

UNITED STATES ARMY

ARMY ORAL HISTORIES

INTERVIEW WITH SERGEANT FIRST CLASS GENESIS A. GALICIA

Fort Lee, Virginia

May 1, 2018

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SERGEANT FIRST CLASS GENESIS A. GALICIA

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I N T E R V I E W

SGM WATERHOUSE: Good afternoon, my name is Sergeant Major Brett Waterhouse of the United States Army Heritage and Education Center and today I'm interviewing Sergeant First Class Genesis A. Galicia for the Senior Non-commissioned Officer Oral History Program.

Today's date is May 1, 2018, and this interview is being conducted at Fort Lee, Virginia.

Sergeant Galicia, can you please tell me your date of birth and where you were born?

SFC GALACIA: I was born October 1, 1984. I was born in Juarez, Mexico.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Would you please talk a little bit about your childhood, you know, places you lived maybe, besides Juarez. And your hobbies and interests growing up. What you liked to do as a child up through maybe high school time.

SFC GALACIA: Well, I grew up the first five years of my life were all in Juarez, and I never really got the opportunity to live anywhere else.

From there, my dad got a job in El Paso,
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Texas, which is the border town. We ended up moving up there. I started school. Never really left El Paso until I joined the military.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

SFC GALACIA: And my hobbies -- my dad left when I was 10 years old, so I had to take the role of man of the house. I have two younger sisters. My mom worked all the time. So, the only person that can, you know, attend to everything that was needed to be done around the house was myself.

I played football in high school. So, after leaving the games, I'd have to walk back home, which was about four miles away from my house, by myself, sometimes in the dark. And did that for all high school.

I played soccer also. I stayed involved. I was a top-10 student. And I always had to make sure that if I was going to set a good example for my sisters, then I needed to be that one. And the one person that always instilled that into me was my grandmother, who always said that you need to learn how to do things on your own. So, that's why I always try

to do that, always learn, you know, from people that I -
- for example, sergeant major of the Army. I got to
meet him in 2016 at the AUSA convention.

And just his words, I mean they -- he gave me
a lot of frustrations I was able to discuss with him.
And that's what I try to stick and get as much
information from, you know, from different people.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, growing up, you played
sports. You basically were a leader of the family.
What inspired you to join the army?

SFC GALACIA: When my mom remarried, she
remarried a former marine. And he had this -- I
wouldn't call it abusive, but he was just very -- he'll
kind of talk down on to people a lot.

I hate to say it that that was my quickest way
out of the house, but it was.

I had the grades. Like I said, I was top 10
in my senior class. I could've gone anywhere that I
wanted and on a scholarship. But I was driving by the
army recruiting station one day, and I just looked at
that like this is my chance to leave and be away from
this guy for a little bit.

SGM WATERHOUSE: And so, he kind of took over, you know, some of the roles you were doing, just not necessarily in the greatest way, right?

SFC GALICIA: Not necessarily the greatest way. Yes. He was very verbally abusive, I would call that.

SGM WATERHOUSE: But he was providing food and money and all that, so you could go away.

SFC GALICIA: Yes.

SGM WATERHOUSE: And he was helping support your two younger sisters.

SFC GALICIA: My two younger sisters, his son, and my mom.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, that was June of 2003, I think when you joined.

SFC GALICIA: Yes.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Why the army, specifically?

SFC GALICIA: For one, I'm the only one out of my entire family from my dad's side and my mom's side to ever join the military. And when I did my research in high school, I learned that the marines are -- just judging from what my stepdad used to always tell me was

that you're very just directed into you're either going to be this or that. They picked for you. You're not allowed to pick.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Your job.

SFC GALICIA: Mm-hmm. For air force, it was not very appealing for me because I like to get my hands dirty. And it seemed like the jobs that I would potentially, you know, want to go for, I guess they didn't seem realistic to me. So, I wanted to have more broader options.

I get seasick easily, so I knew that the navy wasn't going to be the top choice on that. So, that's why I went with the army.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, you picked the army. I assume this was at MEPS, the Military Entrance Processing Station. And is that where you decided to be a 63 or a 63W wheeled vehicle mechanic?

SFC GALICIA: Yes, sergeant major. They gave me the options once I took my ASVAB. I had my physical done, and that's when they brought me in to this room where they have all these computers, and they gave me the options right there. I didn't like any of the other

options. And mechanics is not one thing I ever learned from my dad. He was a great mechanic, but he never took the time to teach me anything.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, you were interested in cars.

SFC GALICIA: I was very interested. Yes. I still am very interested.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, when you joined, how long was your enlistment at the time?

SFC GALICIA: Three original years.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay. And what was, you know, when we all join, we expect to get something out of it, and we expect the army to, you know, do something for us otherwise we wouldn't join. What were your expectations upon joining the army for that three years?

SFC GALICIA: To be able to serve my country. I originally wasn't a U.S. citizen until my second deployment. So, I felt like if I come to this country, and this country is giving me all these gifts, then I should be able to pay them and give it in return by serving our nation. I also wanted to get my college out of the way. And that was pretty much the reason.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, when you joined, you were thinking going longer than three years, off the bat, or just in those three years, I'll get money for school, I'll get some training, and maybe I can get out and get a job doing that?

SFC GALICIA: I was like the typical student that you'll talk to right here at the schoolhouse. I just want to do my three years and get out. And that was my mentality, but obviously, here I am now.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, when you joined, I think your rank was private E-2 or now we call it Pv2 for short. What led to you coming in as a Pv2 instead of an E-1 like the buck privates, we call them, with nothing on your chest or nothing on your collar? How did you come in a higher rank?

SFC GALICIA: I took a PT test. I took a PT test before shipping out. And that was my recruiter's guidance that if I passed the PT test then I was eligible for a promotion. And if I was to also, bring somebody else to the recruiting station, and then they would enlist, then that would be another promotion. So, it was incentives.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, in June of 2003, the same month you joined the army, you attended basic combat training or BCT at Fort Jackson, South Carolina. So, you signed up and basically went what a week or two later, you were gone?

SFC GALICIA: I was in the delayed-entry program.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Oh, you were. Okay.

SFC GALICIA: As a senior, I was on the delayed-entry program.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, you actually signed up delayed entry and then in June you shipped. Okay.

SFC GALICIA: Yes.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, you get to Fort Jackson, South Carolina, what was your experience like there in basic training?

SFC GALICIA: I had never been outside of El Paso, which is mostly Hispanic, or 90 percent at that time, Hispanic. Our culture's different, and when I got to basic, I got to see other people from other, you know, sides. And that was a shock to me.

Also, I had never been in humid weather. So,

we got there in June, and it was really, really humid that day.

SGM WATERHOUSE: El Paso is dry and a desert environment.

SFC GALICIA: Yes

SGM WATERHOUSE: Fort Jackson, not so much.

SFC GALICIA: And also, my initial shock was - not initial shock, but I grew up with my grandma being really strict, yelling and telling us what to do. So, it was an easy transition for me. I saw a lot of people freaking out, but to me it was just like, you know, you guys got to just ease off, you know, them yelling at you.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, looking back, was it eight weeks, nine weeks when you went through? Do you remember how long that was?

SFC GALICIA: It was nine weeks.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Nine weeks. So, looking back at that nine weeks, what were some of your takeaways or things you remember, you know, now that used to kind of stick with you that kind of shaped maybe your thoughts and, you know, about the army? Because we all get

those, you know, do you remember your drill sergeants' names?

SFC GALICIA: Drill Sergeant Garcia was my most influential one.

SGM WATERHOUSE. Yeah, so what are some of your takeaways or the key things? I mean we all have them.

SFC GALICIA: He was the type that nothing was ever -- like he was a perfectionist. He always said that if you're going to do something, and I'm sorry to say, like half.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

SFC GALICIA: Then don't do it at all. And he kept reiterating that. Kept reciting perfection to us, you know, how we all have to work as a team. I think that was very key to our platoon just coming together a lot faster than the rest of the platoons.

Another key takeaway was I have never shot a weapon in my entire life before. And I got to do that in basic training. Got that fear factor away from weapons. Because like I said, like I had never had a male role model. So, that was a good experience.

SGM WATERHOUSE: No, when you went to basic, was it men and women, different MOSs other than 63 Whiskey going? Was it just a mix of all kinds of people going to different AITs after that?

SFC GALICIA: It was a mix of different MOSs, and it was also when we had females, also, integrated into our platoon.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, after basic combat training, you attended Advanced Individual Training or AIT for short at Aberdeen Proving Grounds where you were awarded the Military Occupation Specialty or MOS of 63 Bravo wheeled vehicle mechanic. An MOS later coded today as, you know, as 91 Bravo today.

How about AIT, how was that, and how was it in relation to maybe basic training?

SFC GALICIA: We still had drill sergeants there, and they were just as tough on us. So, it was more like carrying on. You were already used to your drill sergeants in basic. And ours, like I said, mine were strict. When I got to AIT, they were just as strict. So, it was an easy handoff.

I got to learn more in-depth mechanics that I

probably would've never experienced, you know, being a civilian.

You know, more camaraderie. That's the biggest takeaway. We were a very close class. Our instructors gave us the insight on something that I always struggled with, was electronics. I was very curious about that. So, they gave us a very thorough class on electronics.

We got to do timing on engines. Resetting sensors on the HEMTT and all sorts of things that benefited me.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, the different types of equipment like Humvees and your bigger trucks.

SFC GALICIA: Yes.

SGM WATERHOUSE: What is that -- heavy equipment mobile with something trailer? I mean so it's not just cars. It was more like -- was it diesel engines?

SFC GALICIA: It was diesel engines. We worked on Detroit diesels, and we worked on Caterpillar engines.

SGM WATERHOUSE: And about how long was that

AIT?

SFC GALICIA: It was originally set for 13, if I'm not mistaken, 13 weeks, but they shortened down to 11 because we were supposed to go to -- it was during the HBL timeframe, so it would've hit December. And what they wanted us to do is graduate early, so that way we don't leave for two weeks and have to come back for another two weeks and then graduate.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, because it was coming up on the holidays, they wanted to push it.

Now, this was also June of -- I mean this is --
- wow, this is probably, what --

SFC GALICIA: That's already December timeframe.

SGM WATERHOUSE: But, you know, Operation Iraqi Freedom had started, and so that may have been -- they probably didn't tell you that may have been part of bumping your time up too is to get more of you guys trained in case you have to go overseas.

SFC GALICIA: Right.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Any other key takeaways about AIT before we move on to your first unit?

SFC GALICIA: Just it helped mold me into a better mechanic than what I originally was.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, like you said, in December you graduated, and then you were assigned Schweinfurt Germany where you served with Bravo Company 299th Combat Support Battalion. Part of the 1st Infantry Division as a wheeled vehicle mechanic. And you did that for a couple years.

How did this assignment come about, and when did you find out you were going to Germany?

SFC GALICIA: In AIT, they gave us our wish list. And my top thing was to leave, go as far away as I can and, you know, experience and see other parts of the world. So, in my wish list, I had Germany, and I had Korea, and I believe I had Italy also in there.

And I believe like two weeks prior to us graduating, that's when the drill sergeants all sat us down and started telling us who was going where.

SGM WATERHOUSE: I'm surprised you didn't get Korea because most people don't volunteer for that place.

SFC GALICIA: Oh, I volunteered. I was just

curious. I was young.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, you get to Germany, and this is all unclassified. So, you know, that unit over there, the 299th Support Battalion, what was your basic like overall mission for people that aren't in the military that read this later? You know, what was the mission of that unit?

SFC GALICIA: Well, we were a support battalion. So, upon my arrival to Schweinfurt during in processing, that's when we were briefed about, you know, our upcoming deployment. And it was just supporting all of these different other batteries, which they were called at that time.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Field artillery.

SFC GALICIA: Field artillery or infantry. That was our main support.

SGM WATERHOUSE: What do you provide and what kind of stuff?

SFC GALICIA: Maintenance.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay. Mainly, inspection of their vehicles supportive.

SFC GALICIA: We were for support. They call

us now FMTs, which is field maintenance teams. And that's basically what we were.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay. So, you wouldn't necessarily work on the field artillery piece, but the vehicles that company or that battery used.

SFC GALICIA: The vehicles.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

So, in February of 2004, just weeks after you got there --

SFC GALICIA: Yes.

SGM WATERHOUSE: -- now, you find yourself in Iraq for a year. What were some of your concerns? You know, you get there, you're in processing, and now you find out you're going to Iraq. So, you know, coming out of AIT, basic, yeah, you've had some training, but what are some of the concerns you had at that point when you first got there?

SFC GALICIA: I honestly don't remember much of when I was told because I was petrified. I mean I was so young, and I knew the risks because that's the one thing my mom and I discussed before she decided to sign my waiver, was that, you know, stuff is getting hot

over there.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, you were 17 when you signed up.

SFC GALICIA: Yes. And I mean it was the coldest feeling I've ever felt because our inprocessing in Germany was supposed to be a month long, and they cut it down to two weeks.

Two weeks of in processing. After that, I had to qualify on my M16, qualify my 9mm, and qualify for my .50 cal. So, I had to do all that in one week. And then the third week was packing up, putting all your stuff in the Conex and then --

SGM WATERHOUSE: But you got there in time to go with the majority of the unit, or were you --

SFC GALICIA: I got there with the main body. Yes.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay. So, you weren't like a last person getting there and everybody's overseas.

SFC GALICIA: That was the main body.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, once you got to Iraq, what kind of job did you do? Did you get a job like, you know, like you were just training to do, or were you

put in some different duties and responsibilities?

SFC GALICIA: No. well, we didn't fly into there. We actually drove from Kuwait into Iraq.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

SFC GALICIA: And yes, I was assigned just in a regular motor pool. I was fixing Humvees. Anything that went out the wire, we were working on. Long days. Long nights. And I enjoyed it because I got -- I would volunteer just to work on almost every single thing because it just kept me busy and it made the time go by a lot faster.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, were your concerns, you know, like overhyped, so to speak, go in, and when you got over there, you realized it's not as bad?

