**TRANSCRIBER NAME: ENS Kalafut**

**Date: 1/27/2020**

**Participant #: 638**

Interviewer (Code in blue): Dr. Luning

Participant (Code in black): #638

Dr. Luning:

This is Celeste Raver Luning. It is January 5th, 2022, and I'm with Participant 633, or 638. Um, so first question is, uh, what was your last BUDs class?

638:

347.

Dr. Luning:

347. So you've been here for a while?

638:

Yeah, my first BUDs class was 343.

Dr. Luning:

Okay.

638:

So, a long time. (laughs).

Dr. Luning:

So walk me through your story then a little bit, if you were here with 343 and-

638:

Okay, so got out here. We were supposed to get out in April of 2020. We got stuck in Chicago for an extra two months because of the COVID shutdown.

Dr. Luning:

Yeah.

638:

Finally got out here in June, and then my first BUD class... It was, like, the first COVID class, so they didn't let us all class up. Um, so I got admin rolled to 344. In 344, I tore my achilles. I was in PTR until January of 2021, and then I classed up with 347 in their BO first phase, and then I got, uh, medically/performance dropped in the third week of 347.

Dr. Luning:

Okay. So, uh, phase one-

638:

Yeah, third week.

Dr. Luning:

Um, uh, 347 was your first time out of BO-

638:

No, 344. I was, I was in first phase when I tore-

Dr. Luning:

First phase.

638:

Yeah, I tore my Achilles tendon.

Dr. Luning:

Okay, and that's when you tore your Achilles.

638:

Yeah.

Dr. Luning:

Okay. When did you tear your Achilles, like, what point in 344?

638:

Uh, it was the end of the first week.

Dr. Luning:

Okay.

638:

Yeah. I think it was August of that... Yeah.

Dr. Luning:

Okay.

638:

August.

Dr. Luning:

And then, um, and then it took you to 347 to recover?

638:

Yeah.

Dr. Luning:

Before you could-

638:

Yeah.

Dr. Luning:

-get back in? Okay.

638:

I denied surgery because they were gonna drop me from the program, and then probably medically separate me.

Dr. Luning:

Okay.

638:

So I did the rehab for six to eight months, I think it was.

Dr. Luning:

Okay.

638:

Yeah, it was right around there.

Dr. Luning:

And then how long ago was it, um, that you, uh, that you, um, were, were medical/performance dropped from 347?

638:

Uh, that was in March of 2021.

Dr. Luning:

Okay.

638:

Yeah.

Dr. Luning:

So what's had you here so long?

638:

Uh, I have two herniated discs in my neck and, uh... I think, I forget the name of it but there's something else. Like, like a protrusion in my neck that's basically, like... When you're LD, they can't transfer you out.

Dr. Luning:

Got it.

638:

Um, so it took me a while to get to physical therapy, just through, like, medical s- situations and then, um, I just got my first specialist appointment, like, this last week.

Dr. Luning:

Okay.

638:

Like, when I was on leave, they called and set up my first actual appointment.

Dr. Luning:

Okay.

638:

With, like, someone other than the physical therapy.

Dr. Luning:

Got it.

638:

Yeah.

Dr. Luning:

So you're here a little longer until you can get rehab in.

638:

Yeah, so they're putting me... They're gonna start me on, like, a [Lindu 00:03:12] cycle and then-

Dr. Luning:

Got it.

638:

-do, like, the six months on them. Do it, and then hopefully after that I can get out, and, like-

Dr. Luning:

Yeah.

638:

- go do something else but...

Dr. Luning:

Okay.

638:

Yeah.

Dr. Luning:

That makes sense. So tell me a little bit about your childhood.

638:

Um-

Dr. Luning:

Brothers, sisters?

638:

I have one older brother. I was born in Rhode Island. We moved to Arizona when I was about seven, seven and a half years old, and we lived there ever since. Um, single mom. Uh, just, it was me and my brother, my mom and then my, uh, grandmother on my mom's side out in Arizona. Um, parents got divorced two years after we moved to Arizona, so, like, when I was about nine, and then it was, like, a shitty divorce.

638:

So we were homeless for a little bit, and then, like, she picked herself, my mom picked herself back up. Like, she's, uh, she's a NICU nurse. So she started working, like, two jobs. Got us back on our feet, and then, uh, I have a stepdad now. He was with us for, like, since I was maybe 11.

Dr. Luning:

Yeah.

