**TRANSCRIBER NAME: Jesse Hall**

**Date: 10Feb**

**Participant #554:**

**Length of the Interview: 23:19**

Interviewer (Code in Blue): CDR Ledford

Participant (Code in black): 554

Alright the time is 0913 on 10Feb, this is CDR Ledford and I’m with respondent 554, originally you were 141 initially you opted out and then you came back in again which is great.. So are you good with me recording this?

Of course

Alright, sooo this kind of gives us just some background about who you are and what led you to this point, so I’ll give you some softball questions initially. This year, what class did you start with?

334

338, oh 334?

Yes that was my original class

Alright, 334, and then what happened in 334?

Uh second week of first phase, went into buds medical, could hardly stand uh had stress fractures in my tibia.

Stress fractures...and then what happened?

Uh I was in PTRR for uh 3, 2 and a half classes, uh classed back up with 337

You were in PTRR for how long do you think you spent?

Fiiiive or six months?

5 or 6 months in PTRR… and then 337..?

337 I went all through all first phase with them, secured hell week, got to second phase and failed for OC3

Failed OC3...and then?

Got a roll out of that and then classed back up with 338

So you started beginning of 338?

337

But you classed up with 338?

From uh second phase?

So you rolled in with them at second phase?

Yes.

Rolled into 338 at second phase?

Yes. and uh went through all second phase with 338, got uh one week left of third phase

Holy cow.

And then got rolled out of there.

Oh my gosh, dude you got full benefit with this experience.

I... this is the full BUD/S experience.

Sick dude...third phase...last week… and then you went through a whole third phase again?

Yes, another 5 mile swim… all that haha

So when did you start 334?

Uh October 2018

October 2018.. Jeez, that is awesome

Yeah its been quite the journey

That is crazy…thats a full BUD/S experience

My original class is graduated…

Yeah?

They are officially Navy SEALs

Well, you’re here

I’m here, that’s all that matters

How many siblings do you have?

I have one sister.

One sister..how old is she?

28.

28..How old are you?

I’m 21...in 3 weeks?

So it’s just the two of you.. Parents, married/divorced?

Uh Married.

Always married?

Yes

How are you with your parents?..close?

Oh yeah uh yeah...if a son could be closer...I think I talk to em every day, at least 3 times a day…if I can

Looking back through your life, what kind of life-changing events shaped you, any big influences?

Big influence..Running, I got into uh competitive running at a s..somewhat early age and dropped all other sports for..for running..I think that is the biggest influence which is its brought a lot of success..and its really boosted my confidence and made me more like strong...I’d say

You said made you headstrong, confidence?

Yeah I would say I was a above average runner for the early parts of my running career and then uhh somethin actually I’d say I looked into, I always wanted to be a SEAL, every since I was little kid I made like guille suits, went out in the backyard and was just like shooting airsoft and everything and then I looked into the program to see what it was about my junior year...when I went into my junior year of high school, and I was like “oh this looks pretty cool” and then ummm I really started putting more effort into my running and then came out my junior year track season with two state titles and uhh a high point trophy from states and it was like awesome. I went to Kokora and SEALFit, a camp that summer, aaand and that was a huge eye-opener..umm and I came...I came from that, and the knowledge I gained from that put into running and I won the following seasons cross country states as well. To this day, I still follow that same mentality I had at that point..

What do you think about your personality and how should we view it being successful at BUD/S?

I always try and keep a good attitude, especially the amount of rolls I’ve had, setbacks...always try and keep a good mentality….its not worth it if you’re not having fun

How bout your background with friends, family, SEALs and the military?

Uh my uncle was Special Forces....my dad state police.

How bout your childhood umm your parents pretty strict but their parenting style? Would you get spankings if you rebelled, timeouts?

Yeah timeouts spankings, uh got my car taken a couple times.

So you’d describe them..strict? Probably standard…

I’d say probably standard

How bout ummm did you have to move around a lot?

No, weee stayed uh, stay more in town all the time...not all the time but..

Teenage years...team sports, ran, track, cross country..

Ran track and cross country

What about the 5 years leading up to BUD/s uh up to starting 334, what did you do, walk me through uh what did you do those 5 years

So uhhh I was in high school uh

Did you go high school to Boot Camp right into BUD/S

I went to uh one year of college

Sooo one year of college...college where?

Uhh University of Alabama

Alright so your one year of college then..

2 weeks later

Just decided it was for you?

Yeah I had uh I was running down the, loved it, but not the running part, I think that running collegiate made fall out of the love of running and…

Really?

Uh went home for christmas leave er christmas break and uh was just thinking...I’m just kinda sittin on the couch, lovin it I’m home with my family, just thinkin there’s so many others...other guy other people who can’t be at home right now. And so I looked into the military more at that during christmas looking into it, and then that following semester talked to a Navy recruiter, and said “hey.. I’m interested, I’m in”

Why the Navy recruiter right why didn’t you go Army like..SF?

