soldiers that were -- that had this

training mission, but they were here for a year. They were being the -- I can't remember what ETT stood for, but they were embedded trainers.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: But that were with the Afghans as we're training them. And then we transition them out to be out into the field, to their units after they graduate, we stay with them until we were embedded along the way to keep sure, keep making sure that they're following our tech, the techniques, tactics, and procedures that they were taught. But what I was noticing is, and our goal was to train the Afghans how to conduct this training so then they can train the Afghans. So it was like we were supposed to be training the trainers.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah. Yeah.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: And every time there's a rotation, there'd be a change in the curriculum. Because I was talking to the commandant, the Afghan commandant --

SGM WATERHOUSE: For the NCO Corps in the Officer Corps, yeah.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: And for the basic --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Oh, our guys didn't --

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: -- because everybody wants to make an impression even -- because what they were doing in Task Force Phoenix sometimes is they would rotate people out of KMTC out of comparable military training center instead of keeping them there for the whole year. They put them down there for three months. So that guy leaving this other guy, oh, I got a great idea, let's change the curriculum.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Oh, no.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: So once I saw this, I went back to the commander and I went back to a Combined Training Security Assistant, CSTC or OMC-Alpha, the name changes, but the commander that was over a task force, Phoenix and I sat down with her, everybody, I said, we got to come up with a solution. And the solution is that curriculum doesn't change unless the commandant wants it to change. Unless there's something going on down range that requires us to change --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: -- this curriculum, we need

to make this curriculum stable so that when you train these Afghan leaders to become the cadre --

SGM WATERHOUSE: In their units, yeah.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: -- at schoolhouse and if they go forward that they can learn -- even we don't change it that much.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Right.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: I said, and even with our changes, because of our two wars, we only change -- we've implemented it so we can change technique, insert techniques, tactics and procedures into the curriculum that are of value because it was something we've learned down range of lessons learned, but we just don't change for the sake of change because I want a new NCOER are or an OER billet.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Right.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: Which was what I perceived as what was happening. So we set it up that it had to be the commandant of -- the Afghan commandant had to agree and sign off on any of these --

SGM WATERHOUSE: So the Afghan commandant of it.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: Yeah, not us.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: Afghan commandant, he has a U.S. counterpart mentor that can advise them. But even the colonel that was advising this guy, he's like, oh Sergeant Major, you're right. I mean --

SGM WATERHOUSE: It's that guy's soldiers?

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: Yeah.

SGM WATERHOUSE: They're not going out there -

-

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: Not -- I mean and then we identified like we were out watching them at a range one day and I'm like, these guys can hit the broad side of a barn. I mean, what the heck? Well, it comes to find out a lot of Afghans have Vitamin K deficiencies, so they have problems with their eyesight. So we figured out get exams, we started getting them glasses. All of a sudden, they started hitting stuff. Who knew? But -- so it was very challenging. I mean, and then just teaching them the basic things that we take for granted. Like firing discipline. Okay, you can no longer see them. Quit firing and quit wasting your ammo.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: They're over the berm. You can't see them. Quit shooting, save your ammo. So it was things that we, as soldiers, take for granted. And one day they came to me and said we've got to get them an NCO creed. I'm like, excuse me, the Afghan Army does not need an NCO creed. Oh yeah, Sergeant Major, I need an NCO creed. How about we just teach them to shoot, move and communicate? How about we just do that? I said, because they already have a creed, they're Muslim. They're religion is their creed, their religion, if you all haven't figured it out by now, guides everything that they do, that's their creed. You don't need to make something separate. Everything that they do every -- all the decisions they make are all based in surrounded about their religion. That is their creed for everything that they do. I mean, I think eventually they gave him a creed or something. I don't know, but my whole point was, that is not the most important thing we need to be focusing on. So those were -- and then going down range and talking to soldiers. We were on the border one day and young soldier is asking me why

couldn't they follow the enemy across the Pakistani border? Look, they engage the enemy. They're running away --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Same thing our soldiers experienced in Vietnam (inaudible) and Laos.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: Right, but you just don't say, well, we don't do because I said so.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Right.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: Soldiers today want an explanation. I said, look, I'm not giving you the answer. You're not going to like my answer, but Pakistan's a sovereign country, Dah, Dah, Dah, Dah, Dah ; blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. That's why and you just need to understand, you don't have to like it.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: But you need to understand it and why it's important and why we don't do it. But soldiers appreciated that. I said and so, and you know today, soldiers today because I said so is --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Why he's got -- you got to give him a why.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: You got to give him the

why.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Whether it's good or bad or ugly.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: Right and by the way, kids there, a whole much, a lot smarter than you think and --

SGM WATERHOUSE: More teaching soldiers and leaders to be adaptive thinking --

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: Right, you want them to be critical thinkers.

SGM WATERHOUSE: If you don't tell me why, how can I be a critical thinker?

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: Right.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Telling me just because is not critically thinking.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: So, that was my job, my charter, while I was there. I went and visited the Special Forces guys, which funny vignette. I go to one of my first visits, it's with some SF guys and some Marines and it's down south. And I get off the helicopter and the first --

SGM WATERHOUSE: One of the more dangerous areas.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: Yeah, I get off the helicopter. Of course, you see I wear short hair, so in my battle rattle with my helmet and my flag vest, I get off, get in a vehicle, get over to the headquarters and I start taking my stuff off. And I got the CENTCOM Star Major with me. I got the 25th Division, Sergeant Major with me and then, of course, you got the new Combined Arms Center, Combined Forces Command Afghanistan Sergeant Major. So I get, I can get all my gear off and SF guy looks at me, he goes, you're a woman. (Laughs) And I'm like, and I just was like, oh my God, when did that happen? And, of course, everybody's just started laughing. I'm like, I said, I get it, sir. I am the last person you expected to get off that helicopter is the Combined Arms Center. As the Combined Forces Command Afghanistan, Sergeant Major, you are expecting some crusty all infantry armor, artillery NCO to get off of it. And you got the female logistician. So we go into the briefing and I started asking all these questions. He goes, you really do understand this? I'm like, yep, that's why the commander picked me. And Curt -- Sergeant Major Brownhill from CENTCOM and Sergeant

Major Ash. I've known them for a while, they were just kind of chuckling in the background. And then, of course, you go down to see the Marine Corps and the Range First Sergeant, they introduced me and before he could catch himself, he's like, but you're a woman. And I'm like, can I just ask --

SGM WATERHOUSE: What year is this?

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: You could see he said it and you can almost see his hand tried to like --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Oh, no --

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: And I looked at him, I said, I said, you know what, they always told me that you Marines were pretty sharp, pretty quick on the uptake. Because Sergeant Major, I said, First Sergeant, it's okay, I am not what you expected. And I understand that. How about you tell me about your mission? Let's go see your Marines. And then I left. He was, oh, I apologize. I said, it's okay. And for me it's like I understood I was not what they expected. So there's no point in getting upset about it.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Well, I was going to say sometime in the conversation about this you were the

first, female non-commissioned officer in this, in a sub-unified command so --

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: Yeah, in combat.

SGM WATERHOUSE: It should be a little shocking for them because there's never been one before.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: There's never been one before me. And to date there has not one been after me. Yeah, so -- but it goes back to once they get over the shock and then you start at, they started asking questions, our briefing, you're asking them questions and they're like, oh crap, she really gets this. Then it's like, okay, no big deal. Even the Afghans, I'll never forget when I went to see, I think it was 20 First Corps and, of course, we helicopter in. We get there and I can go into the headquarters. I start taking my stuff off. Here's this African general, he's all psyched about the Combined Forces Command Afghanistan. Sergeant Major comes to see him and then it's a woman, so the dynamics initially or there was a lot of apprehension and he started talking and then when he made the connection of who my boss was, being the Lieutenant General Barno, then it was the whole I want

list came out. I want, I need, made that connection. Then after that, it wasn't an issue. And General Barno was very good at including me in everything. we had to go to a road opening ceremony with President Karzai, so they had a big luncheon and, of course, the women are kept separate from the men except for one woman was in the luncheon, me. So, he was sitting next to President Karzai, I was like three or four down and he said an interpreter next to me. And across the way were like Afghan generals and ministers on Karzi's staff and we're eating, they're looking at me and finally one of them brave enough says, who are you?

SGM WATERHOUSE: You weren't wearing a head scarf or anything either were you?

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: No, just wearing my ball cap, but we were inside, so I had taken it off and they're like, who are you? So through the interpreter I explained who I am, what I do, what I do for General Barno, what I do and okay. When General Barno left, I was invited to the farewell. I was one of the only -- I was the only woman at the farewell that the Afghans hoasted, the CHOD [Chief of Defense] at the time,

(unintelligible) he had been the CHOD very long and I -
chief of defense.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: The Afghan chief of
defense, like our chairman of the Joint Chiefs --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: -- or CENTCOM commander,
whatever. So I was wearing our new ACUs at the time.
We had just gotten the new ACU uniform from the Brown
ones we were wearing. So when we were now in ACUs and
it -- he was enamored by the uniform. So he was asking
me all kinds of questions. I'm explaining about --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Digital patterns --

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: -- pattern and the whole
thing. And he goes, what do you do for the General? So
I explained it to him. He goes, do I need one of those?