638:

A year or two years after they got divorced. They're not, like, completely, like, legally married, but they've been together, like, the whole time so, yeah. And then my brother. He went off to college. He's two years older than me, so he went to college when I was a junior in high school. Uh, he graduated from Oklahoma State University. Um, he's air, he's in the Air Force EOD pipeline now.

Dr. Luning:

Okay.

638:

Um, my mom was an officer in the Air Force before we were born, but...

Dr. Luning:

Okay.

638:

Yeah, so I think that's why he wanted to go down that path.

Dr. Luning:

Okay.

638:

Yeah.

Dr. Luning:

So, uh, is EOD in the Air Force same as the Navy?

638:

No, it's, it's different, so...

Dr. Luning:

What's it stand for?

638:

It... Well, it's the same job. Explosives Ordinance Disposal.

Dr. Luning:

Okay.

638:

But, um, they just don't do anything with, like, the water or...

Dr. Luning:

Yeah, okay.

638:

Yeah.

Dr. Luning:

Makes sense.

638:

They're not, like, too on operator type stuff.

Dr. Luning:

Okay.

638:

But yeah.

Dr. Luning:

How long has he been in the Air Force?

638:

He's been in, like, a year and a half now. Um, he was in a different selection course before then, but got dropped after, like, four months there. He got COVID right before their version of, like, Hell Week, and then...

Dr. Luning:

Yeah.

638:

It was, like, peak COVID during that time, so they just dropped him.

Dr. Luning:

Yeah.

638:

Um, yeah.

Dr. Luning:

Okay. So, um, tell me a little bit about... If you don't mind, being, being homeless?

638:

Um...

Dr. Luning:

How old were you?

638:

I was I think nine and a half, 10 ish. So it was, like... I call it homeless because it wasn't like we were necessarily, like, sleeping on the street.

Dr. Luning:

Yeah.

638:

But it was, like, we didn't have... Like, so when the whole divorce happened, dad left. Like, we had to go... He basically... He was, like, lying about having his job. He got laid off in, like, the recession, and then lied about it, had been opening up credit cards, all this different stuff in, like, the kid's names, my mom's name, and using those as, like, his paychecks. So, like, after everything, like, after he left, like, we had to foreclose the house. Like, bankrupt, all that.

638:

So then we... Me and my brother, like... My mom did everything she could to keep us in school and, like, in sports, but she was having to do... She works the night shift, and since she got her second job, it was, like, six nights a week. She was working 12 hour shifts, night shifts.

Dr. Luning:

Yeah.

638:

So, like, we would hop from, like, my grandma's house to friend's houses to, like, different people's, like, couches, stuff like that. So it was, like... We had, like, a close knit, like, friend group, like, family friend group. So, uh, we all were, like, about the same age, so they would just let us, like, stay there. Like, bounce around, and then maybe, like, six months to a year after, um, we got a new house. We didn't, like... My mom didn't buy it or anything. But we started renting a house near-

Dr. Luning:

Yeah.

638:

-our middle school, and, like, after that, it was, like... It got, got better from there.

Dr. Luning:

Yeah.

638:

'Cause she was able to get her feet back on the ground, and then met my stepdad and he helped out a lot. So yeah. Homeless, like... I, I don't know if that's the right word, but basically.

Dr. Luning:

Well, that makes sense.

638:

Yeah, I guess it, I guess it qualifies. But not, like, sleeping on the sidewalk type stuff.

Dr. Luning:

Yeah, but still not easy to (laughs) not easy at all.

638:

Yeah, not easy.

Dr. Luning:

What about sports? Did you do any sports?

638:

Yeah, I played hockey since I was, like, four years old up until I was 17, 18, and then stopped playing. I, I had, like, a few injuries and just was focusing on school at the time. I went to college for a year, and then I was so burnt out from, like, high school. I did IB. I don't know if you know what that is. It's, like, International

Dr. Luning:

[inaudible 00:08:19]

638:

[inaudible 00:08:20], yeah. That was, like... So I was, like, on, I was an, an intense high school schedule, and then, like, it didn't really translate to, like, college credits 'cause only certain schools in the country accept those.

Dr. Luning:

Yeah.

638:

Like, mainly only, like, schools in Florida and, like, some other random schools. But, um, yeah. I think I got really burnt out from high school, working, playing sports. So when I went to college, it was, like... I did well in my first year. I kept my scholarships. I kept everything. I was just kind of burnt out, and knew I wanted to come here, and I think because my mom was an officer, she wanted me to, like, sort of stay in, in, and go through that route to come here. But I, I wanted to give myself a break from, from school, and being in that sort of situation.

Dr. Luning:

Yeah.

638:

So I decided to leave school, and then enlist, and then I enlisted... I joined December 2019.

