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PROGRAM

INTERVIEW WITH COMMAND SERGEANT MAJOR
JAMES K. SIMS (RET.)

Fort Bliss, Texas

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I N T E R V I E W

SGM WATERHOUSE: Good morning. My name is Sergeant Major Brett Waterhouse at the United States Army Heritage and Education Center. Today I'm interviewing Command Sergeant Major-Retired James K. Sims for the Senior Non-Commissioned Officer Oral History Program. Today's date is April 10, 2018 and this interview is being conducted at Ft. Bliss, Texas. Sergeant Major, can you please tell me your date of birth and where you were born.

CSM (R) SIMS: 7 October 1965. Born in a town by the name of Pensacola, Florida.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Sergeant Major, would you talk a little bit about your childhood, when you were growing up, where you lived, your hobbies, your interests, what you were looking forward to doing as a child maybe going up through high school.

CSM (R) SIMS: Yeah. So, I was very fortunate to be raised in a home with four generations of military. My dad was in the military, my

grandfather et cetera. So, I came up in a structured home so we all had chores and rules to follow. My mom did not work, my dad was in the military, and a Sergeant First Class (SFC) ended up retiring. Again, it's just me, I have two other brothers and a sister, and where I fit in that is I'm the next to the youngest kid. I'm sure if that was a good thing or a bad thing but we were fortunate to not have grown up in the middle, I think, the kids that I would say probably had guidance and had vision and had two parents.

So, my hobbies were at the time, I ran track through school. I played in the band, I played football. So, I was very, very active.

SGM WATERHOUSE: What did you play in the band?

CSM (R) SIMS: I played a couple of instruments. I played the sousaphone, I played the trombone.

SGM WATERHOUSE: I played the drums.

CSM (R) SIMS: Anyhow, basketball, track,

football, I was in pretty much all the sports and a really good swimmer growing up as a kid. So, in my early childhood, I really, really somewhat had to figure out what I wanted to do going through high school and junior high school.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, you did know or you weren't sure?

CSM (R) SIMS: I was pretty sure.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, let's say in your junior year of high school what did you think you were going to do when you got out?

CSM (R) SIMS: As junior in high school I wanted to be --

SGM WATERHOUSE: That's normally when the recruiters come out.

CSM (R) SIMS: Exactly. You've got to remember, I thought a sergeant in the Army, a Sergeant First Class was the most powerful, influential person that as I have seen when I thought of the military with the Army. We did have one, a member of my family that joined the Navy, the only one. That one Navy

person is my oldest uncle. Everyone else did the Army so I knew that I wanted to be a sergeant in the Army. A young sergeant in the Army.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, as far as inspiration, it was basically your family inspired you to join?

CSM (R) SIMS: Yeah.

SGM WATERHOUSE: And why the Army and maybe not the Navy or the Marine Corps? Why the Army?

CSM (R) SIMS: Yeah you think about that right. In the State of Florida, you typically have more of the Marines and there are a lot of the Navy and really some of the Air Force is in that region of the state. It's really not a large concentration of population of people that I was around that really joined the Army. What I saw was, I saw a young paratrooper. I saw that individual that was really striking in his uniform. For me, it was more of not really interested in seeing what the other service had to offer but I just knew that I had a calling to do what generations before me had done and that was pursuing joining the Army and be a sergeant. That's

all I could see at the time as a young soldier, a young person, a high school kid. I wanted to be a drill sergeant. We'll talk about that later but I really wanted to be a drill sergeant.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, you joined the Army in 1983 and you decided to enlist as a 76 Charlie Automated Parts Specialist, is that correct?

CSM (R) SIMS: Correct.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, what led you to decide to choose that particular Military Occupational Specialty or is that something you found out after basic?

CSM (R) SIMS: That's something I found out after basic. That was one of those things I really did not understand what the gravity of what that job was. I really didn't understand that the processes and the structure of how you select the jobs. I think at the time, I probably had a great recruiter but I think the recruiter was probably the mission more so than putting talent and skills to where they best fit. I ended up joining MOS 76 Charlie PLL Clerk. I worked

in different motor pools and really my job was to procure, order and store parts for vehicles and equipment and material. I would tell you that if I had to do it again, I probably would have chosen something different but just not having the complete knowledge of really what that MOS was.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, backing up a little bit, to get trained, you went to Basic Combat Training first and you did that at Fort Knox, Kentucky. What was your rank when you first came in? Were you Private E-1 when you got to basic training or what was your rank, if you remember?

CSM (R) SIMS: So, Private E-1 Sims. I still have my ID card as Private E-1 Sims and I just recently retired. I have my first LES. I was a Private E-1 when I joined the Army and I went to basic training at Fort Knox. It was a coaching change. When I went it was September time of the year and it's a little cold at Fort Knox coming from a place that's habitually around the 80-degree temperature. I went to a climate that was very, very cold and I'll tell

you the first time I ever seen a skunk is when I went to Fort Knox, Kentucky.

SGM WATERHOUSE: They have lots of them, families of them especially around the barracks.

CSM (R) SIMS: Exactly then when I saw my first one. So, you talked about basic training and the location. I'll be the first to tell you that for me, I thought it was a way to structure the way I thought into the way the Army needed me to think. But from the physical fitness perspective it was something that for me it was really not as challenging because I was an athlete growing up and I was an outdoorsman. I really liked to be outside so I enjoyed my time there at Fort Knox.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, then after basic training you went to Advanced Individual Training or AIT at Fort Lee, Virginia. What did you think of the training in AIT and what was the most challenging part for you?

CSM (R) SIMS: I arrived there, I still was a Private E-1, Private E-1 Sims. I arrived at Fort

Lee. I think about two different things. I think about going to an organization that had a little bit more liberties. So, I came out of a very, very structured environment to an environment that had a little more liberty. I think it was probably my biggest challenge was really truly was migrating in a large population of people with different cultures, different beliefs, to truly try to get to one common goal. I was the platoon guide at the time. I was the platoon guide at basic training. For me, I was selected to herd these cats, herd these different soldiers.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So you guys were like the Drill Sergeant's -- an NCO of all your soldiers. You were like his helper.

CSM (R) SIMS: I'm like his helper, I didn't understand that. Private E-1 Sims I really didn't understand what I was signing up for.

SGM WATERHOUSE: You're in charge of the privates when I'm not around.

CSM (R) SIMS: I'm in charge of the

privates. I mean listen to me when I say, we did not all get along. So, that was probably my number one challenge.

SGM WATERHOUSE: How did you handle that or how did you go about working through that?

CSM (R) SIMS: I'll tell you, when I had the opportunity to talk to the drill sergeant and try to get his advice, I think at that particular time I think it was really at that point exercise and leadership at a very young age in the Army at a very young rank. I think for me, it was just really truly trying to understand the individuals and understand what their strengths and weaknesses were and try to bring that together as a platoon team.

SGM WATERHOUSE: When you graduated from AIT in the 76 Charlie MOS, you were awarded that job, you were training. How did you feel leaving there and going to your first assignment? Do you feel that the training prepared you?

CSM (R) SIMS: Yes. So, the school, let me go back to a little bit about Fort Lee prior to going

to my first duty station which was in Hawaii. I think the instruction was great. I really do believe that it was very relevant into what I had to do arriving to my first duty station. The number one piece that I would probably say that I was probably under prepared was probably executing my roles and functions in an environment that was not garrison focused. So, it was great and all my training and all my schooling was typically done in the classroom, in the building in a static environment. If I recall, we may have had a few days doing some training exercises. But when I got to my first duty station, we stayed in the field a lot. The connectivity, how you operate, how do you really go from an automated system to a manual system, how do you operate and do this job on the move. I think that was probably my number one challenge was that how do I take what I learned in an environment that I think was conducive in a building to put it in a tent.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So Sergeant Major, in February 1984 after graduating AIT, like I said, you

were assigned to Hawaii as your first duty station where you served with 1st Battalion 8th Field Artillery or 1-8 FA Regiment, 25th Infantry Division. And there you served, like you said as a Prescribed Load List or PLL Clerk for about two years. For people not familiar, you talked a little bit about it. But if you wouldn't mind reiterating, what was is a, at least back then, the Army changes as we go. As a PLL Clerk, back then and what were the basic duties and responsibilities?

CSM (R) SIMS: So, you think about it from the perspective of I had the role and there was just only one of us in my unit.

SGM WATERHOUSE: One of you?

CSM (R) SIMS: Yeah, one of me, one 76 Charlie in that organization. We really had the responsibility of taking in all the different checks and services that came from the individual drivers and their crew that came to the motor sergeants and the mechanics. And based on all the different faults and things that they found that was wrong with some of the

equipment, they came to me now to order that type of equipment.

SGM WATERHOUSE: These are vehicles and weapons?

CSM (R) SIMS: Vehicles, weapons, all the different equipment that was assigned to our organizational unit. Stuff like from our weapons, from our protective masks, from our vehicles, from our tents.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Just about everything, soldiers need.

CSM (R) SIMS: Yes. And I had the responsibility to keep a stockage of that at any given time. They would also have it to where it was mobile. We had to build this prescribed low list to put it, to where it can be able to operate it in any environment depending on where we were training.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Did you have computers back then? I know today the PLL Clerks have computers or was it a lot of manual transactions back then.

CSM (R) SIMS: Yeah that's a long time ago.

I want to say it was very much manual. I remember filling out this card called a 2765 which is tabulated card you filled out that had five different parts to it. You had to turn it in to the warehouse to say you want to order this class 9 or class 2 or whatever the class of supply a piece of equipment was to a warehouse. I remember it was like kind of like there were three or four hundred of them a day. That was the easy part. At the end of the year when we didn't understand what the funding is going to be, we had a motor sergeant come in there because we all worked for a motor sergeant. We had to always have stuff prepared just in case we got a last-minute request or last minute saying we have funds available. No computers, all-manual.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah, the first time I saw a computer was in Germany in the nineties. So, back then, 1-8 Field Artillery (FA) do you know what their mission was? They were part of the 25 Infantry.

CSM (R) SIMS: Yeah, they were part of the 25th Infantry Division at the time, Light Infantry

Division in the Field Artillery Regiment. First of the eight was divided. Some direct support to the infantry and the scouts in the maneuver units and some cases general support based on the size of the artillery weapons system they had.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, Sergeant Major, in that first unit as a young soldier in the Army, I'm sure you made E-2 while you were there at least. That's your first unit, you went to your basic training, your AIT which is to kind of give everybody, hey here's introduce you to the things you're going to do and then, of course, you really learn your job in your first unit. Who did you look to and rely on in that first unit to kind of help you learn really, what you had to be able to do to be a good PLL Clerk and a good soldier?

CSM (R) SIMS: Well, my motor sergeant. So, just one of me in the unit. I had a staff sergeant, he was the motor sergeant, Staff Sergeant Tagnoga. He was an Italian gentleman, very, very short and structured. But he was very dedicated to the mission.

He was one that really took us, myself and other mechanics and ensured that we were doing stuff like correspondent courses and really talking to us about the coach of the Army and some of the do's and don'ts. He was the one that sent me off to my first soldier of the month board and soldier of the year board and selected me to be one of the company (inaudible). So, I really relied on my motor sergeant at the time, who I do believe I want to say can probably take the most credit in shaping me in my first phase of the Army and teaching me what right looked like.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Not only did you make E-2, I'm looking at your records here. So, in September 1985, you were promoted to Specialist E-4. Did your duties, responsibilities, probably not since your (inaudible) but I always like to ask the question. Did your duties, responsibilities change did you get any additional duties or anything once you made specialist or were you strapped down doing what you were doing?

CSM (R) SIMS: Right. I was fortunate at

the time, that was my first opportunity now being in charge of soldiers. So, not just the particular job I had, I had a few more mechanics underneath me. Actually, it was four; there was a total of five of us. I was the specialist in charge and then four other soldiers. The ironic thing about that was I was really young, I was maybe 20 at the time. I had a young specialist 39 underneath me. You can imagine this and all the knowledge I had which was very limited, trying to understand how to motivate him to be able to do what we needed to do. He wasn't the most physically fit guy based on the mission that was required. We did a lot of road marches, did a lot of things that required a lot of physical endurance. It was very challenging for me as a young soldier, a young 20-year-old specialist in the Army trying to lead a section of four people.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Did your experience in AIT help?

CSM (R) SIMS: I think the experience in AIT taught me from an illustration perspective

understanding what structure looked like with a platoon sergeant.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Or maybe basic when you were the platoon guide.

CSM (R) SIMS: Yeah that basic training platoon guide thing, yeah, I absolutely reflected back to that but I think I spent most of my time asking questions of my motor sergeant. I wasn't afraid to go and say, hey I don't know how to do this, how do I handle this situation. So, I think what helped me the most was asking questions of the staff sergeant and the motor sergeant on how to deal with this situation.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, he was mentoring you even though you didn't know it maybe. He was training you on how to be an NCO.

CSM (R) SIMS: I didn't know it. He was training me how to be an NCO.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, looking back at the two years you were in the 1st Battalion 8th Field Artillery, what were some of the positive or negative things you experienced or, in other words, what are some of the

lessons you learned in that first unit that you kind of implicated and took with you?

CSM (R) SIMS: I think the biggest thing that helped shape into someone of passion was we ended up losing a few soldiers in a training accident. We were just out doing training, we unfortunately lost two of our soldiers. But I think of my soldier boards, all the studying, all the different appearance in front of the first sergeants and the command sergeant major all the way up to the division command sergeant majors, I think it helped shape me from a perspective and understanding. I was able to have confidence and believe in myself. Back then, we competed not just within your MOS, you were competing with the soldiers of the division. There was a myriad of different MOS's so some of the question was survivability of those things, all these different things --

SGM WATERHOUSE: You said you went all the way up to the post level?

CSM (R) SIMS: Yeah, the post level. So, I

ended up being the division soldier of the year.

SGM WATERHOUSE: That's an experience and honor a lot of guys don't get. A lot of guys choose not to do it because they're afraid. What kind of recognition do you get on that besides the things you learned, obviously. How are you recognized?

CSM (R) SIMS: It's a great program. My first Army achievement medal was as soldier of the year. At the time, I think I was a PFC. I ended up competing and what I got was an ARCOM, Army Commendation Medal and then I ended up being able to go out and be the division commander's driver for two months. That was pretty good.

SGM WATERHOUSE: You get to see how the big folks work and how the big picture looks.

CSM (R) SIMS: Right big picture things.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, Sergeant Major, in January 1986, you went to your next assignment which was at Fort Gordon, Georgia United States Army Signal Corps School where you served as a PLL Clerk there for about 19 months or so. How did that assignment come

about, is that something you put in for is this where the Army chose to move you?

CSM (R) SIMS: That's where the Army selected to send me. At that time, I didn't really understand how it all was managed. I was just doing what a soldier should do based on where the Army told you to go and what the sergeant told you to do. You execute it. I ended up there at Fort Gordon, which was a pretty good assignment. I was now working in a different environment of my MOS. Now I was working now around a few civilians and the processes that I had to do as a PLL Clerk were totally different than they were in that type of an environment. Now I had to operate more on how you understand things, procure things from a civilian sector. You're doing things based on that particular equipment set. Some of the pieces of equipment they had there were things you had to purchase only from a commercial environment.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, you were supporting the actual schoolhouse and the equipment they needed to run the school?

CSM (R) SIMS: Yes.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, in that schoolhouse environment which is different, obviously, then the unit you were in which spent a lot of time in the field. The school environment, you had that staff sergeant in the first unit, the motor sergeant, who in this unit was your mentor or advisor?

CSM (R) SIMS: I didn't have anyone. In that environment, I actually worked for a civilian. I'm not sure what his grade was, I think it was a GS-11 or 12. So, it was me and I'll tell you what I reflected back on was that discipline I learned to do the right thing. I was put in an environment with absolutely no leadership, no guidance, there's no supervision and you're dealing with a lot of pieces of equipment that cost a lot of money in the civilian market. So, now that character part of the soldier had to be executed and really just being able to say hey, you do what you need to do and do your best. In some cases, I found myself engaged when I was at Fort Gordon, Georgia. I was put in an environment where I

had no guidance.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Did you have any soldiers you were responsible for?

CSM (R) SIMS: No.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, you were surrounded by a civilian corps?

CSM (R) SIMS: Yes.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Which is part of the Army.

CSM (R) SIMS: Which is part of the Army.

(Inaudible crosstalk).

SGM WATERHOUSE: -- second unit and a lot of NCO's who might read this later or guys wanting to be NCO's they don't get that privilege, so to speak, the privilege and honor to work with our civilian corps until much later, usually at master sergeant or sometimes even higher until they make sergeant major.

CSM (R) SIMS: Right that's true. They serve for obviously good reason to be a part of the Army but the way you approached the situation was totally different. As a young soldier, a brand new sergeant or senior specialist, I had to understand that they

were not soldiers and to motivate them was something totally different. I had to understand their processes and how they operate more so than migrating what I learned as a young soldier with two years in the Army and trying to infuse that on them. I had to understand how will I be successful to meet the mission, I had to understand how that process worked. It was a good experience for me.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So Sergeant Major, did you attend the Primary Leadership Development Course or PLDC while you were assigned there at the Signal School?

CSM (R) SIMS: Yes, at Fort Benning, Georgia.

SGM WATERHOUSE: At Fort Benning, okay. So, what were some of your takeaways from that course when you went there?

CSM (R) SIMS: So, I tell you that's probably for me, if I look over my career, that was the turning point for me. It taught me really, really how to be a sergeant.

SGM WATERHOUSE: That's good because that's what it's assigned for.

CSM (R) SIMS: Exactly. It taught me how to be a sergeant and it put me in a lot of different situations. In some situations, I was very confident in and some I had absolutely no idea what to do. It taught me how to take the initiative and they put us in a lot of leadership roles as we rotate through. The challenges were just that working through some of the things that I really didn't have experience in. I think that's what it was designed to do, to force me to one, understand the importance of what it is in relationships is all about and asking questions, doing research and reading through FM's at the time and AR's to understand what's the right way to do something. Because it was really measured upon you doing it based on the right requirement more so based on maybe some of your previous experience. Some of the experience I have did work but I did have to understand if it wasn't in line to the way the Army expected us to do it then it probably wasn't the right way of doing it.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, if it wasn't in the field manuals or Army regulation, they taught you there. These are the guidelines set by the Army.

CSM (R) SIMS: Yes. I was in a group and once again it's PLDC at the time and we had different MOS's and a lot of different experiences coming in. We had infantry, we had artillery and all different types of different MOS's that's lumped in this class. Some people came with coaching experience of units, understanding how to coach and they were operating on this is how we did it in this unit. That was the challenge, that's great but I want you to understand how to execute for the Army and the way the Army wants you to do it.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Was that co-ed? Were there female soldiers there with you?

CSM (R) SIMS: Yes, it absolutely was co-ed, that's right.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So Sergeant Major, going back to Signal School, so about six months or so, I think it was in January 1986, into your tour there at

the Signal School you were promoted, like you said, to sergeant. You said you were the only soldier, now you're the only NCO there.

CSM (R) SIMS: The only NCO there.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Did anything change once you made sergeant? Did it get easier to work with your civilian folks there or did it pretty much just stay the same?

CSM (R) SIMS: Yeah, my job didn't change. The duties were the duties. I still had to be able to procure, through that time, items for equipment that really wasn't in the military system. So, you had to work through that challenge from going from sergeant to, especially to sergeant. I didn't get an opportunity in that job to see the difference because based on what was required of me, I had to execute it the same.

SGM WATERHOUSE: I mean the good thing is in a lot of units, and soldiers reading this, they may be in that situation where they were just part of the soldier team, so to speak, because they were just

specialists and we're all, we all whatever there is 8 of us or there is 10 of us and tomorrow I'm a sergeant now in charge of the guys I was just hanging out with.