SFC GALICIA: It's not as bad. Because initially, I was in LSA Anaconda in Mosul. By Mosul.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Was that logistics (inaudible)?

SFC GALICIA: Mm-hmm.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

SFC GALICIA: And it wasn't that bad there. But then, I was traded off with another mechanic that

was -- I guess he had like some discipline issues. And they ended up sending me to (inaudible), which is right outside of Samarra.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

SFC GALICIA: In Iraq. And during that time, it was one of the only cities that was not touched by any U.S. forces.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, you guys were in a new area.

SFC GALICIA: It was a horrible area. Yes. So, that's when my eyes really --

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, you had lots of work to do on these vehicles. They'd come in all shot up or messed up.

SFC GALICIA: Yes. And we also provided recovery support because I'm also a hotel 8.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, sometimes, you'd have to go outside of the forward operating base to go help tow them back.

SFC GALICIA: We always had to go. We always had to go.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah. So, it wasn't like you

were just sitting on the base waiting for something to come to you. You had to go get it.

SFC GALICIA: Yeah, we had to go get it.

Every single convoy our commander was -- like I said, we were FMT, so when we got loaned out to this one commander, he was just infantry, infantry, infantry.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, you'd support them.

SFC GALICIA: He had this one thing that he would never roll if he didn't have maintenance with him. So, my HEMTT wrecker, or I would ride in the 88, whichever one, part of the three-man crew or a two-man crew for the HEMTT wrecker.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, you guys would roll with the combat patrols in case somebody got hit and you'd be right there.

SFC GALICIA: Yes. And we had to be all certified in the .50 cal because our vehicles had to have a .50.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, you didn't -- you probably didn't get any convoy training, or did you, in AIT? Did you guys do any of that kind of stuff, or you had to learn that kind of on the fly?

SFC GALICIA: No, it was learned on the fly. I -- honestly, my .50 cal class was a couple minutes long when we were in Germany just because they were trying to rush everything through.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, in Iraq, when you were on the FMT and you were traveling, you were up on the .50 cal --

SFC GALICIA: On the .50 cal.

SGM WATERHOUSE: -- so you were up riding up top.

SFC GALICIA: Mm-hmm.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, that was probably a challenge, right, doing something you'd never done. Any other particular challenges that you had to overcome? You know, that's a year over there right out of school. What are some things that you experienced over, and then how did you get through them? I know you said you went through like two weeks of getting ready to go, and I'm sure you had ways to cope for that. But what about the deployment itself?

SFC GALICIA: The biggest thing was keeping my family informed that I was okay. Like I said, my dad

and my mom were split up. And I would try to call my mom as often as I could, but you know, mission dictated differently a lot of the times. So, I would either email her or call her.

The biggest challenge that I would have to say and the one that impacted me the most, you could tell me to do X-amount of things. I have no issues doing it all, you know, do the task at hand. I'll get it accomplished. But what brought me down the most was the fact that while I was over there, my grandma, which was the biggest influence in my entire life, she got sick.

So, that, I had to balance my emotions between being out there, you know, having to think about hooking up these vehicles as fast as I could, the right way, that way, you know, we bring everybody back. And having that thought in the back of my head that my grandmother -- I was not gonna -- possibly not be able to say goodbye to her. And that's what affected me the most.

SGM WATERHOUSE: We call that keeping your head in the game or we have to do that as leaders, keeps our soldier's head -- so how did you cope with that or what were some of the things you did?

SFC GALICIA: I'm the kind of person that I bottle up everything. I just bottle it up, and it just gets reserved somewhere. And I'm not the type to show my emotion to other people. I'm not the type that shows up mad or people don't know why I'm mad. I just hide it all.

And usually, my other grandma, cause my grandmother (inaudible) is from my mom's side of the family, my other grandmother always told me to read the bible. And that way, you know, you can find some guidance through there. So, that's what I used to also do, just read a lot out of the bible, and it'll kind of put me at ease.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, in that first unit, which a lot of, you know, first year on the job pretty job pretty much was overseas, who did you look to as a new soldier in the army and then a new mechanic basically? Who did you kind of rely on for assistance and mentorship or, you know, help? Who did you look to?

SFC GALICIA: He's retired right now. It's Sergeant First Class Crockett. He was -- I mean probably one of the most influential NCOs that I ever

came across. One of my first NCOs, I should say. But definitely one that left an imprint that was -- it took me a long ways in the military. Always told me to my best. Not to quit. Pushed me to my limits. Showed me a lot of things. And it's one trait that I believe in nowadays, a lot of E5s and E6s, they get promoted a little bit too fast, and they lose the concept of be, know, and do, you know.

He was always there, always in coveralls with me. You know, showing me right there detailing everything that had to be done the right way. And that's, you know, one of my biggest things that I took and kept with me as I progressed in the ranks.

SGM WATERHOUSE: You said he was a sergeant first class?

SFC GALICIA: Well, at that time, he was an E5.

SGM WATERHOUSE: E5.

SFC GALICIA: Right now, he's retired. He retired as sergeant first class.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Oh, okay. But he was doing what he was supposed to do, you know, with you, not just

telling you go do it and not supervising. He was there the whole time.

SFC GALICIA: Yes.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, going back to, you know, deployment ends. In February of 2005, you redeploy to Germany. And you continue to serve there for about 11 months, so almost another year.

When you guys got back, what did you guys focus on as a unit when you got back?

SFC GALICIA: Our first week there, we were not allowed to leave post. So, they had us do strictly SRP. They had us do strictly anything, you know, if we needed to speak to a counselor.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Soldier readiness processing.

SFC GALICIA: Soldier readiness.

SGM WATERHOUSE: You're talking to people; medical, dental, emotional, whatever. Counseling if you need it.

SFC GALICIA: Yes.

SGM WATERHOUSE: All those post-deployment classes and help if you need it. Okay.

So, you said how long?

SFC GALICIA: A whole week. We were not allowed to leave post. We were not allowed to -- cause we had ration cards.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, you weren't able to go home? Were the married soldiers able to go home?

SFC GALICIA: Well, they were, but they were not allowed to put in any passes or leave, you know, to a certain distance.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, people could see their family when they got home. They just couldn't go on vacation.

SFC GALICIA: They just couldn't go on vacation.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay, at first, I thought they has you on lock --

SFC GALICIA: Oh, no.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Like you were locked down on the airplane or something.

SFC GALICIA: No, it was for us in the barracks.

SGM WATERHOUSE: That'd be terrible.

SFC GALICIA: Yeah. For us in the barracks,

the first thing we were looking forward was getting a drink because it was legal over there, you know, I was 18. But they took our ration cards away as soon as we got there.

After that whole week was done, the first thing that I started doing was traveling. I went -- I mean I went everywhere with my buddies. And I would just hop on the taxi, go to the train station, and from the train station go to Italy. We did our trip to Spain. We passed by Paris -- Amsterdam. We did everything.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, you could take like 30 days leave or something like that.

SFC GALICIA: As soon as we got back, yes.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, you got back, you were promoted the rank of private first class or E3, I think, during your tour in Iraq.

SFC GALICIA: Yes.

SGM WATERHOUSE: And then you were promoted to the rank of specialist E4 a few months after you returned.

How did your duties and responsibilities

change once you were wearing specialist rank, or did it?

SFC GALICIA: It did. It was very structured in our maintenance team, so E4s, you had your own little squad of mechanics. You know, E3 and under. So, I was responsible for about three soldiers just to make sure.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, like corporal or sergeant would be.

SFC GALICIA: Yes.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Was that because of shortages, or that's just the way they taught you guys how to be a leader?

SFC GALICIA: It was challenged because for us, our sergeant major would not -- if you made E5, you had to recite the NCO creed in front of the whole battalion. If you messed up right there, then that will be a tell-tell that you are not ready to be an NCO.

He would not pin you there on the spot, but then he'll allow you to wear your rank afterwards cause he can't stop your promotion from happening. But there you were already initiated yourself as a weak NCO.

So, for us, as E4s, I went to a soldier at the quarter board as soon as I put on the rank. I always

told my NCO that I wanted more responsibilities cause I felt like, you know, I learned so much already then, I should keep moving forward instead of just feeling comfortable and getting complacent.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, you were seeking leadership experience.

SFC GALICIA: Yes, Sergeant Major.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, looking back at those two years in the 299th Combat Support Battalion in Germany and in Iraq, we call 'em buzzwords, lessons learned. But, you know, in every unit you're in, every position, you have positive things that happen. You have some negative things that happen. And you kind of, you know, you learn from those. Some of them stick with you for life, you know, good, bad, or ugly.

In that unit, what are some of the -- you already talked about some of them, but, you know, if you had to highlight a couple things what are some of the lessons learned per se from that unit?

SFC GALICIA: The biggest one is leading by example. All right, I never had any of my leadership -- we had our own commander actually put coveralls on, you

know, and work with us, you know, when he had the opportunity, of course. But I believe his Humvee -- something happened to his Humvee, to his engine, and he wanted it replaced. As an officer, all they do is just show up and be like, hey here's my Humvee.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Right.

SFC GALICIA: Fix it. Let me know.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yes.

SFC GALICIA: But he actually showed up in some pretty nicely clean coveralls one day and told us that he was gonna sit there the whole eight hours or whatever it took to swap out the engine on his Humvee.

And my first sergeant, very hard charging. I will not say very approachable because he was just one of those like old-school first sergeants but very, very fair. If you worked your tail off. If you were doing the right thing, he would make sure that you'll get rewarded. Now, if you weren't doing the right thing, what I liked about him is that he would not hesitate to impose, you know, some fear into you and make you either -- guide you the right way, or if you wanted to continue your path, then he'll make sure that you exit the

military.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, your next assignment was I think December of 2005, and that was Fort Bliss, Texas.

SFC GALICIA: Yes.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Which you know well. That's El Paso where you served with the Fox Company 1st Battalion, 44th Air Defense Artillery or ADA for short. And you served there as a wheeled vehicle mechanic for about 31 months, a little bit shy of three years.

So, this particular assignment to Fort Bliss, is this something that you requested, or how did that come about?

SFC GALICIA: I reenlisted while I was in Germany. They threw \$10,000 at me. And I was in that mentality, I'm only gonna do my three years, but --

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, they offered you \$10,000 to stay in.

SFC GALICIA: To stay in. They told me, "Well, possibly you're gonna get extended." Because we were on like a year on year off kind of deployment or --

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, you were gonna go back.

That unit was gonna go to -- the unit in Germany was going to go back to Iraq.

SFC GALICIA: We were gonna go back to Iraq. So, I thought about it. I had already worried my mom enough. So, I had figured like maybe I should go home and help her out for a little bit because at that time, she was already divorced again. So, it would probably be better for me to, you know, head back home and help her out for as long as I could.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

SFC GALICIA: My intention was just to go back to El Paso for a little bit and then leave. That was my intention. But, yeah, that's why I got assigned that unit. And when they threw El Paso at me, I took it and ran with it.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, you mentioned you reenlisted. And that first one sometimes is the toughest one. Other than, the only one I can think of is, you know, about the 10-year mark where if you reenlist at that point, you basically have to put in your retirement.

So, how was that decision process for you?

Was it hard, and, you know, what led to you to make that decision of hey, I'm gonna stay in rather than go back home? Cause you actually went back home, but, you know, with another enlistment, so.

SFC GALICIA: Yes.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, how did that decision-making process go for you?

SFC GALICIA: Well, my biggest fear was to leave the military, go home, and not be able to get a job and not able to help my mom. So, I figured that if I stay in, I still have a paycheck coming in, and I could still, you know, help her out with whatever she needs and just be around her because that's, like I said, I've never been away from my mom. Before that, I had never been away from my mom for any extended, you know, period of time. It wasn't like I was a mama's boy.

It was just I was always around her. And it was, you know, as soon as I got detached away from, you know, from her, it was a little bit tough at first, but then I got used to being away, and I felt like it was time to just come back for a little bit and be at home.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Now, were your sisters still

living at home when you came back?

SFC GALICIA: Yes, both of them were still living at home?

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, going back to the 1-44 ADA, what was their mission so to speak at Fort Bliss?

SFC GALICIA: Just to provide air defense.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, not a training unit, it's a deployable unit.

SFC GALICIA: Yes, it was a deployable unit.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, you guys are just training for war in case, just like any other army unit, just in case it happens, or you get the call.

SFC GALICIA: Yes.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, in that unit, 1-44 ADA, or 1st of the 44th, who did you look to in that unit for, you know, guidance, mentorship, leadership? Who did you look to?

SFC GALICIA: I had a hard time kind of attaching myself to some of the NCOs that were there. It wasn't that they were bad. It's just that a lot of them didn't last there very long, and for reasons that I obviously didn't know.

SGM WATERHOUSE: They were relieved or left or both.

SFC GALICIA: My first sergeant got relieved like I guess like a month after me being there.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Oh, so you had some back examples.

SFC GALICIA: Bad examples. We had one sergeant first class commit suicide while we were there. My motor sergeant, he had an alcohol issue. He showed up to the motor pool drunk one day. And first -- our new first sergeant showed up to pick him up because, you know, he was inebriated, and I guess another NCO had called the first sergeant telling him that he was a little inebriated.

So, I actually took the charge of being -- even though I didn't know how to lead a motor pool, I was basically the one that was always there making sure services got done. Everything at my level that I could. And just I felt like I was my own -- like my own man. Basically, I didn't have no leadership to tell me, hey, Galicia, you got to do this, or you got to do this, you got to this.

Everything I learned, it was either I get my -
- if it had to be related to work, put my hand in the
manual and learn or ask for help from another NCO.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, you did a lot of self-
development and/or peer -- some peers out there.

SFC GALICIA: mm-hmm.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So that sounds -- the next
question -- challenges in that unit. Obviously, if you
don't really good NCOs to, you know, that you can look
to and you got to do a lot of, you know, self-
development, that's not easy.

Anything else in that particular battalion
there that was tough or good? I mean challenges
sometimes are good. Good things come out of challenges.