Well it’s a funny story, I went into the Navy recruiter and I guess I went a little to early.. They were closed and it started early and my buddy dropped me off so I just kind stuck in the rain. The army recruiter was uh open and he was like “hey wanna sit inside until your buddy comes and picks you up?” and I was like “yeah I’d love to” and I started talking to him and he was like “Do you have any family in? And I said “yeah, uncle’s SF” and he said “You look like you’re pretty fit, do you think you could go SF too?” and I was like “I don’t know my hearts pretty set on uh being a SEAL” and he was like “ohh you’re betraying you uncle right now.” and I was like “I am but I’m doing the cooler job soo…” he was like “Alright you sure I can’t change your mind?” and I said “I’m positive” so my buddy came and picked me up and the next day I went to the Navy recruiter and then talked to him, got everything ready, went two weeks after my first year just right to boot camp.

Why did you umm why did you think about the SEALs to begin with? Like is it a book, is it a movie, is it friends or?

My uncle always told me cool stories, he did a couple of deployments where he was uh with SEALs aaand so that’s that was crazy..crazy stuff he told me, so as I kid I was always just pretending I’m a Navy SEAL, Navy SEAL do all that stuff...I’d jump out of trees pretending I’m jumping out of a plane. Everything I guess that kind of just translated...up until I went to Kokoro

Yep

And SEALFit and I was like this this is what I wanna do.

Would you consider yourself impulsive?

Slightly

Do you have any tattoos?

I do not.

No tattoos..What do you think the most challenging part of BUD/S, hardest day, hardest thing?

Getting rolled. I’d say getting rolled

One in particular was more devastating than the other ones?

Uh this past roll, getting my third phase roll, that was probably the most heart-wrenching one...getting so close and just getting sent all the way back, especially knowing everything you have to redo. That was, the anticipation was devastating.

That is tough. Yeah it’s one thing to get rolled at the beginning yeah of phase

And then you don’t know anything and

Yeah

Going all the way through it’s just like you have so much to look forward to.

What motivated you?

Uh just my buddies… they helped me out so much. They helped me out uh my parents helped me out. And then resetting myself to the point of okay you’ve, you’ve already done it before, you can do it again, and just saying it doesn’t matter the path, just the destination, and so it was like let’s go get it again, I thought that was that was definitely the hardest role, the hardest part I’d say

What about practices, did you do anything during the day? Like mental practices, physical, spiritual practices that helped you stay?

Uhhh I’d say just more meditation, um

And when?

Uh everyday I’d get back, this was uh, I started this in 2nd Phase. Every day I would just, I’d set aside 5 minutes, and I’d put I’d put my headphones on, they’re noise cancelling so they’d just block everything out and I would just sit there and think about what happened that day, anything that could be done and if I could have done just what would have been the better route, just kind of just repeat each day and just have that reset every day

So you you did that pretty consistently 5 minutes after second phase?

Yeah, I’d say I’d say every day, other than weekends I’d I’d say every day

Did you come across a difficult decision at all that you had to make uh something that you really struggled through BUD/S, running classmates out, or turning in a cheating classmate or someone, that you really struggled with?

No, I’d say, well there’s one instance in 37 we had a guy who uh skipped an obstacle on the O-course, and we all talked to him about it, and just said hey like he knew that it was a wrong mistake, did it anyways, we all confronted about it saying like “you know what you did” um but I think that was the furtherst I got with it, was just confronting..

And what happened?

Umm, our officers, they took hold of it and brought it up to the cadre, and he’s not he’s not in the program anymore. I think that was probably the, in relative to those situations I think that was probably the hardest part, because he I liked him a lot, he was a good guy but.. You just can’t do that stuff.

What do you think made you successful going through BUD/S?

That’s a tough question… uhhh a good support system is is huge. You definitely need that. Umm just I’d say that reset every day. Resetting yourself every day, and just kind of tackling the whole day. Tackling each portion of the day I’d say, every meal one meal at a time.

Is there anything about the people who are not here anymore, the quitters, the people who got rolled, what’s different about them?

Umm I’d ss, I keep up with a lot of a lot of the guys that left the program, got kicked out of the program, I keep up them them. And I think they’re still the same guys I went to boot camp with and classed up with and a little more sad, you can tell, but overall they’re still hungry they just…

Is there any difference though between them and the guys that made it?

Mmm no, they’re still goofy guys, still goofy guys, they’re just the ones that didn’t make it, so..

How about uhh [unintelligable]like has this changed you in any way?

Yes, uhh more mature. Umm I definitely take caution with every step I take. And I wouldn’t say it’s like a mixture of kind of tunnel vision and kind of open view, I’d say uh when I’m tackling something I keep that tunnel vision but when you take that step back you still have to take everything in

Anything else you feel like made a difference that I should be asking you?

I think it’s just… keeping your head up. Keeping your head up and remembering why you’re here, why you decided to jump in, how you see yourself in the future, if you can look at yourself in the mirror and still see the same person.

Alright thank you

Thank you

I appreciate it. Have fun going forward it was awesome this was great we’ll stop there

This was cool

Yeah this was great dude