CSM (R) SIMS: That's right.

SGM WATERHOUSE: But for you, luckily that didn't happen.

CSM (R) SIMS: That didn't happen in that job.

SGM WATERHOUSE: In that job. So Sergeant Major, looking back at the 19 months or so you served there at the Army Signal School, any lessons learned you'd like to highlight?

CSM (R) SIMS: Yes, what it taught me is to be humble and understand how to work with others. All I wanted to do is be a sergeant. That's all I saw in my family and that's what you see typically when you see the television, look at the news, you see the sergeant doing great things. But what you didn't see a lot of is how that sergeant interacted with their civilian counterpart. So, the biggest challenge I had was how do I, as an individual soldier, understand how

to be able to build a team within all corps with the civilian population.

SGM WATERHOUSE: That's not probably something they probably get in AIT a whole lot.

CSM (R) SIMS: It's not what we get in AIT. That was, I would call it a challenge but it was a really good experience.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So Sergeant Major, in August 1987, you were assigned to Germany where you served with the 63rd Signal Battalion as a Battalion S4 NCO for about 22 months almost two years. Is this an assignment you put in for or is this still the Army telling you where to go?

CSM (R) SIMS: The Army telling me where to go.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, Hawaii and now Germany, that's good.

CSM (R) SIMS: Army tell you where to go. I didn't understand the importance of diversity at the time.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Because that's two overseas

tours pretty quick.

CSM (R) SIMS: Real quick.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So Sergeant Major, if you can remember that was a long time ago. But if you can remember in unclassified kind of talk, what was the 63rd Signal Battalion's mission over there? I mean this was 1987 so this is Soviet Union and the Cold War is still going on. What was the 63rd Signal's kind of purpose?

CSM (R) SIMS: So, they had the responsibility to provide security for some of the military VIP's. The mission was very, very critical in a sense of providing connectivity for Germany and communication for some very important people there and to maintain it throughout.

SGM WATERHOUSE: This is still really prior to the big computer push.

CSM (R) SIMS: Prior to the computer push.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Cell hardwires.

CSM (R) SIMS: Cell hardwires. Yeah so you can imagine the challenges over there. That was one

of those jobs --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah what were some of them?

CSM (R) SIMS: Yeah, yeah. So, you think about it, you know, some of the -- when I was first required at that time really to obtain a top-secret clearance, understanding the importance of it at the time. I didn't understand at the time but as I got in there to go out and support some of the missions and do some of the things up there it was really important that I was always called up to do exercise, to go to the headquarters which, I think, at the time was Heidelberg. I can't remember it may have been Heidelberg, Germany and provide some connectivity for communication for the very important people to maintain --

SGM WATERHOUSE: That's a big responsibility for a young sergeant.

CSM (R) SIMS: Pretty big responsibility for a young sergeant and simultaneously I was running track for the Army so it was pretty good.

SGM WATERHOUSE: How did that come about, did you have tryouts in Germany?

CSM (R) SIMS: Tryouts. You compete in tryouts in the Army and get selected and you go out and run about six months. You do some traveling around --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Traveling around Europe, and the States too?

CSM (R) SIMS: For the most part, Europe.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Did you win?

CSM (R) SIMS: I think I did very well. I didn't win all the meets and heats but I did pretty good.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Was that just our Army?

CSM (R) SIMS: It's the Army.

SGM WATERHOUSE: It wasn't like with the Germany --

CSM (R) SIMS: No. So, what it is designed to do is it's a little different now you get to wear (inaudible) athlete program but, you know, it still has some of our Army track.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, for six months that was your job?

CSM (R) SIMS: Six months that was my job, absolutely.

SGM WATERHOUSE: I think I had a buddy that did that. He was actually hear at Fort Bliss, he got chosen to be a golfer for the Army. We had just come back from Desert Storm. So, it was the same thing. So, if you make it, obviously you were a good athlete or you wouldn't have made the team.

CSM (R) SIMS: Exactly.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So Sergeant Major, any other challenges you'd like to highlight or lessons learned from almost two years, not a three-year tour but almost two years there in Germany?

CSM (R) SIMS: Yeah, I would probably say I think the Army prepared me. I would say I'd call it a lesson learned but I think it prepared me to understand the importance of understanding diversity. Coming from different types of units, different locations, I would probably say that was a strength

for me. I go back to the question you asked me, was it a place the Army sent me or was it a place I wanted to go. I think looking back at it now, no I never wanted to go to Germany, that was too far from home. But I can honestly tell you that I wanted to learn the experience.

But the other challenge, I would probably say one challenge. I think the one challenge would probably only be that you're going to be find yourself thrown into situations and places to where you're just not properly prepared. When I say prepared, not so much that the Army didn't prepare you for it, because the schooling come to, it's too much of a gap in time between different, at that time, NTS courses. So PLLC, I don't think it would have been the BNCOC at the time, not yet. So, the school gaps in time are not close enough so you find yourself more often put into a position to where you need to just be able to fall back on the people you know and be able to ask questions.

And then what I did not know as a young

soldier is the importance of doing what's right. I would call that, in some cases, a challenge because I didn't know I would be required to have a top-secret clearance. Some of the things that would qualify you or disqualify you is based on some of your actions to the left of that process.

SGM WATERHOUSE: That's right, that's right. Even before you came in.

CSM (R) SIMS: Right even before you come in. I wouldn't call it a challenge but I think it's important to understand that you've got to always do what's right. When you find yourself in those positions to just continue to persevere through and don't be afraid to ask the right questions of the right people. It's called mentorship...early in your process you don't understand really what you're going through but really at the end of the day it's mentorship.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Sergeant Major, the next assignment was to Fort Drum, New York and that was in June 1989 where you served with Headquarters and

Headquarters Company or HHC Division Support Command or DISCOM for short. And that was part of the 10th Mountain Division Light Infantry where you served as a Management Control NCO and you did that for about 18 months or so. I'm going to assume this is not something you put in for, Fort Drum, New York?

CSM (R) SIMS: Absolutely not.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Not to disrespect Fort Drum, New York but it's not a place that most people put in for.

CSM (R) SIMS: I totally understand. I mean, I don't think anyone there requested to go there. That's a great unit. It was a challenge within just the environment itself.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Especially the winters, right?

CSM (R) SIMS: Yeah, the winter man that challenged me but I think that was by design. We did most of the training in the winter. It taught me how to survive. It really taught me how to survive as a young sergeant and how to lead soldiers when they

wanted to quit.

SGM WATERHOUSE: The weather would make you want to quit, right?

CSM (R) SIMS: That's right, the environment would challenge you. I think that was by design. I think once again it created more diversity. Understanding as a young sergeant at the time when you now ask someone. But just think about the challenge of just fixing the vehicle when it's -20. Just think about that. Think about all of the things that you must get right in your PCC's and your checks before. If you don't get it right then, it tells in that environment.

SGM WATERHOUSE: If you don't do precombat checks you've got a kid out there without gloves on.

CSM (R) SIMS: You've got a kid out there without gloves on. You can't just trust the kid, you've almost got to be somewhat micromanaging. You want to make sure that he or she has the right equipment because it will tell really short really quick.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So Sergeant Major, for people who have never heard of or never will be a Division Support Command, what was that organization designed to do? I think I know what it sounds like.

CSM (R) SIMS: Now, if you want to look it what it's really called, it's called sustainment brigades now. They're sustainment brigades now. The mission was to (inaudible) from a material management perspective and a readiness perspective of the division. We had our finger on the post and had a direct report into the deputy commanding general and the commanding general and where we were from a readiness perspective.

SGM WATERHOUSE: You were actually working out of Division Headquarters or the division level.

CSM (R) SIMS: Correct. Because that command, there is only one of them, there is only a command in O-6 but he had this role and that role but he had this horizontal responsibility to ensure because I was most senior (inaudible) sustainer for the division. I had to ensure that we had the

readiness posture even though you had the brigade commanders at the time, I had a key role in it. But the person that had the ultimate responsibility ensured that when a piece of equipment was down and that request came through that process, that we managed it to do the quickest turnaround on that piece of equipment because it affected the readiness of the units.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So today we don't have a division level it's all brigade level?

CSM (R) SIMS: So now in the Army today we have what we call sustainment brigades. And some of those functions that is not in a sustainment brigade are at the division G4.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay. So Sergeant Major, the Management Control NCO position, can you talk a little bit about that, what your duties and responsibilities were?

CSM (R) SIMS: Yes. So, I tracked all class 9, the repair parts for the division. It was not just me, we had a team of about 11 other people. We had

warrant officers in there that we tracked it on the daily basis what was the repair parts' status. It was broken down by different responsibilities. So, within that overall team, you had teams that were affecting different units. So, first brigade may have three or four people --

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, were you one of many NCOs in this shop?

CSM (R) SIMS: Yes, I was the senior one of seven.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, you weren't by yourself.

CSM (R) SIMS: Wasn't by myself, absolutely not. There were seven of us and four warrant officers.

SGM WATERHOUSE: And you were a sergeant when you first got there right, an E-5?

CSM (R) SIMS: Yes.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Who did you have working with you and below you? Were you in like a staff sergeant position?

CSM (R) SIMS: Correct I was in a staff sergeant position and I had several other sergeants and I think I had a brand-new promoted staff sergeant and that was my first experience where they made the E-5 promotable in charge of a staff sergeant.

SGM WATERHOUSE: It probably didn't go over to well with him or her, right?

CSM (R) SIMS: It didn't go over too well but once again it was based on, I guess what they saw potential in leadership. I was in charge of that team to ensure that we turned in our reports properly, ensure we did our briefings weekly that was required of where we were in the status perspective and we tracked critical parts, whatever that part may be. Let's say it's for something today that's used whatever that critical part was at that time we tracked it. From the time that the PLL clerk now at the lowest put it in --

SGM WATERHOUSE: It probably was computers by then?

CSM (R) SIMS: Yes, we had computers then at

least in that office we had computers.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So Sergeant Major, any particular challenges you haven't talked about in that job in the DISCOM?

CSM (R) SIMS: I would probably say we didn't have, once again some of the MOS's I would probably say some of the challenges we had was once again, we got prepared for the schoolings that they got between schooling is different. So, you think about what you're learn in AIT was a 10-level function what you learn as a brand-new soldier. In some cases, if you haven't been to school in that gap I go you doing in some cases, the 20 and 30 level responsibilities.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Stuff for higher NCO's?

CSM (R) SIMS: For higher NCO's.

SGM WATERHOUSE: That haven't been trained in school yet?

CSM (R) SIMS: That haven't been trained in school yet. It wasn't an issue on the Army we were just dealing with that and it required you to do a lot

of different training to bring up the skill sets --

SGM WATERHOUSE: In that unit, who was above you as an NCO civilian that kind of helped you out as a young sergeant and staff sergeant?

CSM (R) SIMS: So, we were fortunate. We really had some very knowledgeable warrant officers. I had the most senior warrant officer a W-5 at the time. And we had, I want to say, a sergeant 1st class and I think she was the overall NCOIC of the entire section. So, we were constantly getting trained so I was fortunate to have that overwatch.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, you weren't the top NCO, there were people above you that could help.

CSM (R) SIMS: No, there were people above us that could help.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So Sergeant Major, shifting subjects a little bit, we talked about BNCOC, you went to BNCOC or Basic Noncommissioned Officer Course while you were assigned to DISCOM. What do you remember from BNCOC and any takeaways or anything in particular you learned in that course?

CSM (R) SIMS: Well you know, BNCOC at the time, I would probably say most of us, especially myself when I went there, I was probably ahead of the lessons that we were being taught.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Because of the experiences you learned.

CSM (R) SIMS: From the experiences --

SGM WATERHOUSE: -- learned on the job.

CSM (R) SIMS: Because it's required to do. And in some cases, the equipment that we were utilizing probably wasn't the most modern equipment based on the unit. So, that can create a problem within itself. The consensus from my little group, including myself, was that we probably didn't walk away better prepared because at this time, you've got different units and different soldiers from all over the Army with different experiences.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Were they 76 Charlies or a myriad of different MOS's?

CSM (R) SIMS: It was particularly 76 Charlies.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay I didn't know if they mixed you with other series.

CSM (R) SIMS: No.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM (R) SIMS: So, not much a challenge because I think that's good in a sense to where there's some cases there are some units from a modernization perspective get put in a totally different --

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, you realize nobody has it the same.

CSM (R) SIMS: No one has it the same. I don't know you can fix that, I think that's the beauty of coming to school and you talk amongst each other and establish relationships so you can help each other out through the process. But you're talking about in the earlier nineties, 1990 or 1991. You can imagine where we were in modernization from an equipment perspective and I'm at Fort Drum in a light infantry unit. I'm in a light infantry unit doing a lot of light stuff and not just a light infantry unit now

it's a mountain unit training in the extreme cold environment. So, some of the equipment that I was familiar with probably wasn't at the schoolhouse at the time.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Now I didn't write it down but obviously in August 1990 is when Saddam Hussein and his Iraqi army at the time invaded Kuwait and you guys were at Drum. How did that affect you or did it? I know you left there but did that affect operations at all?

CSM (R) SIMS: It sped up, right. So, at that time, the entire division was ordered it. We did have parts at our division certain units did deploy. Now you're talking about a readiness perspective. For me, it had been at that time --

SGM WATERHOUSE: A little more emphasis?

CSM (R) SIMS: A little more emphasis, right. It was very much more emphasis --

SGM WATERHOUSE: It's not just practice.

CSM (R) SIMS: Yeah, it's not just practice, it's game on which is a good deal. At that division

at the time, we did a lot of training I think so we were probably more ready, from my perspective, than most. We stayed in the field, we did realistic training. As a young sergeant, you learn how to survive, you learn how to work on a piece of equipment, you learn how to move and shoot at night. You learn how to do all those things that I think a good NCO needs to know how to do. So, I would say from a Fort Drum perspective I think they were well prepared for it.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, in 1991, the Army converted all soldiers with your MOS of 76 Charlie to 92 Yankee Supply Specialist. Do you know why, looking back, why the Army decided that change was necessary?

CSM (R) SIMS: Yeah, if I had to take a look at it now, I think it was probably looking at it from a migrating MOS's that, you're talking about the Quartermaster Corps at that time. So, the Quartermaster Corps had several MOS's obviously greater than what we have now, I think nine MOS's. I thought it was from a distribution perspective and a

motion perspective, I think they probably decided it was probably better to align like MOS's and put them in one. So, I think the MOS 92 Alpha became five or six different MOS's. But there's a challenge in that. Some of the challenges are you may take somebody like myself who worked primarily in the motor pool. Now you migrated me because there is not anymore training with this migration, it just—you just became a new MOS.

SGM WATERHOUSE: You didn't go to any particular school for the transition.

CSM (R) SIMS: There was no school for the transition.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Hear ye, hear ye you are now this.

CSM (R) SIMS: You're now this and here you are now, sergeant, staff sergeant now you're now a 92 Yankee Supply Specialist. Within that MOS could be someone who worked in a warehouse driving a forklift.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Totally different experience.

CSM (R) SIMS: Totally different experience. So, now he or she there is no more training depending on where you were for BNCOC at that time. If you were to the right of BNCOC, even if you went BNCOC to the left, you went to BNCOC in a specific MOS that has to do with what you migrated in.

SGM WATERHOUSE: What you're doing now.

CSM (R) SIMS: Yeah exactly so that creates its own challenges.

SGM WATERHOUSE: I think in January that same month, you were promoted to staff sergeant. Later that year, you were assigned to Fort Myer, Virginia where you served as a Supply Sergeant in the 1st Battalion, 3rd U.S. Infantry, which most people know as, The Old Guard. You served there for about three years which today is a normal assignment. How did the assignment to The Old Guard come about?

CSM (R) SIMS: So, I was selected to go down and do an interview. I went down and interviewed with the team at Fort Myer and they ended up selecting me. I was fortunate to be selected and PCS'd there.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, this is something your leadership put you in for?

CSM (R) SIMS: Correct. I think leadership did and I think it was one of those things where they had their prerequisites where they probably queried the HRC in the branches and based on what they were looking at from a prerequisite requirement I think I met that in the cut. It is one of those things you didn't have a choice. You go down and interview and if you get selected you PCS and if you don't you go back to your unit. It's not one of, hey I don't want to do that. It's one of those types of situation.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So Sergeant Major, today according to 3rd U.S. Infantry The Old Guard's website, the 1st Battalion conducts memorial affairs to honor fallen comrades and ceremonies and special events to represent the Army. They also communicate the Army's story to our nation's citizens in the world. On order, it says they conduct defense support of civil authorities in the National Capital Region or D.C. area. Was that the mission of 1st Battalion when you

were there or is it different?

CSM (R) SIMS: That was the mission then of The Old Guard and the 1st Battalion when I was there, absolutely.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, your duties now as a Supply Sergeant, new title, new MOS, for those who don't know what a Supply Sergeant is, in The Old Guard was it different? I guess it was a new title but what were your duties and responsibilities there in The Old Guard? Is that kind of similar to what all 92 Yankees were doing at the time?

CSM (R) SIMS: So, in The Old Guard, the fortunate thing I would probably say, I wouldn't say unfortunate, is that you became a ceremonial person first. So, everyone in the command had to perform the same mission.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, you performed ceremonies whether supplies had to be ordered or not.

CSM (R) SIMS: Right absolutely. But the role of the supply sergeant is that, it's maintaining custodian of all of the property within that

organization. And you maintain that within throughout the property book. We call it the property book. It's this document that tracks and maintains what you have by different line entry and by quality and then also, you have to ensure that the equipment is all accounted for through based through sub-receipts where someone has had to sign for it. So, it's a regular responsibility.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, everything The Old Guard uses from rifles to uniforms or whatever, you're responsible for the upkeep of that stuff and if need be, order new stuff.

CSM (R) SIMS: Right if need be order it.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, I know it was a name change but I know you said it was probably a culture shock for a lot of those folks that maybe didn't have the same experiences. Now they're all lumped into one MOS. Did that happen to you at all? Now you're a Staff Sergeant in a new MOS?

CSM (R) SIMS: Well yeah from the perspective of the job, from the supply sergeant job

absolutely. You had to rely on your young soldier, the private, the specialist who went through that particular MOS now AIT. So, they wouldn't migrate anything, those soldiers joined the Army --

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, it was 92 Alpha for them?

CSM (R) SIMS: 92 Yankees.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, they were already Yankees?

CSM (R) SIMS: And the ones that came in because you would still have in the supply room, an S-4. You can have up to five or six different E-4's and below. Most of those are within a year or two in the Army. So, I was fortunate to have quite a few young soldiers, E-4 and below, junior soldiers, I'm sorry, E-4 and below that had less than a year and in some cases no more than two years who joined the Army and went through now the new MOS AIT.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, in this particular unit you're talked about learning, helping you as a leader, in this particular case, your younger soldiers.

CSM (R) SIMS: Yes, it's perfect right it is almost what we do today. In some cases, the smartest person about something on something is the person that is executing it. A great leader is someone that has the ability to learn from all. So, I was able to learn from young soldiers who were executing it every day. Once again, I had migrated into an MOS that I didn't go back to AIT, at that time, an NCO course. So, I had to rely on their experiences for the most part. But then again, those soldiers had to be doing two jobs, a supply clerk and, in my case a supply sergeant then you are still a ceremonial soldier or NCO performing. At that time, The Old Guard 1st Battalion 3rd Regiment were all males, it was an all-male unit. And ceremonial was first, which was important, because it was about having the right number of people and the individuals that could perform those ceremonies.

SGM WATERHOUSE: What the mission was.

CSM (R) SIMS: The missions were the ceremonies.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, while you were assigned there to The Old Guard, you attended and graduated from Airborne School and the Advanced Non-Commissioned Officer course or ANCOC. Let's start with Airborne School. One, how did that come about, is that something you put in for and then what were some of your experiences like there at Airborne School?

