**TRANSCRIBER NAME: ENS Kalafut**

**Date: 1/27/2020**

**Participant #: 633**

Interviewer (Code in blue): Dr. Luning

Participant (Code in black): #633

Dr. Luning:

Um, uh, January 5th, 2022. And I'm here with participant 633. Um, so one more time, if you can tell me, uh, your class. BUD/S class?

633:

Uh, my original class was 350.

Dr. Luning:

350. And you left in first phase and, uh, September?

633:

Correct.

Dr. Luning:

Okay. So tell me a little bit about your childhood.

633:

Um, I have three siblings. I'm the youngest of four. Uh, it was a pretty standard childhood.

Dr. Luning:

Where'd you grow up?

633:

Pennsylvania.

Dr. Luning:

Where in Pennsylvania?

633:

Like right outside of Philly.

Dr. Luning:

Okay.

633:

Um, yeah, it was pretty much of a standard kid's childhood, I guess, just like playing outside and whatnot.

Dr. Luning:

Brothers, sisters?

633:

Yeah. I have one brother and two sisters.

Dr. Luning:

Two sisters. Okay. Um, did you always live in that area or move or...

633:

No, I always lived in that area. Yeah.

Dr. Luning:

Um, sports?

633:

Uh, I wrestled for one year and played football for four.

Dr. Luning:

Okay.

633:

So...

Dr. Luning:

Okay. Um, did you go to college before-

633:

No-

Dr. Luning:

Joining the Navy?

633:

I graduated high school. That's my highest level of education. Yeah.

Dr. Luning:

Okay. And then did you go straight into the Navy or?

633:

Uh, I worked for like construction for like two years and then-

Dr. Luning:

Okay.

633:

Enlisted, so...

Dr. Luning:

Okay, great. Um, how about if you were to describe your personality, like three traits, how would you describe it?

633:

Um, I don't know. I'd say unassuming probably is one. I don't... I don't really know how to describe myself. Sorry. That's not more helpful.

Dr. Luning:

You know, it's, it's funny. It's uh, been interesting 'cause uh, everybody's struggled with that question-

633:

Yeah.

Dr. Luning:

A little bit. (laughs) If, um, if I were to ask that question, uh, I don't know. Um, like or how would your friends describe your personality, do you think?

633:

Oh, probably like... probably goofy, funny. Just like easy going, I'd say.

Dr. Luning:

Yeah.

633:

Yeah.

Dr. Luning:

Always been that way or...

633:

Yeah, for the most part. Yeah.

Dr. Luning:

Um, how about, and I just asked you this, but a little bit more about last five years of your life leading up to coming to BUD/S.

633:

Um, well went to high school, graduated high school, worked construction for about two, realized it's not what I wanted to do and then pretty much enlisted, uh, in like 2020 and then shipped out March 29th, 2021.

Dr. Luning:

Okay.

633:

And then it was all [inaudible 00:02:40] from there.

Dr. Luning:

Okay. Great. With, when you went through, um, 'cause I know they recently changed it. Were you in that 800 group? Um-

633:

No, there was no eight-

Dr. Luning:

That was gone when you...

633:

Yeah, so we had, my division had only like 15 non BUD/S guys.

Dr. Luning:

Okay.

633:

But we weren't in 800 division-

Dr. Luning:

Okay.

633:

So we didn't get like diet bill, but it doesn't really... didn't really matter.

Dr. Luning:

Okay.

633:

I, I would say.

Dr. Luning:

Okay, so you just did like bootcamp?

633:

Yeah.

Dr. Luning:

But, but-

633:

Like straightforward bootcamp.

Dr. Luning:

Okay.

633:

Yeah.

Dr. Luning:

Um, if you think about kinda your life experiences, would you say there's any like life shaping kind of experiences prior to coming to enlisting in the Navy?

633:

Um, I'd say working in like the real world.

Dr. Luning:

Yeah.

633:

And not realizing or realizing that's not what I wanted to do at all. Um, just like not, I just don't like have like a routine or like a set routine doing the same day over and over again. So I'd say that's probably... that's like what pushed me to enlist, I would say, um, yeah.

Dr. Luning:

Um, any, anything you did training wise preparing for BUD/S?

633:

Uh, besides like the normal?

Dr. Luning:

Yeah.

633:

Not, not in particular. No, I didn't do anything like crazy.

Dr. Luning:

Um, how about kind of this, the experience of being in construction and then kind of realizing it's not, that's not like the life you wanna live. How do you think that impacted kind of your just mindset and training in general?

633:

Um, it, I think it impacted positively because like every time I was in, uh, first phase and like we were in past the construction guys, I knew like that's not what I wanted to do.

Dr. Luning:

Yeah.

633:

Um, yeah. But other than that, just like working long days, just I think working, like having... you getting used to like working long days transferred well to BUD/S. Um-

Dr. Luning:

Yeah.

633:

But other than that, I don't know.

Dr. Luning:

Mm-hmm (affirmative) what about, I mean, I know you kind of talked about why you wanted to join the Navy, but any other reasons, like Navy and BUD/S in particular that you, drove you to do that?