SFC GALICIA: Well, the one thing that was
good that I remember was that our sergeant major, every
Thursday, he used to release us like by 1300. That's
probably the only plus.

SGM WATERHOUSE: That's sad.

SFC GALICIA: That was probably the only plus.
But morale -- I mean morale wasn't that bad, I mean.
But you could -- me as a specialist, me coming from

another unit where I never saw my NCOs, you know, doing the wrong thing, coming to this one where I was obviously looking at them doing the wrong thing. You know, some NCOs were overweight. When we would do company runs, you know, they would not -- they didn't want to go out there and sing cadences.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, it was like night and day from your last unit.

SFC GALICIA: It was night and day. So, when I got there, I mean I'd never challenged them, but I felt like, and I spoke to my first sergeant about it, I felt like why should I look up to this other NCO when he's not doing the right thing? I'm doing more than what he does, and I wear less rank than he does.

SGM WATERHOUSE: I'm surprised your first sergeant didn't hook you up with corporal stripes. If he had soldiers to lead and nobody was -- I mean I don't know if it was that bad, but --

SFC GALICIA: It was pretty -- yeah, it was that bad.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Looking back, I mean you'll be a first sergeant one day and maybe that's something

you look at as, you know, if -- I mean if NCOs perform, they perform. But some people if they're doing something wrong, obviously, they shouldn't be NCOs anymore.

SFC GALICIA: Exactly.

SGM WATERHOUSE: That sounds like a good lessons learned right there.

SFC GALICIA: It was.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, while you were there, I think you went to or a later course.

SFC GALICIA: Yes, I did.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Or WLC while you were there. What did you think of that? I think that was fairly new at the time, the WLC versus PLDC.

SFC GALICIA: It was a great experience because it brought back discipline. So, the SGLs that we had were --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Small-group leaders, I think.

SFC GALICIA: Yes. They were strict, and that's what I liked. You know, I like the discipline, again. So --

SGM WATERHOUSE: And these were staff

sergeants?

SFC GALICIA: They were E5s (inaudible).

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

SFC GALICIA: And staff sergeants. We got back to doing land nav again. Got back to the basics. You know, and that's what I was itching for because I was never gonna involve myself with a crowd. Most of the time, I was kind of like separated from the crowd.

You saw all these other soldiers, people who were in my rank and under, you know, getting DUIs in my unit, you know. Drinking until they black out. Partying and all this other stuff. And all I wanted to do was if I was gonna enlist then I was gonna make sure that I did the best that I could and get as much as I could out of it.

So, when I went through WLC, they brought back a little bit of that, so it was, you know, a breath of fresh air for me. And like I said, it was only a month long, but it was a month that I felt like I was leaving the unit that was just toxic. So, I felt like a little bit of, you know, renewness in me.

SGM WATERHOUSE: That unit, you know, even if

it's not toxic, it's an unhealthy work environment.

SFC GALICIA: It was unhealthy. Yes.

SGM WATERHOUSE: And you not being NCO, there's not a whole lot you could do besides go outside and ask for help. And at that point, you may not have known how to do that.

SGM WATERHOUSE: It was mostly roger (inaudible) roger (inaudible) and that's it and move out.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, any other lessons learned you'd like to highlight there before we go to your next unit? Cause you spent -- I mean you spent 31 months there. Obviously, hopefully you got some family time there.

SFC GALICIA: I did.

SGM WATERHOUSE: But any lessons learned, and maybe even outside of work, but, you know, from that time you had there in El Paso?

SFC GALICIA: I got to -- I didn't know what a Patriot system was. And that's what the system that the 88th uses. I didn't know anything about it. So, when we would go to the field, I got to actually work with a 14

Tangos, 14 series and kind of see what they were doing. I mean to me, it was a lot of pointless stuff, but I mean I got to witness a missile getting launched.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, the kind of things they repaired.

SFC GALICIA: And how they worked. You know, what they had to do in order to keep the skies, you know, free of any incoming missiles.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Kind of how they operated.

SFC GALICIA: Mm-hmm.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, after that unit, I think it was May of 2008, you were promoted to the rank of sergeant E5 and assigned to Fort Riley, Kansas.

SFC GALICIA: Yes.

SGM WATERHOUSE: And there you served with headquarters and headquarters company or HHC, 2nd Brigade Special Troops Battalion or BSTB. And that was part of the 1st infantry division, and you were there 21 months - - 22 months.

How did that particular assignment come about?
How did you get to Fort Riley?

SFC GALICIA: I came up on orders out of

nowhere. I didn't volunteer. I didn't do anything. I just got pulled into my first sergeant's office. It was on a Friday. I still remember that. And he said, "You're going to Fort Riley, did you know that? I didn't know that. I mean I was working in the motor pool at that time.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Specialists normally, or even young sergeants don't normally call branch reps.

SFC GALICIA: No. No, so that assignment came out of nowhere. And just got ready a couple months later, and there I was going to Kansas.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Now speaking of that, cause I mentioned it, but, you know, you were in El Paso for about 31 months, and you said you didn't want to spend a whole lot of time there. So, was it ever explained by your NCOs or your first sergeant, like, hey this is how you can go to, you know, you do have a choice in your assignment sometimes? Was that ever taught to you at the time?

SFC GALICIA: Counseling was not conducted to standard over there. So, like I said, a lot of the things were self-taught or would be myself staying in

contact with my last NCO from Germany, which was Sergeant First Class -- well now Sergeant First Class Crockett or Sergeant Green, which was another NCO that I had in Germany.

So, I would call them since they had all PCS from Germany. I would call them, and that's who I would get, you know, my advice from, from both of them.

SGM WATERHOUSE: That's actually a sign of what we call true mentorship. That, you know, you're continuing to reach back --

SFC GALICIA: Yes.

SGM WATERHOUSE: -- to those same folks. That's good.

So, you get to Fort Riley. So, for those that don't know what a BSTB is or was cause now they're gone away again.

SFC GALICIA: Yes, they're gone.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah, they came about in the 2000s, and now they're gone. But what was the mission, you know, if you could say in layman's terms, what was the mission of the BSTB? What was their job?

SFC GALICIA: Our mission's always been the

same as 91 Bravos, is to provide support to any unit that's in our footprint.

For an STB, we had a company that we supported that was all engineers, all sappers. We had another company that was just 11 Bravos.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, infantry guys.

SFC GALICIA: And the third company was all MPs. So, from our maintenance -- from our motor pool, we were split up into those different companies.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, you supported a certain company?

SFC GALICIA: Mm-hmm.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

SFC GALICIA: Yes, I supported the infantry guys.

SGM WATERHOUSE: You did. Okay. And what kind of equipment did you work on for those guys?

SFC GALICIA: Humvees. That's the first time I got to actually cross train in to M1s and also Bradleys.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Oh, attacks?

SFC GALICIA: (inaudible) attacks, yes.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, you had some hands-on experience working on those engines?

SFC GALICIA: Yes. On the turbines and on the --

SGM WATERHOUSE: (inaudible) jet engines.

SFC GALICIA: Yeah.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Well, not in the Bradley. That's diesel. And the tank is a jet engine. So, was that just opportunity training, or was that a program for that unit?

SFC GALICIA: My own curiosity.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Oh, okay.

SFC GALICIA: Since I'm not a tank mechanic, once I was done working with my, you know, my equipment, I would always go with my buddies, which were working with the tanks. And some of them were not the brightest people ever. So, I would go over there and loan a hand and, you know, try to learn as much as I could.

So, when one of the NCOs saw me doing that, and I wasn't trying to get any attention onto myself, it's just a way to pass the time, he saw that, and he actually ended up talking to the first sergeant, and

they ended up moving me from I believe -- cause initially -- I'm sorry, initially, I supporting the MPs, and then that's when they moved me to support the infantry guys.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

SFC GALICIA: So, that's what happened.

SGM WATERHOUSE: And the infantry guys had Bradleys.

SFC GALICIA: And they had Bradleys, yes.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

So, as an NCO there, how are your duties and responsibilities different than they were in the 44th ADA?

SFC GALICIA: Well, I arrived as a specialist there. I was not promotable yet.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

SFC GALICIA: And I attended the board while I was in Fort Riley.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

SFC GALICIA: So, when I PCS'd, I told myself, my next duty stations, that's when I will go to the E5 board because while I was in 1-44, it wasn't pretty. I

felt as if I was to take my NCOs that were there in charge of me at that time. To the board it would be I'm not like -- I'm not a representation of them. So, I felt like kind of embarrassed if I was to take this one NCO that cannot fit in his uniform.

SGM WATERHOUSE: (inaudible) more about how they look or distracting you.

SFC GALICIA: Yes. So, I waited until I was in Fort Riley and to take my opportunity and go to a couple Solider of the Quarter Boards.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, how long were you there before you got promoted?

SFC GALICIA: I was there for about a year before I got promoted.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay. So, once you got promoted, how did your duty and responsibilities change, your roles? What did they --

SGM WATERHOUSE: I became a shop foreman after that. So, I was moved up from just your squad leader position. So, they put me up as a shop foreman helping out the motor sergeant. That's when I got to learn more of the paperwork side of maintenance. You know, how to

update your NMC -- how to read codes, how to, you know, properly read your non-mission capable report. What statuses were what. Cause there's a lot of status (inaudible).

SGM WATERHOUSE: (inaudible).

SFC GALICIA: Yes.

SGM WATERHOUSE: And all that stuff.

SFC GALICIA: How to track 'em. How to make sure you order the right things instead of the wrong things.

SGM WATERHOUSE: And make sure people write down the right part -- well, you guys do the parts as mechanics, but defaults are correct and --

SFC GALICIA: Yes.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, you're not just working on stuff, now you're actually making sure that the right things are ordered to have your mechanics work --

SFC GALICIA: Yes.

SGM WATERHOUSE: -- or use the parts, correct parts.

So, now in this new unit, did you have any mentors in that unit or people that (inaudible)?

SFC GALICIA: Yes, I did. I did. And he's actually the first sergeant right now again in Fort Riley, First Sergeant (sounds like Estuline) was the best mentor. I mean, next to -- if I have to categorize 'em, I'd put Sergeant Crockett, obviously on top and Sergeant Estuline would be my number two mentor. Always there. Always getting his hands dirty. Always, you know, being the, you know, properly counseling me, telling me what to do, what's gonna better my career in the long run.

Nowadays, a lot of NCOs would just tell you, whoa, you know, look at the black and white. You know, kind of tell you like, oh, well here's the regulation, read it. Not tell you in depth like look man, I know what I'm talking about. I've read the regulation. To me it sounds like if an NCO tells you well, just read the regulation, they don't know what the regulation states.

Yeah, so, he knew it. He could voice it out.

SGM WATERHOUSE: It goes back to be, know, and do it. Do you know it? Can you do it?

SFC GALICIA: Yes. Be, know, and do all the

time. And he was, you know, when time came, he was hard on us.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Now, what was his job? What was his duty title?

SFC GALICIA: He was a motor sergeant for --

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, he was the -- he was like a -- is that a master sergeant position?

SFC GALICIA: Well, for us, it was an E6 position.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay. So, he was like the squad leader.

SFC GALICIA: Mm-hmm.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

SFC GALICIA: And during that time, he was an E5 promotable, and he got promoted to E6 during that time, so. I was seeing how fast he was progressing, and that's what I kind of attached myself to. I'd said if this guy is making it this fast, I can probably make it a lot faster than he can.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, in this unit, if I did my research right, you spent more than half of your assignment to the 2nd BTSB in Iraq.

SFC GALICIA: Yes.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, in this unit in Iraq or, you know, stateside, what are some of the biggest challenges or things that you had to personally face, and then how did you kind of overcome them or deal with those, whatever those were?

SFC GALICIA: I didn't have too many challenges when I was in --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Not like the last unit.

SFC GALICIA: -- In Fort Riley. Honestly, it was smooth sailing for me. During that time, you know, obviously my grandma had already passed away, so I felt like she was already at peace so I could progress.

The only reason why I spent longer in Fort Riley was because my time came up for reenlistment, during that time, as an E5. So, we were already training up to go back to Iraq. And I felt like it was duty to -- if I was training my soldiers then I should be able to lead them at war and war also. And instead of packing up my bags and, you know, saying goodbye to them and then another E5 comes in that they're not used to, then I felt like it was my duty as a leader to coach

them while they were stateside and then deploy with them.

So, I ended up reenlisting while I was there. I got -- I think they stuck me again in Fort Bliss for some reason. I don't know why. That was the only option during that time. And I asked for a deferment, so they ended up deferring me until I got back from my deployment.

SGM WATERHOUSE: And I failed to mention the dates. It was October of 2008, is when you went to Iraq.

SFC GALICIA: Mm-hmm.

SGM WATERHOUSE: And how long -- you were there a year, right?

SFC GALICIA: A year, yes.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah. So, then you guys came back in September of '09 I think it was. And you continued to serve there at the HHC 2nd Brigade Special Troops Battalion about another four months. And then, you went to Bliss.

SFC GALICIA: Yes.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Before we get to Bliss, like

you said, it wasn't -- you said it was a lot better unit or at least the leadership you had.

SFC GALICIA: Yes.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Any particular lessons learned you'd like to share before we move on to your next unit?

SFC GALICIA: It wasn't a lesson learned, but actually, it was. During that time, Fort Riley led the army in suicides. And it taught me that really nothing is -- to me in my own personal opinion, nothing is worth your life.

So, when I saw a lot of even senior non-commissioned officers doing that or that occurring to them and witnessing one of them actually -- not a -- yeah, he was an NCO, he was and E6, I witnessed him driving -- as I was going up Normandy Road --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Was this at Fort Riley?

SFC GALICIA: Yes.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, this was not in Iraq but when you guys got back.

SFC GALICIA: No, when we got back.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

SFC GALICIA: When I was coming out of the chow hall, I was going up Normandy Road, and I don't know if you've ever been to Fort Riley, but that post is just --

SGM WATERHOUSE: I don't remember that particular road.

SFC GALICIA: Yeah, it's just one way going up the mountain.