CSM (R) SIMS: I was selected from there to go to Fort Bragg which is an airborne assignment. So, prior to going to that assignment you had to go to Airborne School. As it worked out, I was still there.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, this was in preparation for your next job.

CSM (R) SIMS: Yes.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, what about ANCOC? Was this geared now to the 92 Yankees?

CSM (R) SIMS: Now is it geared to the 92 Yankee. So, 90 percent of everybody in that class migrated to an MOS. So, you can imagine you got all these, some sergeants first classes, staff sergeants.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Just now getting into that.

CSM (R) SIMS: Just now getting into now we're talking about the 40-level course.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Preparing you to be a Sergeant First Class.

CSM (R) SIMS: Preparing me to be a Sergeant First Class. That was a beautiful time. Now we're totally different now in the Army. It was a new step.

SGM WATERHOUSE: The readers of this later will see just how good we have it today. And that's part of this is how much NCO education training has gotten better over the years.

CSM (R) SIMS: That's not a blue print for all MOS's it just happened to be my path. We had NCO's back then that took initiative. You had to learn the job. We still have soldiers that do that today but then you really had to take the initiative to learn the job. Because once again, you still are responsible. That command and leadership based held us, me responsible to meet the mission based on the job and make sure the soldiers are trained.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, in ANCOC now it's the first time you're going to this new MOS structured schoolhouse training, institution we call it, where they're supposed to kind of get everybody on the bubble, level to bubbles of different experiences. What were some particular things you remember maybe struggling with in that course or what was hard in that course and how did you get through it?

CSM (R) SIMS: So, we worked together. First of all, we had great instructors. The instructors understood that. I think it was for me, I'm sure there were classes before me that were in the same predicament. What I'm going back to is probably 95 percent at most or all of us migrated in. We probably had some young sergeants that may have just made their way through the course.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, all of you were kind of in the same boat.

CSM (R) SIMS: All of us were in the same boat. So, we all worked really hard to learn the job. You had your different experiences. At that time,

you're talking about accountability. So, we're talking individuals coming from the Special Forces Unit, individuals coming from the Airborne Unit, coming the Mechanized and Heavy Armor Unit.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, now you're actually a bigger diversity maybe than before?

CSM (R) SIMS: Bigger diversity with a lot more challenges because some had the responsibility of managing millions and millions of dollars' worth of equipment based on the size of the unit. So, we brought in, I think that was probably the best collaboration probably outside the Sergeants Majors Academy, for me.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Do you remember about how long that course was?

CSM (R) SIMS: I want to say 8 to 12 weeks.

SGM WATERHOUSE: That's a pretty long course.

CSM (R) SIMS: Yeah it was a pretty long course.

SGM WATERHOUSE: But a lot of peer learning.

CSM (R) SIMS: The thing about it was we had drill sergeants coming in who really had been out of it for about three years. So, it was a really good course. I would probably say we all wanted to learn because we all were in a situation to where we were probably relying on our junior soldiers who really had the schoolhouse experience. This is how you do it and we were bringing in a different set of experiences to that job. None of it was based on how you do this as a 92 Yankee. I came out of an MOS that was somewhat similar. We understood storage, we understand ordering stuff but the processes were different. It wasn't a bigger leap for me than those that might have been in a warehouse driving a forklift, but that was the MOS.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So Sergeant Major, looking back at your time there in 1st Battalion 3 U.S. Infantry, or The Old Guard for those that know it by that, what were some of the takeaways from that unit, some of the things you learned that you took with you from that day forward?

CSM (R) SIMS: The Old Guard for me was a unit that really taught me attention to detail. I'm talking about every step and piece mattered. From the time you wake up and it's still today but I'm talking about to a level of detail that I have never experienced in my military career. In the winter months, there are some requirements of prep for a ceremony than there were in the summer months. Your physical fitness has got to be above your character at the time. We wanted, at that time, the very best of the best in that unit.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, professionalism.

CSM (R) SIMS: The professionalism. When we start talking about the professionalism of the profession, that was my first introduction. It wasn't (inaudible) at the time but it was really my first introduction of --

SGM WATERHOUSE: -- describe as professionalism.

CSM (R) SIMS: Yeah, yeah that was Army professionalism. We were representing the United

States Army in ways you could never imagine. So, you had to have character (inaudible), you had to be able not to get into stuff, you had to be able to be an upright soldier and NCO.

All those things we require now, I experienced that really young in my career as a young sergeant in The Old Guard. From attention to detail, I would go back and think about, we were taking young specialists. We had this thing called a ceremony uniform. In other words, we would make the E-4 and below put corporal stripes on their uniform because we didn't have enough NCO's around to perform all these ceremonies. He may be a PFC or maybe a specialist but we make him in charge of this team that's called a ceremony uniform wearing corporal stripes. That was just how we had to put our NCO's in charge of a team to perform ceremonies. So, this young soldier was put in that position to lead very young in his career.

SGM WATERHOUSE: They probably think about it at the time but that probably actually helped them.

CSM (R) SIMS: It helped them a lot and it

demanded a lot of you. It was a very tough assignment from the perspective that you worked pretty usually all weekend. Funerals are funerals, you worked Saturday's and Sunday's and you had early mornings and late nights. The same thing we're doing across most units. But for me as a young sergeant at the time, it really taught me attention to detail, it shaped me, I would probably say from an Army profession that was my first introduction.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So Sergeant Major, in March 1994, you were assigned to Fort Bragg. I mentioned earlier you went to Airborne School in preparation for that. At Fort Bragg, you were assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Company or HHC 2nd Battalion, 325th Infantry Regiment. There you served as the Battalion S4 Non-Commissioned Officer in Charge or NCOIC. That was a position you served in for about 18 months. So, going back to Airborne School, is there anything you'd like to talk about in Airborne School? Was there something, I'm afraid of heights, I don't know about you. But was there something you

learned from that experience besides having to run everywhere?

CSM (R) SIMS: Yeah you do a lot of running everywhere. You trust your jump master. You trust that person with your life. You have no choice, you really trust that person that they're going to check your static line. You think about it when you turn around and say, jumper check my static line, that's the ultimate trust.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Which opens your parachute when you jump out.

CSM (R) SIMS: Which opens your parachute so you've got to trust that that individual that checked my gear and it's going to work and to find a deficiency if it's not going to work. So, you're really ultimately trusting him or her with your life. But from the physical fitness perspective --

SGM WATERHOUSE: You get used to that.

CSM (R) SIMS: You get used to that, came out of units that did a lot of running and prepared us for that type of training. At the end of the day, you

walk away saying you have more confidence in yourself as a soldier or sergeant but you really do say hey, you understand the value of trusting this person in your front and to your rear.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So Sergeant Major, looking back then, can you explain what the mission of the 2nd Battalion 325th was? I know today even 20 years ago people say the 82nd Airborne is the nation's 911 course to go anywhere. Did the 2nd Battalion 325th have any particular mission?

CSM (R) SIMS: Yes. When you think about it, we were an airfield seizure type unit. The airborne aspect of it was that it was a mode of how are we going to get there.

SGM WATERHOUSE: By driving trucks.

CSM (R) SIMS: We were not driving trucks initially. You're going to go through, you had an 18-hour sequence. They prepare you to get you prepared to go anywhere in the world. The mission today is still the same mission.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Rapid deployment.

CSM (R) SIMS: Rapid deployment.

SGM WATERHOUSE: You get a call you have to be out within so many days.

CSM (R) SIMS: Yeah. You really can now be that sure force for the nation in the Army to get someone there quicker. More so than preparing heavy equipment, armor equipment, artillery equipment, you can just say hey, get your parachute and that equipment will catch up with you but your body can get there in 18 hours.

SGM WATERHOUSE: The key thing is you've got to get there.

CSM (R) SIMS: You're there. So, you think about it from that perspective of the airborne part of it was your way of getting there but we had the ultimate mission of new airfield seizure, we had weapon deployment. We were able to be the quick reaction Air Force for the brigade and division.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, you would set up airport operations and basically get a foot on the ground for the armory at large if they had to go

somewhere.

CSM (R) SIMS: Right. You may be an early entry unit.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So Sergeant Major, for those who don't know it, as a Battalion S4, so a lot of people don't know what maybe Battalion S4 is yet. Can you explain what your job was as the NCOIC or Noncommissioned Officer in Charge, of Battalion S4 section?

CSM (R) SIMS: So, Battalion S4 ultimately has the responsibility in overwatch and mentorship of all the company supply sergeants. So, in this particular battalion, we had HHC where the headquarters elements were and within that you had some company supply sergeants and then we had the Alpha, Bravo, Charlie and Delta companies. Each of those companies had a supply sergeant with a supply sergeant and two to three junior soldiers. Overall, we were responsible for the budget, how we were going to deploy units, the moving of transportation equipment. From whether it is going to be how we go

into NTC, you had a responsibility to do all the preparation. You're going to JRTC you had to do all the preparation for the battalion. Within that, you had to ensure that the parts and stuff was done. You were the highest headquarters from a logistic perspective within that battalion sized element.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Looking back to your time at DISCOM, so you were at the division level, this should have been really easier, maybe but maybe not in this type of unit.

CSM (R) SIMS: Mission different.

SGM WATERHOUSE: A different mission but the processes probably were similar.

CSM (R) SIMS: Different mission, the processes were totally different.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Oh, they were, okay.

CSM (R) SIMS: Yeah totally different.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, in December 1994 in that unit you were promoted to Sergeant First Class or E-7. Were your duties and responsibilities, did they stay the same because now you were getting paid for

the position you were doing or did you get additional duties?

CSM (R) SIMS: It is a Sergeant First Class position still to this day. I was a Staff Sergeant. To give you a quick story, I had my battalion CSM. Once again, I had a Staff Sergeant at the time who made Sergeant First Class and I was just the Staff Sergeant and I went to see the Battalion CSM. I said, hey Sergeant Major, I want to talk to you. I've got my HHC supply sergeant is going to get promoted on the first to Sergeant First Class and I'm a Staff Sergeant, what do you want me to do?

SGM WATERHOUSE: Because you're responsible for watching those guys, right?

CSM (R) SIMS: Exactly. He said I'll tell you what to do, you go back to work. I said, you go back to work in the Battalion S4 right so that was confidence.

SGM WATERHOUSE: In other words, you're still in charge.

CSM (R) SIMS: Right, I'm still in charge

which was very powerful at the time. You think about it today, to this day, we do that. We put what we think is the best competent person, in some cases, in those jobs and we do consider each person.

SGM WATERHOUSE: But, you were promotable.

CSM (R) SIMS: Yeah, I was promotable.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, it was just a matter of time.

CSM (R) SIMS: Yeah it was just a matter of time.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Now if you weren't it would have been harder for that guy to swallow.

CSM (R) SIMS: Yeah.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, in the 2-325 as the battalion S4 NCOIC, who was your go to guy or gal for helping you or mentoring you in that position?

CSM (R) SIMS: So, it was just me. I was the senior person in the battalion. What you do have, I had a battalion S4 which was the Infantry Battalion infantry captain who was slated as the S4. I was the 92 Yankee slated as the S4 NCOIC. But above that we

had in my brigade was 2nd brigade above me, we had a Master Sergeant who was at the brigade 4 shop. So, in most cases when I had a question I could ask him and get some type of mentorship.

SGM WATERHOUSE: From the Master Sergeant?

CSM (R) SIMS: From the Master Sergeant when he was there. We were constantly --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Because he's got all the battalions.

CSM (R) SIMS: He got all the battalions.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, a lot was on your shoulders.

CSM (R) SIMS: But you did a lot of off installation training, Fort Bragg training independently. So, in most cases the S4 Brigade, S4 Headquarters were not at the location --

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, it was really up to you at the battalion level. So, you and the captain had to run the show.

CSM (R) SIMS: Yes.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So Sergeant Major, in 1995

you attended the Army's Battle Staff Course. Was that here at Fort Bliss?

CSM (R) SIMS: Fort Bliss.

SGM WATERHOUSE: I've heard lots of people say how good that course is or how it helped them. How did that course help you maybe as a Battalion S4 NCO?

CSM (R) SIMS: It was a very challenging course. I attended because it was an authorized school for the position as was the school was authorized for that Battalion S4 position. It helped me because it allowed me to be able to understand, once again, it was just myself and a captain and our senior people in S4 and really for the Battalion. So, all of that planning and understanding of planning had to come from he and I. So, the school really, really helped me understand how to do a lot of different things from a mission analysis, understand operations. A lot of different things I just learned through my progression of going through the Army here at Ft. Bliss when I came to Ft. Bliss back in 1995. It

really prepared me.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Now, thinking back to when you were in Battalion S4, did you have a Battalion S3 Sergeant Major that you worked with at all?

CSM (R) SIMS: He was a Master Sergeant or actually a Sergeant First Class. I think it was a Master Sergeant promotable position.

SGM WATERHOUSE: But not really in the same lane?

CSM (R) SIMS: We worked together when we had to do planning. But when you start thinking about it, for me, I think that was the best thing the Army did for me. Now here I am as a Sergeant First Class, now really understanding value added, to really understand doctrine, the way of doing things from a mission-oriented perspective.

SGM WATERHOUSE: You know how all those other positions tie in. What all Battalion S3's are supposed to be doing.

CSM (R) SIMS: That's right so now you can be value added to those for the Battalion and doing

logistic estimates. At that time, you had the S4, the S1 that would work with the S3 maneuver in the unit. So, it was a very, very powerful helpful course for me.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So Sergeant Major, you mentioned earlier Pathfinder School. So, you also went there that same year. Me, when I first saw that when I was looking at your biography I was thinking infantry guys and going to Pathfinder School. So, how did you as a supply side NCO end up at Pathfinder School? Is that something you sought to do? You said it was part of -- well you were in the 82nd Airborne.

CSM (R) SIMS: Yeah, I was fortunate. The way we did it in the 82nd, even for Battle Staff School, you may have been slated to go to the school but we did a division PT test. Every one every month, it was the 82nd way of doing things. We went out, we did a Division G3 and Division CSM.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Was this for all the NCO's?

CSM (R) SIMS: Yes, everyone. You were scheduled to go to school, you started off with a PT

test. You may not go that month but you're going to do a PT test. It was for all schools, it was the way we were doing it for every school we had to attend. So, I was fortunate that I was slotted into a position that required it.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, you were supposed to have that Pathfinder badge in the battalion?

CSM (R) SIMS: Yes, every school I went to it was derived from a position that I was in. So, for me it worked out. I ended up going to Pathfinder School. Once again, it was a great school because it was part of my mission at Battalion S4 to do (inaudible) operations, to go out there and set up drop zones, set up different landing helicopter zones and pads. So, for me once again it was a multiplier. A small section had a big mission. It enhanced our ability because we did a lot of those types of missions.

SGM WATERHOUSE: And you were able to take some of those things with your other NCO's and teach them how it had to be done.

CSM (R) SIMS: Right.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, shifting the focus back, so you did that school. But looking back at the actual position in 2nd Battalion 325th in the 4 shop, any particular challenges during your tenure there or lessons learned that you would like to share, your experiences?

CSM (R) SIMS: The biggest challenge was, and I'm sure everybody has them, you just don't have enough people. When you're in that type of unit and it's just you or maybe a captain and maybe three or four more soldiers, you just run out of slips. You'd run out of people based on that mission. The mission is constantly going. So, the biggest challenge is how do you balance family work with soldiers and mission when you only have a handful to do a mission. You can be doing a mission support for company A and doing mission support for company B and doing mission support for HHC but you only had a handful of people.

I'll give you a perfect example. So once again, that's the role and responsibility of the

Battalion S4 to get their unit to their training locations. So, if I have a company that's going to a training exercise and work JRTC you may have maybe more support going to NTC. We typically have got to split that mission up. So, I think the biggest challenge for me at the time was one, to maintain, help the people and really ensure they were probably working at skill levels above their current grade level.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, they would go with the units from the Battalion, some maybe in the Louisiana and then some at the same time in California.

CSM (R) SIMS: And that's a young PFC or specialist that I may need to go out there and do a core mission with senior people for support. So, in some cases now we were really understanding why we need to be multipurpose in our way of thinking, how do you help him or her to be able to understand what is required of the Sergeant First Class at the 40 or 30 level when he was probably only at the 10 level.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So Sergeant Major, in

September 1995 you were assigned to Camp Essayons, Korea another overseas tour where you served with Headquarters and Headquarters Battery or HHB, 6th Battalion, 37th Field Artillery Brigade or 6-37 FAR. There you also served as a Battalion S4 NCOIC or Noncommissioned Officer in Charge and did that for about 13 months.

CSM (R) SIMS: Yes.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, by this time in your career, you had already been to Hawaii, Germany and now Korea.

CSM (R) SIMS: Now Korea. That's diversity.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Not normal today to do that. It's not normal today to do that many -- deployments yes, but not actually moving there to do the work. So, how did this particular move to Korea come about? Did you have any say so in that?

CSM (R) SIMS: No, well yes, I did. I wanted to PCS and do something different. So, I remember talking to the branch man and he said yeah, I can send you to Korea or I can send you back to Fort

Bragg so I did and didn't. So, at that time when we had a shortage of my MOS that were airborne qualified so you had to keep us in a population to fill that priority unit at least 100, 110 percent. So, I'll just tell you career wise, I was in an MLRS unit, Multiple Launch Rocket System.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Some people have probably seen that on TV before, especially the Gulf War in 1990/1991.

CSM (R) SIMS: Yes in 1990/1991, very, very utilized. It was a really good unit.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, for people who maybe aren't familiar with that, some of the younger soldiers today or soldiers that will read this in the future or people that want to become soldiers, the MLRS can you explain what that is and what it does.

CSM (R) SIMS: It was a system that launches, it was a direct support in some cases, general support unit that had the capability of reaching miles, miles to the enemy. It was in Korea so we had to have the ability to reach where our enemy

was.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Some people call it launching telephone poles, it reminds them of it that's how big they are. They have an extended range, obviously it's a type of artillery.

CSM (R) SIMS: Yes, it's artillery, it's a form of artillery but it was the rocket part of the artillery more so than that canon part of the artillery.

SGM WATERHOUSE: A rocket propelled canon.

CSM (R) SIMS: Yeah.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So Sergeant Major, in Korea as a Battalion S4 Vice 82nd, what were some of the differences in your roles and responsibilities in those two units that you'd like to highlight.

CSM (R) SIMS: Yeah, I'd would probably say both were very equally important. The mission of the 82nd was very, very important and really the mission of the unit in Korea there in the S unit was very, very important by virtue of the mission set and what it was designed to do in the event of a war. Critically

important too, I think, shaping how we're going to fight and win in that environment. Of course, the duties, some of the systems were the same. When I was in 82nd, I was able to get things a little faster.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Not as much equipment, right?

CSM (R) SIMS: So, in 82nd less equipment and in MLRS more equipment. Our means of travel were, although we had trucks there but it is not as many trucks and systems because it was a system thing with the rocket launch system and the truck. But the requirement to ensure that, at that time, it was called a pacing item where always capable, it could be a highly stressful job. From the maintenance perspective down from S4 to the supply people that had to ensure that it was all ordered and readily available.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Because you're in a deployed like environment.

CSM (R) SIMS: You're already in the deployed environment.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Whereas before, you were always getting ready to go or sending people.

CSM (R) SIMS: Correct.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, you were there about a year?

CSM (R) SIMS: About a year. You think about that tour, it's a year. Usually about six months into it you get about very, very proficient from a perspective not just your job but the context. The people you build your relationship with and about 9 months in you've got to shift gears and get back home right which is a challenge within itself. Just imagine that challenge, you've got critical people, NCO's in those roles and you've got them about a year and then you've got to retrain.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, you're always losing people.

CSM (R) SIMS: You're always losing and gaining people. That was probably the biggest challenge in the career. In my case, I had the person who replaced me was a reclassified 92 Yankee who had only

been in that MOS less than a year.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, brand new to the job.