633:

Um, not, not in particular. Uh, I just wanted to do something like out of the norm and like really like challenge myself. Uh I'd say it wasn't like a higher calling from like God. Like a lot of people have, um, I'd say, I don't know. I just called my friends, went through and made it so figured I would do it. And...

Dr. Luning:

Were these people you knew from high school or from your town?

633:

Um, from, well, one from my town, well I was thinking about doing it and then my brother's or my buddy's brother did it and he didn't make it.

Dr. Luning:

Yeah.

633:

But I, but like once, once I saw he made it like to BUD/S I can do it. Um, and then, when I, I knew a guy from [Dep 00:05:44] who made it, so that was weird. I was talking to him about it. So yeah.

Dr. Luning:

So when you joined the Navy was, um, coming to BUD/S something you, you wanted then, or was it like-

633:

Yeah.

Dr. Luning:

That was the goal?

633:

Yeah, that was... so I specifically joined the Navy for that. I didn't join for anything else. So...

Dr. Luning:

Anybody in your family military?

633:

My stepdad was just a chief-

Dr. Luning:

Okay.

633:

Uh, in the Navy, but other than that, no, it's just like, it was a spur, like, yeah.

Dr. Luning:

How about what motivates you on a daily basis?

633:

Um, well training for BUD/S, it was like for BUD/S, I would say. Not like not to let the people who like supported me down. But, uh, other than that, like now, I mean there's nothing really to train for. So-

Dr. Luning:

No.

633:

Yeah, the motivation's a little gone, but uh, when, yeah, when I was like in BUD/S, uh, not letting my family down, so pretty much. Yeah.

Dr. Luning:

Um, anything you did training-wise before BUD/S, um, to get ready?

633:

Uh, I swam, swam a lot.

Dr. Luning:

Yeah.

633:

I think that helped, uh, just be, come from the water and then ran a lot. I would've ran twice as much as I would've lifted. Uh, 'cause it's not like a strong man's game.

Dr. Luning:

Yeah.

633:

So yeah.

Dr. Luning:

How about um, if you could describe your experience here at BUD/S, what was that like?

633:

Uh, it was pretty, it was the real deal. Uh, it was pretty cool, I'd say. Just to be in it. Um, you don't realize, realize how good you have it when you're in it-

Dr. Luning:

Yeah.

633:

I'd say, uh, and it's like, it sucks, but it's like the purpose you're fulfilling your purpose and uh, yeah.

Dr. Luning:

Was it, um, tell me about first phase. When, when did you leave during first phase?

633:

Uh, I got out the third day Hell week.

Dr. Luning:

Okay.

633:

So, um, yeah, my, I was pretty, I mean, everyone was pretty tired-

Dr. Luning:

Yeah.

633:

By that week. Uh, but then I was doing fine for like the first couple of days and all of a sudden, like my legs just gave out. And I just couldn't keep up. And basically I rationalized with myself that I couldn't do it, which I like could have, which is like super frustrating.

Dr. Luning:

Yeah.

633:

But, um, I'd say I just like was like, didn't wanna let my boat crew down and didn't want to hurt good guys-

Dr. Luning:

[crosstalk 00:08:09] Yeah.

633:

The boat. So that's pretty much what brought me to it. Yeah.

Dr. Luning:

Was there pressure from your boat crew?

633:

Um, not really. It was, I was doing... yeah, like I said, I was doing fine. We were all doing good. And then, um, it was just like a switch flipped and my legs just started to give out and then pretty much that was it from there. So-

Dr. Luning:

Yeah. So, um, tell me about, and, and it could be the decision to leave or it could be something else, a difficult decision you made during training at BUD/S and kinda walk me through what was happening when you made that decision?

633:

Uh, well, when I quit?

Dr. Luning:

Then, it, it can be, or can be something else.

633:

Uh, I'd say the whole part was difficult.

Dr. Luning:

Yeah.

633:

Um, but that was probably the most, I think the most difficult decisions came in like week one.

Dr. Luning:

Yeah.

633:

'Cause like you're still getting... your body's still shocked, but I mean, week two and week three, it was nothing you didn't do in week one. So it just kind of sucked. Um, I'd say week one was like, when I had the most thoughts of quitting.

Dr. Luning:

Yeah.

633:

Yeah. And then you just see everyone else going and you realize you don't wanna do that. So you just keep going.

Dr. Luning:

Yeah. Um, is there anything you woulda done differently in BUD/S?

633:

Uh, I would've not quit it. Yeah. But other than that, I mean, I would've, I mean, training up, I would've rope climbed or something like that. Like got my muscles used to that 'cause I sucked at the O course.

Dr. Luning:

Yeah.

633:

Um, and then probably would've rucked a little more. But other than that, I mean, you can't really train for it, I'd say.

Dr. Luning:

If you, um, could or are you going to try to come back?

633:

Yeah. Yeah. I think that's, that's like my goal right now. So...

Dr. Luning:

Yeah. Have you been given what other options you have-

633:

Uh-

Dr. Luning:

Leaving here yet?

633:

Yeah, so I, I leave actually in a couple, in a couple weeks for Pensacola for like air rescue school.