SGM WATERHOUSE: A main road going up. Okay.

SFC GALICIA: And then on the other side, you're going down.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay, I know what you're talking about.

SFC GALICIA: So, I saw this one guy drive like erratically on that road. And he jumped on the sidewalk, drove his Jeep into a WWII -- I think it was an Abrams. Not an Abrams --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Sherman tank.

SFC GALICIA: Sherman. There you go.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Wow, right in front of you.

SFC GALICIA: Right in front of me. And he hit it full speed. Didn't even stop. I got out of the

vehicle. I was one of the first people there. He wasn't alive, but --

SGM WATERHOUSE: He was or wasn't?

SFC GALICIA: No, he wasn't.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Wow.

SFC GALICIA: He perished right away. We checked for vitals and everything. He was done.

That was my biggest takeaway. I had never been around suicides in my entire military -- up to that point in my career, in those five years, had never been around it. And that was part of the lesson learned that no matter how hard life gets, then nothing is worth your life. You know.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Was this somebody you knew?

SFC GALICIA: I knew them. I had worked with them, yes.

SGM WATERHOUSE: I mean what are some of the ways -- I mean we have programs, obviously, but what are some of the ways that you dealt with that? I mean it affects -- I know it affects you somehow.

SFC GALICIA: Yes.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Obviously.

SFC GALICIA: I did a lot of -- is not that I would go through the counseling process, but like is said --

SFC GALICIA: I did a lot of -- is not that I would go through the counseling process, but like is said --

SGM WATERHOUSE: What helped you, I guess?

SFC GALICIA: Yeah, what helped me was being around people. Always associating yourself. Not becoming that, you know, like what you call a loner, you know. Always being around people. If the help came up, then it is not -- it is not frowned upon if you just go talk to somebody, a counselor, you know.

And I took that opportunity when we got back from Iraq. I spoke to a couple counselors. Told 'em, you know, that I'm the kind of person that bottles up a lot of stuff, you know.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Which they tell you is the wrong thing to do.

SFC GALICIA: It's the wrong thing to do, yes.

SGM WATERHOUSE: I'm the same way.

SFC GALICIA: And, you know, they asked me the

first question was do you replace, you know, your emotions with alcohol and anything like that.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, you coped with it by talking.

SFC GALICIA: I coped with it by talking, yes.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, back to Bliss again, January 2010. This time, you were with the 2nd Battalion, 43rd Air Defense Artillery.

SFC GALICIA: Yes.

SGM WATERHOUSE: 2-43 ADA. Part of 11th air defense artillery brigade. And you were there for like six and a half years.

SFC GALICIA: Yes.

SGM WATERHOUSE: If I did the math correct. So, you may have mentioned, but just in case you didn't, how'd you end up back there again?

SFC GALICIA: I reenlisted while I was in Fort Riley.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

SFC GALICIA: The only way that I could get any duty station, everything else was full for some reason. The only thing that I can get at that time was

Fort Bliss.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

SFC GALICIA: So, I chose Fort Bliss thinking that --

SGM WATERHOUSE: It seems odd because you're a wheeled vehicle mechanic. It's not like you're a Patriot Missile Battery --

SFC GALICIA: Yeah. And I asked for --

SGM WATERHOUSE: I mean that's probably true cause, you know, that's in the middle of rotations and all that stuff.

SFC GALICIA: And I was hoping that maybe I was gonna get in first AD, which was already in Fort Bliss. That's when they were building up east Bliss. So, I went in there with the mentality, okay, well I'm not gonna go back to the same unit cause I don't like it or --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Fort Bliss is huge. I mean -

-

SFC GALICIA: Yeah.

SGM WATERHOUSE: -- there's a lot of units. So, you just knew you were going to Fort Bliss. You

didn't necessarily know what unit at the time.

SFC GALICIA: Yeah, not unit.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

SFC GALICIA: Until I got to reception, and they broke the news to me.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, I mean do you know how you end up in that particular -- it's just where they needed a sergeant?

SFC GALICIA: Mm-hmm.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay. So, now that particular unit, for people who don't know, so 2nd Battalion, 43rd Air Defense Artillery, what is their mission?

SFC GALICIA: It was basically the same mission as 144. It was to conduct air defense.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, another wartime mission.

SFC GALICIA: Keep the skies free of Scuds.

SGM WATERHOUSE: The reason I ask is there are, you know, Fort Bliss is at least or used to be, you know, that's where they had the air defense school.

SFC GALICIA: Yes.

SGM WATERHOUSE: You know, so I just wanted to

make sure it wasn't a training unit. So, the first unit you served with there in the 11th ADA was Fox company.

SFC GALICIA: Yes.

SGM WATERHOUSE: The 2nd of the 43 ADA. And you served in Fox company for three years, and in those three years, I'm looking at your record, you had three different duty positions in those three years.

SFC GALICIA: Yes.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Your first duty position in Fox company was technical inspector. So, for people like me, I don't know what that means. Can you kind of explain what your job was as a technical inspector?

SFC GALICIA: Well, for the technical inspectors, for one, it was an E6 slot. So, as soon as I got the opportunity to jump up from E5 to an E6 slot I took it.

For us, we worked for the shop office, which is where our chief would be at, where our master sergeant would be at, our BMS, Battalion Motor Sergeant. And we would basically after all the services were conducted on a piece of equipment, we'll be the ones to check up afterwards. It's kind of like the second set

of eyes on the equipment.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Like a quality assurance to make sure everything was done correctly.

SFC GALICIA: Yes.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Faults were correct.

SFC GALICIA: Make sure that all the --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Are you checking repairs that were done too, or are you checking --

SFC GALICIA: Repairs --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

SFC GALICIA: -- and also, making sure that the service packet was filled out correctly.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

SFC GALICIA: And not just pencil whipped.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay. So, you were making sure the mechanics did what they were supposed to do but also the crew or whoever identified what was wrong, that was actually what was wrong.

SFC GALICIA: Yes.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, kind of both.

SFC GALICIA: Mm-hmm.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, any particular hardships

or difficulties in that job that you can remember?

Anything to highlight in that one?

SFC GALICIA: The only thing -- the difficulties were as an E5, you have more sergeants that were E7s or E6s. So, when you call a bluff on what they signed off on, on their service packets, and you say, you know, this wasn't done, and you still signed off on it? Since I had to answer to a master sergeant, he will come down on them, get mad at them, chew them out.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, you were having to tell people of higher rank than you that they did something wrong.

SFC GALICIA: Yes. They didn't like that too much, so, yes. That was the only hardship. Other than that, it had a lot of pluses to it. I got a good NCOER out of it.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, to deal with that, if need be, you just went to the master sergeant and said, hey, here's what I found. They don't like it, but.

SFC GALICIA: Yes.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, he or she had your back if you needed it.

SFC GALICIA: Yes.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay. So, you were still able to carry on.

SFC GALICIA: carryon, yes.

SGM WATERHOUSE: To carryon. So, January of 2011, you moved in to a wheeled vehicle mechanic position, and you did that for about a year. But that was in Qatar.

SFC GALICIA: Yes.

SGM WATERHOUSE: A different country.

SFC GALICIA: Mm-hmm.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, unclassified wise, what was Fox company, your mission, over there in Qatar?

SFC GALICIA: Just to provide maintenance support for --

SGM WATERHOUSE: For the vehicles that were there.

SFC GALICIA: For the vehicles that were pulling the launching stations, I should say.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

SFC GALICIA: And power generations also.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, units that were there.

SFC GALICIA: Mm-hmm.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay. Any particular thing that -- I mean it's a job you've done before. You obviously know how to do that. That's your main MOS. But any particular thing come out of that deployment? I know it's a vacation spot for a lot of people.

SFC GALICIA: It is. It is. I got to work hand in hand with other branches. So, I got to work with the air force. And was envious of how their motor pool looks versus ours because their motor pools, you have Snap On toolboxes. You have all this abundance of tools. So many goodies. And for us, we had to -- we had like the caveman, you know, like a --

SGM WATERHOUSE: But they were working on aircraft.

SFC GALICIA: They were working on aircraft. They also had their wheeled mechanics there. So, every single time we --

SGM WATERHOUSE: I mean, I can understand aircraft tools having to be the top of the top.

SFC GALICIA: Oh, yeah. No. No. But even their wheeled mechanics, they were hooked up.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, did you try to talk to your chain of command into, hey, we need to get some Snap On tools?

SFC GALICIA: I tried, but everything comes down to the same word that I got for years, and it's, you know, budgeting. So, I got to work with what I sometimes would call Neanderthal tools, and then they worked with, you know, the latest and greatest.

But we got the mission done. During that time, I got to experience or work on generators, different types of generators for the first time.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Power generators.

SFC GALICIA: Yes. So, I had like two case, three case, five case, ten case.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah, we don't have a whole lot of generator mechanics in the army.

SFC GALICIA: No.

SGM WATERHOUSE: And they're like gold, especially overseas.

SFC GALICIA: That's why we crossed --

SGM WATERHOUSE: If you don't have power, you had to hope we had somebody to fix it.

SFC GALICIA: Yeah.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Or air conditioning. If you don't have power, you don't have any of that stuff. So, that's good. So, you got some more cross training I guess you could say into that.

SFC GALICIA: Yes.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Were you able to get -- (inaudible) what year, but would you think about getting a secondary MOS or a certification in that? Or I don't know how that works, if you could do that. Or is it just -- cause I know we had a chief in one of my units that did that. He would go around -- it's his job, but he knew how to do it. And he would go around and help out with the Afghan army's generators.

SFC GALICIA: Oh, okay.

SGM WATERHOUSE: When we'd go to do work on their vehicles or help with their vehicles or help determine what's wrong with their vehicles cause they're our old vehicles, he'd fix a generator or two while he was there. And of course, he's the man then.

SFC GALICIA: Yeah.

SGM WATERHOUSE: We got power back. But I

don't know, it's just interesting.

So, the third year there, January 12, 2012, you returned to Bliss, and then you moved in what would be your final job or duty position there in Fox company, which was motor sergeant.

SFC GALICIA: Yes.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Now that was -- was this the staff sergeant or the master sergeant?

SFC GALICIA: The staff sergeant.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

SFC GALICIA: Cause I went back to -- after technical inspection, technical inspector was an E6 slot. And then they moved me back as a shop foreman, which is an E5 slot. And then afterwards, when I left technical inspector, I was promised that, you know, soon I will get the motor sergeant position. So, that's the only reason why I took it. I said, okay, I'll do that. And as soon as we get back then my first sergeant came through and said, "We're gonna give you Alpha company, 2-43."

The biggest challenge for that is that I knew what to do, but since I was so -- I wasn't used to

briefing the commander for Alpha company on maintenance, you know, because that's her program or at that time, it was her program. That was the hardest thing, briefing, you know, coming out of that shell. Not being the guy in the back, backing up my motor sergeant and just throwing one or two words in there. And now, I was the one briefing her. And then during maintenance meetings, I had to brief our battalion XO, which was a major. And sometimes even our battalion commander and sergeant major would sometimes --

SGM WATERHOUSE: On the status of that particular company's equipment.

SFC GALICIA: Especially, cause a lot of when you talk about Patriot items --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Actually, it'd be battery I guess, right?

SFC GALICIA: Yeah, they're batteries. But when it comes down to Patriot items, a lot of their stuff is pacing items. So, once they have that P status in front of them, like you got to either find a solution on how to fix it or have those parts already ordered.

SGM WATERHOUSE: If not cause that equipment's

considered -- you can't use it at all. It's big news above the unit.

SFC GALICIA: Above the unit. Yes.

SGM WATERHOUSE: It's reportable to higher headquarters --

SFC GALICIA: Yes.

SGM WATERHOUSE: -- that that particular part needs to come in, and it's not, you know, yeah, I got you.

So, were you able to -- say, you're in the staff sergeant position, did you go to the Board or anything while you were in this unit, or was that later on?

SFC GALICIA: No, I did go to the Promotion Board while I was in 243. During that time, you know, how they would say how many points you got coming out of the Board? Well, I maxed out. I was the only mechanic that maxed out on the Board, next to all the 14 Tangos that went.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, you were in the same Board with the air defense.

SFC GALICIA: Yes, with air defenders.

SGM WATERHOUSE: They didn't ask you any air defense questions, hopefully.

SFC GALICIA: They tried, but a lot of those first sergeants, I fixed a lot of their equipment while we were deployed, so they were very, very like, just answer this question, and you'll be all right. So, yeah, I was -- I'm not gonna say I had it easy, but they knew that I fixed their stuff.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, you were promotable while you're -- you got some promotable -- you were promotable while you were in the seat, so to speak.

SFC GALICIA: Yes.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, that's good.

So, looking back at that three years, three different duty positions, you know, a tour in Qatar. I don't know if you got to see any of the good parts of Qatar, but I've heard about it. I've heard it's a nice place to be.

SFC GALICIA: I actually did get to see the good parts. It was very nice.

SGM WATERHOUSE: But any good, bad, ugly lessons learned from that assignment those three years

there?

SFC GALICIA: The good was I got what I want to call like my initial step into learning how to kind of gauge my soldiers. You know, a lot of -- I had NCOs that, you know, going back to my first duty station, they could look at a soldier, and they could be like this guy's either gonna be good or he's just gonna be trouble.

And at that time, I always told myself, I said, private, I was like how do they do it, you know? How can they figure you out like that? And now, I started, you know, as a leadership role, I got to see okay, which mechanics are gonna benefit my motor pool. Cause I now longer rode behind the main guy.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, did you have sergeants under you? Some sergeant E5s.

SFC GALICIA: I had one sergeant E5.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, this is your first opportunity to lead other NCOs. Okay.

SFC GALICIA: Yes. So, I got to lead another NCO. And not only that, the first time me working with a warrant officer that was air defense, a 140 Echo. So,

it was a different like, kind of like, a change of pace for me cause I no longer worked for 915, which is what chief is here. I work with a 140 Echo, which they don't know anything about maintenance. All they know is how to fix the air defense stuff.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

SFC GALICIA: So, it put a lot more pressure on me.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, you're more of an advisor. You had to do a lot of advising.