CSM (R) SIMS: There you go.

SGM WATERHOUSE: But you have time with him or her to coach them up?

CSM (R) SIMS: A few weeks.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Not a whole lot of time.

CSM (R) SIMS: Not a whole lot of time.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Over there, was it similar at Fort Bragg where it was you and a captain and not much help from a brigade or oversight from brigade or was it easier because you were in one country?

CSM (R) SIMS: Yeah, the Battalion was there, that was it.

SGM WATERHOUSE: You didn't have a brigade there?

CSM (R) SIMS: We didn't have the brigade there in that of unit, it was just us. You're like the structure of the S4 from an authorization perspective were the same. We had the Sergeant First Class. At that time, I had a Quartermaster captain.

That experience he brought was great. In the 82nd, it was the authorization of the captain where it was the preponderance of the unit. In my case, I was in a light infantry unit so it was an infantry captain. So, a lot of that experience in the S4 came on the S4 (inaudible).

SGM WATERHOUSE: It wasn't his background.

CSM (R) SIMS: It wasn't his background. He was doing a great job.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So then in Korea --

CSM (R) SIMS: So, now in Korea, we've got a loading station then we got more capabilities and knowledge. They understood it a little bit more and the learning curve was less from the differences of the two battalion S4 jobs, absolutely.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So Sergeant Major, looking back at your time in Korea with the 6th Battalion 37 Field Artillery, any lessons learned you'd like to highlight or things, good or bad experiences that you took with you?

CSM (R) SIMS: Korea was all good

experiences.

SGM WATERHOUSE: People hear nightmares about --

CSM (R) SIMS: Yeah, we did a lot of training. For me it was --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Distractions I would say, the soldiers --

CSM (R) SIMS: There were no distractions. Of course, there is no family near. For us, the family wasn't in the location. The families were further south. It really truly taught me how to lead and survive really as a soldier and as a senior Noncommissioned Officer. From the field perspective how to improvise because it got cold in Korea.

SGM WATERHOUSE: I was going to say it gets cold there too.

CSM (R) SIMS: It gets cold in Korea. That was my first time when I came from Fort Bragg in the 82nd Airborne Division and I remember going to the field in Korea and we were trying to put up a tent. You had to learn that that stake that you had, that

metal stake doesn't go in the ground well. All the stakes were bending and you had to think about what do you do. It taught me a lot on how to execute and think on the move.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Now, thinking back to your time at Fort Drum, did that help you and your team kind of adjust to Korea in the winter?

CSM (R) SIMS: It was a few years between that but yes. I would say it was colder in Korea than it was in Fort Drum. It was a different cold and in Korea everything freezes up. In Fort Drum there was just a lot of snow on the ground and not as much ice. In Korea, there was a lot of ice from my experience there.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So Sergeant Major, you mentioned earlier, if you go to Korea, a lot of times you'll get what they call station of choice when you leave. Not so much today but a lot of soldiers would volunteer to go there to come back here. Is that how you came back to Fort Bragg in that next assignment?

CSM (R) SIMS: Yes. Once again, I was

Airborne and it was one of those things to where there was a need to have my MOS back in the Airborne unit. It was a volunteer school, Airborne is a volunteer school. Most of the time, we're not volunteering so the few that were kept us in that community.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, that was November 1996 when you went to Fort Bragg again. And this time, you were assigned to the United States Army Special Operations Command or USASOC where you served as the Combat Senior Training Management NCO for about two and a half years.

CSM (R) SIMS: Right.

SGM WATERHOUSE: How did you feel when you heard USASOC? For me, I'm a tanker, an armor guy. I hear that and I'm like, special forces, wow I get to work with the special forces. What kind of thoughts did you have when you knew you were going to a special force's community?

CSM (R) SIMS: Yeah, it was one I didn't know a lot about it. I was on Fort Bragg but you saw a lot of the Green Berets special forces guys. You

saw a lot of the CYOPS there and we saw some of the other units, our special mission units that were there. So, for me I was really happy to be a part of another elite type unit that had a very important mission. It was more of an incitement for me than anything else. I had a chance to at least go back there or at least go to this unit which I ended didn't leave for ten years later.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, for those, including myself, who don't know, what were your duties, responsibilities as the Combat Senior Training Management NCO?

CSM (R) SIMS: I did quite a few different things. I was fortunate to work with some of our special mission units there that I can't get into. The units that was an open source unit I was able to get out and help them develop some of their requirements.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, is this kind of like an S3 operations? How is it different?

CSM (R) SIMS: It's a little bit different.

So, you think about we're looking for a unit that you're trying to help develop and shape the requirements. If I have a requirement of a certain place or a certain piece of equipment where the teams that had the responsibility to facilitate that. Whether it was ammunition, whether it was a type of equipment or a type of materiel, our location we had that broken down in combat teams that we were required to go out and do some pre-site locations and visits and come back and start working mission sets.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, was this like a broadening experience? This wasn't a 92 Yankee position, was it?

CSM (R) SIMS: No it was not. Actually, it was more of a broadening assignment. It was my first exposure to a broadening assignment. When you look back on it, it prepared me for something greater. It was more of a job that you had to learn and you had to just work relationships and you had to work relationships with the community. You had to understand what the Ranger Regiment requirements were.

You had to understand what the special forces requirements were. You had to understand at the time what the CYOPS were and truly understand what our special unit needs requirements are and you had to go out and really be, I called it an ambassador, for all those units in a team. A team consists of quite a different few individuals. We had Ranger Regiment individuals, we had the gamut of what the United States Army Special Operations Command, their authorizations are. So, you had all those units. We had an aircraft and the 160th are part of the team. It was a really good assignment.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, in that type of unit, who helped you learn the ropes and who did you look to, to help you in that path to try to be the team builder and plan this training for such a diverse group.

CSM (R) SIMS: Yeah, I think it's about now you have to take initiative. We had a major in charge of each of the teams but we also had to be able to work with the organization unit to understand their

requirements. So, that had just become you and your ability to grasp what they are asking for and put it in some type of package to facilitate their needs.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, you're going to them figuring it out it's not them bringing it to you.

CSM (R) SIMS: It would go both ways it depends.

SGM WATERHOUSE: You were kind of independent.

CSM (R) SIMS: You are independent in that sense but once again you're representing all so you are kind of somewhat migrated to going out to trying to see what their requirements are initially. That relationship, that communication now is going back and forth to execute the mission.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, you would work with NCO's and those organizations.

CSM (R) SIMS: Yes.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So Sergeant Major, in 1998 while you were assigned to USASOC, you attended the Army's Jumpmaster School and Force Modern Management

Course. It sounds like two ends of the spectrum. One sounds like a lot of fun outdoors and one sounds like a college course. Would you like to talk about those two particular things for people who don't know anything about them?

CSM (R) SIMS: Both schools are very, very important. One, the jumpmaster requirement is, at the time, being a leader, you had this requirement they wanted you to at least be a jumpmaster. One, you can lead when we need you to lead in that capacity and two, understand what is required for you on the jump route. So, it was really I had a dual hatted in that perspective. But in the Force Management School, you had to understand how the Army ran, how the procurement process works to help facilitate combat operations in each department.

SGM WATERHOUSE: To get these guys the equipment they need.

CSM (R) SIMS: Absolutely. So, you've got to understand that process. Although we had some different means of operating based on different units,

some of the units but --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Maybe the budgets were different or whatever.

CSM (R) SIMS: Yeah. But the process you had to kind of understand it the Army way.

SGM WATERHOUSE: That was kind of like you said, it was an Army level course so people from different backgrounds came to the course.

CSM (R) SIMS: Yes.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Were there civilians also in that course?

CSM (R) SIMS: Civilians in that course. I think we had (inaudible) in the course.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Was it a rank requirement or just based on position?

CSM (R) SIMS: I think it was position. I don't recall any NCO's under the rank of Sergeant First Class.

SGM WATERHOUSE: But that was a requirement for the job you were in?

CSM (R) SIMS: A requirement for the job I

was in.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Any key things you learned in that course that you can remember?

CSM (R) SIMS: Yes. It teaches you, once again, how to be a leader. It teaches you how to go out and take initiative when you don't know anything. You've got to be able to go find the answer and learn how to work with others. I think the biggest thing was in the broaden job that it was for me was understanding how other organization units within the Army operate and how they come together now. Really, look at how we got brigades and BCT's and how it was task force organized. We were doing that type of organization, that structure then --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Before the Army started.

CSM (R) SIMS: Before the Army really started doing it. We really did it in the 82nd Airborne Division because when I was there we already had all the unit that supported us were they jumped with us, they deployed with us, they went to the field with us. So, we were already task force oriented.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Like a Brigade Combat Team today.

CSM (R) SIMS: Like Brigade Combat team today.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So Sergeant Major, in that job you mentioned some of the challenges. Any other challenges you'd like to mention about that training management NCO position and/or some of the key takeaways from your time there.

CSM (R) SIMS: I think that was it. I think the key is I would never look at things as challenging. I think the only thing that's challenging is if you didn't try. That's my philosophy of stuff. Everything is an enhancement of your ability to broaden your knowledge. I think having the ability to think outside the norm, think outside the box and be able to once again, Battle Staff course which I didn't know at the time would probably help prepare me also for the schools and understanding the operational aspect of it, I think, really helped prepare me. I look at it as all those

challenges really enhanced the program.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Sergeant Major, in July 1999, you were assigned to Charlie Company, Support Battalion, 1st Special Warfare Training Group Airborne at Fort Bragg where you served as the First Sergeant for two years. In November 1999, about four months after you moved to Charlie Company, Support Battalion, you were promoted to Master Sergeant. So, what led you serving as the First sergeant as a Sergeant First Class when you got there?

CSM (R) SIMS: Well, I was promotable so I went as -- I never really (inaudible) because I was promotable as a First Sergeant then I got promoted.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay so they made you, you earned the stripes.

CSM (R) SIMS: Correct.

SGM WATERHOUSE: That's good.

CSM (R) SIMS: Yeah absolutely. Yeah so I became promotable, went into the job immediately and, of course, got promoted. So, I think the rank from Master Sergeant to First Sergeant probably should be

the same thing right.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, when you got there, was there a First Sergeant you did the transition with or was the position vacant or being held by a platoon sergeant?

CSM (R) SIMS: Yeah so, I did transition with a First Sergeant. We had about 35 days of transition.

SGM WATERHOUSE: This unit sounds like another unit most people aren't going to know anything about and I know you can't say a whole lot about it. Now you're a first sergeant, you did 76 Charlie now you're a 92 Yankee and, oh by the way, now you're going to be a First Sergeant but not necessarily in a company that you may be thinking is coming but now you're got special warfare training.

CSM (R) SIMS: Exactly. So, you think about that. We have riggers in that unit, our parachute riggers. We had people that ran our central issue facility. We had communications and electronic individuals in that unit. We had everything in that

one particular company to support, I think to do what - now, support battalions do, but from a smaller scale - it was the mission set of the unit. Going back to some of those courses, the Battle Staff course, the Jumpmaster course, the Pathfinder course. You don't know what you don't know at the time. It really prepared me now to be a First Sergeant in that particular unit with some of the duties and requirements.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Now this is part of the Support Battalion. So, were your soldiers in your company mostly logistic folks or were there special operations guys?

CSM (R) SIMS: A combination of both. The unit was, you can have some of the companies in the unit, we have 18 series and then supports people. If you look at how the structure of a special forces team, typically I would always have a support element infused in that unit. It's a combination of both.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, your company's mission probably were all the companies in the Support

Battalion the similar mission of supporting the different groups in the Brigade?

CSM (R) SIMS: Different missions. You may have one that may just be public transportation. You may have one may be, in my case, had the diversity of all thing's logistics. We supported obviously our special forces soldiers and other units that were doing training across a spectrum of different locations.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So Sergeant Major, as we do, we do it at all levels as NCO's but really as a First Sergeants, one of the times where we as NCO's have to assess the bigger -- now we're at the highest rank of NCO in our unit. Now we come in there and sometimes it takes a week or a couple of months where we make an assessment of what we just inherited, responsibility for. So, in that particular unit, Charlie Company, after you had been there a month or two, you're learning the unit, learning what you had, the good, the bad, the ugly, what were some things that you saw where you said here are some things

where, some people call it initiatives whatever where here are some things we're going to do to get better.

CSM (R) SIMS: Yeah so a lot of it was, one the unit runs about 200 miles an hour a day, just the mission set. Some of the biggest challenges is one, you're talking about an airborne unit. Obviously, you want airborne soldiers in an airborne unit. There are cases where you just can't get airborne soldiers in an airborne unit so then you've got an authorization unfilled. I was fortunate to be able to work it out so I could reach across to Fort Bragg to bring in non-airborne people and then work with headquarters. The importance of the airborne soldiers is very, very important but I think most important is having the authorization of people to perform the mission to provide the support. So, we were able to at least initially bring in non-airborne people then put them through a training program to send them off to Airborne School. So, what we had now capabilities was greater. We wanted to have the capability support

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SGM WATERHOUSE: So, you just didn't have enough people.

CSM (R) SIMS: Didn't have enough people so that was the first challenge. After that it was really about systems. Like anything, the First Sergeant you almost want to be able to not to be at work every day management, you want to have systems that runs things based on where you see they need to be. So, some of the biggest challenges was getting the right people. I still think that rings true today. Then we had that extra requirement, Airborne, that complicated it a little bit more. And two, maintaining people that one, healthy. In most cases when you're not healthy and you can't jump. Typically, you PCS because we can't leave you there, not able to perform--

SGM WATERHOUSE: In that particular unit anyway.

CSM (R) SIMS: In that particular unit and then clearances. We're now talking about the importance based on who we're supporting.

SGM WATERHOUSE: You had to have a certain security clearance to be in the unit.

CSM (R) SIMS: To be in the unit because if they can't meet those requirements then you can't have them go support the community that you're supporting, the unit itself. So, those are challenges that never stopped. From a training perspective, one we were able to pick up people. We were able to work with HRC to get what we thought was the best from an aptitude perspective and a physical perspective which was really good. Then we lose people because we're now going to lose people to go do what, I want to be a special forces soldier. I want to go out and to assessment from other organizations within --

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, I'm a 92 and you're a (inaudible) now working with these 18 series MOS's. You don't want to be an 18 series.

CSM (R) SIMS: I was 18 and you got the other special mission units where you lose people.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Rangers.

CSM (R) SIMS: Rangers and some of the

classified units.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, it's good but you don't know if you're inspiring your guys, well you probably do but some of the guys get inspired by supporting those teams and now they want to be part of it.

CSM (R) SIMS: Especially our communications. Like I said, we had signal ears in there that once you train those individuals knows specialized pieces of equipment.

SGM WATERHOUSE: They want to get their hands on it.

CSM (R) SIMS: They want their hand on the community, this huge community now wants those same people. The biggest challenge for me was really maintaining at least 95 percent of our authorization just to do and support the mission. That mission ran 24 hours a day 7 days a week.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So Sergeant Major, in that organization there, this is your first First Sergeant position. Who did you look to as a trainer or mentor?

CSM (R) SIMS: So, all the way up until I

retired and to this day, I was fortunate to I never really worked a job where I had logistics supply sustainers above me. So, my mentors have always been a special forces Sergeant Major or Infantry. I always reach back into because I believe leadership is leadership. The technical aspect would be different but leadership, from my perspective, is leadership. What I thought was the best illustration of leadership was my experience with those senior Sergeant Majors. So, I was fortunate to reach across Fort Bragg and go visit and make some phone calls and asking, how would you do this. I still think today you've still got to do that. You've got to be willing to say that I'm not sure how to do this and at least have some people you can call and get their opinion.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So Sergeant Major, in 1999 during your first year as a First Sergeant there, you attended the First Sergeant course. Where was that course?

CSM (R) SIMS: Fort Bliss.

SGM WATERHOUSE: That was at Fort Bliss,

okay. So, you went to the Army level one. How did that course help you in your second year?

CSM (R) SIMS: You brought up a good point. I already made my mistakes by the time that happened.

SGM WATERHOUSE: That's usually how it happens.

CSM (R) SIMS: Yeah, I made my mistakes.

SGM WATERHOUSE: That's how it was back then, we fixed that now with the Master Leader course.

CSM (R) SIMS: We fixed that with the Master Leader Course. So, once again, you learn it as you go. When I got here, it taught me, once again, some more systems and some more options of doing things. The biggest piece of the First Sergeant course to me, was talking to the other First Sergeants who were experiencing some of the challenges --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Learning each other's --

CSM (R) SIMS: Those that already and had good systems and ideals. I think I walked away and understood some of the ways of doing things from a doctrine perspective. For me, I think it was the

relationships I established amongst the other First Sergeants that was in the course with me.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Sergeant Major, looking back at Charlie Company, I think you mentioned a lot of the challenges you already faced. Any lessons learned you'd like to highlight or things you learned, I use lessons learned as a catch all phrase. Anything key takeaways that you experienced there that really helped mold or shape you?

CSM (R) SIMS: Yeah my ability to, now that I think about it, what we call now in the Army, presence right. So, for me it was to understand what was going on and required in the unit you had to go down and see the soldiers. That was the biggest thing for me and I think that rings through to today. Those that understand what's happening internally through the people we represent, I call myself as the First Sergeant, a representative of the soldiers, they didn't represent me. I think for me, I was able to really have a dialogue with where the requirements were met with the soldiers and people doing the work.

I probably say it wasn't a challenge but more of a plus.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So Sergeant Major, in August 2001, you were assigned to Korea again. This time you were assigned to Camp Casey where you served as the First Sergeant of Alpha Company, 702nd Main Support Battalion MSB part of the 2nd Infantry Division again for another year tour. I understand that back in 2001, the 702nd MSB was the largest Main Support Battalion in the U.S. Army.

CSM (R) SIMS: Absolutely.

SGM WATERHOUSE: And the Battalion had over 1100 soldiers and its mission was to support the entire 2nd Infantry Division.

CSM (R) SIMS: Correct.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, in unclassified type terms, whatever you can say, what was your company's primary mission in that big picture of supporting that division?

CSM (R) SIMS: I had the Supply Company within that main support battalion. You're talking

about all the fuelers. Although you had in the forward support battalion, it was smaller but we had the tankers, 75 plus tankers. We ran all the warehouses from the class 2, 4, 7 and 9 of all the classes of supplies. We ran the class 1 with all our substance and water.

SGM WATERHOUSE: That was important. Well, they're all important.

CSM (R) SIMS: I think we had multiple affairs in there. It was a huge mission, several hundred soldiers, I can't remember the exact number, I think it was over 300.

SGM WATERHOUSE: 30 in your company? Wow.

CSM (R) SIMS: Correct, within the company. We were located right outside the gate of Camp Casey on Camp Memo (?). Did you go to Korea?

SGM WATERHOUSE: I have not.

CSM (R) SIMS: Yeah so right outside the gate of Camp Casey. It was supporting the division. In any given day, there was a soldier within that company at a support role in the division by virtue of

the mission of the supply company. Of course, within that battalion, you had a transportation company. You had a Charlie man and medical company and then you had the Delta company which was a maintenance company within that battalion. The ones that had the most diversity was the supply company. At any given time, you could have nine or ten different MOS's in there. We had the engineers in there because you may have to run some pipeline and they had to go dig the trenches.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, now you've got soldiers with all these MOS's that may or may not know what they do.

CSM (R) SIMS: They may or may not know what they do so you think about it. And then managing, some of the problems that can come along with Korea, although you were away from their families, soldiers typically found themselves when they're not training probably doing some things like they shouldn't be doing like underage drinking or something.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Which you didn't have to worry about that the first time.

CSM (R) SIMS: Didn't have to worry about it the first time, you know, the drinking underage. But then we went through 9/11 and we had curfews.