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah. Well, they eventually
got one because I met him.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: They did.

SGM WATERHOUSE: At Fort Polk.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: Yes. Yes. That's how we
started. Do I need one of those? Sir, you should have

one.

SGM WATERHOUSE: That's awesome.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: Then my --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Actually, she went to the academy.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: She did go to the academy?

SGM WATERHOUSE: I can remember his name, but he went to the camp.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: I can see his face, but I can't remember his name. And he was there for about six, seven years.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: Because I used to see him at a AUSA and because I said -- I talked to Curt Brownhill about it, I talked to the SMA about it. I said, look, we're primed. Should I have one of these? Yes. You should have one of these. In fact, at every level you have at your corps, you should have one of these. So we started the ball rolling. It didn't take place until, I think, a Sergeant Major Dan Wood, who took my place when he came in 2006 really got the thing moving. But yeah, even the corps, I mean the JTF

Sergeant Majors they were all on board. They all promoted it when they were out and about visiting units and working with the Afghans, but we just brought visibility to the role of the NCO and kind of laid out and then tried to even have senior enlisted engagement. So once they got their sergeants majors into their key billets, the follow on after I left, I know that they did Sergeant Major forums and our Sergeant Major of the Army Conference, they would hold them there in Afghan --

SGM WATERHOUSE: For like their corps guys?

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: Yeah, but the SMA or the -- usually SMA always came and the CENTCOM senior enlisted and usually our Center Marsan. They would try to, the leaders from Army Central Command would come in there and support, either the CFC Alpha eventually becoming 2S4A, eventually becomes whatever. And even with our ISEF counterparts, they're senior non-commissioned officers over there. We tried to get some synergy and how we helped instead of attacking them separately, it was how do we get some synergy so we're all trying to get them moving in the same direction and not confusing them because that's very easy to do in these type of

operations. But the worst thing about Combined Forces Command in Afghanistan was it was a headquarters of individual augmentees.

SGM WATERHOUSE: And how they rotate out a lot?

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: So when we first setup the headquarters, the only three people on one-year tours, was myself, the commander and the chief of staff.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Everybody else was six months or less.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: Everybody else was six months. So we happened to be in a briefing one day and I don't know, I don't even know what it was on, but anyway, the commander got very frustrated and he's like, are people not listening to what I said? I looked around the room, I said sir, three-fourths of these people didn't hear what you said last month.

SGM WATERHOUSE: They just go here.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: They just got here. I said, our problem is, look, the lower level guys, they can rotate out in six months. I said, but we have got to talk to General Abizaid and SATCOM that your one,

your two, your three, your four staff --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Your staff.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: Your staff and their deputies have to be on one-year tours. Otherwise we'll be like Korea. No sooner than you get here and figure out what you're doing, it's time -- we'll be worse than Korea. They're, I mean we've been in Korea in 50 years, one year at a time when you really think about it.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: Now, we have two-year tours and other things, but I mean, you get there, you figure out what you do, you go on mid-tour,

SGM WATERHOUSE: Mid-tour leave?

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: Mid-tour leave, you come back and you're already counting about your short time and you're ready to go. I'm not -- and I identified some key NCO positions that I needed to be one-year billets regardless of service. Then the other problem is when they first setup the headquarters, officers made the joint manning document.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Hmm.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: So when I got there and

they needed to go on a convoy somewhere, I don't know who came to me, but they're like, hey Sergeant Major, we need to go on a cowboy. We need some soldiers and drivers. I'm like and you're coming to me. Why? I don't even have a driver. It's me. Usually, I go with the PSD, with the boss.

SGM WATERHOUSE: I was going to ask you to, did you travel separately typically, or did you --

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: Yeah, I travel separately. So unlike Iraq, we didn't move by ground a lot in Afghanistan because of the nature of the country. So I didn't really need a PSD or any type of, I mean I eventually got an admin NCO to keep track of stuff when I was out running around and helping me request flights, helicopters and stuff. At certain times, I traveled with the commander and we'd go to the same place where we go separate ways once we get on the ground.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah, once you're on the ground.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: But usually, wherever I went, once I got there, then they provided me my travel, my transportation and security if we were going outside

the Ford operating base. But because of just the nature of Afghanistan, I usually flew by Black Hawk everywhere I needed to go. And I was very cognizant about the limited -- everybody wants air. So I always tried to figure out where things were going so I could be on that flight. It's usually meant I became the senior person when we would go, but I tried not to say. Even if we were having like a logistics run to somewhere, I need to be on that bird. Can you have it come swing back from Bagram, swing by Kabul, pick me up and take me instead of me requisitioning my own helicopter with an attack helicopter escort. Because I'm like, nah. I was just trying to be cognizant of our resources. I think people were appreciative of that and so I went back to him. I said, you guys want to go to Bagram by ground, then you're going to have to pull it out of your section. Well, we're all officers. I'm like, yeah, you are. I said, because the only enlisted people were the --

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, the manning document didn't --

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: Right --

SGM WATERHOUSE: -- have that.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: -- was the guard unit that augmented the compound for force protection. So they were the force protection unit that manned all the guard towers and provided guard duty. So I'm not pulling them --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Right.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: -- to go be convoy. And then it became it's like -- I went to the commander -- I went to the chief of staff. He goes -- and they were all complaining. I'm like, you don't have any worker bees. I'm like, yeah. Who did the manning document?

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah, if it's not on the piece of paper --

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: I said, who did the manning document? Well, did and this one -- I said, you didn't have any and NCOs that are helping you? Oh, well, no Sergeant Major. I said, and knowing I was coming here, he didn't even think to send it to me to ask me if I wanted to look at it because I could have told you then and there, okay. You got all these people but you ain't got no worker bees. I mean we got it fixed, but I told him, I said, it's not something you going to fix

overnight though.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: Though, we did call SATCOM. We said, look, we need a special review of the JMT early, the joint manning document because --

SGM WATERHOUSE: How often does it normally change? A couple years.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: Yeah. They usually review it annually, but I wanted it. They had just submitted, I said, I want it done now.

SGM WATERHOUSE: With individual augmentees --

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: I said --

SGM WATERHOUSE: -- it should be faster.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: I said, I need to identify, we don't have any enlisted worker bees. We don't even, I said, I don't need a ton of people. I need at least one. I just need one.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So even in the staff section, there was --

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: Very few. We had the enlisted aide. We didn't even have an NCO, admin in the Commander's front office. We had the aide, an XO and a

chief of staff.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Did you have like J-1 NCOs, J-2. I mean, there was some?

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: We had, yeah, but they were like E-7s. You're not -- but they were like --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Like private (crosstalk 1:21:17).

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: They were like the NCOIC. They didn't have any like specialists. They didn't have -- they were just building it out. So I mean, as we got more, I said, look, these people can do the job of what you're asking them to do, but if you want to go somewhere or do something, if you take him away from that, then this is going to get processed. That's not going to get done.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: So like it or not, I don't like to use the word fluff, but you have to build in people that you have to do guard duty. You know you're going to have to run convoys, you know you're going to have to do this. So every section has to have a couple of extra people that can pull duties.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah, yeah.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: You just can't run this.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Unless you're going to hire some contractors to do it.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: So you just can't have a manning document just to do a specific function and anything that's one deep --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Single point of failure.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: Is a single point of failure in a combat zone.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Can't go on leave. You can't do all kinds of stuff.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: They're like, good point Sergeant Major. I'm like, yes. I mean, so we got it right.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Well, it was a new organization.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: I mean, we got it right. I mean, it's just a growing pain of a new organization. And so we got it right. And eventually, I would say 90 percent of the headquarters ended up on one-year, 90 percent of headquarters were all --

SGM WATERHOUSE: That was CENTCOM Commander could approve that [one year tours]?

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: Well we went all the way back to the Joint Staff.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: I mean, CENTCOM supported it. We went back, we briefed the SECDEF and everybody and the services because and I understood. They got to come out of somewhere. Got it.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So in your two years there though, that was -- it was -- you saw that change.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: Yeah, we saw that change. I mean, when I left, we were never at 100 percent manning, but we were always well over 90 percent. Which when you consider an individual augmentees I don't think that's a bad thing. I mean it's just the nature of the beast. I mean, we were individual augmentees. CSTC-A which was Combined Security Transition Command - Afghanistan was again, individual augmentees. Across all the services that the units. We did get some units that came in to augment, but they came in for a specific mission. So you had the task force Phoenix guys, which

usually a National Guard division that came into be the embedded trainers.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Trainers, yeah.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: You had like, we had a National Guard unit that they came in to be our base defense. They ran the base defense operations center that took care of perimeter security for the compound. We did get units in like that.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: When we did some requests for forces we tried, if we could request forces where we could get a squad, a platoon and a company --

SGM WATERHOUSE: With their own chain of command.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: Yeah, that was helpful. But the headquarters when I did my exit interview, I said, if you ever have to do this again, don't do it this way. It's just hard because it takes a while for -- I never served what General Barno, but I had met him before through the Soldier 21 Task Force. And I've seen it because I've been at Leavenworth and commanders, the Chief of Staff of the Army used to hold his general

officer conferences there. So is the host sergeant major?

