

Gibb: So what was the leadership training like? Because we hear a lot about some of the basic training and some of the advanced training, but what was the leadership—what did that focus on?

Anderson: Really two forms. You know, you've got the, if you want to call it, the institutional training that all officers or even senior non-commi—or non-commissioned officers, as they progress up through their ranks, through the ranks, you are provided institutional training, on really some of the core elements of leadership. So when you think of—from just the coaching and mentoring, ethics—which, in my mind, really are—is at the core of being a leader—and those elements of leadership that maybe in some respects are quite easily taught in the classroom. The—where—but, to me, where you really gain those leadership skills—and you can only gain it through time—is experience, out with the troops. And so very early on, you're put into positions of leadership. But at a much smaller level, you know? My first command, if you want to call it, or my first leadership position, I was a platoon leader, as an officer. I had about thirty guys that I was responsible for. But I had some very quality non-commissioned officers that, while subordinate to me in rank were vastly superior to me with regards to experience at that time for leadership. I gained a lot of my leadership skills through interaction with them, observing how they conducted themselves. As you progress up through the ranks, you get more responsibility, broader scope of either the type of organization or the number of men and/or women that you're responsible for. And through that progress—those progressive experiences, I think, really give you an opportunity to hone your leadership, your style, if you want to call it. I will say that I—in many respects, I've learned maybe more about leadership from those that I would not want to emulate than from those that I would.

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Gibb: Were there any particular challenges when—especially when you were starting out in leadership positions? [Inaudible] you found challenging?

Anderson: Probably the largest at that time would've been just the age differential. So, you know, a young lieutenant was twenty-four years old. I progressed through the ranks rather quickly my first couple, three ranks. I made captain quite quickly. I found myself in command of an artillery battery as a captain—actually, as a senior first lieutenant, first. I was promoted while I was in command. I had much older men that—with many more years of experience. And so there were times, as I was kind of gaining my competencies as an artillery officer, and that would be in conflict with what maybe those non-commissioned officers thought. And a sign of a good leader is always to make sure to take counsel from your subordinates. And—but then at the end of the day, the decision is yours. And you make that decision, and hopefully, again, with that wise counsel. You move out and accomplish whatever mission or whatever task you were making the decision on. And in some cases back in those days, some of the guys maybe were not as receptive to—if the decision wasn't exactly in line with what they were thinking. And so sometimes there—I don't want to say a force of wills, but sometimes that occurred. And so that was probably one of the earliest challenges for me.

And really was kind of—it's interesting. I just thought about this. That, you know—so