SGM WATERHOUSE: A month after you arrived.

CSM (R) SIMS: A month after I arrived. So, we had tension because the U.S. soldiers couldn't leave, you had the curfew going. You had a lot of fights.

SGM WATERHOUSE: I was going to ask you, that obviously impacted all Americans but when that happened which is right after you got over there, so you and the commander, how did you approach talking to your company about that?

CSM (R) SIMS: It was almost a 100 percent lockdown. It was every day. All the passes were removed and the curfew was there. We always had a curfew but in most cases the curfew was 2200 or 2300 every single night. At 2400 you had to have a warrior pass. But what was happening was the soldiers didn't have the freedom of movement. At any given day you can say, I can catch the bus and go Yongsan or Osong --

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, your off-duty time was limited to on post.

CSM (R) SIMS: Off duty time was limited so guess what we're doing up there we're running guard.

SGM WATERHOUSE: And everybody was doing that in the United States. (inaudible crosstalk). Yeah that's got to be hard.

CSM (R) SIMS: One of the best jobs, now I'm in a conventional type unit more so than an unconventional unit. It was not necessarily a challenge but I think it was more, that company there and that job I would probably say taught me more as a leader. I grew more as a leader as a company First Sergeant from any other job I had.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, kind of like the last unit, now you're the First Sergeant of a much bigger unit.

CSM (R) SIMS: A much bigger unit.

SGM WATERHOUSE: A different type of unit. When you came in was your commander already there?

CSM (R) SIMS: He was not there. I got in

with a commander that left within three months.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, both of you were fairly new. When you assess the organization besides some kids getting in trouble, what were some things, was there any initiatives or anything you tried to get done? It's a short tour, obviously. Are there some things you'd like to highlight that you tried to get done with your NCO's or your unit? Because we always try to improve our organization even though it's harder in Korea.

CSM (R) SIMS: I was able to put a lot of focus in on working on how you increase, and at that time, I came on a lot of light units, came out of a special operations unit. I understood the importance of, what I believe, were multifunctions of the company. So, we had functions in the company but I believe that, I don't want you to be parochial in just learning one job, I want you to be familiar with learning multiple jobs.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, cross training.

CSM (R) SIMS: Yes, cross training is one of

them. Multifunctional is the way I look at because when you start looking at it from a perspective of, in Korea now you've got to understand it's one for one. Typically, it takes a while. If I would have lost a soldier for any reason, he or she doesn't just show up tomorrow trained and ready in your formation. They typically come from the states and whatever you'd got to identify. Again too, you had that profile. You had all the different things and challenges that we still think about today. We had the non-deployables..we had all these different things happening but what we had as the command team was how do we build capacity within what we had. So, the mission is --

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, there's constant turnover.

CSM (R) SIMS: There's a constant turnover. So, you may be an ammunition specialist but I may need you to go down and do something in the warehouse because I believe store it, receipt and issue is different commodity but the process is the same. So,

I'm going to train you to use your different ways so I have a capacity that is more so than just have --

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, it's not really like training 92 Yankee to be an infantry man, you're talking about within the scope.

CSM (R) SIMS: Within with the functions of the company. That was huge for us to do and it paid big dividends.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, now we don't have no single points of failure.

CSM (R) SIMS: I had no single points of failure. I had layers of training individuals to use based on the visibility. I believe that from my perspective that when a soldier leaves Korea they're trained because they had nothing but time to train. And you did a lot of time --

SGM WATERHOUSE: It's almost like going to Kuwait today for some units.

CSM (R) SIMS: Like going to Kuwait today for units. Your readiness level real high and the confidence level of a soldier is high. And the

importance of how do we build retention for the Army. At that time, I wanted to ensure that the soldiers had options when it came time to reenlist. What I mean is, we put a G3 pre-course training so that was important. (Inaudible crosstalk) ASFAB scores. You had time. We had a classroom and instructors over there and we wanted to raise the AGT scores and give them more options --

SGM WATERHOUSE: In case they wanted to change MOS.

CSM (R) SIMS: In case they wanted to change MOS.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So Sergeant Major, looking back at now your second time in Korea, this time as a First Sergeant of a pretty big company with a huge responsibility, what are some of the key takeaways from your time there?

CSM (R) SIMS: Well you know, I think it requires me, us as a leader especially me as the First Sergeant at the time to, I call it now, mission command. You power down and trust the platoon

sergeant. At the time, it wasn't mission command at the time but you had to execute mission command with the unit. Remember you're talking about a company that is the size, in some cases, as battalions.

SGM WATERHOUSE: And you can't be everywhere.

CSM (R) SIMS: You can't be everywhere. So, the importance of ensuring that that platoon sergeant --

SGM WATERHOUSE: You don't want them having to call you, hey First Sergeant can I do this?

CSM (R) SIMS: So, you had to ensure that they understood know what the expectation were but you had to have trust in them and then you had to develop the ones that needed to be developed. It still happens today but when you're in Korea it is more relevant because you don't have that, I need someone tomorrow and they get there tomorrow to replace the platoon sergeant. The platoon sergeant you have is the platoon sergeant you have for a year, good, bad or indifferent.

SGM WATERHOUSE: It's not like you can change another EA for another unit across the post.

CSM (R) SIMS: Right not in Korea. If I'm at Fort Bliss or Fort Bragg I could probably work out a swap in some kind of way. That was -- and really, I wanted to be able to have the company to be able to take what our mission set was to move fast. You know what I mean is how do we get them -- it's a large division, it's a large unit. But how do we get them to understand, and I came out of the 82nd Airborne Division so there was a lot of fast moving --

SGM WATERHOUSE: You're used to going fast.

CSM (R) SIMS: I'm used to going fast. I came out of the special operations community and that was going fast. So, we were basically redesigning how we were going to do all the camouflage on the vehicles. We would pre-stage the thing. We would send up packages that was already deployable packages versus having to go out there and go to a warehouse and start loading things up. Hey let's already have packaging tents and stuff ready to go so it was to be

able to accelerate our fast movement. Because once again, we are a supply company for the division.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So Sergeant Major, in August 2002, you were assigned to the 513th Military Intelligence or MI Brigade at Fort Gordon. I think that was the second time you had been to Gordon now.

CSM (R) SIMS: Mm-hmm.

SGM WATERHOUSE: In November 2002, about three months after you arrived there, you and your brigade deployed to Kuwait where you served as the Brigade S4 NCOIC or Noncommissioned Officer-in-Charge.

CSM (R) SIMS: Right.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, now at the brigade level, you had done that job twice at the battalion level, so now you're at the brigade level. Looking back then from what you can say, what was your Brigade's mission in Kuwait back then prior to Operation Iraqi Freedom beginning on March 20, 2003?

CSM (R) SIMS: That brigade had --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Because you got there before the war started, so to speak.

CSM (R) SIMS: Yeah so, the brigade mission was more of CI Counter Intelligent Agents. They had tactical communications dealing with more of the satellite placement, tactical communications. So, it was all over the place. You're talking about now in a signal brigade, in my brigade that had the responsibility to be able to gather classified information to package it for a decision for at the top that we called the CFlick, the commander that was over there in Kuwait. We were his brigade that had the mission to do it. Also, take your CI agents, put them in civilian clothes and send them to different locations to bring in that type of data to help shape some things. We also had a mission to run an interrogation facility.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So Sergeant Major, how did your Brigade's mission change once it became Operation Iraqi Freedom began? Did it kind of change or you guys were still doing the same thing it is just now it is a wartime footing?

CSM (R) SIMS: It is a wartime footing. At

that point now, we split base. Now we're in Iraq and once again we were supporting --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Iraq and Kuwait.

CSM (R) SIMS: Iraq and Kuwait. It was the same mission just now we're still based in Iraq and Kuwait.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, your job as the S4 NCOIC at the brigade level, what would you say in laymen's terms was in Iraq. Were you having to go back and forth or what were some of the things you had to do personally?

CSM (R) SIMS: Yeah so as we moved forward into Iraq with the team, now the biggest challenge was the equipment perspective of it. How do we manage equipment, priority, what to send for and really the accountability of it. That was the beginning of the war when we crossed over in March 2003. We were in preposition there. Not just we were there we also had elements in Afghanistan. So, that brigade, remember that was working under central command when then you had the element forward and the mission for the

theaters. There was a lot of activity going on in that part of the world too.

SGM WATERHOUSE: We had soldiers in Afghanistan in October 2001.

CSM (R) SIMS: There we go.

SGM WATERHOUSE: They had been there a while.

CSM (R) SIMS: Been there a while. So, we split from this brigade as military intelligence brigade --

SGM WATERHOUSE: And their responsibilities also in --

CSM (R) SIMS: In the theater. And primarily in Afghanistan, we had a bigger footprint in Afghanistan based on that mission.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So Sergeant Major, did you stay with the headquarters or were you able to travel and see your soldiers and the battalions?

CSM (R) SIMS: Well I spent 95 percent of my time in Afghanistan and Iraq. As we split base, my

OIC stayed with the headquarters here and me and four other individuals went forward.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, you went out to see the troops, the battalions?

CSM (R) SIMS: Yes, and just reported back to him what we had going forward.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, any lessons learned or anything from that experience? That's obviously a big footprint.

CSM (R) SIMS: That's a big footprint.

SGM WATERHOUSE: You're the S4 NCOIC but you're not just hanging out in a building or in one installation you were in at least several countries, three countries.

CSM (R) SIMS: Yeah that's tactical supply, tactical logistics at its best when you start looking at it from that perspective. How do you operate in a tactical environment. You remember now that was the beginning of a war, infrastructure was not really there.

SGM WATERHOUSE: There was no forward

operating bases.

CSM (R) SIMS: There was no forward operating bases so now you've got to anticipate now as the brigade S4 what you think the requirements are. And then how do we one, pre-stage those types of pieces of equipment and all classes of supplies the brigade S4. You've got your rations, you've got to maintain the supply parts and repair parts. So, that was the biggest challenge when you're operating in, across the CENTCOM theater.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So Sergeant Major, in May 2003, you redeployed to Fort Gordon where you served in the 513th for another four months or so. Looking back at those 14 months, you already talked about kind of what it was in Iraq and Kuwait but looking back at that entire period is there anything that stands out before you went to Sergeant Major Academy?

CSM (R) SIMS: No, I was fortunate to come back just for that reason to come back for preparation for the Academy. I always say once again, the Army at the time was trying to build doctrine, write doctrine,

simultaneously fight a war, simultaneously teach you in a school environment.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Because you normally would have been there in two or three years, right?

CSM (R) SIMS: Absolutely.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, you were notified that you were selected to go to the academy.

CSM (R) SIMS: When I was deployed yes. When I was forward deployed, it's ironic you bring that up. I got selected to attend the Non-Res school. I had just come from Korea, got home for Korea for a few months then got deployed and I ended up calling the brass up. I think it was the sergeant major, the school's person at HRC. I said hey, I know on the Non-Res thing, at the time I think it was the largest class. It was 700 plus students in class 54.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Here at the Academy?

CSM (R) SIMS: Here at the Academy. Now the class now in session is larger. I said I would really like to be able to get to the resident course and move family, whatever. They said, let me see what I can

do. So, they ended up putting me in a resident course right and at that time, we were selecting you for promotion and for school so it was two different things. For me, that was a good thing that the command allowed me to come back and then allowed me to go back. That was during the timeframe where they were not allowing any of the NCO's to come back to go to school.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, the brigade had to stay over a little longer after you left?

CSM (R) SIMS: Yes, the brigade stayed there. I just came back to go to school, yes.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, who took your place? Did they have somebody that could take your place?

CSM (R) SIMS: I think it may have been a Sergeant First Class somebody that ended up. It was not anyone who PCS'd in, it was somebody internal who had deployed.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay. So Sergeant Major, in September 2003, you were assigned here to Fort Bliss, Texas where we are today and in January 2004,

you were promoted to the rank of Sergeant Major and attended the Academy here. I think that was through June?

CSM (R) SIMS: Through June.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Was it a ten-month course?

CSM (R) SIMS: Five and a half months.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, if I looked at your bio correctly, you got here two or three months before class started?

CSM (R) SIMS: I think I did.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Did you do the international study?

CSM (R) SIMS: No. Everybody was coming from deployments. It was during the phase, I was coming back and I came, I can't remember what I was doing here. Was it September, class started in January. It may have been September, I'm not sure. It may have been September when I got here and I may have been working with battle staff or something like that teaching for a short period of time. But I was promoted prior to the class starting.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah, I noticed that.

CSM (R) SIMS: Because remember the class didn't start -- the ironic thing was if you were already enrolled in the Academy, you could be considered for promotion and all the other stuff. And then the same list came out on promotion, I came out on the CSM list. So, I started the school as a CSMD promoted --

SGM WATERHOUSE: CSM designee.

CSM (R) SIMS: Designee attending the course for five and a half months and graduated early and take over a battalion, yeah.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, you said you were able to get the resident course which was good.

CSM (R) SIMS: It was good.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Now for the Academy itself and the guys here, it's constantly being worked on and constantly being changed just to make it better or more relevant or whatever. As a matter of fact, they revamped the entire Non-Res course and all that fairly recently. What were some of the best things that you

took out of the course, those six months when you were here?

CSM (R) SIMS: So, the course was still on the normal POI, I think it was nine and a half months. They were working to try and facilitate how do we one, how do we get students in and reduce the course. I think it was a decision made by the Sergeant Major of the Army, to reduce the course because the priority was fighting in the combat zone.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, it went from 9 month to a 6-month course.

CSM (R) SIMS: The POI was the same to get the sergeant majors out.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, it was kind of like going to college, night school and having accelerated courses.

CSM (R) SIMS: Accelerated course and also on top of that it was a closed book test, everything was totally different. It became an accelerated course, a closed book test --

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, you guys were the first

ones to go through it?

CSM (R) SIMS: We were the first ones to go through it and then it happened that was the only time. The went back after that, they went back to the regular 9-month course.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, you guys were the guinea pigs.

CSM (R) SIMS: So me, let me just get to the question where now I had prior to school, I was a Sergeant Major and I already knew that I was selected to be a CSM. So, what I was looking for were things on how do I prepare to go out to be a Command Sergeant Major. I think the school at the time was probably, the POI was really good based on preparation to be an ops Sergeant Major or something along those lines.

SGM WATERHOUSE: A Staff Sergeant Major yeah. It wasn't a CSM because I know several times they've had like a two-week course for CSM's.

CSM (R) SIMS: Yeah, we did get that on the right end of the course.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, you did get that.

CSM (R) SIMS: So, we got a CSM designated course. During the course, allow us, the ones that were selected to attend that course, and to help somewhat shape what we needed to prepare for going out to a battalion. The course was a great course and I think it was geared perfectly. I didn't get a chance to perform and execute most of the POI because I went straight into a battalion. I couldn't utilize most of the lessons, I couldn't utilize the things they were teaching me I think really from the POI. But that was not the bulk of the course, you're talking about less than 1 percent that went out and did that and got selected to be a CSM. So, I think the course is perfectly designed but I'm just speaking from my personal desires.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, that particular class you guys were --

CSM (R) SIMS: That particular class.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Now was there still an emphasis in your class since this was accelerated that

you needed to go to college or that was out the window?

CSM (R) SIMS: No. Actually, I think I attended a few college classes here but most people, it was tough for most. It was a transition back in, we were going through predeployment physicals and all these different things going on and redeployment physicals and really, we were going through as an accelerated course. We were going through a lot. You take the course, it's common knowledge and you condense it and you're taught it all.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Read 800 pages tonight.

CSM (R) SIMS: Read 800 pages tonight, write six papers tonight.

SGM WATERHOUSE: And make sure you maintain all that. So, when did you find out what battalion you were going to go to?

CSM (R) SIMS: At the very end. So, in my case, I was Airborne, Jumpmaster qualified guy, Air Assault guy and I figured I was probably going to go to either Fort Campbell or maybe back to the Airborne

unit. During that time, we had the course was coming down and the brief. We had the USASOC community came down and briefed. The USASOC came down, they had a list of individuals they wanted to see and were all interviewed like 39 of us. The 18th Airborne Corps came down and wanted to talk to every Airborne Jumpmaster in the course. So, really it was a tossup, at the time I didn't know. I was calling Bragg and they said oh, we don't know yet.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Because this was all before we had the central (inaudible crosstalk).

CSM (R) SIMS: Yeah, absolutely. But I found out roughly about a month later where I was going.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, that was July 2004 when you went to that unit which was at Fort Bragg and there you served as the Command Sergeant Major of the 528th Special Operations Support Battalion and you did that for about a year and we'll get into that here. So, coming out of the Academy though, I know you said it was pretty good, it was accelerated and condensed

and they hit a lot of things you would need as a Staff Sergeant Major. You know, working as an operations Sergeant Major, maybe a training Sergeant Major at one of the brigades that had training Sergeant Majors. For that first billet as a Command Sergeant Major, what were some of the things you think that maybe you didn't get that you later find out that they get in the Academy now?

CSM (R) SIMS: Well, I'll give you a perfect example. So, I graduated early. Walked across the stage and since the command wanted me there we flew it. So, we graduated. --

SGM WATERHOUSE: All the CSM's.

CSM (R) SIMS: Some of us. It depended on where you were. It was totally different. I was 38 out of 39 on the list and I was the first one to leave. I went to a Special Operations Community and they wanted me there now, so I didn't get a chance to stay here. I didn't get the chance to get the experience to learn how to manage expectation as a Sergeant Major. So, let me give you what happened. I

showed up at my unit, drove from Fort Bragg to Fort Bliss, checked into lodging, got my family situated. When I arrived to the unit on leave, they were on the field getting ready to execute a battalion chain of command. Now, that unit you talked about that I ended up being the CSM of, it was the only unit in a three-star command like that. So now you've got this three-star general and his Command Sergeant Major who participated in this ceremony. So, you've got this level of expectation. So, I got the command on this field.

We've got everybody with this book, you've got the XO, you've got 40 people with the FM on the Field and Ceremony. Everybody interpreted it differently.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Of course.

CSM (R) SIMS: Here I am wearing Command Sergeant graduated several hours ago when I drove to Fort Bliss from Fort Bliss to Fort Bragg and the experience I had to fall back on was the experience I used in The Old Guard.

SGM WATERHOUSE: I was about to say The Old Guard, yeah.

CSM (R) SIMS: Staff Sergeant Sims and I'll say it to you again. So, what did we do. Let me just think about what I did at the highest level of professionalism in ceremonies, The Old Guard. I had just graduated the Sergeant Major's Academy. So, could I have been better prepared, either way was I prepared to go out and maybe do some ops, absolutely and learn that, yes. Do I think that --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Well, you worked in a battalion headquarters several times.

CSM (R) SIMS: I got you. But the point I'm making is that I think the experiences that I learned was great but once again my mind was shifted on how do I be successful as the Command Sergeant Major walking out the door. The information was great, doing great on the test but once again, how would I be successful because I knew I was going there before the class start, going to a battalion. So, the Academy has truly went, you're talking about 13, 14 years ago, it

totally turned. I think the students now are very, very prepared to go out and do that. That was my number one challenge. I had several years as a First Sergeant, a large company, had diversity, been around different parts of the Army, the Army did a great job of preparing me for that. But the biggest challenge I had as a Command Sergeant Major was, did not know where I'm working at and they got, hey Sergeant Major, how many steps do you do this, where do you go, who goes there. I'm like wait a minute, wait a minute. It was a situation where I almost could have lost credibility. It worked out.

SGM WATERHOUSE: And you said you were on leave when you got out there?

CSM (R) SIMS: I'm on leave. I had to put a uniform on and went to work. I said to the family you go in this hotel I'll see you later, I have to get to the ceremony straight. So, you get smart, you do work. You get a commander trip card, put it on a 3x5 card and say this is what I want you to know.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Here's your lines.