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: I would see all this. So I knew most of these general officers and so him and I, we -- and he asked me to be his Sergeant Major, so we hit it off. But I didn't know Colonel Thompson Lucas from the man in the moon who was the Chief of Staff then I got a Brit I got to get to know and then I got all the, I mean, funny story. We're in the -- one day working in an OPERA -- join a headquarters this young Air Force Staff Sergeant comes down to my office and asked if she can talk to me. She's very upset. I let her come in. I said, what's the problem? She goes, the surfers class down in the, the Army Sergeant down in the J-1, no, the SJS, he was cursing and Dah, Dah, Dah, Dah, Dah. I said, okay, all right, I'll take care of it. I'll go down and find this NCO. I said, what does he at you? Did he curse you out? He goes, no, he was cursing out the other Air Force guy, but it really upset me.

SGM WATERHOUSE: He worked with the secretary of the General Staff?

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: Yeah.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: The Secretary General Staff
NCOs.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: The SFC, Army guy was in
charge.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: It's a WIAS tasking, right,
individual tasking. It's an infantry guy --

SGM WATERHOUSE: First time working with a lot
of females probably.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: Well --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Or joint --

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: -- joint females, yeah, the
whole wrong mixture. So I go down and I talked to the
Air Force Master Sergeant, the other, no, the Air Force
staff, the other Staff Sergeant that was getting -- that
got chewed out. I called him in my office. I said, I
understand Sergeant First Class so and so chewed you out
and used a pretty foul language. He goes, yes, Sergeant
Major, but I really screwed up. I deserved it. I said,

so you weren't offended, you weren't upset? No. You know it's an Army guy, doing his Army thing. No, no, it didn't offend me and I did, he goes, I really did screw it up. I'm like, okay. So I call the Army Sergeant First Class and I said, okay, look, you just, you're going to have to watch it. Okay. You have to -- got to understand your environment and you got to understand you're in a joint environment. You also got to understand you're in a Three-Star Headquarters and we don't really use that kind of lang -- you shouldn't be using that kind of language. You're not down on the infantry line or down in an infantry platoon. So what might be acceptable down there is not acceptable up here. And he understood and he goes, and you went back and he talked to the guy and he apologized. I said, and you need to talk to the young female Staff Sergeant, because she was the one that was more upset than the guy who chewed out. So then I called her back in and I said, look, talk to Sergeant First Class. He understands, he'll probably come and talk to you, blah, blah, blah, blah. So I'm sitting there and then she goes, oh, thank you, Sergeant Major. She goes, do you

think I could have a hug? I'm like, excuse me? She goes I was just so upset and you just think I could have a hug and I just put down, I just sat there, said, no, I don't think so. So I'm going to go back to what I was doing and when I turned around and you just want to not be standing in my office. About five minutes later the phone rings and it's Chief Brownhill from CENTCOM, Command Chief Brownhill, who's the CENTCOM, senior enlisted. And I said, Curt, I know I'm a little new to this joint environment thing, but the senior NCOs in the Air Force, hugged their airmen when they're upset.

(Laughs)

SGM WATERHOUSE: It's a culture thing. I don't know.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: He's like, what? I said, I'm just trying to understand. And I told him what happened. He goes, I'll be there tomorrow. I want -- I said, no, no, no. I'm not going to have you -- I'm not going to have you crucify the child. I mean, I just, I just want to know.

SGM WATERHOUSE: How about a handshake? How's that?

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: I just want to know if this is an Air Force thing. He's like, no, it's not an Air Force thing. Okay. I just thought I'd ask. There's always great levity in any of these things that we do.

SGM WATERHOUSE: I wanted to hit on a couple of things real quick. You got over there in early 2004 and I don't know, within months or you get into the heavy election.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: Yeah.

SGM WATERHOUSE: And so you're building this organization, you're realizing why we don't have the people up here. How did that, from what you were talking about it, how did that go about? I mean how --

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: The Afghans were pretty much responsible for planning the election. I mean the Ministry of Interior was the lead supported by the Afghan -- the Ministry of Defense and the Afghan National Army. And then the JTF, the Joint Task Force of the U.S. division was responsible, so,--

SGM Waterhouse: For security?

CSM(R) Pritchett: No, we were actually more about ballot distribution. So we use the helicopters to

get the ballots out to the remote sites and the Afghan National Army and the MOI and the Afghan National Police were responsible for polling station security, all that. And for the most part, they did a -- they had a good plan. We --

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, the organization didn't really happen --

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: We were like the QRF.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: We were there. This was good to have an Afghan face. We are in the background, but if something happened, I mean they had their own QRF, but if something happened, we were there to back it up. So that first election, I think they had 90 percent of the population voted. That's better than a U.S. turnout on any given day, any given year. We had a few challenges like, the problem with the Afghans is 85, 88 percent of the country's illiterate. So it's not a ballot that you and I would think of. So it was interesting to see how the U.N. had to put these ballots together. You're running as a candidate. Your symbol is a broomstick. I'm running my symbol is a chicken --

SGM WATERHOUSE: I was thinking it would be a photo or something.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: Yeah. So it's a photo of the individual and then a symbol.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: And you're voting the symbol.

SGM WATERHOUSE: I got you. So every candidate had a symbol with the photo by them. Then, so they'd marked the photo -- marked that and then to because it's all paper. It's not like what we do. So to ensure that nobody voted more than once they had to dip their finger into this purple ink.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Mm-hmm. I remember seeing that. So initially, I think, within the first hour we realized that a couple of the -- some of the ink was not permanent.

SGM WATERHOUSE: It wiped off.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: It could wipe off, but we caught it pretty quick and we don't think anybody voted twice. But we found the problem, we solved it or the U.N. did. They found it, who solved it, but everybody

tried to make a big deal out of that versus that 90 percent of the population turned out to vote. Oh by the way, there was an attack. There was a rocket attack on one polling station. The people went for cover and then they got back in line and stood in line. And it was at a polling station where it was predominantly women, but and so the women turned out to vote. I did a CNN interview, but it never aired because I was talking about how successful it was. It was this, that, and the other. And we were trying to make a big deal out of the ink and this, that, and the other. And I'm just like that's nothing compared to and I said --

SGM WATERHOUSE: That's a means voting.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: Yeah, it was a means of trying to make sure that nobody voted twice.

SGM WATERHOUSE: The fact is, they showed up and voted.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: The fact is they showed up and voted. What did you think of cars I just said, this, that or the other? That I did tell them. I mean, so we had the presidential election was very successful. Then a year and a half later we did the parliamentary

elections --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Parliamentary ones, yeah.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: They were just as successful. But I did tell people, I thought after we elected the parliamentarians, I'm like they were -- I was down there watching them as they were getting ready to put all the information together, for the parliamentarians when they all came to Kabul from their provinces and everything so we could teach him how to be a parliamentarians. So they had printed all this material. And I'm looking at him, I'm like, so what are you guys going to do with that? Oh, we're going to give it to the parliamentarians. I said so 88 percent of the population can't read and write. Of the elected officials, how many of them do you think can read and write? What are you saying Sergeant Major?

SGM WATERHOUSE: Twenty percent.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: What are you saying, Sergeant Major? I'm saying, I'm thinking that might not be the best way to communicate with them. They did come up with some more visual -- I think they made a couple and they were giving them the equipment they needed, so

they made like, some CDs and so they could play them on
a --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Listen to it, listen to them,
because that's how they're going to learn. If you want
to put him in school and teach him how to read and
write, but that's not the quickest way of figuring out
how you're going to -- but I did tell them, I said,
things just got more complicated in Afghanistan by doing
this parliamentary election so soon. And they were
like, well, what do you mean? I said before we could go
to Karzai, you could go to President Karzai and he could
work with as ministers and he could mandate crap to get
done.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Almost like a king.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: Yeah. Almost like a king.