SFC GALICIA: Yes. So, we had to work together in order to come up with, you know, a working product for the battery.

Another change that was -- I can honestly never say anything too bad about that unit. The only thing that I guess I didn't kind of agree with was, we had a lot of sergeant first classes that were 91 Bravos that I looked up to.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Military police?

SFC GALICIA: Ninety-one Bravos.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Ninety-one.

SFC GALICIA: Yeah, 91 Bravos.

SGM WATERHOUSE: What is that?

SFC GALICIA: Us.

SGM WATERHOUSE: I'm sorry, I got it. I was thinking a 63 Whiskey.

SFC GALICIA: No. No.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Ninety-one Bravo. No, yeah, wheeled mechanics or mechanics.

SFC GALICIA: Yes.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

SFC GALICIA: A lot of them were retiring as E7s. So, I was always -- I was thinking to myself, you know, you have all these air defenders making E7, E8 fast, but yet, my own MOS can't make it past E7.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, they were retiring at 20.

SFC GALICIA: They were retiring at 20 years, E7s, E7s, E7s, E7s. And I was -- that was the only thing that I was, you know, I was thinking like, whoa, does air defense affect you? Does being in this unit affect you progressing since the eye's more on the air defenders than it is on the maintainers. You know, do I need to PCS somewhere else?

So, that's what got my head, you know, my

mind, you know, started working because I was thinking I don't want to be a sergeant first class 20 years and then retire. I want to make it as far as I can and know at the end of the day, I gave it my all. If I don't achieve that goal, at least I feel that confidence.

For them, it was very nonchalant. It was just more like, I'm retiring. Oh, I did 20.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Is that why you reached -- I mean you had just made staff sergeant, right?

SFC GALICIA: Mm-hmm.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, were you starting to reach out to people higher, you know, maybe some of your mentors in the (inaudible)?

SFC GALICIA: I was.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Hey, how do you get to sergeant first class and then they go beyond?

SFC GALICIA: I was. I've always -- when I got promoted to E5, the one and only thing that my motor sergeant told me was, "You are about to get -- this is probably the easiest rank you'll ever get, but it's also the easiest rank that you can lose." That's his only words to me. And when he told me that, that instead of

just saying oh, yeah, okay, sergeant, I took it personal. I was like no, man, like I'm not gonna lose this stuff, you know.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Well, you're the ones that direct responsibility for those soldiers.

SFC GALICIA: Exactly. And when after I got my first counseling, Sergeant Estuline, which is the first sergeant Estuline right now, he on his first counseling as an E5, he told me, "Once you get that rank, do not feel comfortable after that. Feel a sense of urgency. As soon as you pin on that rank, what should I do know to get me ready for the next rank?"

And he always reiterated to me that there's a difference between a sergeant an NCO. And he always told me that thing. So, all that stuff resonated, you know, in my head. As soon as I pinned on E6, I was already thinking, you know, a promotion from E6 to E7, that's 91 Bravos, is suffering right now. Like they're only selecting, you know, 200 or 300 people at that time.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Cause there's only so many positions out there.

SFC GALICIA: Yes. And that was -- my sense of urgency was, okay, now that I make E6 as a motor sergeant, I got to be the best motor sergeant out of the whole battalion and win as many -- cause we used to get inspected, which they were called OIP inspections.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Organizational Inspection Program. Yep.

SFC GALICIA: And we were to have those inspections --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Like once a year or something. Was it twice a year?

SFC GALICIA: Well, they would do it semiannually for us.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, twice a year at least. Okay.

SFC GALICIA: And I would say, I got to win all these. So, I was always stressed. I was always like, you know, staying late, coming in early, making sure I was still maintaining, you know, my physical fitness, you know, passing all the PT tests, being the example for my soldiers, make sure I counsel them on time.

My first sergeant major had an issue with me turning in my -- I always turned in my counselings early just because if there was something that he can catch in there and say no, man, you could've just changed this to this, then I had the opportunity to go back and change it or make sure that, you know, let my soldiers know, okay, you know what, we did this counseling, but next month, this is what I'm gonna correct on your counseling. You know, that way you have a heads up.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, he could look at what you wrote down about what you said and what you covered and like hey, you should've covered this or maybe -- did you cover this? Write it down. You didn't write it down that you covered that.

SFC GALICIA: And not only that, to a lot of my soldiers, it made them feel like I actually gave a, you know, cared about them. So, it was good lessons.

SGM WATERHOUSE: We call it counseling for a reason.

SFC GALICIA: Yeah, it was good lessons. It was lessons learned, so. I mean I learned all this stuff from my NCOs in Fort Riley and also in Germany.

SGM WATERHOUSE: And so, since I messed it up a minute ago, so 91 Bravo is -- when did it change from 63 Whiskey to 91 Bravo?

SFC GALICIA: It was while I was at Fort Bliss the first time -- no, the second time. That's -- no, wait --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Mid-2000s or somewhere in there?

SFC GALICIA: Yeah, mid-2000s.

SGM WATERHOUSE: What was the point of all that? Do you remember what the talk was?

SFC GALICIA: Well, because initially when I first came in, we had 63 Whiskeys, 63 Sierras, 63 Bravos. So, we had three different MOSSs, that ultimately, if you look at it in the big picture, you're doing the same thing.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, it was like heavy trucks? Light trucks?

SFC GALICIA: Yes. For Sierras, they were the heavy trucks. For Whiskeys, we were just like the Humvees, like the smaller versions of it. And then you also had the 63 Hotels, which was all tanks.

So, the army, I guess, in order for them to not waste so much money on all these different schools, they can, you know, gather up these three MOSs --

SGM WATERHOUSE: There's Stryker too, right? So, you had like --

SFC GALICIA: Yes.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, the same -- those same folks now, 91s, getting the Stryker, they get the Humvees, they get the -- I take it, the what's the IED ones, the --

SFC GALICIA: Oh, EOD.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Any M-ATVs -- those guys get that too?

SFC GALICIA: Oh, M-ATVs? Yes.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, any kind of -- any kind of four-wheeled vehicle, these guys are gonna touch it during AIT. So, they consolidated those MOSs really.

SFC GALICIA: They consolidated everything. Yes. Instead of having like right now in Fort Lee, instead of having three different schoolhouses, you only have one that it's all 91, CMF 91. So, you have people that came in as Whiskeys like I did. People that came

in as Sierras. And now, that I'm an X-ray, we all go to the same SLC. So, you have --

SGM WATERHOUSE: the same Senior Leader Course.

SFC GALICIA: Yes, you have the 91 Deltas go in there, becoming xrays. The, you know, 91 Charlies, which is ACs mechanics, becoming xrays also. So, it was smart -- in my opinion it was smart because it takes a lot of the downtime away from the equipment. Because as Whiskeys, we would only work on the main part.

SGM WATERHOUSE: You weren't authorized to work on certain things.

SFC GALICIA: Troubleshooting. We were not allowed to do troubleshooting.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Which now you can do.

SFC GALICIA: Yes.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay. That does make sense. So, now move up to January 2013. You were assigned a Charlie Battery 2nd Battalion, 43rd Air Defense Artillery Regiment there at Bliss as the motor sergeant. And you served there for -- this is like the second half of your six years or so.

SFC GALICIA: Yes.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, you served there as the motor sergeant for almost three years.

SFC GALICIA: Mm-hmm.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Why did they move -- why did they move you?

SFC GALICIA: At that time, in Alpha company -

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SGM WATERHOUSE: Did you put in for a request?

SFC GALICIA: No, I didn't request it. Alpha company, their first sergeant, First Sergeant Flores, was told by our sergeant major that he was gonna be moving from Alpha to Charlie. And he said that he basically made a -- I'm not gonna say a drug deal but a deal with sergeant major and said the only way that I'll take it is if you have my motor sergeant come with me.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

SFC GALICIA: So, it was a trade.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Well, that reflects good on you, I guess.

SFC GALICIA: It felt pretty good to know that. But once I got to Charlie company, that's when the ball started rolling for me. I went from 100

percent to 200 percent. I wanted to put Charlie company -- since I couldn't do it with Alpha company, I mean I tried my best to get -- to be, you know, win all the OIPs. With Charlie company, I was with a bigger warrant officer, and one that was always about winning, winning, winning.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, he had the same go get 'em attitude.

SFC GALICIA: The same mentality as me. The other warrant officer that I had in Alpha company was more like I'll show up at 1130 and leave at 1330. And I'm gone for the rest of the day. This guy, Chief Conyers (phonetic), man, he was just as hungry as young.

SGM WATERHOUSE: And by that time, you were a staff sergeant in think, right?

SFC GALICIA: Yes.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, you were actually getting paid to do it. So, better leadership I guess or better partner as your partner there.

SFC GALICIA: Way better commander too. Way better.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Leadership matters, are you

sure? (Laughter)

SFC GALICIA: Yeah, cause for our commander in Alpha company, she was kind of scared to do anything. Everything you got to bring the black and white to her because she lost trust for the NCO corps somewhere in her career as a lieutenant. You know, maybe one NCO, you know, screwed her over on inventories or whatever but --

SGM WATERHOUSE: To more of micromanaging.

SFC GALICIA: She was more a micromanager. When Captain (inaudible 9:57:34 Ralph?) came in for Charlie, he was -- he was the type that you had to earn his trust. And as I want every single OIP that you could think of it, it looked good on his OER.

SGM WATERHOUSE: And when you say one, your battery over all the other ones in the battalion.

SFC GALICIA: Over all the other ones because we would have on our maintenance meetings, once we finished each OIP, each commander had to sit there for that meeting. And each commander got to see where he stood in the battalion. And when every single time it was Charlie up top; green, green, green across the

board. You know, Alpha company was at the bottom after I left.

That instilled a lot of trust. So, whenever I needed anything, anything, like operators were not doing their job or platoon leaders were not doing their job or even platoon sergeants were not doing their job, I would get on the phone right away and be like hey, sir, you know, we're conducting maintenance Monday today --

SGM WATERHOUSE: You're talking about the commander?

SFC GALICIA: Yes. I would call Captain Ralph? and be like hey, sir, I know you wanted a SITREP. I know you wanted to have statuses on how maintenance is going on Monday, well, this one platoon never showed up. And it was easy because after that like he'll back me up on everything. And I never did him wrong.

I never did anything in spite, or I never did anything just to get people in trouble. It's just that I wanted maintenance to be ran smoothly. And if people started caring about their equipment. That's what I wanted. That way it prevents me from having to work long hours.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Don't all mechanics wish we as operators --

SFC GALICIA: Exactly.

SGM WATERHOUSE -- used and properly cared about the equipment.

SFC GALICIA: Exactly.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, as a staff sergeant, did you have any (inaudible) Charlie (inaudible advice?) was it Alpha?

SFC GALICIA: Mm-hmm.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Anymore -- like did you have any additional duties, or did they give you more responsibility?

SFC GALICIA: Yes, with Charlie company, I got to go through the Master Fitness Trainer course. So, aside from being the motor sergeant, I was also the righthand man for -- I was the only certified one in the battalion, actually, cause out of all of us that went, air defenders that went with me, they all failed out, and I was the only one to make it.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, who did their PT plans?

SFC GALICIA: I did.

SGM WATERHOUSE: You oversaw the whole battalion. Wow.

SFC GALICIA: I mean I would oversee, like I would give advice. But sergeant major, as soon as I graduated the MFT course, he's like you're gonna be leading PT every single day. So, you're gonna be the one bringing in all these candidates that want to be Master Fitness Trainers.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

SFC GALICIA: You're gonna show them what (inaudible) looks like and what's gonna set them up for success.

SGM WATERHOUSE: You're supposed to help the commander the first sergeant come up with a good PT -- effective PT plan.

SFC GALICIA: Well, usually, the first sergeant.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah. Yeah.

SFC GALICIA: And at the battery --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Well, the commander's got to sign off on it.

SFC GALICIA: Yeah, the commander's got to

sign off on it. But at the battery at one point for Charlie company, we had about 20 people -- 20 soldiers that were either overweight or they didn't pass the PT test. And it reflects on my NCO ER 2. All of them passed by the time I was done with them, except for one. So, I can get through to -- that's soldier just wanted to get out. So, he was on the I don't care kind of attitude.

But I helped out a couple staff sergeants. I helped out, you know, with meal -- not meal plans, but, you know, giving 'em hints on the proper way of eating, dieting. Exercise, you know, how to balance them both.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah, that one guy or that one percent, you know, if they don't have the will, it doesn't matter what --

SFC GALICIA: It doesn't matter. Yes.

SGM WATERHOUSE: -- it doesn't matter what means you provide.

SFC GALICIA: So, yeah, during that time also in Charlie company, First Sergeant Flores like made sure that if I was able to attend a school, he'll make it more feasible for me, you know.

And not only that, my whole team -- I had 20 mechanics at that time, my shop foreman, I would hold him to such a standard where he sometimes had to cover for me. Like I would -- he was a shy person, so in the maintenance meetings, I would put him the front seat.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, give him a little leadership training.

SFC GALICIA: Give him leadership training. So, after a month of him doing that, he started picking it up. And he would brief instead of myself.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Whereas, you just kind of got thrown in the fire when you did, right?

SFC GALICIA: Yes.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Go brief. What? How do I do that?

SFC GALICIA: But I mean I would -- he would sit with me in the meetings, so he knew what to say. He knew what statuses looked like. He knew what to brief. But it was different when he had to actually sit in the seat and brief the battalion, so.

But once he got a hold of it -- I was with him the whole time, like I never, you know, separated from

him. In those maintenance meetings, it was the motor sergeant and then the chief right next to him. So, the chief understood that that was for his own career progression. So, I mean I would always write down notes on the NFC report for him, like oh, no, say this. Don't say this. This is the one way that you open up a can of worms, you know, because you have a CW4 over there that's gonna question you from head to toe. Now, you got to be able to shoot back at him, that way he stops with those questions, and he knows that you know what you're talking about.