CSM (R) SIMS: Here's your lines. Once again, we figure things out as a Sergeant Major and CSM so you understand that. It was not a ding on the Sergeant Major Academy it was just I'm using that experience. I talk about it all the time. Hey look what I ran into.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah. So, for the Battalion, 528th Special Operations Support Battalion, another unit you probably can't talk a whole lot about. But in layman's terms, what was the mission of your battalion I guess?

CSM (R) SIMS: Oh wow, so great battalion. So, there's only one battalion like that in the entire Army. Anything that falls up under the United States Operation Command, it fell under the support of that command. So, not just USASOC was just a unit underneath the United States Special Operations Command. We were supporting the Navy Seals and all our special mission units, classified units, all our open sourced units. So, every mission from the highest level of classification down to the secret

level. So, it was a unit that had, there was only one in the Army at the time, that had to have the very best and brightest to be able to facilitate the requirement as it came. That's probably the best way to term it through all thing's logistics and sustainment, all things.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, as the Battalion Command Sergeant Major of a unit of one, there was only one like it, can you explain what your roles and responsibilities as the Sergeant Major as you found. You probably had to figure out a lot, what was the best use of my time. When you did that, getting the unit, assessing the unit, figuring out how it worked and what needed improved on, what were your roles in the course command has something to do with what you do. What were your roles and responsibilities in that particular unit?

CSM (R) SIMS: So, the biggest thing is one you've to always, we were fortunate, not fortunate to have a direct relationship with Human Resource Command. It was me directly working with the three-

star Command Sergeant Major. So, often we had to do what we called a recruitment show. You'd really want someone with a G2, at the time, 110 and higher.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, you couldn't just request it you had to get volunteers.

CSM (R) SIMS: You're requesting but the prerequisite is strenuous, it was pretty tough. The first challenge was one, to establish a relationship within HRC to one, constantly try to find the quality and type of person that fits the command. In most cases, that type of unit you want someone to be able to have vision but think outside the box. Perfect example, part of my interview would be, and I'll come back to where you are, would be to take two pieces of paper. You've got this that has instructions and you've got this, this is my interview, no instructions. Most people follow this very well, instructions. In that community, there is no instructions. Instruction is meet the requirement as it requires.

So, the way I best like to put it is the

challenge was, hey sergeant major or sergeant I'm going to give you a quick mission, write out the execution and I'll be back. I'll give you 30 minutes. Based on most people, they could not put out or write out what they would do. It was easy for me to save your career than destroy your career. We needed someone to be able to understand when I put the team of ten with this highly trained classified unit wanting you to do something and trusting you and your character has got to be above reproach for what you've got to do, most people just weren't prepared for that.

SGM WATERHOUSE: You're not going to get some operation order from somebody on high saying here's exactly what you've got to do, they had to come up with it.

CSM (R) SIMS: You're not going to get that so that's a challenge to be able to find a person to think that way.

SGM WATERHOUSE: What about your S1 person?

CSM (R) SIMS: S1, that's what they're looking for. They would find candidates that would

get the interview. You don't PCS somebody in there until you go through the interviewing selection process.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, you wouldn't get a lot of first termers typically in there.

CSM (R) SIMS: No. Typically, once you get in that community you're going to be there 10, 12, 15 years. That's the first challenge. The second challenge I would probably say is once again, maintaining those individuals once you get them to that training level and skill level.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Kind of like you had in Korea but not necessarily the time crunch.

CSM (R) SIMS: Yeah then they're going out and they've got jobs that are going to pay them in the civilian market a lot more than they get paid.

SGM WATERHOUSE: They're rotating to a different job.

CSM (R) SIMS: To a different job. That was the day to day challenge and you're constantly looking forward. The next challenge is how do you strike that

balance of someone that is constantly deployed and somehow reach that. It is just one unit that has the support of the entire community. So, how do you reset that and that was the challenge within itself.

SGM WATERHOUSE: You'd think that have more, maybe they do now. You think they'd have more than one of those types of units.

CSM (R) SIMS: Now the Army has put somewhat of those capabilities into those types of units. So, they had a habitual type of people now.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, it's internal now.

CSM (R) SIMS: It's internal.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So Sergeant Major, in that unit, anybody in particular you looked to help you, besides maybe your commander, but anybody you leaned on there for assistance and guidance and such when you were in that unit in that community?

CSM (R) SIMS: My role was the senior person as the manager for the community, all those types of support people. It was just challenging from a perspective of it was just you. Once again, there was

not another layer of support element above you. So, it was just based on your experience and really --

SGM WATERHOUSE: That may be why they picked you because of your previous experience doing the same thing.

CSM (R) SIMS: There you go. I don't necessarily think it was a challenge I just think you've got to be able to go back to the combat developing job you've got to be able to understand that requirement. And then once again, really create this multifunction noncommissioned officer more so than functional noncommissioned officer. In that environment you need to that. You've got to look at it from a perspective of -- I remember deploying and wearing a uniform with no name and no rank on it. And then again, once again you talk to these senior people, they don't know what your rank is. You're trying to establish habitual support from the supporting unit in that deployed environment. So, you've got sergeant X going up talking to lieutenant colonel X about establishing relationships and how are

we going to establish this support and support a unit that I just want you to drop the equipment off and trust that we're going to use it because you couldn't allow them to get into that classified environment. Once again, this is important. That's a challenge not trying to go into great detail and keep it on the low side. That's a challenge in that environment but they had worked through that. Once again, how do we train NCO's for that. How we do it we put you in a community and we leave you there for years because you're understanding the culture and how it operates.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, speaking of traveling, obviously you had to travel overseas and visit those units and coordinate those units. What were some of the things you would do when talking to NCO's? As a senior noncommissioned officer, what were some of the things you would talk to your soldiers overseas about?

CSM (R) SIMS: It is who you were representing and the importance of who you are as a representative of the United States military. That's critical because the type of unit you find yourself

not just on a fab, you find yourself embedded in the culture of the country. So, some cases that's the first engagement to the United States soldier. So, most of it is just an understanding of who you were and the importance of this is an environment or a unit to where you've got to get it right all the time. That's stressful, I understand that but you've got to get it right all the time.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Was that a challenge with the special force's guys? My experience is that it is.

CSM (R) SIMS: It could be challenging but it is important.

SGM WATERHOUSE: It is a different culture than your general-purpose forces like I come from. It's a different culture.

CSM (R) SIMS: Yeah, it's a totally different culture but it is a culture that had to be understood by virtue of the mission you're performing. Most people look at it and say well, him over there versus us, it's not about that. The mission requires,

I call it grooming or whatever you want to call it. Like any other thing, you're going to have the good and the bad. That's the challenge of the soldier because you've got to keep them forward deployed. Most understood it but it could be a challenge for a few. That's why it was very important to where you didn't typically bring in young soldiers who didn't have a good strong family support at home. With the youngest children, newly married, it just becomes a distraction but it's a good distraction because you're worrying about what, you're worrying about your family. So, I need to keep you forward deployed in most cases.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So Sergeant Major, looking back at that year that you served as the Command Sergeant Major 528th Special Operations Support Battalion, what were some of the lessons learned or your key takeaways that you brought with you for the rest of your career?

CSM (R) SIMS: You've constantly got to be engaged to where the rubber meets the road and that's

the soldier. You've got to understand --

SGM WATERHOUSE: And it gets harder as you move up.

CSM (R) SIMS: It gets harder as you move up but that tactical understanding at that level, it helped articulate whatever level you may work in next in that requirement. That's drive, in my opinion, in the requirement because those are the individuals that are going to have to execute it. So, if I walked away as to my first battalion is really understanding the importance of having mental and physical endurance and really truly the importance of engaging at the point of need. That's the soldiers out there to try to provide the best support for them and give them the resources they need.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So Sergeant Major, in July 2005, you took over and served as the Command Sergeant Major of the Group Support Battalion 7th Special Forces Group at Fort Bragg, a position you served in for two years or so. What led to this particular assignment? How did that come about?

CSM (R) SIMS: So, we saw a need to where we need to be able to give, that was the first phase of how do we now take the burden off one battalion and grow our support footprint within our separate units. What we ended up doing was deactivating the 528th and activated the First Group Support Battalion because we never had one. We did that with 7th Group. The reason we did it with the 7th group is because it was located in the same footprint as the 528th at Fort Bragg.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM (R) SIMS: So, the 3rd group and 7th group was there on Fort Bragg so the pilot was the 7th Group.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, you didn't really move anywhere.

CSM (R) SIMS: We didn't move anywhere we just reflagged our command and gave us a new UIC and deployed that as the First Group Support Battalion. From a conceptional perspective, they saw that it better facilitated logistics which ended up working out pretty good because now the rest of the groups have their own Group Support Battalion.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, all in all actually three years in the same organization.

CSM (R) SIMS: Yes.

SGM WATERHOUSE: I do want to highlight one thing. It was in January 2006, I think you guys were reflagged by that time.

CSM (R) SIMS: Yes.

SGM WATERHOUSE: You were deployed to Afghanistan where you served about 8 months as the Command Sergeant Major of Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force-Afghanistan or CJSOTF-A. I'm sure there's a way you say it.

CSM (R) SIMS: Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force-Afghanistan.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Can you explain in layman's terms, what was your mission as the Command Sergeant Major and how was that different at the group?

CSM (R) SIMS: What you do now, you take the special forces group at the deployed location, that commander and that command becomes now the Joint Special Operations Command for that region. In this

case, it was Afghanistan, it could have been Iraq.

SGM WATERHOUSE: And, you've got Air Force, Navy.

CSM (R) SIMS: There you go and that commander now has command authority of all that. It is not just the coalition forces too but you take the coalition special forces and then that becomes part of that CJSOTF, in this case Afghanistan. My role as the group support battalion of that deployed element was to do exactly that. Now, how do we facilitate logistics and support across the entire Afghanistan.

SGM WATERHOUSE: With different countries armies.

CSM (R) SIMS: There you go. In some cases, they come with their habitual support but at that point, you still have to support because they fall up under the previous commander. Now we were everywhere. The headquarters this time were at Boggle (?) as to the location. They were, of course, across the country.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So Sergeant Major, I think

it was August you redeployed back to Fort Bragg from your tour in Afghanistan when you finished up your time there, about 8 months or so. And then in July 2007, you were assigned to Fort Lee, Virginia where you served as the Command Sergeant Major of the 530th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion 49th Quartermaster Group for about 22 months. Within weeks of taking over as the 530th CSSB, Command Sergeant Major, you deployed to Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom for 15 months. What led you taking over the battalion when it was in the process of deploying? Was that on purpose? Did they pull you out of that group to put you there?

CSM (R) SIMS: You know, I think it was really an experience perspective at that time. At that time, the battalion Command Sergeant Major at the time was brand new out of the Academy and they ended up moving him and I was, at that point, had had a couple of battalions. I think it was a requirement to have previous battalion experience. Once again, it's not CSM it was just a couple of more years. Once

again, I believe the Army made the best decision. As you talked earlier, it was just a few weeks from working back to overseas again but for 15 months. Once again, the CSSB's how much soldier support the battalion had. It was a large unit, 1700 soldiers. We deployed as the headquarters and we ended up bringing in a couple different companies. We had active duty, reserve, guard. We had companies underneath us with the mission of MND north and south in Iraq, Multinational Division south and north.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, you had a pretty big footprint or area of responsibility in Iraq and you had just left Afghanistan and now you're in Iraq, a new organization. So, you pretty much learned what your unit was and who you had, a sister unit, in the combat zone.

CSM (R) SIMS: Absolutely yes. That is typically probably not the best design way of doing it but I do believe experience allowed me to compensate some of that. So, you're absolutely right. I had to train the PSD team, had to learn the commander. I met

the commander on the aircraft when I was going to deploy for 15 months. You've got to be mindful that the units underneath us were not habitual organic units. They were not organic units to the command, they were just units that came around. So, that piece wasn't hard it was the headquarters at times that might have had 71 or 69 personnel that was in the headquarters that deployed in the battalion.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Of that particular --

CSM (R) SIMS: Of that particular unit.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, the other ones were units that were under you in the deployed environment but they wouldn't be back at the home station.

CSM (R) SIMS: They were not their home station units, no. It was units coming in from different locations depending on where you at that time in the cycle. But that was still challenging because they were all over the country in Iraq. A good leader believes in presence and in presence you've got to do what. You've got to fire your horses up, the vehicles, the 1151's, Humvees, and you've got

to get in tempo and go see soldiers. That's a morale booster, that's confidence building. You can do it over the phone, you can do it through VTC but the best way of doing it is getting to that location, spend a couple of days there, a couple of weeks, and that's what I did for 15 months. I went around when I can. I probably spent more time off the headquarters location going out to visiting all those 7 to 9 companies.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So Sergeant Major, how did you determine when you would go and some people called it battlefield circulation. How would you determine where you would go and who you would visit?

CSM (R) SIMS: So most cases, it was real easy for me. When events happened, there were a lot of events going on in Iraq. IED's or rocket attacks, that's typically where most soldiers can start losing confidence.

SGM WATERHOUSE: This was during the surge.

CSM (R) SIMS: That was during the surge, that's exactly right. So, I chose to say it's best to

go to where the most current incident, danger zone, IED's, rocket attacks. So, you spent a lot of time in those locations that warrants it to encourage those individuals to stay in the fight, especially when you're losing soldiers. You're out there where the team can be just the lieutenant, Sergeant First Class out there. It could be a team of 12 people or a company of 120 people. Primarily, those teams are small teams where I spent most of my time. They didn't have the layers of leadership.

SGM WATERHOUSE: And the commander allowed you to do that, you didn't have to wherever he or she went.

CSM (R) SIMS: Absolutely. It was split the bases the best and you can cover more territory.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, any particular challenges you'd like to highlight? That's a long deployment.

CSM (R) SIMS: That's a long deployment.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Any lessons learned or whatever you want to call it out of that time? I'm

sure there were many but some things for the guys and gals who will be reading this later. Anything you'd like to -- in case they get to a position like this.

CSM (R) SIMS: Yeah you think about it right. So, I would say, in most cases we had to allow these systems to work. The Army is pretty good at trying to diversify your experience. I think HRC will do a good job of that. They try to have you go to different assignments to prepare you for senior level jobs. I think, allowing the process to work has to be the first thing I say. Also, remove what your personal desires are and allow the system to work.

The second piece would be, in this case, this unit which was a unit of at any given time 1700 people, you don't get a chance to pick the First Sergeant but you've got to understand that diversity in a unit is power. In other words, you have a unit of females, males whatever the case may be. You need to have leadership of diversity because it brings more credibility. You understand that. You being an armored guy it is probably all males.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Not now. It was.

CSM (R) SIMS: But it was. So, diversity in a unit is important. Also, people need to see you more so, than hear you. They need to see you.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Well presence is a category on the NCOER now.

CSM (R) SIMS: Presence is a category on the NCOER now so there is a reason for that and it's important. When you're in that type of environment for 15 months, that's a long time. I do believe the mission does happen. You do got to find other things to, I think, stimulate the soldiers. We were able to have different warrior competitions and things that was really derived around enhancing their battle drills, warrior testing their battle drills, their physical fitness requirement, their medical requirements. I was able to establish a PWLC, at the time it was WLC, a course while we deployed. When they got back they were prepared because we wanted to get them in the cycle and also run the pre-GT improvement course. You've got to think outside the

box to one, not just the mission is important but how do you continue to help improve the soldier and the sergeant and develop them through that process. You've got to have a development program, leader development.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So Sergeant Major, in October 2008, you redeployed to Fort Lee where you continued to serve as the 530th CSSB Command Sergeant Major for another 7 months or so. What was the focus when you guys got back?

CSM (R) SIMS: So, after deployment, remember the headquarters deployed but the companies that were back were always in a deployment cycle. We had that in that battalion, the only two mortuary affairs active march aware affairs company in the Army. So, that can be very stressful based on the mission set. So, they constantly deployed, the mortuary affairs.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah because you mentioned when you were over there, a lot of the units weren't from your organic unit.

CSM (R) SIMS: Correct. So, when we got back, we fell in on just the churn of the cycles. The pre-deployment training, how you prepare your soldiers, how you do your validations to ensure, once again that experience was good because now we're currently understanding what is really required for where they're going. That was a value added to prepping them for their deployments on the company side, the platoon side.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So Sergeant Major, before we go on to your next unit, looking back at the almost two years you served as the 530th CSSB or Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, what were some of the key takeaways from that experience?

CSM (R) SIMS: You've got to be engaged man. You've got to constantly come up and figure out ways to keep people involved. At this particular time at home station we're talking about anywhere from 1700 people. Once again, that's almost a brigade size element. Send a home station --

SGM WATERHOUSE: At least half a brigade.

CSM (R) SIMS: Exactly.

SGM WATERHOUSE: A combat brigade is about 4000 strong.

CSM (R) SIMS: Right 4000 and some of your separates could be this long.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah separate brigades.

CSM (R) SIMS: You think about it that's a large footprint for a Battalion Command Sergeant Major and a Battalion Commander. Keep in mind, first battalion they only get two or three battalions. At the time for us, they had three, I guess you would call it fortunate. So, for me the challenge is how do you keep them engaged and constantly developing an element that is so diverse that has a mission cycle that is constantly overlapping. So, you're overlapping mission cycles and it is a diverse organization. It could be a challenge within itself so you've got to have systems in place, you have to have leader development and understand the requirement at the lowest level. You've got to understand that the number one mission is that they're prepared to

deploy at any time, and obviously keep them deployed for the readiness rate.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So Sergeant Major, in May 2009, you were assigned to the 49th Quartermaster Group at Fort Lee where you served as the Group Command Sergeant Major for about the same amount of time, about 22 months or close to two years. How did that assignment as a sergeant major come about?

CSM (R) SIMS: Well, now you're managing --

SGM WATERHOUSE: And the group is a brigade for at the brigade level.

CSM (R) SIMS: Correct. You're managing now, four battalions now. You've got four battalions in there, you've got HHC so your experience is now and for me, I spent a lot time focusing in on my First Sergeant population. And, of course, you're still a little safe to the degree of the CSM but I spent the majority of my time mentoring really at those two levels down. Most of my time was that. Again, you're still talking about a unit that has different mission cycles and once again we didn't have the CSM, it

wasn't even in place at the time.

SGM WATERHOUSE: That was the year they first started.

CSM (R) SIMS: Thinking about it, we started thinking about doing some preferences several times. At one point in time, I had two Sergeants Majors performing as the Battalion Sergeant Major. That's normal in most cases depend on where we are but that's a lack of experience. You think about the mortuary, I'm not sure how familiar most people are with our mortuary affairs unit in the Army, it's only two active duty, you've got some reserve and guard. That mission status around the world is constant. They have the responsibility to package, process our remains and forward shipment back to, in some cases, Dover Air Force Base for processing. That's a tough mission to do that day in and day out. So, that's a challenge in the sense of an individual because now you're dealing with a large population of people that may have some severe cases of PTSD because there is no break in it. You're constantly going in --

SGM WATERHOUSE: You don't get a lot of down time.

CSM (R) SIMS: There's not a lot of down time so you've got to manage that process. But that's where we found most of our challenge at the brigade because the battalion was underneath that brigade. As that brigade started to deactivate it was the only petroleum group of their group in the Army. It was a petroleum group that had a multifunction mission. Does that make sense?

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah, I was going to ask you. The Quartermaster Group, what does that mean, what does that do?

CSM (R) SIMS: That was when the Army had functional units. That was a functional unit and you were maybe the 7th trans group and it was a functional unit by virtue of what was the capabilities. This particular unit's capability was pipelines, fuels, mission sets, doing a lot of those things there from a petroleum perspective.

SGM WATERHOUSE: How did you actually get

chosen to be the Sergeant Major of the 49th
Quartermaster Group?