SGM WATERHOUSE: A monarchy.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: Or a monarchy. I said, now
that you have established a parliament --

SGM WATERHOUSE: They have a say.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: They have a say, so things
are not going to move as fast and as quickly as before.
We're going to get frustrated, he's going to get

frustrated because now they get to approve who he picks for MOD.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Because that was the first time in like 30 years they even had a parliament.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: Right, right. I mean it's that they -- it's just that with the Taliban and everything that happened, they just lost a whole generation of -- people left then, you just had the religious education and then girls weren't going to school.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: So you just lost this whole generation of children and the problem for them even in building their ministries was yeah, you had some expats that come back that could help, if you put in positions that can help run ministries, but just like any organization, it's not the guy at the top. It's all that stuff like for us, it's those middle managers. It's those NCOs. It's those mid-level leaders --

SGM WATERHOUSE: The Staff Sergeant everybody wants --

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: -- that makes things

happen.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: And you have a lack of human capital and they don't have the capacity to absorb everything that we're throwing at them on the civilian side in the ministry. Well, even in the Army. But -- and then I think the other thing we my hindsight, my view on it, now that I have my Masters in International Relations is I think, we made a mistake in trying to do a central government. They always had type a type of central government, but everything was really done in the provinces, kind of like states do what we do. And I think our -- we were so focused on building the central government that really Afghanistan's made up of five major tribes. They're all in different pro -- and then you have the provinces. So like we say, all politics is local.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Mm-hmm.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: Same thing applies in Afghanistan. So it's at the province level. It's where the governors are. It's -- and I don't -- we put governors in. We did this, that and the other, but we

didn't really give them any resources or authority to -- everything had to funnel through Kabul. And if it's coming through -- when it comes in, it wasn't necessarily always going out where it needed to be.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Sifter

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: In Sergeant Major Pritchett's humble opinion. I mean, it was an interesting eye opening tour. It me think about world affairs and world politics differently, which what's led me to decide to go get my Masters in International Relations predominantly on the CENTCOM region. Go figure. But yeah, I mean --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Any other particular takeaways or lessons learned from that two years that you applied later maybe? Because you came back here to CENTCOM.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: Yeah, I came back here to CENTCOM.

SGM WATERHOUSE: And worked in the J-5.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: I came back here and worked in the Joint -- J-5 in the Security Cooperation Division and I was, all I asked was because I was approved to --

I was in the 30 over 35 I was in, I was approved to 35 years early on. So I knew in my MRD, my mandatory retirement date was, but it was 2008, July of 2008. So, all I asked when I came back was giving me a year so I can do my medical, all that.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Prepare to retire.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: Prepare to retire, transition, get my household goods out of Kansas and bring them to Florida. The General Iverson served Major Brownhill said, oh, no, your MRD is not until 2008. We've talked to the SMA, we have a plan for you. We have stuff we want you to do. We want you to help us out with some projects. So they were -- in Security Cooperation, we always focus on things and officer related, PME in Security Cooperation when they're trying to help our partner.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Prior military education.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: Yeah. So we always focus on in our partner nations, how to help transform their officer corps or get them to do Professional Military Education, or on things, so what Sergeant Major Brownhill was like, wanted me to do is to help the

security, the embassies and particularly the military side of the U.S. embassies, the SDOs, the security defense officials or security cooperation officers. And the defense attaché is about the value of helping them try to transform. Or I took the scope of saying, well, I don't know if we want to establish NCO course. How about we first get them to understand the value of having a professional enlisted corps. How do you professionalize their force first before he jump to this thing called a non-commissioned officer?

SGM WATERHOUSE: Mm-hmm.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: Because in the Central Asian states, they're more off the Russian model. So they're never going to trust non-commissioned officers. And then in some of the Middle Eastern countries, some are modeled more off the Brits like the Jordanians are more off the British model. So it's -- and then a lot of them just had conscription.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: It's like, let's first get them -- they know they want something, they just don't know what they want. I said, but before we go full

board and saying, you need to have this thing called Non-Commissioned Officer Education System and this, I bet how about we figure out how to first get them to professionalize their force. Are they going to have conscripts always? Maybe, but it will, they will -- and they wanted to move away from conscription.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: They wanted to have a smaller bit of it and then a more professional force.

SGM WATERHOUSE: How do you convince those guys to stay to become Noncommissioned Officers?

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: Yeah. So how do you first professionalize it then, figure out what it is they want to do next. I said you got to kind of use the crawl, walk, run method in this. So we've been pretty successful in some of them. Some of them are I said, this is like climbing Mount Everest, she only got to do it -- you can only do it one step at a time. You're not going to be able to do it in all countries all at the same time. So where it gets legs is where you make your focus and then once you get that one and somebody sees it as a model, oh look what they're doing. Maybe it'll

catch up.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Well, we have several armies -- guys and gals go to the Sergeant Major Academy.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: Yeah, some of --

SGM WATERHOUSE: That's part of that too, right.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: So, when I was a student at the Sergeant Majors Academy, I think we had, I mean I had an international officer, we had a Botswanan in my class. I think we had maybe five or six. Now, you look at the Sergeant Majors Academy, it's almost comparable, what you see at the Command General Staff College where you have 60 or 70 --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Different countries.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: -- different countries at the Sergeant Majors Academy. And it's not the traditional U.S., U.K., Australia, it's I mean, so the more of that happens, but so I was -- that was my task, helping figure out how to come up with a strategy, come up with a plan to do that. And then General Abizaïd left. And we brought an Admiral Fallon. We brought a Navy guy in to run a ground war. Don't ask me why. And

he brought with him a guy named Sergeant Major Morin, Jeff Morin. So Admiral Fallon initially was to scheduled to go be the PAY COMM COMMANDER and then got sent over to be the CENTCOM commander and he had picked Jeff more to be his Sergeant Major in Pay Comm, but he brought him to CENTCOM. (Laughs) So when Sergeant Major Morin arrived, I was -- it was -- I was way senior by DOR and very well-known in the command. So I went up to him and said, hey Sergeant Major, I'm approved to leave here -- I got my retirement orders for July of 2008, but I can always call Army and depart early if it would be -- if it's more beneficial to you because I'm all done in the command and I don't want -- because what happens is the CENTCOM Sergeant Major would travel a lot and Sergeant Major Pritchett would be back here. And she would take care of like the superintendent --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: -- the reared detachment Sergeant Major and handled all the day to day issues and problems that -- so by default sometimes people are like, well she's CENTCOM Sergeant Major. And I'm like, oh no, no, no. I am the Army Elements Sergeant Major

who kind of fills in, is a rear detachment person.

SGM WATERHOUSE: I was going to ask you, so as the -- because I think you were actually assigned as the head -- Army Element (crosstalk 1:44:24) leader.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: Yeah, so as the Army Elements Senior Enlisted Leader, you're really just like a Company First Sergeant for all the Army folks. So, and then you did work in the J-5, as part of that --

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: Yeah. I was kind of in both places.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Wasn't really too different (crosstalk 1:44:38).

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: Yeah. No it was this kind of in both places.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: So each of the services in this Joint Headquarters is responsible for disciplining -- you need a level of discipline before you go to the old man to the Four Star.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Right, you were the Army's --

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: So we're the Army's person

--

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: There's no such thing as a company grade Article 15 in a Joint Headquarters because the lowest level you get is probably a lieutenant colonel, who's the Army element guy. Well, normally it's the GOFO. It's the senior Army or Air Force or general that's the element commander. And then they can appoint somebody that does the daily, it's usually an O-6.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Who was your boss?

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: A Lieutenant Colonel Schrader, a great guy. I got along with him great. So anybody that failed PT tests, overweight, all the this traditional stuff that you do in the company.

SGM WATERHOUSE: That's what it sounds like.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: All that housekeeping.

SGM WATERHOUSE: I mean, how'd you feel during that drove after leaving Afghanistan? (Laughs)

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: Well, they used to have a -
- we eventually did get a First Sergeant into the thing. I said, you really just need a First Sergeant and then I can advise the First Sergeant. But I'm just like, I

felt like my thing was like, I knew I was on my way out. I'm like, I can do this standing on my head with my hands tied behind my back and my eyes closed. I'd like, you just talked to me and I can give you answers. So, I mean --

SGM WATERHOUSE: You'd be like Alexa.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: Yeah. Yeah. So it's like I mean, or you'd have people do stupid stuff. They lose their clearance and you've got to find a place to put them in the headquarters because they can't be in the headquarters. The CENTCOM supply is off the campus, down in a warehouse, down by the gym. So when people would lose their clearance or their ability to -- then we'd have to put him somewhere until -- and it didn't matter whether it was the Army, usually that was the holding place for anybody, whichever sister service, so there was an Air Force guy and Army guy and Navy guy and an Army guy to -- and a Marine and MARCENT usually took care of the Marines because they're right next door. So my Marine Central Command kind of took care of the Marines that were assigned to a CENTCOM. It was like, to me it wasn't that much of a burden. It was like

sometimes comical. Sometimes it was like, I can't really believe I'm doing this, but for me it was like somebody got picked up if somebody got picked up downtown, I'd just, the jock would call me. I'm like, okay, they're in the S-3, this is three senior NCO calling to tell him to go pick him up because the Sergeant Major ain't going, but it was getting them to understand, yeah, yeah, you can call me. But now, go down there -- go down, who's the S3NCYC, who's the S3SEL?