And it became easier for me because now I could focus on the MFT portion of it and also, be a motor sergeant at the same time, and it wasn't overwhelming for me.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

SFC GALICIA: Because my guys had proper training. They were all cross trained, all of 'em. All my 91s knew how to work on generators, knew how to work on ACs. And it was because myself and Sergeant Nelson, my shop foreman, when we would have some work, they were all there involved. All of them.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, while you were there in 2013, you attended the Advanced Leader Course or ALC. Where did you go to that particular school and what did you --

SFC GALICIA: Here.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Here, at Fort Lee. And what did you think of ALC when you went through?

SFC GALICIA: It was -- it was just too long. It was two months.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Two months. Too much, too long.

SFC GALICIA: Too much, too long.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Why do you say that?

SFC GALICIA: Because a lot of the stuff that they were teaching us was repetitive already. And not only that, we were in a different phase of the SAMS-E system. And a different SKIP I should say. And we were on SKIP 7 when I came over here. And what they were trying to teach us --

SGM WATERHOUSE: This is the computer programming used for the --

SFC GALICIA: Yeah, for the SAMS program.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

SFC GALICIA: And here, they were teaching at the schoolhouse SKIP 4. So, when I came here, I came with some expectancies of learning stuff that I didn't know versus stuff that I basically could do blindfolded already, you know.

So, when I got here, they were like, we're gonna be working on SKIP 4, and I'm looking at them like, but this is a schoolhouse. Like you guys should have like --

SGM WATERHOUSE: SKIP 8. Yeah, that's like you got the iPhone 2, and we're on nine or whatever it is.

SFC GALICIA: Yeah.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, that kind of thing as far as the system.

SFC GALICIA: Yeah.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Hopefully, that's been corrected.

SFC GALICIA: Hopefully.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, any positives from ALC? Anything that you took out of there that, you know, to

this day you remember?

SFC GALICIA: Ah --

SGM WATERHOUSE: It hadn't been that long ago, but it's been four or five years.

SFC GALICIA: It got -- just leadership wise, like it helped out with, you know, questions, Q&As that we had with sergeant major. That was one of -- yes, I'm sorry, but that was one of the biggest things we got. We got actually, a Q&A with the commandant. And he got to answer a lot of questions for us.

SGM WATERHOUSE: The ordnance school
(inaudible).

SFC GALICIA: Yes. So, it was way better to see if he heard from somebody that was an actual ordnance soldier and also, a senior non-commissioned officer on what right looks like and how to get promoted.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Talking about your career progress.

SFC GALICIA: Career progression. Yes.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, moving forward a little bit here. October 2014, you deploy to Qatar again. For

a year this time with Charlie Battery 2nd Battalion, 43rd ADA, and you continue -- where you continue to serve as a motor sergeant over there.

And I assume your duties and responsibilities are the same. Any particular highlights of that tour you want to cover?

SFC GALICIA: Yes, during that time --

SGM WATERHOUSE: (inaudible).

SFC GALICIA: Yeah.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Nothing confidential.

SFC GALICIA: We actually won the highest readiness rating ever in the AOR as far as Charlie company went -- Charlie Battery. We were the only site because they have different pat [Patriot] sites. So, we were the only site that didn't have overhead cover for the equipment. So, generators were exposed to 100 plus degrees, you know, heat, humidity. And that doesn't do good -- well with electronics.

So, I had my guys -- myself and Sergeant Nelson. I would never say "I," cause that's wrong. But myself and Sergeant Nelson kept those guys in line to the point where if something failed, my E3 can figure it

out. My E2 can figure it out.

So, we were, like I said, we were the only ones without overhead protection. I had enough soldiers to split up into three different teams. So, I had my highest-ranking specialist be in charge of crew 3, Sergeant Nelson was in charge of crew 2, and I was in charge of crew 1. Even though I came in for all three of those crews because I would eventually if nothing was broken, I would leave for the end of the day.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

SFC GALICIA: But we were able to keep our equipment running 100 percent throughout the whole year. No cover. No nothing. Every single other unit, every single other battery in that site had failed, catastrophically. They had the heaviest downtime because they would blame it on the heat. They would blame it on we don't have time, or anything like that.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, your guys were just making -- doing the right thing.

SFC GALICIA: Everything was done like -- and we got recognized by the General Terry, I want to say, yeah, General Terry. He came in, I still remember that

day. I was in coveralls. I was working on an EPP generator, which is a 100 and -- was it 400 kW generator. It was a German-made generator. And I was working on it, myself and Sergeant Nelson came in and Sergeant Flores -- First Sergeant Flores, briefed us that General Terry was gonna be showing up. So, you know, just change out of your coveralls and be ready for him. Little did I know, is that as he was saying that, our commander was walking into our motor pool tent with General Terry right behind him.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Too late to change
(laughter).

SFC GALICIA: So, I had all my guys show up, and he asked us the question of how do we do it, you know. And I just told him, "We stay on top of our services on all of our equipment." I can leave here, leave my guys behind, and it'll be smooth sailing. I don't have a worry in the world, you know.

And we got recognized for that, for attaining I believe a 99.8 percent readiness rating and being the only battery to do it ever. And they all got like coins about this big. All 20 of my guys got award coins.

SGM WATERHOUSE: About a six-inch coin.

SFC GALICIA: Yes. They were frisbees. But, yeah, they got awarded that. And I kept my battalion commander happy because when we were on our red or gold cycle, cause it was split up between two batteries and one AOR, every single time we had Alpha Company, which was my previous company be on the hot cycle for that month, they would immediately two days into it, they'll go down, generator problems or whatever it was.

So, at one point, our battalion commander asked the battalion motor sergeant if I could go over there and basically help him out, which he was a staff sergeant long than I was. He seemed like he knew what he was doing, but I guess his leadership skills kind of were where the sergeant major kind of didn't feel too comfortable with him.

And my guys and I would make repeated, you know, trips over to their site and go over there and help them out. And I want to say like maybe more than half of the time, we got their equipment running -- up and running, and they were good to go.

SGM WATERHOUSE: They should've gotten better

whether your guys helped, I would think.

SFC GALICIA: No, they got more like oh, Charlie Company's gonna show up eventually.

SGM WATERHOUSE: That's the opposite of what's supposed to happen.

SFC GALICIA: Yes.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Your guys' work hopefully would've inspired them to do the right thing. But it all starts, like you said, you know, with a leader. If the leader's not willing to step up.

SFC GALICIA: Well, I was there with them the whole time.

SGM WATERHOUSE: When you weren't there, their leader --

SFC GALICIA: Oh, yes.

SGM WATERHOUSE: -- that was assigned to 'em.

So, October 2015, a year later, you guys come back to Fort Bliss, and then you were assigned to Echo Company, 2nd Battalion 43rd ADA. And you served there about eight months. So, if I did my math right.

So, before we talk about Echo Company, looking back at almost -- yeah, almost your three years there in

Charlie Battery, any particular things you'd like to highlight that you haven't already about your time there before we move on to Echo?

SFC GALICIA: First Sergeant Flores, hands down the best first sergeant ever. I cannot ever say, you know, anything good enough, you know, about him because as of now, like, he's only been in I believe 16 years, in the military -- no, 17, I'm sorry. He just made 17 and also, made the sergeant major's list. So, he --

SGM WATERHOUSE: The army recognized that he's good then.

SFC GALICIA: Yes. So, I mean with him, it was very approachable first sergeant. Very -- like he would take the time even though he was busy, you know, with paperwork or whatever, he will still take the time like hey, first sergeant, you know, can I talk to you real quick, you know this is what I want to do.

And at that time, I was coming up -- I was already thinking and sweating it out about the E7 Board.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Trying to be ready.

SFC GALICIA: And I was trying to be ready

years ahead of what I was supposed to. And he was a guy that just took the time to sit there, you know, had me bring in my NCOERs. Had me bring in my ERB. You know, pull up my OMPF and balance everything out. Make sure everything was synched.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah. That's good. And you said he's a sergeant major now or just got picked up?

SFC GALICIA: Yes. He went to be an ROTC instructor up in Ohio. I'm not sure which state that he went to.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Then he'll got to the academy.

So, as we mentioned -- so before that or after that, you went to Echo Company.

SFC GALICIA: Yes.

SGM WATERHOUSE: You served there about eight months. What led to you moving, you know, for that little bit of a time?

SFC GALICIA: Because Echo Company --

SGM WATERHOUSE: It sounds like a little time. Eight months is not necessarily a little bit of time, but in the bigger scheme it is.

SFC GALICIA: Well, we all as mechanics, we all originally belonged to Echo Company.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

SFC GALICIA: Our FMTs were just basically for the batteries.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay. So, you're all in Echo Company, but then you're working as teams for those other ones. Okay.

SFC GALICIA: Yes.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, you're really coming back to the home room.

SFC GALICIA: Home room. Yes.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

SFC GALICIA: To the hub (laughter).

SGM WATERHOUSE: So -- yeah, so -- so, we'll skip those other questions. I was thinking it was a different unit. So, really, you're just going back home so to speak.

SFC GALICIA: Yes.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay. So, before we talk about the next assignment, I want to cover this different topic, which is the Sergeant Major Larry L.

Strickland Educational Leadership Award of SELA, which you earned in 2016.

So, for future readers of the transcript that will come from this interview, I just want to cover some basics of this award, and then I'll ask you a couple questions here.

SFC GALICIA: Okay.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, every year, each major installation or army post camp station submits two nominees for this award. One sergeant in the rank of or paygrade of E5, two sergeants first class with a paygrade of E7, and then master sergeant, E8 and/or E9. The award is presented to the NCO of each rank and paygrade category. Those two folks who best exemplify the army's vision and influences others in shaping future leaders while practicing excellent stewardship of the nation's most precious resource, which of course is our soldiers.

The award is called the Sergeant Major Larry L. Strickland Educational Leadership Award in honor of Sergeant Major Strickland, who was a real person, who served in the army for 30 years and was serving as

sergeant major to the army's deputy chief of staff for personnel when he became a victim of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attack on the Pentagon.

The family and friends of Sergeant Major Strickland instituted a memorial scholarship fund and a leadership award program in 2003. And the Association of the United States Army or AUSA provides the funding for the award.

The AUSA presents the award to each years' winners, which is two -- I said, every year is two folks, at the Sergeant Major of the Army Non-commissioned Officer and Soldier Forum at AUSA's annual meeting.

Each recipient of the Sergeant Major Larry L. Strickland Education Leadership Award receives a bronze eagle and \$4000 to assist in covering the cost of an education that tuition assistance does not pay, such as instructional fees, lab fees, books, etc....

In addition, the two winners of the award have his or her names engraved on a permanent plaque at the United States Army Sergeants Major Academy at Fort Bliss, Texas.

So, that's basically, you know, so you were one of two folks that year. I think the other was a master sergeant or sergeant major.

SFC GALICIA: He was a sergeant major.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, you won it for the staff sergeants to the sergeant first class. So, you're one of two people across the entire army. How did you find out that you had been chosen as the winner?

SFC GALICIA: I was already -- I had already PCS'd here.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay, here to Fort Lee?

SFC GALICIA: To Fort Lee. I got a phone call from -- during that time, I was working nights here at the schoolhouse. So, it was about 8 in the morning. I was still asleep cause we get off at 2 in the morning. And my sergeant major, Sergeant Major Williams from 243 is the one that called me. And the only thing I heard was this deep voice like, "Congratulations." That's the only thing that he said. And I'm half asleep, so I'm like looking at my phone like who's this?

SGM WATERHOUSE: From Fort Bliss calling you?

SFC GALICIA: No, I mean I had his number

saved. And I was like, "Sergeant Major, I'm sorry," like, "I didn't get that." And he said, you've been, you know, you're gonna be receiving an award at the AUSA Convention. Congratulations. I had no clue. Sergeant major -- I can honestly tell you, I had no clue what he was talking about.

So, I'm just used to saying, "Roger," that's it and just drive along and find out eventually what it was. I didn't want to ask him too many questions. (laughter) He's a very grumpy man.

So, I just told him, you know, I just got the basics of what it was, and he asked for Sergeant Major Cordona (phonetic), which is our battalion sergeant major here in Fort Lee, he asked for his contact information, that way he can email him and he's already tracking.

But I didn't know how I came across this award. I didn't know who submitted the recommendation.

SGM WATERHOUSE: That's good. You're not supposed to know.

SFC GALICIA: I'm not supposed to. Yes.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, when you found out what

it was, and I just read it for folks reading, you know, kind of what it represents, how did you feel about that when you figured, you know, now that you know what he was saying congratulations for?

SFC GALICIA: Well, that week was just full of surprises. During that same week when I was told I won that award, I also found out that I made the sergeant first class list.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Wow, twofer.

SFC GALICIA: And that was also around my birthday timeframe. So, it was a very, very -- no, but what I got from the award, from just being recommended for it, is that I sat there and those NCO PDs with sergeant majors, all the sergeant majors that, you know, influenced my career, telling us all the time how the NCO corps not doing its job. How the NCO corps becoming weak. How the NCO corps needs to do this, needs to do that.

So, while everybody -- I felt like everybody was sitting there was forced to be there, I wanted to be there. And one thing that I never wanted to do is be that one guy that does the right thing just because he's

waiting to be rewarded. I wanted to do the right thing because at that point, I was already into the army mentality, into making the army better. And I wanted to be the best that I could I mean even though it sounds a little bit cliché, be the best and not ever taking second place for anything.

So, when I received word of that, the first thing that I could think of is all my guys that went through college while I was a motor sergeant because it's not that I made it -- I made it easy for them because I could cover down for them, for whatever they needed -- they needed to get done. So, all my guys kept telling me, sergeant, you know, you see all these air defenders getting promoted really fast, you know, they have low (inaudible) scores. And through counseling, I got through a lot of their thick heads that the only way you're gonna get promoted is if you go to college. That's the only way. Like quit being a dummy, quit being -- going back to the barracks and drinking, actually put your head into a computer or into some books. Go to college.