CSM (R) SIMS: So, the 49th group at that
time, the group had the oversight and command and
control I think it was the 101st, it was the 101st
division that the Division Sergeant Major selected the
brigade level CSM. It is pre-CSL. So, the Division
Sergeant Major still pick you.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, as the group Command
Sergeant Major, who was your higher? Was it the
Division Sergeant Major you would talk to?

CSM (R) SIMS: Yes, 101st was the higher
headquarters.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay. In that job, you
were there a couple of years. So was petroleum base,
mostly missions.

CSM (R) SIMS: It was multifunction but it
was the petroleum unit that we ended up during the
time of war was shifting it to a multifunctional
department. So, the CSSB went down, the Combat
Service Support Battalion did and had this

multifunctional requirement. You had some petroleum battalions underneath it, you had mortuary affairs company within the organization. So, the unit constantly was deployed although we were located on Fort Lee which creates another challenge because the higher headquarters is at Fort Campbell. So, now we're on a training installation base with predominant training going on.

SGM WATERHOUSE: It's not like you can walk across the street to talk to the Division Sergeant Major.

CSM (R) SIMS: You can't walk across the street to talk to the Division Sergeant Major so you're training ranges and locations. It's not as it would be at Fort Bragg or Fort Campbell or Fort Hood or Fort Bliss. It had its own challenge within itself.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, as the Sergeant Major of the unit, well you were in the battalion or in that brigade, in that group. In that unit who did you look to for help? You said you had the division but did

you still reach out to some of those special operators?

CSM (R) SIMS: Yeah it was Fort Campbell. I still had my mentors and they're important. There are some things that you just need to be able to talk to somebody to get a good opinion. You don't necessarily want to take the chain of commands advice but I still reached out to my mentors at the time and obviously worked through my boss, my commander and then worked through the Division Sergeant Major there to get guidance.

SGM WATERHOUSE: When you got to the group, you were in that same arena so to speak. Once you got up to that level and you had time to assess the group, what were some of the initiatives or things you set out to improve upon during your two years there?

CSM (R) SIMS: So the group, the biggest thing we wanted to do was to ensure that once again not to lose focus based on where you are. We were located on an installation and the requirement in that there were installations to train, AIT soldiers, NCO

Academy was there. We had the bullet course, the advanced course so it was a training location. So in some cases, the soldiers can lose focus of being a force com type unit unlike Fort Bragg or Fort Campbell. You're constantly around units that have the same somewhat mission but the culture is the same. You had a difference of cultures. You had a culture of this organization that is not deploying and you've got this organization that is deploying. That was a big challenge, hey stay focused here. Although you could look across the street and see something different but stay focused here. That poses a challenge.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Were able as the Sergeant Major on that installation, if you had some of the soldiers that had done multiple deployments to move them over to training and man units there?

CSM (R) SIMS: Correct and that worked out really good. So, we used to be an officary for a lot of those AIT soldiers that was going through that training. We worked out a really good rotation plan

to switch out some of the instructors who were there to flip it out. Especially in mortuary affairs and petroleum and the Quartermaster field to bring in the most relevant based on experience of deployments and put them on the platform and rotate them out.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So Sergeant Major, in June 2011, you were assigned to the Quartermaster School there at Fort Lee where you served as the Command Sergeant Major of the Quartermaster School and as the 10th Quartermaster Regimental Command Sergeant Major and that was about 16 months or so. It was kind of a dual hatted position.

CSM (R) SIMS: Yes. That was my first nominative job. That was my first job working for a General Officer, a Brigadier General. Our responsibility was to have all the training and doctrine that applies to the Quartermaster Corps. That's the officers and enlisted soldiers. But the center is the school piece of it. Me being the senior Quartermaster, the regimental for the corps in the Army, that role was dual. You had the senior

regimental guy, you got the propanancy underneath you and you've got the training, the center of the school portion of it from a perspective of providing what we think the POI should be for our quartermaster SLC and LC.

Also, what do we think is relevant for the AIT and the warrant officer advanced course and officer base advanced course. And then had the responsibility to ensure that all those things are balanced for the Army, for authorizations across the Army in different jobs. You had a quartermaster soldier through an NTO TDA authorization, we had to make sure that was balanced and look at the promotion, look at the grade plates and all that.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, to get this job this was an interview process with the General, the same process we kind of use today.

CSM (R) SIMS: A little different. So, the process then was you could put in a packet to compete when you heard there was a job.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, if there was an opening

you were able --

CSM (R) SIMS: So, you could now submit a packet of --

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, there might be a 100 guys or gals --

CSM (R) SIMS: It was totally ridiculous. I think when I compete, (inaudible) there were 19 of us competing for this job. I worked this job (inaudible) AMC position that I worked now so now it is a good system. It is hard to find the best based on availability that's competing for the nominative position. It's totally different now, you don't put a packet in. You've got to go through a board, you've got to go through a process.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Well in the guard or reserve you do. So, did you have a transition with an outgoing Sergeant Major in that job?

CSM (R) SIMS: No. The outgoing he was selected to go to Hawaii to take a job, in a two-star job. The TSC, Theater Support Command over the 8th theater support command in Hawaii. So, he left a

couple of months early so I had the Brigade Sergeant Major filling in.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So Sergeant Major, as the Quartermaster Regimental and School Command Sergeant Major, what were primary roles and responsibilities in that position?

CSM (R) SIMS: Really from my perspective it was one, I think the Army prepared me for it. I was able to have diversity and I think diversity does create, I think, credibility, experiencing different things. I was deployed a few times at that point. My overall responsibility was to bring relevancy to the school and ensure that soldiers were better prepared going to their first unit or station. And ensure that the POI we're teaching in our NCOS was relevant to what is required.

SGM WATERHOUSE: The Program of Instruction?

CSM (R) SIMS: Program of Instruction.

SGM WATERHOUSE: What was going to be taught, how it was going to be taught.

CSM (R) SIMS: What is going to be taught,

how is being taught, is it current.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah are we teaching old stuff or are we, yeah.

CSM (R) SIMS: Correct. So, that could be a challenge but the challenge is not from a perspective of the material is old, the challenge could be you've got to have the right individual with the right set of experience there to provide input like to develop (inaudible). What I wanted to do when I was in the position to ensure that from the Quartermaster Corps, the NCO's we had in there, how relevant were they. Some cases during that time it was hype of the war. The Army wanted us to ensure that when the AIT soldiers graduate, are they prepared to go to their first unit or station and really deploy. We had about 80 percent of our soldiers doing that out of AIT. There was the surge going on and all those different things happening.

I wanted to ensure that based on the experience I had and bringing in senior CSM's and Sergeant Majors to provide input on what we were doing

writing and POI's, Program of Instruction. Not just make it an internal Fort Lee thing, bring in those individuals that's coming from the operational unit and do a panel and talk about what are you expecting because you're the beneficiary of that person.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Are we teaching these guys and gals what they need to be able to do.

CSM (R) SIMS: There you go. That was the biggest responsibility just to ensure that we met what we think the requirement was on the receiving end.

SGM WATERHOUSE: And Sergeant Major, did you work with a Training and Doctrine Command Sergeant Major for approval or that was something that you guys could approve at your own level there.

CSM (R) SIMS: We could approve at our own level. That was the fortunate. I'm not sure who the TRADOC sergeant major was, I think it was Brunner. He was from special forces and I knew him when I was at Fort Bragg. The higher level above that for me was the Combined Arms Support Command Sergeant Major and then it was TRADOC. For me, we had the ability to do

that. Of course, I was working for this general officer who gave me permission to go out and establish those types of relationships. In other words, bring the already existing relationships to Fort Lee to validate what we're doing. Are we providing you someone that's trained to meet the requirement or are we teaching legacy ways of operating. That was the challenge.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So Sergeant Major, you were there about 16 months in that job really in a dual hatted role. What are some of the things you'd like to highlight that you learned there that you took to your future jobs.

CSM (R) SIMS: So one thing was really, really the importance of relationships in that job. Most cases working at the tactical level you're somewhat in this parameter. That job there, the parameter was the entire Army because every unit in the Army has a supply unit. Some Quartermaster soldier is in every unit of the Army.

SGM WATERHOUSE: You're affecting every

unit.

CSM (R) SIMS: Affecting every unit.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Good or bad.

CSM (R) SIMS: Yeah good or bad, you know.

Hopefully good.

SGM WATERHOUSE: And you're getting input from the units that they're going to.

CSM (R) SIMS: Across the Army so that's the importance of relationships as we talked about today. Because that's as strategic as it's going to be. The implication is good or bad.

SGM WATERHOUSE: You were making a strategic impact in that job.

CSM (R) SIMS: In that job. The number one thing is understanding in what way the strategic impact that that particular job within that branch had on the entire Army. There's a lot of branches out there that don't have a soldier in every formation. But this particular branch, one of those nine MOS's in every formation. You've got an authorization one. You're the 19 Bravo, you're the food service.

SGM WATERHOUSE: You're the food service now you're the supply sergeant.

CSM (R) SIMS: Now you're the supply sergeant but you have authorization there. It has strategic implications on it.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, speaking of CASCOM in November 2012, you were assigned to the United States Army Combined Arms Support Command otherwise known as CASCOM for short. And you also had Fort Lee, Virginia in your title where you served as the Command Sergeant Major for a little over a year or so. Was that the same interview type process or was it now different?

CSM (R) SIMS: It's still the same to a degree, we were perfecting the process. That process was I think you still have to turn in a packet, yes, they did, and then you get interviewed and you turn the packet into the Sergeant Major of the Army manager team and they package it all up and send it to the General Officer and you get interviews. I think there were 9 people competing for that job and I was selected for that job.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, this was a now two-star general level Command Sergeant Major position. Did you have any concerns going in now at a different level or did the school prepare you for the next level?

CSM (R) SIMS: I think it did. So, the first nominative job was coded and it still is coded as a two-star general but they put a one-star in it. This CASCOM job is coded as a three-star general still coded today as a three-star billet. One, we just don't have enough three-star generals in the Army so they've been filling it with two-stars.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So really you went from a brigade to a two-star level.

CSM (R) SIMS: Correct.

SGM WATERHOUSE: I should have asked you back then. That sounds daunting. I know one-stars that's a big deal so you went to two-star. Well, let me back up a little bit. How did you feel knowing that I you were going from a brigade to where a general is now my boss?

CSM (R) SIMS: Now he's my boss. At the time, there was no formalized education.

SGM WATERHOUSE: The Nominative leader course was that not there yet.

CSM (R) SIMS: None of that is happening. So, now how do you manage expectation that you're now really working at the general officer level. There is a lot of stuff that a general officer requires. My role and how I operate should be a little different. It's the political aspect of it, you have to understand how to be diplomatic. So, all of the tactical way of operating and some of the direct leadership of operating doesn't always fit. So, you've got to somewhat learn and understand now what he or she expects of you and you've got to go out and get it. There is no instruction that comes with those jobs. They expect you to read and understand how do be effective and be where you need to get to be.

So, I got that job at the Combined Arms Support Command and there are three hats in that job. You've got the Combined Arms Support Command and

within that you've got the Sustainment Center of Excellence and that is responsible for the Quartermaster Corps, the Ordnance Corps, the Transportation Corps, the AG Corps and the Finance Corps and the band in there. That's Fort Jackson and all of Fort Lee. That's the Sustainment Center of Excellence. Then you have the Senior Mission Command for Fort Lee. So, you have three of those roles.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, you do you balance that?

CSM (R) SIMS: There you go, you think about that. You bring up something very important. One, in the Sustainment Center of Excellence, those different branches and corps, there's a general officer there. The Army did very well selecting those general officers. That's a Command Sergeant Major working at the general office level. You've got to trust that the Army did get that right. Then you've got this installation piece that now you have the garrison part in that and all the supporting agencies and you've got the G3 that I do believe that is a huge mission. So,

now you've got to help shape the garrison and, in my case, it was an old brigade command level sergeant CSM, how to that manage that person's expectation and priority of work. Then you've got this Combined Arms Support Command who's really reporting to TRADOC every day and then you've got this overall responsibility with all thing's doctrine, all things training for this huge organization.

SGM WATERHOUSE: It sounds like a job for three-stars and majors.

CSM (R) SIMS: It's a job for three sergeant majors. I got a job for three command sergeant majors.

SGM WATERHOUSE: When you found out you were going there, how did you mentally prepare? Did you reach out to the Sergeant Major that was currently serving? How did you prepare before you got there and then once you got there, what are some of the things you did?

CSM (R) SIMS: So, I had an understanding of TRADOC. I was the Quartermaster CSM. So, obviously

some of the MOS's are different and branches are different but some of the mission requirement is the same. The concentration is on ordinance, training and protection. So, I think I had an edge in understanding some things in TRADOC and expectation from that job. Going upstairs and having the same billet upstairs to have the Combined Arms Support job.

But then I've got to go back to 2003 and 2004 when I was sitting in class at the time was then Master Sergeant Dan Daily, my classmate, who was then the TRADOC Command Sergeant Major. So, I had already had a habitual relationship with someone I had known over ten plus years. So, the first thing I did was do what a good sergeant major does is one, understood what my boss expected of me and then went to go see my higher headquarters CSM. And really wanted to know what it is that he saw from his level that I need to be focused on that drove some priorities and obviously work with my boss, the general officer.

One, you've got to remember I only stayed in that first job for a few months. And be very

intuitive to understanding how you need to operate as a CSM at those levels. You talk about an installation it's almost someone being the Mayor of vicinity.

SGM WATERHOUSE: And you said you had a Sergeant Major there but you're responsible over them.

CSM (R) SIMS: Over all them and they have their own mission but, in some cases, you've got to provide that mentorship. Hey Sergeant Major, you've got to understand the strategic implications of all these things here. And really at that point, working with those CSM's and Sergeant Majors to make sure they understand how what the did tied into the big picture.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, you talked with the TRADOC Sergeant Major who is now the Sergeant Major of the Army. When you got this job and you were there 13 months or so, so three hats pretty much, three jobs. You get 13 months, what are some of the things you set out to try to do and what are some of the things you did in that organization. Not a lot of time there.

CSM (R) SIMS: We were very powerful. We were able to run pilot programs for credentialing for

the Army. One of the side tasks was to run the best warrior competition for the Army. That was in addition to the three different hats I was wearing. And really to establish a common operating picture of how do we gather information from deployed units to bring it back to shape the doctrine right.

SGM WATERHOUSE: For all those different schools.

CSM (R) SIMS: For all those different schools. So, we had a sustainment unit that was deploying they wanted them to do one of two things. Get to the left of the deployment cycle to try to meet some of the school's requirement that they needed and to the right of that deployment, when they returned, to understand what were their lessons learned. That was really how do we stay relevant and always establishing relationships to bring in and maintain communication. You've got the senior Sergeant Majors deployed wherever it may be for Afghanistan, Iraq or wherever. What are the requirements, what do you see in staying in contact with the operational units on

what do you require of this person, what does he or she, what does that mean, what is your feedback requirement. We started AAR process.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Is that equipment or personnel.

CSM (R) SIMS: Equipment and personnel.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, during your job as CASCOM, so you're over the Center of Excellence for all these different one-star billets, I guess. You had other Sergeants Major under you right?

CSM (R) SIMS: Yes.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, you worked with those guys, how was that working with those Sergeant Majors under you. I mean you're talking about mission command I guess you had to do it.

CSM (R) SIMS: You had to do it. The beauty of it all, we all had a good relationship. In most cases, you give people, in my cases, an expectation and requirement and they'll meet it. And you just hold them accountable. And be mindful, they still have a general they're working for, they still had a

function, they understood the hierarchy in the higher-level chain of command. But I was always about bringing them in and allowing them to do the briefings to the Sergeant Major for their school et cetera, allowing them to talk about what they had going on --

SGM WATERHOUSE: For their school.

CSM (R) SIMS: For their school. It was as team thing.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Like you had done at yours.

CSM (R) SIMS: Like I had done at mine.

This is your opportunity to tell a Sergeant Major in the Army, to tell whoever, what you had going on. This was ordinance school and they got direct feedback. It was a collective effort and when we moved that way we became a unit of one.

Let me get back to this credentialing thing. That's when we established CDL's for 88 Mikes. We talked about doing welders, LI tradesmen. I don't know if you remember in the Army, when soldiers are getting out, you're trying to strike a balance.

SGM WATERHOUSE: 2013.

CSM (R) SIMS: 2013 we really talking about how do we get the soldiers who wanted more credentialing.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Get them some jobs.

CSM (R) SIMS: The degrees, there you go. So, the credentialing we found, was far more in demand than the college degree. So, we had this pilot program and we were, TRADOC, was the installation that led it for the Army. It was pretty good.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So Sergeant Major, looking back at those 13 months, you actually had three hats. Combined Arms Support Command Sergeant Major, Fort Lee overhaul, you and your commander had Fort Lee under your purview and then also the Center of Excellence. So, looking back at that what were some key lessons learned?

CSM (R) SIMS: Well you're talking about training over 100,000 soldiers and people, NCO's and officers a year. That's quite a few. So, the key lesson in this is understanding the implication to the job unit. It was greater than just being the tactical

CSM. Once again, we talk about collectively more MOS's collectively than any branch of service at the Center of Excellence impacting the Army. So, you have to understand and make everyone understand from the Senior Sergeants Major down to the instructor, how they played a role in that.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah because like your maneuvers Center of Excellence is infantry armor.

CSM (R) SIMS: That's right. That's the second tour. So, you think about the strategic implication that it had across the entire Army at any given time you had more of those MOS in the unit collectively than any other MOS's. So, they played a huge role to understanding the importance of being relevant and the importance of understanding your level of expectation and training requirement when you go to those units.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So Sergeant Major, in December 2013, you were assigned to Redstone Arsenal in Huntsville, Alabama where you served as the Command Sergeant Major of Army Material Command AMC for over

three years which is the Army's major commands besides TRADOC and Forces Command. So, how did you find out and when were you notified that you were going to be to the next AMC?

CSM (R) SIMS: Well, it was actually two years and four months total, the time I went to my first nominative general officer job to get to the four-star job. Most people serve three years and one. Good or bad, indifference it was only two years and four months that I went from the first to the four-star level. It was that formalized process there. I went through a CSM, a package was given. It didn't come from an individual saying I wanted to compete, it came from the Sergeant Major of the Army and his team of Senior Sergeant Majors who identified who they thought the best candidates were. I went through the interview process. The General's XO called me up, I went and did the interview out at, in my case I didn't go to Redstone I went up to the Pentagon, to the LNO office, did an interview up there where he had his office. And a few weeks later I got a phone call and

said, Sergeant Major I'm selecting you to be my next AMC Commander. That is one of the greatest feelings in the world because I was focused on the job at hand and I know I was only in that job less than two years and I was focused on this job. Making a lot of headway, a lot of momentum going, a lot of great things happened in CASCOM so it caught me by surprise. I was fortunate and I moved immediately. The higher you go the faster you move.

SGM WATERHOUSE: When did he say he needed you by, next month?

CSM (R) SIMS: Yeah. I reported the week before Thanksgiving. I think I got notified in October. Somebody called me and said Jim, congratulations but you are not leaving until this (inaudible) competition over. So, it was about three to five weeks, maybe four and a half weeks before the notification to report.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Wow, that's pretty quick.

CSM (R) SIMS: That's pretty quick right.
We get in most cases six months --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah six months out right.

CSM (R) SIMS: Kiss the family, kiss the kids and I ended up leaving them there and drove to Redstone. I got there on a Monday, sent for my housing on a Tuesday. Went TDY that Tuesday, came back the following week and did a change of responsibility. That's how that all worked out. It was a huge responsibility.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah, I was reading today's AMC website which I'm sure was similar. It's an organization has a presence in all 50 states and more than 140 countries. Would you please explain FORCOM and TRADOC people hear about those everyday but AMC, not necessarily most people don't understand what it is and what it does. They would know it if AMC didn't do what they were supposed to do then they would probably jump all over it.