SGM WATERHOUSE: Senior Enlisted Leader.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: Senior Enlisted Leader, call them and have them go pick up there, bubba. Then I would deal with it in the morning. But we got down there, I mean Colonel Schrader was -- before it was just had a haphazard, we were just trying to put some structures in place to make sure that so this wouldn't be so hard. If you did this and you did this and you did this because G-1 used to handle everybody's leave forms. Well, and then we'd doing some changes around. So, we helped them go through -- my experience with just, I could just help them maneuver some of these

pitfalls and --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Streamlined some of
(crosstalk 1:48:11) --

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: -- streamline kind of still kept me connected to soldiers, but not the and so when - as I digress back to when Admiral Fallon came in and Sergeant Major Morin came in, when I went to him and asked about my leaving - if I could leave early. He's like, oh no, no, no. Jeff was an Iraq guy. He did everything Iraq. He goes, I don't know anything about Afghanistan. I was hoping you could stick around a little bit longer and help me. They were going to do something. And I was like, well, I got to talk to the Sergeant Major of the Army. I mean, I'm about eight months out.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: And, I said, because they're just going to think I don't want to retire because I was being accused of -- I don't know how you're going to transition. You're such a lifer. SMA was coming down to visit. And, so they had a talk. He came to me, I said, well an Admiral Fallon had asked me

to stay. I said, we're an Army at war. We're a nation at war. If they want me to say, I have no problem staying as long as it doesn't impact the Army, I didn't -- I said because if you get too many knives and nothing else bubbles up, but of course, no rules applied during these times. I mean, so I wasn't affecting the Army. I wasn't taking a billet from the -- I wasn't keeping an Army Sergeant Major from being assigned to do something. So and it was the time of anything went with the site as far as for strength. So I stayed and did that and then, Admiral Fallon got sideways and had to with an article about Iran with the President, he ended up retiring and did General Petraeus came in. So when General Petraeus came in, I told us our Sergeant Major Morin that Marvin Hill is going to be coming to be the Sergeant Major CENTCOM pretty soon. No, no sir, Sergeant Major, They told me I'm staying in. I'm like, Sergeant Major, I'm an Army Sergeant Major, I'm telling you, I already know, it's is going to be General Petraeus is Sergeant Major at CENTCOM within six months. I'm just telling you. He was a Sergeant Major at battalion. He was the Sergeant Major brigade. He was the Sergeant Major at division.

He was the Sergeant Major when he fought, when he brought him over to a Iraq. And when General Petraeus left CENTCOM and went to Afghanistan, Marvin Hill went with him. So my point to him was, I understand what they're telling you. I just want you to prepare. So church, true to form. It happened. So when they came in I went to Marvin and said they extended me. I'm here for another nine months. But -- because Marvin was a student of mine at the Sergeant Majors Academy, so I was like if you're uncomfortable with me being here, Sergeant Major, I have no problem asking Army to speed this up and I can be gone in three months. No, no, no, General Petraeus, they were talking, General Petraeus is getting ready to do this study and he wants you to be part of the study. He's doing a whole study about the whole Afghan situation, the Dah Dah Dah Dah Dah and being the former Sergeant Major there, we want you to lead one --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Say it was your project.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: -- lead, one of the teams, Blah Blah Blah Blah Blah. So we need to extend you again.

SGM WATERHOUSE: And that would put you over 35.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: No, it would put me at 37.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Way over 35.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: Way over 35, way past 35. I was already over 35 by the time, we are already into my first extension. So I said fine, talk to Army. We talked to Army, current Sergeant Major of the Army said sure, fine and all I said is okay, I can't keep doing these extensions. One year at a time. We got to pick a number. I mean, if you want me to stay until 40, just say so, but we need to pick a number. I can't -- if it's 10 months, if it's a year, it's 18 months, let's just pick a number. And that's the last extension.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Like a contract.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: It's the last extension because what the Army was doing, they weren't rescinding my retirement orders, they were just amending them, so I didn't have to go back, start the whole ACAP [Army Career and Alumni Program], go do all -- all that stuff was already done. The only thing that was on hold was submitting my medical records.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: They'd already been assessed once and I'm like, just stop. I'm going to be on active duty for another like 10 months, another 14 months. So don't send anything. Because who knows if I get hurt between now and then, I make sure it's in my records and they go forward to the, the VA.

SGM WATERHOUSE: The VA, yeah.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: So I stayed on, we did that. Then the time came for me to retire, so I did actually, 36 years, seven months and 29 days.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah. I remember seeing that.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: On active duty. And the other anomaly of that whole number is 19 years as an E-9.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: Nineteen years as an E-9.

SGM WATERHOUSE: That's almost an entire career for your average soldier.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: Yes.

SGM WATERHOUSE: One year career.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: Yes. And when I talk to young officers, they're like, I only have 15 in. I'm like, exactly. Nineteen years in grade as an E-9. Unheard of.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah. You were probably the first to make that.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: I mean, you don't get that kind of return on investment from anybody else. I'm sorry, but people like, but it went by so fast. I mean I -- it never, it did not dawn on me until the day I looked at my 214. When I looked --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Nineteen years and (laughs) -
-

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: I was almost 19 years to the day, because I got a frocked in February of '92 and I retired on the 28th of May, at the 20th of February in '10.

SGM WATERHOUSE: 2010, yeah.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: I'm just like, wow. Unfreaking believable.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So in some ways you retired from the United States Army, like you said in February,

2010 with 36 years, seven months. What was it --

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: Twenty-nine days.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Twenty-nine days of active federal service and your Retirement Center Ceremony was held a few months earlier at Joint Base Myra Henderson in Virginia and the Sergeant Major of the Army, Kenneth Preston hosted it, which I thought was pretty cool. In addition, the United States Army Band, one of the elite bands purging zone, provide the music for your retirement ceremony and you got to perform an inspection of the old guard troops that were there and they were dressed in like 18th century uniform. That was, it was pretty awesome to see those, the photos. I haven't seen that video, but I saw the photos though, but looking back, I know you talked a little bit briefly, you were a Sergeant Major for 19 years, but looking back over to that 36 plus years here you are at the ceremony and you're getting to review the, inspect the troops. I mean, how did you feel about that?

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: Well, so it came about Sergeant Major of the Army asked me what I was going to do for my retirement and I told him I was just going to

retire down here in Tampa and I was going to ask General Barno to come in and officiate my ceremony and be done with it. And he's like, oh, no, no, no, Sergeant Major, you've done too much for our Army for us to just let you go out like that. He goes, I'm going to host your retirement. I'm like, okay. So, I thought that was pretty cool. And then, so I worked with Army protocol and invited my counterparts and people I've worked with and everything and my sisters, my parents are both deceased. So I brought up my sisters and one funny story is, I did ask them to invite a General Shinseki who had retired, who is now the current VA Secretary at the time. And I said, look, I know his schedule probably won't let him come to my ceremony, but whenever I would be TDY in D.C., I always would go to church on Sunday over at Fort Myer. And as I was coming out of Catholic service, him and his wife Patty, would be coming in. And I have known that Shinsekis for a long time and he'd always see me. They're like, have you retired yet, I'm like, no, sir. I said, so I just want you to send them an invite to my retirement so that he knows I'm retiring. That was pretty cool. So, I mean I

was pretty much, nah and when he said it's going to be the entire old guard. Of course we did it in November and I think we ended up doing it on like a Friday the 13th for whatever reason. (Laughs) But anyway, oh, because he was the 13th Sergeant Major there and that's why we did it in Friday, the 13th and in fact, Sergeant Major, I had very good relationships, so I had seen the old guard many a times from my days at Fort Belvoir and watching them do the Spirit of America or do the Twilight Type II, but to have it just be for me, that was pretty awesome and overwhelming, but it was even more awesome and overwhelming for my sisters. Because I mean, they understood that I was in the Army and I mean they're Navy brats like me, but neither one of them served. They knew that I had important jobs in the Army, but I don't think they really understood how that I was quite well-known in the Army until this day --