So, I made it to the point where if they kept

a certain grade point average while they were attending college, I would give them four-day weekends like at least once or twice, you know, during that month. I would give 'em, you know, incentives for that.

I would also, if I had three of them or four of them going at the same time, which was a lot, but I mean I had a large maintenance team, if I had four of them going at the same time and, you know, one of them had the highest grade point average, they'll show up to PT and I'll release 'em, you know, for PT. As long as they pass PT, they had, you know, a valid 705 and as long as they weren't having any trouble in their 5500s, if they needed it, were good to go.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Their weight and their body fat percentage was good.

SFC GALICIA: Yes.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

SFC GALICIA: And of course, I'll run that through First Sergeant Flores and first sergeant and say look, you handle that. I'll leave it up to you. You just let me know.

So, it was easier for me like once they got

those incentives, as soon as one of my guys saw that his buddy got promoted, he's like oh, hell no, man. I'm not gonna be subordinate to this guy. So, it started with training. I mean I ended up having good soldiers.

SGM WATERHOUSE: And they don't know, but they were getting educated at the same time.

SFC GALICIA: Yeah, they were getting educated, but they were just competing cause they were so competitive with each other. And you know, they all went through different schools like combatives level one and two, you know. Most of my mechanics had more schools under them -- their belt then most of the air defender batteries, you know, in total.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

SFC GALICIA: So, once we started averaging more and more people going to college -- I also had the largest number of promotables in my motor pool. So, all my guys that came in E1s, E2s, by the time I was about to leave, they were already promotables.

SGM WATERHOUSE: (inaudible) sergeant.

SFC GALICIA: Before sergeant. Yes. And the only way that they'll get, you know, they were able to

go BLC or get on the list for BLC, which was WLC --

SGM WATERHOUSE: The Basic Leader Course.

Yeah.

SFC GALICIA: Was if they scored the highest on their PT test, or if when they went to the range and they scored the highest out of everybody.

So, when we had a range date, I would go out there with 'em. I never skipped it. I would go out there with 'em. I will shoot the highest, and I'll be like whoever can beat me, I'll give you a day off tomorrow. And man, you should've seen like just challenging them. Like nowadays, you're just -- these soldiers nowadays, their just like they wanna go back to the computers. They wanna go back to their cellphones.

If you unstick them from that and make it more competitive and fun for them, something that, you know, sparks their imagination and stuff or what I can do instead of being a couch potato, instead of what you were talking about earlier going back to mommy and daddy. You know, I wanted them to be better.

And ultimately, out of -- all of them reenlisted. All of them reenlisted. All or most of

them are back in Fort Bliss still. One of them is a motor sergeant, you know. And to this day, they'll call me, you know, telling me hey, you know, Sergeant, what do I do, you know for this? I'm already looking for ALC. How to get to ALC, you know. Like I felt confident that at least throwing a little seed in there, that now it's coming to fruition. So, that's what can I contribute that award or my recommendation for that award.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Your first sergeant probably put you in for it, you just don't know it.

SFC GALICIA: That and -- I mean he was a very educated man. So, I don't doubt it.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, for your educational goals, did this award kind of, you know, cause I know we as NCOs, we typically look out for our soldiers first. But is there any particular educational goals you have for now or after the army?

SFC GALICIA: Yes. My educational goal is to become a physical therapist. And the only reason why I say that is because I already got the Master Fitness Trainer portion out of the way. I got to go through three

different levels of college for it cause now they -- you just can't be a jock and be a Master Fitness Trainer. Now, you have to go through like the actual kinesiology, muscle, anatomy, skeletal structure, and nutrition classes.

So, I feel like the army's physical therapy system, if that's what it's called, is broken right now. Because I see it here. I have problems with my feet now, you know, from all the running. I went over there to get help, and they first thing that they asked me, "You want a profile?" Didn't even look at me. Didn't even check my feet or nothing.

SGM WATERHOUSE: No, I want to be fixed.

SFC GALICIA: Exactly. So, I want to be the type that -- the one that goes over there, doesn't allow these soldiers to be walking around with crutches when they're 17, 18, and 19 years old. You know, they don't have anything wrong with them, you know. And I want to, you know, help them get better. And if we have some veterans, you know, also the soldiers that have done their time, help them out the right way. Because lot of us here at the schoolhouse, we're all seasoned. And a

lot of us got back issues, got, you know, all sorts of issues.

SGM WATERHOUSE: We all have something.

SFC GALICIA: And when we go see any medical help here, it's more like, "Do you want a profile?" Right away. So, I want to get paid for what I do the right way. Not just get paid to show up.

SGM WATERHOUSE: A culture change needs to be taking place.

SFC GALICIA: Yes.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, speaking of that, since we're talking about this education, I just want to get your opinion on a couple things and kind of stealing some thunder from the end. But how do you think civilian education, you know, the classes you've taken, you know, that your soldiers -- like how do you think it helps an NCO by taking college for example? How does that help an NCO?

SFC GALICIA: Cause you got to be -- I bought into like the whole soldier -- no, what is called -- the entire soldier concept?

SGM WATERHOUSE: The whole person, whole

soldier.

SFC GALICIA: The whole soldier concept. Yes. That's what I bought into. You got to be able to be good -- at least good in all those different areas to be a successful NCO in the military. You got to be able to tell your soldiers, I went to college. I did the hardest things. You know, I don't look smart, but I mean I got a master's degree. You can do it too. I'm also a good mechanic. Look at -- you know, I can teach you. Teach, coach, and train you the right way, and make you into a successful mechanic yourself and also, be a good leader and not be the one that can sit there and say oh, this, this, this. Just point the finger and not be able to, you know, lead at the same time.

That's pretty much -- yeah, just leading by example. That's what I always take it back to.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Now, in your MOS and the maintenance side, does credentialing come in a lot as far as your guys' career tracker and --

SFC GALICIA: Yes.

SGM WATERHOUSE: -- like AC -- ASE certified. Is that built in -- is that something we're looking at

building into your ALCs and your SLCs or is that something that soldiers still have to duke it on the side.

SFC GALICIA: Well, for the last briefing that we received from Sergeant Major Cordona was that they're trying to have an accreditation process for SLC and ALC. Where you actually do receive credits.

SGM WATERHOUSE: For those guys that maybe pursue a degree later or just want to go out and work, they can get certifications, which is the other part of the education that is available to soldiers. Not just civilian education degrees but credentialing.

SFC GALICIA: Yes.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay. That's good.

So, switching our focus back to your army career part. In July of 2016, you were assigned here.

SFC GALICIA: Yes.

SGM WATERHOUSE: To the United States Army Ordnance School, specially the wheeled maintenance training department here at Fort Lee, where you served and continue to serve as an instructor/writer.

So, what led to you coming here, particularly?

SFC GALICIA: That was when I was -- before I, you know, found out about the sergeant first class list, I hadn't had a career-broadening assignment.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Broadening assignment.

SFC GALICIA: So, I was panicking for that. You know, I was trying to look for ways. I tried doing drill sergeant. I was told no, that because of my MOS at that time. They were only taking certain MOSs I guess for --

SGM WATERHOUSE: They didn't want to sacrifice any more mechanics on the front line.

SFC GALICIA: Yeah. So, and then --

SGM WATERHOUSE: I can see that. Recruiting, did you ask for that?

SFC GALICIA: No. I was leaving that for just in case everything else failed, and I can do recruiting.

But I called up HRC, and I talked to Mr. -- I forgot --

SGM WATERHOUSE: It doesn't matter.

SFC GALICIA: Yeah.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, you called human resources. So, this is the first time you kind of tried

to take career on your own.

SFC GALICIA: Yes.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Ask for what's out there yourself.

SFC GALICIA: And I was told that initially that there was a waiting list for, you know, for us, like, you know, as far as for them to review our records before they gave us a final say so. So, I took that as an okay, this guy's telling me no already.

So, after I hung up, you know, with him, thought about it, I was like, well, I mean if it happens, it happens. If it doesn't, it doesn't.

And that following week, my first sergeant, the shortest first sergeant ever that I ever worked for, First Sergeant Jackson, very mean little lady, called me. And she was cursing me out for about five minutes until she got down to the point. And at that time, I was already used to it. I was like, "Roger, First Sergeant. Roger, First Sergeant. Roger, First Sergeant." And -- cause I -- she thought that I was gonna be in this next deployment, that they were gonna go to Bahrain, I believe. So, she was already counting

that I was gonna be there as a motor sergeant for Echo Company this time cause it was an E7 slot.

SGM WATERHOUSE: She didn't want you to go.

SFC GALICIA: She didn't want me to go. So, she finally told me that I was on the list for, you know, people PCSings soon.

SGM WATERHOUSE: And that's how you found out.

SFC GALICIA: That's how I found out.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, for those that don't know, you arrive here, I think you were still a staff sergeant when you arrived.

SFC GALICIA: Yes.

SGM WATERHOUSE: You're a sergeant first class now. You got promoted I think last October.

SFC GALICIA: Yes, October 1st. My birthday.

SGM WATERHOUSE: On your birthday?

SFC GALICIA: Mm-hmm.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Wow, that's good.

So, for those that don't know, cause different Military Occupational Specialty schoolhouses, they have these types of jobs where they just call 'em instructor/writer. I mean I'm in a job where it says

researcher.

SFC GALICIA: Yes.

SGM WATERHOUSE: What is it that you do basically, that you can tell the audience? What is it you kind of do here? What's your role?

SFC GALICIA: Well, my role is --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Or roles. You might have more than one.

SFC GALICIA: More is just instructing the 91 Bravo MOS to these soldiers. Here, we're broken down in different modules.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, this is their AIT.

SFC GALICIA: This is their AIT.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

SFC GALICIA: So, we have A through I mod. And I'm the very last module that they go through before walking the stage.

Basically, before they exit out of here, we take time -- when I was in I-mod, to talk to them for once. You know, not given the sugar-coated kind of briefings or anything like that. Not have anything that's illegal. But just more of a realization for them

that they're about to go into the actual operational army. That it's not gonna be AIT anymore. That it's not gonna be these -- and not in a bad way but more -- they're cuddled here.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah, no chaperones at your unit.

SFC GALICIA: No chaperones. And you're not gonna have --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Mom and dad's not gonna be there to watch out.

SFC GALICIA: Exactly. You're not gonna have -- like your probabilities of getting kicked out of the military are far greater over there if you're doing the wrong thing, if you're not up to par.

So, we take that time to teach them -- aside from teaching them what they're supposed to learn with the AAFES system, which is a fire-suppression system for the military, we take that time to kind of give them a real-life scenario, like hey, this is what maybe you should expect, and you can expect, but it's not set in stone. You know, it just gives me a warm and fuzzy that hopefully they understand it and they take it with 'em.

But as you can tell, this younger generation, they're a lot harder to get through to, you know.

SGM WATERHOUSE: But you're prepping them for the real world.

SFC GALICIA: Yes.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay. So, as far as writing, that's just getting classes ready and some days you have to change your (inaudible).

SFC GALICIA: Writing POI also.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah, you have to change some of the lesson plans and that kind of stuff.

So, do you get to -- you said you get to switch modules or whatever you call it in phases, or is that just kind of dictated?

SFC GALICIA: No, we're just one set module.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

SFC GALICIA: So, once a class arrives, they'll go to AMA which is with Staff Sergeant Coles (phonetic). And then, after AMA, they'll go to Sergeant First Class Schultz. And so, they'll jump from different instructor each time -- each module.

SGM WATERHOUSE: But you have -- you have

several -- there's probably several AITs going through at the same time, right? Or separate platoons.

SFC GALICIA: Several class. Yes.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Several classes.

SFC GALICIA: Yes.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, this week, you may have this one, and what is it, every other week you get one.

SFC GALICIA: Yes, every single module right now is full of different classes. So, right now, we have class 50 all the way to 62 I believe.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Then you've got different students like every week.

SFC GALICIA: Yes.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, do you enjoy what you're doing now?

SFC GALICIA: I enjoy it. I enjoy it because I can actually have an impact on this generation. And I was always a big critic of AIT because of the quality of soldiers we were getting in. a lot of them, you'll put them, you know, to work on a Humvee, the basic things. They couldn't even tell you how to do it.

One of them arrived to our motor pool when I

was still in Echo Company. Didn't even know how to turn on a Humvee. And I'm sitting there like, "You don't know how to turn on the Humvee?"

SGM WATERHOUSE: And you just came from Fort Lee.

SFC GALICIA: And you just came from AIT. And I mean, they all -- they're all quick to do this. Well, I didn't get taught. And it's everybody else's fault except mine.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

SFC GALICIA: So, when I got the opportunity to come here, I was like, let me test this theory out that I have.

SGM WATERHOUSE: You find out what's going on.

SFC GALICIA: And, no, we teach it. It's up to them whether they grasp it our not. And allow them, like I said, I mean a lot of them will take responsibility. But more than half of them will sit there and point the finger and say it's everybody else's fault but mine. I'm the grade A soldier. I'm good at PT. I can sing cadences. Yeah, but are you a good mechanic? Well, no.

SGM WATERHOUSE: That's why you're here.

SFC GALICIA: That's why you're here. Yeah.
You're not here to sing cadences.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Well, you're here now, then
maybe you can influence that, so.

So, last year, I think you went to the Senior
Leader Course.

SFC GALICIA: Yes.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Or SLC. Was that here at --

SFC GALICIA: Yes.

SGM WATERHOUSE: What do you think of that
course?

SFC GALICIA: Not very good.

SGM WATERHOUSE: No?

SFC GALICIA: Not very good. It needs to
revamped. It needs to be -- the --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Well, you get to tell, you
know, critique the --

SFC GALICIA: Your AARs. Yes.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

SFC GALICIA: But I don't know what the lag is
between FORCOM and TRADOC? There's a lag there.

There's a huge gap. Because FORCOM, we were already on wave 2 of GCSS-army. Here, they're teaching you the scraps of GCSS-army. You know, and I understand why it's --

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, another program that the schoolhouse is behind on what they're teaching?