CSM (R) SIMS: So, when you think about AMC you think about a very diverse command. We're talking about the Army Contracting Command commanded by a two-star general. All things contracting in the Army goes

through AMC. The Research Development Engineer Command, when you're talking about 67 percent of all the engineers assigned to the military in the Army are within that two-star command. The Communication Electronic Command, everything to do with communication electronics from a lifecycle management perspective within that command. The Army Sustainment Command, Tank and Automotive Command within the Army Contracting Command you have two one-star commands. You have the Mission Installation Command and then you have Expeditionary Contract Command. I want to make sure I'm not leaving any out as there are quite a few of them in there. You have the Joint Munitions Command, the Lethality Command, all things from a 9 mm to a 500-pound bomb. You've got the AMCOM, Aviation Missile Command and it just goes on. You're talking about this huge command had the responsibility from research and development for a life cycle manager for a piece of equipment, from a soldier's idea saying we need something to destruction.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Kind of like the new

pistol.

CSM (R) SIMS: Yeah perfect example. And the ultimate responsibility is being the premiere provider and really managing readiness for the Army and the joint forces. So, that presence you talked about it's important. That presence is, it's just that. We have in every state, all 50 states and a 140 plus countries. So, what that requires of its Command Sergeant Major, my average travel load was about 289 days a year.

SGM WATERHOUSE: That's a lot. When do you sleep because you have soldiers everywhere?

CSM (R) SIMS: You've got them everywhere.

SGM WATERHOUSE: I mean, how did you and the commander, when you first got together, you have soldiers everywhere. You've got people in all those organizations that fall under AMC that have all these responsibilities and, of course, you want to go see all those folks. How did you guys determine where you would go?

CSM (R) SIMS: We did it through theaters.

We had a theater focus, maybe all things Pacific, the ones we could get to CENTCOM.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, different parts of the year you would focus on a different area.

CSM (R) SIMS: Correct. So, maybe summer months were CENTCOM and PAYCOM and we would hit all those regions. Also seeing Senior Mission Commanders in those locations. That's the best way to manage it and really, deployment need and effort. Depending on what is going on, let's say if Korea has got some stuff that needs some attention, we would go to Korea. So, those are all cycle type visits based on a requirement.

We laid out this strategic travel plan that was based on seasons, based on theaters and that's the only way you can do it. Of course, hundreds of BTC's, thousands of phone calls but the best thing is to travel three days and then spend six hours. It's priceless. Because most people want to see you more than hear you, that's the nature of the beast. And not just our command, within that we would visit

operational units and we did PT with battalions, visited brigades and divisions to see what they needed from us and what we're providing was meeting their needs from a readiness perspective.

SGM WATERHOUSE: I was going to ask you because I've seen some of those, I don't know if it was when you were in charge but like when I was in Afghanistan we'd have AMC folks come out. So, for your NCO's, at this point they're all Sergeants Major below you.

CSM (R) SIMS: Yes Sergeants Major and maybe below a Sergeant First Class.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, what were the kind of things you discussed with those guys and gals when you'd make your visits?

CSM (R) SIMS: So, it was a powerful impact. So, now we're talking about in some cases where Sergeant First Class, truly a Sergeant Major that has responsibilities, in some cases, from a geographic location than some of our sustainment brigades and sustainment organization. With the Army Sustainment

Command, you were talking about a second ago, Army Field Support Brigades. Especially ones in Kuwait and Hawaii.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Definitely Kuwait.

CSM (R) SIMS: Yeah, the one in Kuwait. Now that can grow with contractors and people that could be several thousands of people. You're talking about fixing tanks, fixing equipment, ordering supplies from a food perspective, contract perspective, all things in AMC, they had the responsibility to synchronize everything across the AMC footprint portfolio back to the four-star headquarters. That's a huge mission. Now, think about that sergeant, the hand four (?). Now we're talking about I need Army preposition stock, think about the thousands and thousands of pieces of equipment that they've got to maintain and ready to issue out. Think about the implication from the huge national level implication strategic level.

So, that young Sergeant and that CSM or Sergeant Major had huge responsibilities, huge. So, it was important that they understood that one, who

they represent and the implications of their actions good, bad or indifferent. There was the Security Assistance Command where those guys and girls go out and train our partners' nations. They do foreign military sale, they're all over in the world training. You're talking about NCO's that has national implication, good, bad, indifferent. So, it's very, very important to one, get the right person, the right NCO. That is going to be hard because everybody is competing, everybody wants him or her because they can perform in those roles independently.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, as the AMC Sergeant Major and luckily you had it for a longer time and didn't get moved every 12 or 13 months. So, what are some of the things you set out to do and you look back and here are some things I tried to do in this organization from a noncommissioned officer perspective and improving the organization that we are.

CSM (R) SIMS: My predecessor was Ron Riling and his was Mellinger and both of those guys did a

fantastic job. One was a scout, a 19 series and the other one was an 11 series and there was 10 years of that. So, when I got in there I was probably the first sustainer logistic personnel there for a while. So, it was very, very important to me to bring that community across the Army together to give them a common picture of expectation.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Now is it still, it's not necessarily got to be a sustainer?

CSM (R) SIMS: It's who best fits based on commanding. The commanding general turns in his knowledge and skills and attributes, what he or she wants from the commander.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, it's up to the commander.

CSM (R) SIMS: It's up to the commander.

SGM WATERHOUSE: It seems like for me that would be a logistic --

CSM (R) SIMS: Yeah in some cases it is just did you have anybody that was available with the level of experience.

SGM WATERHOUSE: I just didn't know if that -- some of them are yes, this has to be Common Arms, so that one doesn't.

CSM (R) SIMS: It doesn't but in most cases, it is really up to the commanding general. I foresee it in the future probably being a sustainer. We have a bench, they have a bench individual that has the right prerequisite level experiences they had to be able to go to that level. So, it is important to one, get everyone to understand and have a clear picture of where the community is going, you're the senior enlisted soldier in the Army and some cases DOD. So, you've got to shape that first and to one, have an individual reach that at the highest level for mentorship. That's very important. And two is being able to provide from a different additional requirement as to one of the ACOM CSM from the nominative program and the CSL provide good input on talent. That's very, very important. You've start looking at slates.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Help the senior talent

manager.

CSM (R) SIMS: Yeah, you've got to help be able to help somewhat provide some great input on talent. You don't determine who goes where but you have a huge role based on your experience, who best has the best experience for that position and then let the process work out.

And then you want to be able to have foresight to think about doctrine, foresight to think about something as simple as Sergeants Major coming out of the Academy, how do you best utilize them based on skill. Although HRC plays a huge role, (inaudible) plays a huge role but your experience can help that process too. And then another role, you've got to be able to advise general officers, you need the AMC Command Sergeant Majors not just for your commander for all that 140,000 people that are dispersed around the globe. How do you help provide input to that and be an advisor.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, that's even going back to your first nominative assignment, a lot of guys and

gals when they go through the nominative leader course and I've sat through three of those as a cadre member, helping out with certain things over there. One of the things people want to know is how do you advise a general officer, especially if you were going into a unit where you had no experience. How can I be an advisor if I don't have the same education level, same background. So, how did you approach that in those jobs?

CSM (R) SIMS: I think the Army did a good job. I had to go back and say for me if you look at it, some people say man you did three battalions. That's not how you really start, it's how you finish and it's not about a position, that's my perspective. By me having the opportunity to serve in three of those battalions and to really understand the tactical aspect of the Army and how it works and some of that operational perspective. Regardless of where you sit, I spent a lot of time talking on Capitol Hill and a lot of time talking with the Chief of Staff and Secretary and the Under Secretary, a lot of time

talking at the most senior level. But every conversation needs to have a platform of that tactical level because that's the soldier. For me, (inaudible crosstalk) because if you don't have a lot of that then the things you may be advising may not just be as relevant because it's not connected to the execution at the tactical level.

SGM WATERHOUSE: That's good, I actually heard that from several people. A lot of people say the general doesn't need another general.

CSM (R) SIMS: You've got to have, I call it professional course, some people say tact but I'm going to say course. It's about understanding how that general operates too. You've got to understand that he hired you, that's the distinction. He hired you to be able to go out. I spent a lot of time traveling with my boss but just to use that as a mode of transportation to get someplace to disperse. That's my point because you're just along where you can get the right feedback and provide him or her uncountered advice from the people.

SGM WATERHOUSE: From all those unit's underneath.

CSM (R) SIMS: All those units. And in my case from AMC, it's not just the units, it's the customer. So, it's the units and the customer. When you start looking at where is AMC we are what, globally dispersed. You talk about TRADOC, you talk about Forces of Command but most cases when the Forces of Command provide forward unit to a unit it belongs to who, the combatant commander. (Inaudible) space. So, we're not (inaudible). I mean every combatant commander footprint. And you're not forward, you still own those individuals so you're constantly in that you try to understand what are those requirements. With that (inaudible) role I don't think the jobs come with instructions it is now your experience that is important.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So Sergeant Major, looking back at your three years as the Army Material Command Sergeant Major, what are some of the things you learned that you passed on to your successor who took

over when you left?

CSM (R) SIMS: Well, you know lot of it is I was able to have a good relationship with him. My successor was one of my two-star CSM's who ended up going up to be the G4 Sergeant Major who I had a lot of daily activity.

SGM WATERHOUSE: The Army G4?

CSM (R) SIMS: The Army G4. So, he came back to be the AMC Sergeant Major. So, we already had a really good relationship. He was already in tune to some of the systems and programs, how the command was moving. I was fortunate that he was able to come in and really take those things to another level. To this day, we still communicate. I think it's important to communicate because in some cases you'll fall in on something that may be in motion but you may not understand what that person's thought process was.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, he was already tied in with you.

CSM (R) SIMS: Correct. So, he understood the thought process and what was going on.

SGM WATERHOUSE: He wasn't coming from outside.

CSM (R) SIMS: Not coming outside, absolutely.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Any other thing before we move on?

Anything else you'd like to talk about in regards to your time there at AMC before we move on?

CSM (R) SIMS: I was fortunate to be able to move across the Army and establish relationships. AMC is a job to where relationships is in the Army in every career field. Every CSM, every Division Sergeant Major, corps sergeant major, so it's not about the MOS's it's really about understanding their requirements and trying to help shape and facilitate the needs in the operation forces. That's the measure of success.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So Sergeant Major, in 2017 you retired from the United States Army with over 33 years of Active Federal Service. Looking back over your military career, what were some of the proudest

moments that you had? When people think of Sergeant Major Sims or Staff Sergeant Sims, how do you want to be remembered or even Private Sims.

CSM (R) SIMS: My proudest moment was to never forget that I stood on the shoulders of giants. The giants, for me, was the soldier. They allowed me to see at a higher aptitude to set conditions for their successors. From an assignment perspective, just being able to serve, I don't want to say one particular assignment but all them really from my perspective helped me be successful. From the 82nd to Korea to Germany.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, no hard feelings not being a drill sergeant?

CSM (R) SIMS: Yeah, I always wanted to be a drill sergeant but the Army would not let me be a drill sergeant.

SGM WATERHOUSE: See how I pulled that back in there?

CSM (R) SIMS: You pulled that back in there. I ended up making Sergeant First Class, that's

what ended happening and he held that until the list came out. Really, just to be able to serve in all the different units and every unit I carried some experience and I used every last one of those experiences in my job. Working early with civilians and really my three nominative jobs I had a civilian workforce that was part of the command that prepared me early. For me, I was fortunate that the Army got it right with me from an assignment perspective and a development perspective.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, when somebody thinks of you now, how do you want to be remembered?

CSM (R) SIMS: A soldier's soldier.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So Sergeant Major, by the time you were getting out we had Soldier for Life. It used to be Army Career and Alumni Program and the last five or six years or so it was changed to Soldier for Life. How was your transition to civilian life for you and what were some of the good, bad, ugly with what you experienced and what would be some advice for folks coming up whether they're getting out after 8

years or 33 years.

CSM (R) SIMS: I would probably say that for me, everyone won't have some of the options I had. I was fortunate to be able to transition through the nominative program and was able to see it from a different perspective. I would probably say, but I did set in my installation's Soldier for Life - TAP [Transition Assistance Program] for an entire week, and I wanted to experience it to provide some input. I would probably say we've got to get to the left of the resume writing, some of those requirements because you don't when someone will get out in their career. Everyone won't do 20 years. So, I think maybe in some of the NCO courses maybe introduce some of that. How do we prepare our NCO's to transition. Not telling anyone when they leave but I think that process should happen a littler earlier than at the end of their tour of duty whether it's 4 years, 33 years or 35 years or whatever. So, the sergeant is prepared, the soldier is prepared and you're starting to understand the importance of that resume. You've got to share as

you're now going through the Soldier for Life Army Career Track that you're building your resume. Maybe the Army Career Track that should be in there. We have a lot of different tolls in there but I would probably say one thing I would recommend we do to help prepare Private Sims, we got Sergeant Sims, the Sergeant First Class, the First Sergeant Command Sergeant Major Sims is you're now forcing me to now start writing my resume. Every time I go a job it's a requirement to input that requirement.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Like you do in the civilian world.

CSM (R) SIMS: Like I would do in the civilian world. I think the best place to put it would be in Army Career Training. It would help the Soldiers for Life program and it helped me because I can move and have a better understanding of when I get to that Soldier for Life week long course or whatever I'm not cramming it. What did I do and how did I prepare.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, it's a year later or

whatever, I'm not sure how long you've been out.

CSM (R) SIMS: October 1st.

SGM WATERHOUSE: October 1st. So, what are you looking to do in the future?

CSM (R) SIMS: I want to be able to start doing some things that is going to help people, that's just who I am. I want to be able to take my experiences, the things I learned in the Army and things I learned as a person along the way to provide some type of development type deal whether it's at a non-profit type organization or profit type organization.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So Sergeant Major, I'm going to switch gears on you. I've got a few questions now just about the NCO Corps in general and kind of like you just talked about the Army Career Track, to get your advice on some things and your input. Sergeant Major, in your opinion, what are some of the key things a Senior NCO must do and I'm talking Sergeant First Class or above now or in those positions to be an effective leader of their

subordinate NCO's and the soldiers. So between the Sergeant, the First Sergeant, the leadership role.

CSM (R) SIMS: Yeah, I think it starts with him or her being confident in their own craft and skill set. If I look at where we were then, and in my case, my training came behind the job. I think the Army now really has got it right. So, when you start looking at the Sergeant First Classes and the First Sergeants and the Master Sergeants out there today, I almost believe that -- when do we have them do some type of introspective survey? So, when does that process start? It happened to me at the Command Sergeant Major level, battalion pre-command [course]. But guess what, I was affecting lives when, way before that, to the left of that. There should be some way I need to be able to look at the type of leader I am to make modifications and adjustments before I become the Command Sergeant Major.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah, I think the 360 gets to that but we're not talking at the squad leader level.

CSM (R) SIMS: So, when should it start. Because it is almost to a point when I become so stubborn in my way of my leadership style I can almost be toxic. So, when do I help me or help the Sergeant to realize that maybe someone now can start shaping me better from a mentor perspective. When does that start. At a minimum a First Sergeant needs to go through the process, and sometimes the Platoon Sergeant, an assessment of him or her.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Or it could be in the Master Leader Course, I'm not sure.

CSM (R) SIMS: It could be based on the question. I think at that point because every job requires something different. I didn't stay in one environment.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, along these same lines, NCO's we have leadership roles but we also have advisor roles, so Platoon Sergeant to his or her platoon leader, we have those advisor roles too. What was your advice to current NCO's or people that want to become NCO's later or do become Platoon Sergeants.

What would be some advice you give them to be a good advisor to their commanding officer whether it is a lieutenant, a platoon leader or a two-star general.

CSM (R) SIMS: As a young sergeant, we had been taught, I think from my experience, to lead from the front, we're taught to take charge when we need to. But in some cases, as an advisor you want to be able to understand the meaning of walk softly and carry a big stick. It's a different perspective. Sergeant Sims needs to get out there. When I'm advising, walk softly means listen more. Carry a big stick means once I understand it, execute. It's a little different than that. So, I think that the best advice for someone to be an advisor, you must understand what is required and how what you're doing affects above, below, left and right.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So Sergeant Major, what advice would you give to those Sergeants Majors selected in their first Battalion-level Command Sergeant Major position?

CSM (R) SIMS: Expectation management. What

I mean by that is it is okay and because the Army understands that the bulk of your experience is what you did before and what you have done. So, if you have never been a Command Sergeant Major you really have served as the First Sergeant, you're relying on your experience set. You may be relying on what you did as a Master Sergeant and in some cases maybe relying on what you did as the First Sergeant. But if you understand the importance of how you manage that expectation and understand how to grow into the position, there is no expectation for you to be the best Command Sergeant Major tomorrow. The expectation is for you to be patient enough to grow into a job, learn what's required and seek mentorship through the process.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So Sergeant Major, now moving up, so now we have the Nominative Leader Course, so now we have a course. If you were to advise somebody that just found out that he or she is going to be working for a general officer, so their first Nominative Sergeant Major position whether it is

an SGM or Sergeant Major position, a Staff Sergeant Major or a Command Sergeant Major, what kind of advice would you give them, those guys serving in that capacity.

CSM (R) SIMS: Well, you've got to learn the unit. Every unit is required different from the Command Sergeant Major. You've got to understand that a unit that has civilians, the way you conduct yourself is going to be a little different than a unit that just may be all soldiers. And then two, the nominative level's Command Sergeant Major, you have got to understand what is required at the lowest level so you can articulate it at the highest level yourself. And really truly keeping your boss informed and also how do you shape the staff. So, in some cases a Nominative Sergeant Major depending on what level you are, you have an inherent role because you're going to know the general officer, you should know him or her probably their do's and don'ts, their strengths and weaknesses and how they like to process information. You'll know them better and you've got

to take what you know to help shape the organization to better prepare a better outcome.

Let me give you a perfect example. Someone that is sitting in the job that you know when your boss receives information, he or she is a 10-slide [powerpoint slide] person or they like take it [briefings] in a 10-slide and the CSM knows that but the staff is working non-stop hours preparing 50 slides for an informational brief but he really is preparing for a decision brief. Who knows that information? You probably know that about your boss so you've got to be able to understand how your boss functions, how it affects the command, how you, your role, how you've got to go out and shape the organization with the commanders, the staff, not just the Sergeants Majors, not just the enlisted soldiers. Spend an equal amount of time with the commissioned officers and depending the level you work, the general officers, to help them understand how the boss operates. Make sure your boss, give him or her the best temperature check of the organization.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So Sergeant Major, what do you think will be the Army's major challenges in the next 15, 20 years and, in your opinion, is what the Army planning -- it's changing everyday but what we're looking at long-term, I know you're not in the Army anymore. But from what you hear, what you see, are we going in the right direction?

CSM (R) SIMS: Yes. I think we are. I think technology is going to play a critical role. I really do believe technology is. I think the way the NCO's are being trained and how confident our commissioned officers are in our noncommissioned officers is second to none. I totally think from just the way that the Sergeants Majors Academy is, from the credentialing, from the NCOES courses, from the ALC course, from the MLC Course. I think we've got the knowledge gaps filled. There was a time where I may have said something different so I think there is a school per skill level. There was a time where, and I'll use myself as an example, there was absolutely no school that prepared me from the expectation of the general

officer, now there's the Nominative Leaders course. So, I think the NCO course is totally on the right track. I think we bring in more credibility and confidence and trust in our officer counterpart.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, last question Sergeant Major. Is there anything else you'd like to discuss about anything, something we haven't addressed?

CSM (R) SIMS: No, I think that's it, thanks a lot.

SGM WATERHOUSE: I appreciate you taking your time out of your busy schedule. Thank you.

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