SGM WATERHOUSE: And the impact, yeah.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: And the impact that I had when you see all these people in the stands and then you have the old guard --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Right.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: -- and then you and you have the Ceremonial Fife and Drum Corps, so we did the ceremony. I got to troop the line.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: That's something only commanders usually do --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: So you think back to all these things and parades and you're just like, wow, I'm really getting to do this. So I mean, I was just over the moon and then, he gave his remarks and he was very gracious. I mean he talked about a lot of the things that I -- at Leavenworth that I was promoting for Non-Commission Officers Education at the time when I was promoting it, was not very popular. Structure, Self-development was not a popular thing. And everybody thought I was like banged my head and it was something from la-la land or something. We wanted -- for a long time we wanted to make the comment onto the Sergeant Majors Academy, an NCO and put them in charge. But the way they wanted to do it, I was like, you just can't do it otherwise you just make it a super NCO academy. You

got to put -- there's some things we got to do policy-wise in order to make sure it's just not a super NCO academy. If you want to give that Sergeant Major the authorities that he needs in order to not to have to go run to some officer to do. Not that I was at against it, yes, but and, of course, the yes, but would get me in trouble all the time. But it was sort of Sergeant Major Tilley at the time and I was like if you tell me to do it, I will move heaven and earth to make sure we can get it done. But if you want it fast, it might not be right. It was my whole point and he was like, I need your support on this. I said, Sergeant Major Tilly, as long as you're asking me my opinion, I will to continue to give me my opinion. If you tell me to execute, I will go execute. So, Major Preston touched on that, that a lot of the, a lot of the changes that we were starting to see that Sergeant Major Sparks and everybody was getting ready that we're -- that TRADOC was moving down this path. He goes, she really kind of laid the seed corn and laid the foundation, the groundwork for some of the things that are coming to fruition today. And he goes, she'll even tell you, it's not about her

getting the credit. It's the fact that we're getting it done. And that is true. I mean, I don't need credit. I'm just glad to see that it finally and timing is everything. Back then, we were still having challenges with resources. We were still fully engaged in Afghanistan and Iraq and I said, so timing is everything and now you had the right Sergeant Major in the Army, you had the right, TRADOC guys, you had the -- and TRADOC Commander and the right chief of staff that are willing to now make that investment to move it down the road, but I did appreciate that they acknowledged that I might have had a little bit to do with getting us moving in that direction. Then, graciously talking about that if I probably had my Afghanistan time earlier I might've been the Sergeant Major of the Army because I did interview when Sergeant Major of the Army Tilley was selected and I did interview when Ken was selected, but it was all about timing. I mean my only deployment part of that was my time in Somalia, but don't regret it that we have female Sergeant Major in the Army probably because now, it's women in leaderships, female knock, senior female knock, non-commissioned officers Sergeant

Major non-commissioned in leadership positions is nothing new. For this generation, they've always been there.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: Because the leaders that are now the chiefs of staff of the Army and in the FORCECOM TRADOC Commanders have always had female officers and non-commissioned officers and sergeants, majors in command positions. Yeah. It's not an anomaly. So it'll happen one day, just like when you got General Dunwoody. I took great pride in -- and, of course, as he's going through all of that and my sisters are kind of looking at me and they're like, you never told us that. You never told us that. I said, you know what? You've been sitting here listening into it and when people bring it up, I said, it's kind of hard for me to fathom that I did. I sit there and like, did I really do all that? It's just like --

SGM WATERHOUSE: I wanted to mention a couple of things Sergeant Major Army Preston said --

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: Sure.

SGM WATERHOUSE: -- during his remarks. He

was talking about something we talked about earlier and I did catch my typo, so you served as the Army's Senior Enlisted Advisor to the DACOWITS, Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Services from 1995 to 2001, not 1991. Can't go back in time (laughs).

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: Right.

SGM WATERHOUSE: You served on the (inaudible) the Army's Taskforce on Extremists Activities, like you've talked about. A senior review panel on sexual harassment. You were distinguished member of the Quartermaster Regiment. You were awarded Distinguish Order of Saint Martin for your distinct and significant contribution to the Quartermaster Corps. And you were also awarded distinguish order of Saint Maurice by the Infantry Center and School. So I'm trying to -- now that I know about your initial relationship with the Infantry, so how did that come about? I think that's pretty awesome.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: Actually, it was General Riley, my commander at CAC, we had just finished the Army training, one of the Army training and leader development studies and the infantry commander was there

and we were kind of saying goodbye to the people that worked on the task force. And we were at a dinner, I think at the High Noon Saloon and --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Unfortunately I think closed last year.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: They came out and they said, oh, Sergeant Major, we have -- because we'd given certificates and stuff to everybody else and General Riley goes, oh, no, come here, Sergeant Major, we got something for you. And they, the Infantry Center and School and in General Riley was an infantryman, they awarded me the order of Saint Maurice, which I thought was pretty cool.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: Giving my history with early on with the Infantry Center and School.

SGM WATERHOUSE: I thought that's cool.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: Yeah. So, which it made me feel really good because it was like, okay, they valued that I guess it gave me credibility with combat arms soldiers that and hey, she knows what she's talking about.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Sergeant Major of the Army, he went on to say a couple of the things I'd like to highlight. He said, well in March, 2009, you were inducted into the Army Women's Foundation Hall of Fame in June of 2009. The Combined Arms Support Command awarded you the General B Somerville Metal of Excellence --

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: Yes.

SGM WATERHOUSE: -- for having distinguished yourself as a multifunctional logistician. And November, 2013 after you retired, you were honored by the Veteran Women's Igniting the Spirit of Entrepreneurship or VWISE for short. Their program's first "first initiative." And from what I gathered and you can talk about this a little bit more about the organization, but from what I gathered on looking at their information on their website now, the program, the VWISE Program was designated to recognize significant first for women, both in the military and from across society.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: Yeah. The Summerville award was kind of a surprise. I mean, because I -- even

though I was quartermaster and a logistician, most of my career was leadership. I didn't really work my MOS, I didn't really function as a logistician when you think about it, supply sergeant, warehouse NCO and then from there --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Master/drill sergeant.

(Laughter)

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: Drill -- but I mean, when you look at my -- I mean, I wasn't your typical quartermaster --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Career progression .

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: It's career progression systems person.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Right.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: So the fact that the CASCOM Combined Arms Support Command recognized me with that award was pretty awesome. Getting inducted in the Quartermaster Hall of Fame was awesome. And then this VWISE Program, so it's actually the international -- it's the I-V-M-F, Institute for Military Families and Veterans or Institute for Military Veterans and Families. It tries to look at those things that impact

Veterans and their families and especially in the employment afterwards and after they get out. And how did -- about transitioning? So the VWISE Program actually is about helping women who want to start their own businesses and become entrepreneurs. So as a -- their first program is they award women who have done things in their careers that have been first as a way of being an inspiration, so we come in and they give us these awards and then we talk to the audience about what got us to where we were and helped us be successful. And so the, so it's a pretty unique thing. It's surprising who you run into when you go to those things. And then there's always somebody in the audience somewhere because it's such a small world that know or know who you are. Yeah, so I've been associated with them ever since my induction. I actually sit on their board now.

SGM WATERHOUSE: And then, not only were you in the Army's Women Foundation Hall of Fame, in June of '14, you were inducted into the Quartermaster Hall of Fame, which I think you've mentioned.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: Yeah.

SGM WATERHOUSE: In Fort Lee.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: So yeah, the Army Women's Hall of Fame, I got inducted just prior to my retirement.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: And now I sit on their board I guess, I don't know if that's a requirement after you get inducted.

SGM WATERHOUSE: To pick the future.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: Yeah, well, yeah, so the Army Women's Foundation is a non-profit that's all about preserving the history and promoting Army women. It does a couple of different things, but one of the programs is their Hall of Fame, which is their most robust. And then we give scholarships to the children of being Army women, college scholarships. Then during Women's History Month, we run a summit with different panels, about things that are impacting Army women or about transitioning or whatever. So, that non-profits, so it's an honor to be -- I was one of the first inductees into the Hall of Fame. The other first inductee was my good friend, Brigadier General Pat

Foote. So we were inducted in the Army Women's Hall of Fame together.

SGM WATERHOUSE: That's cool.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: And then in 2014, I was inducted in the Quartermaster Hall of Fame. It's a big deal being able to go back to Fort Lee and a lot of people know -- when you're just one of many -- when you're one, a lot of people know who you are.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Right.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: Because people come -- oh, Sergeant Major, I've been following your career. I'm like, who are you? (Laughter) No, I never do that.

SGM WATERHOUSE: I mean, yeah, as a three, four-star level of Sergeant Major, any Sergeant Major you're going to have a following. People are going to know who you are and you're not going to necessarily know who they are. But as a female, the first you're going to have a lot more people know who you are.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: Right. I mean, even today at CENTCOM, young majors, well, lieutenant colonels and some colonels would come up to me and they're like, where do I know you from? And my first question to them

is, when did you go through Commando Staff College or Captains Career Course --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: -- or PCC?

SGM WATERHOUSE: Because you were there seven years.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: Because I was there for seven years. (Laughs) So somewhere in there --

SGM WATERHOUSE: You probably saw me there.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: -- I probably saw you. So for most officers I can usually narrow it down to Leavenworth or my time in Afghanistan.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: A lot of people come and say, I think you were my Sergeant Major in Afghanistan. I've run two and a couple from our days in Somalia. So yeah, but they just -- so they're kind of the same thing. You're a legend in the Quartermaster Community. I have stuff in the Army Women's Museum, which is there on Fort Lee. I have stuff down at El Paso at the NCO --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Stuff you've donated?

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: That I've donated --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Uniforms and stuff.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: -- (crosstalk 2:10:29)

yeah, so I have my uniform from Somalia and I think my Bronze Star from Somalia at the Army Women's Museum, at the Sergeant Majors Academy. At their NCO Museum, they have a uniform.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah. I've seen it.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: They have some of my stuff.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Do you have any of your women's Army corps stuff?