Dr. Luning:

Okay.

633:

Which is like, I mean, I know my, uh, couple of instructors here were air guys who quit their first time and came back so-

Dr. Luning:

Great.

633:

It's, it gives you hope. Yeah.

Dr. Luning:

Awesome. Awesome.

633:

Yeah, but I mean, yeah, I think it didn't like, I mean, a lot of people get like think they got screwed over by like the instructor staff or it's like not really true. I mean, it's pretty much all voluntary, so...

Dr. Luning:

Yeah.

633:

Yeah.

Dr. Luning:

How about any practices, physical, mental, spiritual that you do to push through challenges? Or you used to push through, especially that first week at BUD/S that you're talking about?

633:

Um, nothing in particular. I mean, it's just, like I said, I was just like reminding myself why I was here and my buddy, uh, who made it through, I was like talking to him, uh, like the weekend before we classed up. And he was just like basically saying like, I was in better shape than him. So he was like, "You can obviously do it if I did." And I mean, it also motivates you that like all your, you make friends in bootcamp and then you go through prep with those guys you made in bootcamp. So then you see those guys and you just want to hang around them. And so you like feed off their energy.

Dr. Luning:

Yeah.

633:

Yeah. That's it.

Dr. Luning:

How did this experience change you as a person, if at all?

633:

Uh, I think it makes you realize that you can do a lot more than you think.

Dr. Luning:

Yeah.

633:

Um, like especially tired-wise. Like I think when I wake up now, even if I wake up a little early, I'm tired, but it's not like anything compared to how tired you are in first phase. Yeah.

Dr. Luning:

Yeah.

633:

I'd say.

Dr. Luning:

Um, anything I didn't ask that you think is worth sharing?

633:

Um, I'd say like what, how, um, like what events 'cause like there's like a bunch of events you have to pass to get in the hell week. I'd say what events you do struggle with and if you, if you were liked by your class.

Dr. Luning:

Yeah.

633:

That's probably a good one. Yes.

Dr. Luning:

So I'll ask you those questions. What events did you struggle with?

633:

Uh, what the O course. Yeah.

Dr. Luning:

Okay.

633:

But other than that, I mean I passed all my runs, and swims.

Dr. Luning:

Oh. How about the, what if you were liked by your class?

633:

Uh, yeah, I think, I mean, you're obviously not gonna get liked by everyone. It's just like, in, no matter what profession you're in, there's always gonna be-

Dr. Luning:

Yeah.

633:

People who dislike you. But I'd say there's, I'd say my class like me for the most part. I mean, yeah, there was a, you could definitely tell the people who weren't liked by the class because-

Dr. Luning:

Yeah.

633:

The instructor cadre would like make an incentive. They'd be like, "If you guys get one person to quit, we'll like stop its evolution." And then they all start yelling out names. My name was never called.

Dr. Luning:

Yeah.

633:

Even when it got down, 'cause like in like third, in the third week we had like 50 guys left or like close to 60 I'd say. And like they're all pretty solid dudes, but I mean you just want the evolution to stop. But I'd say yeah, I'd say my, my class liked me for the most part. Yeah.

Dr. Luning:

What would you say... Um, 'cause several people we've talked to have been, uh, 351. Um, and so you're a first person I've talked to that's been class 350. What would you say the d- dynamic of that whole group was like?

633:

Um, for 350?

Dr. Luning:

Yeah.

633:

So I think we played, they call it kangaroo court. Uh it's basically, if you, if you're not like performing, they just... they'll just eat you alive, like the instructors said they loved our class 'cause they didn't have to incite any like chaos, we did on our own.

Dr. Luning:

Yeah.

633:

Um, like if you're not pulling your weight, like multiple people got like pulled out and like thrown to the ground by their own classmates. Um, which I didn't mind. I thought, I thought it was pretty cool 'cause I mean, it keeps you accountable too. Um, but I mean, each class is different. I'd also say for the question part, if you were a winter or summer class. 'Cause-

Dr. Luning:

Yeah.

633:

That's a huge difference. Um, 'cause 350 was a summer class and we just ran all the time and 351 barely ran. They just went in the surf. So...

Dr. Luning:

Yeah.

633:

It's completely different.

Dr. Luning:

Um, why, I guess was it a hot summer? Why'd they make you run so much?

633:

Uh, 'cause the water is warm.

Dr. Luning:

So they, they can't-

633:

While it's war- it's warm, yeah.

Dr. Luning:

They can't push you much (laughs).

633:

Yeah. So I mean they, they surf tortured us like three times that were scheduled. It was uh, like really early on like four or five.

Dr. Luning:

Yeah.

633:

Before the sun came up. But then on the third week they did it as like a reward on like 'cause the day it was so hot out.

Dr. Luning:

Yeah. Uh-

633:

But um, yeah, for the remediations in 351, I was starting to call my buddies. They just said the- they would lay in the surf.

Dr. Luning:

Yeah.

633:

So-

Dr. Luning:

That's cool. Makes sense. Um, well great. I'm gonna turn these off.

633:

All right-