SFC GALICIA: Yes. Yes, because a lot of instructors here, they don't -- you can tell 'em GCSS-army. What's that?

SGM WATERHOUSE: You mean the ULLS system.

SFC GALICIA: The ULLS or SAMS-E system. And ALC was the same issue. I was why are we on SKIP 4 when we should be on SKIP 8?

So, I believe that when you come through to a course, you should already have the latest and greatest. I understand that there are some people lagging behind on the --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah, maybe that not all the units have that particular system.

SFC GALICIA: Exactly.

SGM WATERHOUSE: And SLC and the ALCs --

SFC GALICIA: Might be able to catch them up.

SGM WATERHOUSE: -- the school is try to get kind of people on the same page. Whereas, you may have -- you have already used the latest and greatest but say three-quarters of the units out there are still using the old system.

SFC GALICIA: Exactly.

SGM WATERHOUSE: They still have to cover the old system. And you may have to relearn old stuff even just for the schoolhouse. But your unit is, you know, blessed to have the new stuff.

SFC GALICIA: Exactly.

SGM WATERHOUSE: It's like in the armor corps, we, you know, some guys had M1A2 tanks. I never was on one. But a lot of those guys when they got to school and they were having to learn M1A1, what they call the antiquated tank, well that's what the majority of the army has.

SFC GALICIA: Exactly.

SGM WATERHOUSE: You have to know how to use that too. Cause guess what? You're gonna get assigned maybe to an M1A1.

So, that's probably why they still do it,

unless that system is totally taken over an older system or an older version of the system. If it's not army wide, reserve, guard, they probably have to keep it in there.

SFC GALICIA: Yeah, well, then at that time SAMS-E was already obsolete.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay. Well, I can't help that.

SFC GALICIA: So, I mean I was --

SGM WATERHOUSE: If it's obsolete, it shouldn't be here.

SFC GALICIA: Yeah, that's what -- when we were there -- and it was taught with -- we got to go through 762 slides in three days. Death by PowerPoint. Instead of you putting the GCSs system on a computer because that's all it is now, it's on computer, and having us learn by actually, you know, us being involved hands on. That's the way that most of us would learn. But no, we sat there struggling to keep our eyes open, you know, like trying to freaking inject ourselves with 5-Hour Energies or something, you know, trying to stay awake. But it was brutal.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Well, I mean that's what those ARs are for, and hopefully they'll get the funding or whatever they need to change.

SFC GALICIA: Yes.

SGM WATERHOUSE: And that's why -- that's why we get better. And I've interviewed some folks from the 70s. Believe me, it's a lot better than it used to be. But we can always improve. And that's part of it. That's the reason I like asking questions about school is because it's our responsibility as NCOs to, you know, when you say TRADOC or FORCOM, but it's all of us to make sure and tell them hey, this is -- this needs to be changed.

SFC GALICIA: Yes.

SGM WATERHOUSE: We need to update it. So, that's good.

So, I want to cover here what you've recently done. So, you recently just returned here from Twentynine Palms, California --

SFC GALICIA: Yes.

SGM WATERHOUSE: -- where we have some U.S. Army soldiers and Marines. And you guys completed a

couple months of testing there on the Joint Light Tactical Vehicle or JLTV. And that was at the Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center, MCAGCC. I don't know if they have a way to say that, but -- the acronym. But you guys did that. That's a new line of vehicles that the army I guess has already decided to purchase. And now, you guys went down there to kind of test the company that was awarded the contract. You know, the versions of it that they're pushing out.

SFC GALICIA: Yes.

SGM WATERHOUSE: And you guys were, I guess, from what I understand, are gonna test those vehicles to say here's the -- kind of like that course, here's what's good, here's what's bad.

SFC GALICIA: Yes.

SGM WATERHOUSE: And from what I read, the army sent Bravo Troop 1st Squadron, 33rd Cav Regiment out of 3rd Brigade 101st Airborne Division. And the marine corps had what they call the Marine Corps Weapons Company out of 1st Battalion, 7th Marine Corps Regiment. And you tested two different variants there, a Combat Tactical Vehicle version and a Combat Support Vehicle

version.

And according to the article I read, it was also -- those two variants were broken into like four other configurations.

SFC GALICIA: Yes.

SGM WATERHOUSE: A heavy guns carrier version, a general-purpose version, a close combat weapons carrier, and a utility version.

SFC GALICIA: Yes.

SGM WATERHOUSE: I even heard that the Marines, and that you guys did like real-world scenarios at like a joint readiness training center or a national training center where you guys are out there in the desert in harsh environments and kind of like combat scenarios. So, you were running these things through the paces. And that's not in a lab. It's not in an air-conditioned building or running around some track. They're actually in the desert. And from what I understand, the army plans on purchasing about 50,000 of these things, and the marine corps 9000 or so.

So, what you guys were doing was kind of QA QCing the product before it hits the street.

SFC GALICIA: Yes.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah. So, looking back at this -- I think it was two months that you guys were down there.

SFC GALICIA: Two months. Yes.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Two months. So, how did you get picked from here to go? How did that come about?

SFC GALICIA: I basically received an email from sergeant major saying you will go.

SGM WATERHOUSE: From your sergeant major here?

SFC GALICIA: Yes.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

SFC GALICIA: So, I was in a CNO a CAO class during that time.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Casualty Assistance?

SFC GALICIA: Yes. And we had our -- I had my laptop -- oh, we had our laptops, and I got an email from sergeant major saying you've been selected, so --

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, you've been voluntold to go.

SFC GALICIA: Basically.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, do you know why those particular two units, the one from the army and the one from the marines, did you -- were you guys told why they were chosen?

SFC GALICIA: No. The Rakkasans, I don't know why they were chosen. Just -- I have no clue.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay.

SFC GALICIA: I didn't speak to any of them really.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay. For those folks out there -- well, by the time they read this, they probably will be, but some that haven't, you know, they don't keep track of this stuff, what -- for those not familiar with the Joint Light Tactical Vehicle, can you explain in layman's terms why the army wanted it developed and the marines? And why the army and marines decided, hey, we need to buy these things?

SFC GALICIA: Because they researched basically how easily a Humvee can be, you know, destroyed in combat. And it's basically the replacement to the Humvee.

They army wanted a contract -- they wanted a

compact vehicle that -- so, the government put a certain spec out there for all these companies -- all these manufacturers to build up on. Oshkosh was the only one that built exactly what the army requested. A compact vehicle. It has to have this. It has to have this.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Survivability.

SFC GALICIA: Certain specs. Yes.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, Oshkosh company got the contract.

SFC GALICIA: Yes.

SGM WATERHOUSE: And you guys were testing their variance of the vehicle.

SFC GALICIA: Yes.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay. So, what were your roles or duties during these two months? What was your part in this?

SFC GALICIA: I was a maintenance SME, Subject Matter Expert, and also the recovery SME. That's Subject Matter Expert, also.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay. So, you basically did kind of the job you would do in a regular army unit for these vehicles.

SFC GALICIA: Yes.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Okay. Any particular -- without getting into classified stuff, any particular challenges that you guys faced out there, or you faced during this time?

SFC GALICIA: Elevation change.

SGM WATERHOUSE: (laughter) Physical challenge.

SFC GALICIA: It was a different -- it was a different environment over there. I mean I went from green all the way to desert again. Elevation was pretty intense. It was just in the middle of nowhere. You have to drive a good distance about 45 minutes to get anywhere in Twentynine Palms.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, no civilization.

SFC GALICIA: No civilization. So, I thought I was in jail for a little bit. I managed -- the truck is a great product in my own opinion. It's gonna kick some serious, you know, behind when it gets, you know, deployed. And Oshkosh did an awesome job of building it.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, looking at -- I'm kind of

flipping back here -- you came back here. But in the time, you've been here at the ordnance school the past couple years, what are some of the takeaways you have so far from your experience here that you know you'll take forward with you?

SFC GALICIA: You work hard, you'll be rewarded when you least expect it. So, Sergeant Major Elsberry is a prime example. He's very old school. So, he's more of like if you're doing the right thing, he has no issues, you know, making sure that, you know, you get something that's gonna help you progress in your career. If you're just basically holding onto everybody else's, you know, shirt, riding the waves, he's just gonna let you, you know, do your time and get out of here.

But that's one of the greatest things. Like here, is the one place, one duty station, that I could say if I want to warrant right now, I have a CW5 -- well, a retired CW5, Mr. Garrison, right there. You know, I have everything here ordnance wise. As, you know, as far as schools go for us that'll benefit us, it's all here.

So, here is a main spot, like if you want to put that extra overdrive into your career for 91 Bravos, here's the one spot you can do it. And you can either do the wrong thing and get complacent and start leaving work early, your NCOER reflects your work output, or you can do basically an easy job. Cause now, I get here at a certain time, and I leave here at a certain time. I wasn't used to that before.

SGM WATERHOUSE: You got a set schedule.

Yeah. Do more off-duty stuff.

SFC GALICIA: Exactly.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Or you can plan it easier.

So, speaking of your next assignment, how much longer is this assignment for? Is it a set number of months or --

SFC GALICIA: It's supposed to be -- I believe they were talking about moving up to four years. It's three years originally.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Oh, really? Okay.

SFC GALICIA: So, they're planning on making it for four.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, you got another yearish,

I guess.

SFC GALICIA: I little bit over a year.

SGM WATERHOUSE: What are you looking to do next?

SFC GALICIA: When I contacted HRC while I was in Twentynine Palms, I was just wanting to know, what are the options for me? They said that I hadn't been to Korea, so that would probably be my landing spot next, which is not bad. I mean I would gladly take it because I've never been to Korea. Go over there for a year. Experience that for a little bit. And head back, you know, somewhere. I'm not sure where.

But my wife got an awesome job here. Her progression keeps going up every single year, you know, along with her pay, which is good.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Well, if you go to Korea, she could always stay here obviously, and you come back (inaudible).

SFC GALICIA: We also purchased a house here, so. Our second house.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah, so you should -- they used to still do that where you could get the station of

choice coming out. So, you should be able to come right back if that's what you want to do.

Now you had mentioned earlier about going into -- I can't remember -- is it physical therapy or, ah --

SFC GALICIA: Physical therapist. Yes.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Physical therapy. So, are you looking to do -- just get a master's or something (inaudible) you're in --

SFC GALICIA: Master's.

SGM WATERHOUSE: -- and get out at 20 and then go -- okay. Okay. So, that's what you want to do.

SFC GALICIA: That's one of my options. My second option is to come back here to the schoolhouse as a GS11 possibly if everything goes good. Here we have three different levels for instructors. We have your basic, and then you have your senior, and your master instructor.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Right.

SFC GALICIA: I work with two master instructors. So, they're -- I mean how easy can you get it. They're right there next to me. They're GSs. They don't have a lot going on. So, I want to get as much as

I can out of here, leave to the fullest degree that I can, and then once I get to Korea, go into overdrive with college and just, you know.

SGM WATERHOUSE: How much time have you got in now?

SFC GALICIA: I have 14 years' time in service.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah, so you're not that far away.

SFC GALICIA: Yeah.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, you're looking to do 20 no matter what.

SFC GALICIA: Twenty no matter what.

SGM WATERHOUSE: And then take that 50 percent retirement and go -- yeah, you probably could transition right in -- come right here if you enjoy it. Why not.

SFC GALICIA: I do.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, last question. Is there anything that we haven't talked about? Could be anything before, during, future, that you want to discuss before I stop the tape.

SFC GALICIA: Anything that I have to say

about my -- the career is don't be a complainer, just react. Just be, you know, if something gets thrown at you last minute, you know, the last thing you want to do is be in front of your soldiers complaining or be buddy buddies with your soldiers.

You know, they got to understand that there's a rank structure here. You know, it's one thing that I see a lot around here, that a lot of NCOs instead of being that hard guy, they want to be the friendly one, the cool guy. They got to understand, there's a fine line. You can't come up to me talking to me like I'm your friend. You've got to have that discipline.

Everything is all an image now. Cause now everybody's got cell phones. They see you doing the wrong thing, they see you walking around without your headgear, and what do people do nowadays?

SGM WATERHOUSE: You're probably on YouTube.

SFC GALICIA: Exactly. YouTube, soldier doing this. NCO doing that. NCO having DUI. Everything is, you know, whatever perception you put out there for yourself.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Perception is reality for 90

percent of the population.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Now it is. Facebook is everything now for people. So, what I can get out of my career is like listen to your leaders, if you have a good leader. You know, learn as much as you can from them. Be the best at everything. Like don't ever take second place for anything. Even now as a sergeant first class, I don't need to score 300 on my PT test, but I take my PT test with the students.

The last one I took, I scored 300. I beat all of them in the two-mile run. And I was talking so much trash to them afterwards because you're 18, I'm 33. How is it that I can beat you? Well, it's because I work hard. You know, and they can do it too.

I don't just talk them down and beat them down more. I basically tell 'em hey, I beat you. You told me you were gonna beat me. But here I am, man, number one, and you're number two. I always tell 'em --

SGM WATERHOUSE: Next PT test, give it a try.

SFC GALICIA: Yes. I always tell 'em that number 2's the first loser.

SGM WATERHOUSE: That's right (laughter).

SFC GALICIA: So, they take it to heart, and they're like okay, sergeant, next time we're -- okay.

SGM WATERHOUSE: Yeah, because, you know, we talk about challenges throughout today. But, you know, most people like to be challenged. If we're doing physical training and it's just boring and I'm not getting anything out of it, then that's probably not good PT.

SFC GALICIA: Exactly.

SGM WATERHOUSE: You know, so we say challenges, but challenges are supposed to be -- some of them need to be self-inflicted to motivate us.

SFC GALICIA: To motivate. Yes.

SGM WATERHOUSE: So, I think you're doing a good job on that.

All right. Thank you for taking the time out of your schedule to do this interview. I know here at the schoolhouse, it's not like you have off time during the day, so I appreciate you doing this. And I think it will definitely benefit the current NCO corps and future NCO corps out there. Thanks.

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