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: Yeah, I think it's all gone.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Oh, no.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: I don't think I kept hardly any of that.

SGM WATERHOUSE: That'd be nice to bring it --

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: Yeah, I was just -- after a while stuff just --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Your cords and --

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: It just got purged. It's like, we're not worried about it anymore.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Your cords well, you don't

have -- you didn't buy the yellow.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: I didn't buy that green thing, that lime green thing. No, I don't, no.

SGM WATERHOUSE: But looking and talking now, today's the second day, but looking back over that 36 plus years, you obviously, have a lot to be proud of and you've accomplished a lot. What are some of the -- if you had to pick up and I know it's going to be hard, that's a long career, but what are some of the things you're most proud of during your career and when people think of you, how do you want to be remembered?

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: Some of the things I'm most proud of is being a drill sergeant (inaudible), they all represent the Army and playing softball. I thought that was pretty unique. My time at -- deployed to Somalia, one, because it proved to me that I could deal with this type of adversity and the fact that being a logistician Sergeant Major, a non-combat arms technically person because back -- by the time I'm a Sergeant Major, we weren't -- I'm already past all the, where we're making all these changes about warrior tasks and all. You're now down there just doing it.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: So the fact that based on things that all the way back to Drill Sergeant Oden taught me about being infantry. I was able to put it to use there in Somalia and the fact that we were deployed with everybody and only had three soldiers actually injured, but not critically, but hurt all the same. So I mean that's successful deployment. Being selected by a Secretary West to be on both those task forces. I mean, it afforded me an opportunity to see the Army like I don't think any other Sergeant Major, except maybe the Sergeant Major of the Army or other senior enlisted of a service gets to see their service, warts and all.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah. And it -- and in that experience, it taught me how things operated and who does what to whom and so that and then, my time at CAC, being selected as a Combined Arms Center Sergeant Major, but not just being selected, but the reason why General Meigs picked me. He talked to me about being a soldier, soldier, and muddy boots soldier and about my skills and qualifications, not about my gender. And then, of course, out of the blue being asked by a guy I never

served with, if I would, who just happened to see me on a task force that we happened to be on. And only really heard me really speak and talk about what I thought the Army soldier should look like and objective for soldier '21 to out of the blue, just call me up and ask me if I wanted to be a Sergeant Major in Afghanistan. And get to do that type of operation. Then asked by General Abizaid, then the Command Chief, if I would stay on another year when General Barno left in General Eikenberry came on and the fact that General Eikenberry also agreed that I should -- wanted me to stay on as his Sergeant Major. And then having the Sergeant Major of the Army recognize me with my retirement ceremony to say you actually contributed more than you probably realize, or give yourself credit for of what you've contributed to the Army that will have a lasting impact. Never really thought about it until you just asked me this question, but yeah. I thought that was pretty amazing. and just the friendships that I made over the years and how I would want to be remembered is that I was firm, fair, open-minded and welcomed change. Not for the sake of change, but because change was necessary.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So Sergeant Major, I'm going to switch gears up on your now.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: Okay.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So now I want to get your input and this is for the current NCO corps, the future NCO Corps, just get advice or opinion on a couple of things.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: Sure.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So in your opinion, Sergeant Major, what are some of the key things a senior NCO, your E-7s and above, Sergeant First Classes and above, must do to be effective leader of his or her subordinates, NCOs and soldiers?

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: I think you have to have walked in their shoes. In other words you can't tell your soldier to go do something you've never done yourself or experienced in some form or fashion. Maybe not that exact thing.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Right.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: But at that level, I mean, I think you have to do that. I think you always have to be training your replacement. If you're too worried

about what's next, it doesn't mean you're going to go look and say what's that guy doing? I liked -- I want that job and what are the requirements and the (inaudible) it's not that I don't strive to get those things, but if that's all I'm focused on and I'm not looking at who's going to replace me and pulling those people up behind me then I've failed as a non-commissioned officer. Yeah, that's kind of my basic philosophy.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Now, as you well know, NCOs also have to be advisors, or confidants to his or her commissioned officers. So on that realm, in your opinion, what are some of the key things that senior NCO must do to be effective advisor to his or her commissioned officer?

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: First, I think they have to know their left and right limit. Then they have to be - they can be candid and frank without being disrespectful. And I'll give you an example. So when I was at Leavenworth, my Garrison Sergeant Major was the Sergeant Major that filled in until I got there. So when there was the gap. Old armor guy, good guy, nice

guy, but somewhere along the way, it was like, well, I took his position, which then caused for a rocky relationship. But so at Fort Leavenworth, we had the United States Army Disciplinary Barracks and at the time before it we just became a maximum security prison, it was a minimum to maximum prison. So minimum meant that some of the inmates could be given work details outside the prison.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: So we had inmates that cut the grass. Soldiers didn't cut grass. We had inmates that did painting when quarters were empty and you needed painting on the installation. So we had inmates at the dining facility that we had our dining facility in the hospital that we paid for it. So that the inmates were the cooks and the workers in that. So when they decided to make this shift in the building of the new Disciplinary Barracks, because the other one was just crumbling. It became a maximum security prison. Instead of having the -- all the seven-year below went out to the regional correctional facilities and all that you now had in there were people with 10 years or more.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: And some more crimes
against persons versus travel fraud --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Car thieves.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: -- car thieves, so drugs,
crimes against persons stuff, more of those people are
in the prison, so they're not necessarily getting out on
work details. So that caused some challenges. So one
of it was, if you don't have those people doing that you
have to replace them with either civil service contracts
or soldiers. So the DFAC [Dining Facility], because the
disciplinary -- so the largest troop populations on Fort
Leavenworth are the MPs at the Disciplinary Barracks,
the students that Command General Staff College and then
the little corps cadre of enlisted people that support
the staff at the Command General Staff College. So, the
headquarters company, so all the military police are on
separate rations. So basically, everybody was on
separate rations.

SGM WATERHOUSE: They get extra money for food
in their paychecks.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: Right, yeah. So everybody

was on separate rations. We the defect was kind of nice. It was in the hospital. It served a purpose, but it wasn't like --

SGM WATERHOUSE: All the soldiers had to eat there.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: -- all the soldiers are eating in the dining facility. So when it came time to make some tough decisions, we ran a count of how many people are eating in the dining facility monthly, daily and monthly.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: And came to find out that spending a half a million dollars a year on a dining facility that an average of 30 people a month, eat in --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Wow, is not something that we wanted to do.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah. So this Sergeant Major, old school guy, he had about 29 and 28, 29 years in. He was getting close to retirement. I mean, he just went ballistic when we announced that we were going to close the dining facilities.

SGM WATERHOUSE: And this was in a meeting

with all kinds of senior leaders?

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: He didn't voice it there. So the general made the announcement. They MP SAR, the Disciplinary Barracks Sergeant Major, he, yeah, okay. Got it. The only time that the number spiked was just before payday when all the troopers were running out of money because we already had on post a Burger King and a Taco Bell and all that. All we wanted to do for them was a range to try to get the PX folks to put a little canteen closer to the Disciplinary Barracks area so that and then we went in and refurbished all the barracks to make sure there was a large refrigerator and stove on every floor. So if the soldiers, and then we bought the little micro fridges for every room, so in case the soldiers wanted to cook, make as a tradeoff to not having to put a million -- half a million -- a million dollars a year into a dining facility that the students don't live at, blah, blah, blah, blah.

SGM WATERHOUSE: But don't use it.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: But don't use. And he was just beside himself. I mean, he came into my office, he was screaming and hollering and yelling at me. He goes,

look, you got to you got to go in and tell the commander, you got to go in and pound on the commander's desk and tell them this is the stupidest idea he's ever had and this is just wrong and you're not taking care of soldiers. And I mean, he just pounding his fist and wailing on my desk and yelling and I'm like, are you done Sergeant Major? He's like, well, yeah. I said I could probably go in and do all those things you said with General Steele and I'm sure he'd let me get away with it, but it is probably the last time he'd ever listened to anything I said to him. I said, secondly, I happen to agree with him. Well, then the tirade happened again. Then he calmed down. I said, but here's why. Oh by the way, if we don't do this, then either we don't fund some of the other MWR family things like -- do you want people to pay to have to go to the pool? I mean, it's the trade-off. You have to make as the Installation -- He's the garrison guy.

SGM WATERHOUSE: He should know that, yeah.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: But the installation, this is before we had --

SGM WATERHOUSE: MCOM.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: MCOM.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: It transitioned as I was leaving.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: But I mean, so we can't keep taking operational funds to take care of other things. So I said, I'm just not going to do that Sergeant Major. I said, I mean look, I know I'm junior at this level, but I'm also wise in that how I did things as a Battalion Sergeant Major where I could walk into the door and close the door and tell my colonel that's the stupidest damn idea you've ever had, sir. And get away with it.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: Not something I think I'd be doing at the three-star level. So I think for NCOs, they have to understand what their left and right limits are.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Right.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: And I said, oh, by the way, as the Sergeant Major, I have several opportunities to

voice my opinion about something. I can voice it in the open forum where he asked the question; I can voice in small group or it's him; the deputy commander and the chief of staff and myself; I can voice it with it's just him and me in a conversation. And if I really, really have hard on about it, I can go back in and knock one more time and have a one-on-one and give my opinion.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: And it's the same thing even at the lower level. You have opportunity, you can if your question no matter what level you're at, you have an opportunity, but you have to know when you air something publicly and when you have to approach something privately.

SGM WATERHOUSE: But even as a Platoon Sergeant to your Platoon Leader, because if you try to be little your Platoon Leader in front of the men and women, right.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: Right, I mean, I could remember somebody saying, well, he's just a second lieutenant. I said yes, but he is an officer --

SGM WATERHOUSE: And he's a Platoon Leader.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: -- and you're -- he's a platoon leader and you're non-commissioned officer.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Right.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: You do not bearish your -- in public. Now, have I ever violated it? Probably on occasion, but normally, not only because they asked for it in the end, so when sometimes, I've been challenged in public by officers and you try to close it down and it's like, sir, we can take this privately or whatever. They don't want to do that. I'm sorry. Game on it. Because I'm not going to let you talk to me like that in front other people -- in front of my non-commissioned officers, I'm going to show my non-commissioned officers I have a spine. There's a way to disagree with him respectfully, even though it's publicly. So you just got to know when to pick your battles.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Sergeant Major, what advice would you give to Sergeants Major selected to serve in their first battalion level command Sergeant Major position?

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: Remember you're not a First Sergeant anymore. I think the biggest thing -- the

biggest mistake Battalion Sergeant Majors make is they want to become a First Sergeant again.

SGM WATERHOUSE: I'm the best First Sergeant/

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: Right. Because, that's what they know.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah. I mean, and it's hard, but I think you got to like let that go and short of them making a mistake or a decision that's going to be - - involves safety or bring harm to soldiers, you got to let them make those mistakes as much as you disagree with them. Then understand -- never cause a First Sergeant have to choose between you and the Company Commander.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Right.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: Understanding that the company -- the First Sergeant works for the Company Commander, rated by the Company Commander. We are NCO Support Channel. We are given certain authorities and charters to take care of, but under -- communicate to your First Sergeant, and even the Company Commanders that you're not going to put them in those positions, but they need to understand that when you are giving

direction or asking for things to be done, it's that because you dreamed them up. They usually came from somebody else.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Right.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: So that would be my advice.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So now, moving up to the nominative. Those sergeants major preparing to serve in their first one or two star level Command Sergeant Major billet for even Sergeant Major billet for a one or two-star general.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: I think what I did was I was kind of thrust into -- I went from for one star man by no, six all the way up to a three-star. I kind of skipped a lot of things in between. So when I first went in that position, I was more in a watch and listen kind of see how the organization worked. I mean, I did do a little bit of research about what the Combined Arms Center was. I reached out to my a higher headquarters Sergeant Major, I went and talked with the TRADOCs Sergeant Major about what did he see as the role and scope and mission of the Combined Arms Center Sergeant Major. How is he looking for me to support TRADOC and

how did he think I should be able to support the centers and schools? I actually reached out to my senior Sergeant Major to say, how do you see this position?

SGM WATERHOUSE: Right.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: What do you expect from me? The other thing I asked was my commander for the letter that he gave his boss on what he was going to accomplish as the Commander of CAC. So, those three-star levels, they write a letter to their boss and say --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Their priorities.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: Yeah. These are the things I intend to accomplish. It's kind of like, I wouldn't call it a contract, but because they don't really get OERs --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: -- this is what I'm going to accomplish during my time as the Combined Arms Center Commander. So I asked for -- when I understood that, I asked for a copy of each of my commanders' letters and then figured out how can -- how do I support making those things happen?

SGM WATERHOUSE: Right.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: And which ones are in my lane? Some are not, but which ones are? And the ones that are, then how do I support the Commander and making that happen? And if one-stars and two-stars get OERs, then I think you asked him, can I see your OER support form? I would even ask that of an O-6, if I was a Brigade Commander. Sir, can I see your OER support form? What is it you're trying to accomplish as the Brigade Commander and how am I, as a Sergeant Major --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Going to support that.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: -- going to support that?

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, Sergeant Major, now, this is a conjecture or whatever projection. What do you see as the Army's major challenges in the next 15, 30, even out to like 30 years. And are we, as a Army, kind of leaning in the right direction?

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: I think, well, I think what we're doing in the education realm for non-commissioned officers is definitely going in the right direction. I like what's going on with Army University. I think trying to get your arms around it and get it synchronized and eventually, now, being able to get non-

commissioned officers degrees is a good thing. I mean, we should've been doing that long ago, but again, it's timing and it's understanding what has to be in place to be able to award a degree. It's just doesn't happen. I think modernization, I always think we're just behind the power curve. I don't know why. I mean after watching Secretary Gates and everything that we had to do in Afghanistan to figure out to find out how to get the right armored vehicle to keep soldiers from getting killed with IEDs or -- so how we managed to get through that process in order to field all that in the right gear, I mean, I just think our acquisition is all whacked up -- is all out of whack. So until the services and the Department can figure out how we make that better, I mean, because I think it's -- you can watch Boeing and them build an aircraft, some brand new super aircraft that they can get built in a couple of years and it takes us 10 to figure out how to --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: I mean, look at the F-35 Program for crying out loud. I mean, I just, I don't know how you get this modernization of equipment and I

don't know if we've actually transformed -- I mean, we've talked about talent management, this and that. So our personnel systems, I still think they're too post-Vietnam. I just, I don't think we're 21st century yet.

SGM WATERHOUSE: What kind of things would you think would be a better way to do things?

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: I mean, I know they're moving towards it, like why we have three personnel systems? It's pretty clear that we're never going anywhere without the Guard and Reserve ever again.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Right.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: But we're still in this --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Well, on the school side, we have the one Army school system, so we're making strides there.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: We're making strides. So, now you got to get it in the personnel and the talent management. I mean, I've seen a couple of Sergeant Major get out just because of, you say you're about talent management, but you've had a Sergeant Major that's done X, Y, and Z, and then you put them over here and they're like, no, I'm not taking that assignment.

And they get out and you've just lost that -- so it's
are we truly in talent management? Are we still
managing billets?

SGM WATERHOUSE: Empty seats, yeah.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: Are we still managing empty
seats or are we truly trying to put the right skill set
in the right -- especially at the senior levels? I do -
- I think they've made great strides in understanding
and renaming things, it's broadening assignments instead
of crap, I got selected to go be a drill sergeant or --

SGM WATERHOUSE: And a recruiter.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: And recruiter or whatever.
I mean, so I think that changing the terminology, I
think they, they've done a good job on that. We're just
a work in progress. I mean it's like I was telling them
when I was recommending changes to NCOES, I said, we are
a learning organization. We're all about change. I
said, if not, we'd still be trying to do what we did in
the Army of Washington.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: So it's not about change
for change sake. It's about change for the greater good

and making progress. So you shouldn't be afraid of change. And, but we are, we're very resistant to change. Just think of the uproar that happened with -- that happened with the black beret.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Hmm. Yeah. In 2000.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: I mean, we spent more time arguing about that dag-gone thing and so, but Chief of Staff had asked me at one time, he goes, so Sergeant Major Pritchett, what do you think about the black beret? I said, sir, you made the decision, we're going to wear the beret. Enough said, well, you don't have an opinion, but does it matter? You said, the black beret, I just want to know how to wear a damn thing, right. Because I'm not 82nd [Airborne Division]. I'm not Special Forces. I've never worn a beret. I just want to make sure I can wear the damn thing right. That's all. But he's like, why don't your fellow Sergeant Majors have that kind of attitude? Don't know, sir. But I mean, so we get ourselves wrapped around the axle about the wrong thing. I mean, look, I'm not a fan of pink and greens, but if we're going to do it, just tell me to do it and let's move out. I don't need to spend

any more time angst about it. So, yeah, I don't know where I'll be. I mean, I think we'll be fine. Because we are a learning organization and I don't think anybody gets up on any day with the intention of making the decision of whatever we're going to do next with the intent of harming the Army or any soldier, but they truly believe in their hearts of hearts that what they're recommending is for the best. We just got to run it to ground and do the right analysis to make sure it is the right thing to do.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Sergeant Major, the last question. Is there anything else you would like to discuss? Something we have not addressed?

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: No, I think we've pretty much covered it all. I mean, I do appreciate that the - of being, having an opportunity to have this recorded for perpetuity and that hopefully it'll be of help to some future non-commissioned officer down the road.

SGM WATERHOUSE: And I'm sure it will Sergeant Major. I thank you for taking your time out of your busy schedule to do this.

CSM(R) PRITCHETT: Well, thank you for coming.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Thanks.

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