Dr. Luning:

Okay.

638:

But I had been in, like, the cadet program for four or five months before that just waiting to leave.

Dr. Luning:

What, um... I'll come back to that about the Navy. But... What was I gonna ask you? How long were you in college?

638:

I was in for a year.

Dr. Luning:

And where did you go?

638:

University of Arizona.

Dr. Luning:

Okay.

638:

Yeah. I, I'd gotten into a lot of schools, like, outside of there. I had good test scores and stuff like that, but, um, like... My mom, we had, like, a college fund and stuff, but I didn't wanna, like, get into a lot of serious debt, and U of A gave me basically a full run. I just had to pay for, like, the dorm.

Dr. Luning:

Yeah.

638:

So it was a lot easier for me, 'cause then I didn't even have to pull out of, like, the college fund. I could just use my money from working and stuff like that. Yeah.

Dr. Luning:

How about if you were to describe your personality in three traits? How would you describe it?

638:

Um, I would say quiet until, like... Quiet, in a sense of, like, if I don't know, like, a person. Like, I'm quiet, but, like, with my good friends, I'm really outgoing with them, and, um... I would say, like, like, I try to be uplifting, I guess, to other people. Um, and I guess I don't, I don't... I try not to take everything, like, very serious. So, like, I don't know what the word for that would be, but...

Dr. Luning:

Okay.

638:

Yeah.

Dr. Luning:

Yeah.

638:

[inaudible 00:11:07]

Dr. Luning:

It makes sense.

638:

Yeah.

Dr. Luning:

So you've talked a little bit about it, but if you were to, like, talk about the last five years of your life, prior to enlisting in the Navy, what were they like? What, what'd you do?

638:

Um, so right when I could get a job, I started working. So, like, 15 and a half.

Dr. Luning:

Okay.

638:

I think was the rule in Arizona, so I've had two jobs ever since then. Going to school, playing sports. Um, it was a lot, but I just... I wanted to do that to, like, help my mom out, I guess, 'cause she helped me and my brother when s- like, stuff was really rough. So I would, like, take some of my paychecks, and give it to her. And she never, like, would accept it. So I'd just, like, put cash in her drawers, and stuff like that.

638:

Um, I, like, I would say I, like, stretched myself very, like, thin, over those, like, five years, I guess. Like, I was doing a lot of stuff, like, at once. Like, two jobs, hanging out with friends. Like, tough classes, like, studying for college, stuff like that. So, like... But I tried to do everything, just because, like, I don't know. I guess I never really liked being at home, I guess, when I was, like, that age. Like, now, I like going home, doing... Just hanging out, relaxing. But, like, I was a kid, just wanted to get out of the house.

Dr. Luning:

Yeah.

638:

Just do everything besides sit at home, I guess. So I did a lot of stuff I guess, yeah.

Dr. Luning:

Wh- I never asked. Where in Arizona?

638:

Uh, [inaudible 00:12:40]. It's, like, West Phoenix. Near... Sort of near, like, the Cardinal City. Like, in the Valley.

Dr. Luning:

Okay.

638:

Yeah.

Dr. Luning:

So close to Phoenix then?

638:

Yeah. 20, 20 minutes away, 25 minutes.

Dr. Luning:

Okay.

638:

Yeah, yeah.

Dr. Luning:

Um, if you were to think about your experiences, uh, prior to coming to BUDs.

638:

Uh-huh (affirmative)

Dr. Luning:

How would, would you say there's any, like, life shaping or kind of crucible type of experiences?

638:

Um, I think probably, like, the whole, like, divorce, like, single mom thing. Like, that sort of, like, shaped, like, me and my brother, I guess a lot. Like, we matured really, like, young. Like, we would, like, have to, like... Some nights, like, when we got the, the first house. Like, we would, we were, like, 10, 12. Uh, just staying at home by ourselves, cooking ourselves dinner and stuff like that, because my mom had to work so much to try to keep the lights on and stuff like that.

638:

So... And I, I think at that age, like, it was, like, you were old enough to know what's happening with, like, the whole family situation. So, like, we matured really young, I guess. So, like, by the time we were in high school, like, it, it wasn't like that was, like, our first sense of freedom, because we had already been doing, like, our own thing for long. It wasn't like our mom was, like, hands off at all. She was a great mom, but it was just, like, we saw a lot, and, like, knew a lot about stuff that, like, I guess an eight year old isn't used to knowing about, so.

Dr. Luning:

Yeah.

638:

Um, I think we matured really young, so I think that was, like, a shaping moment for us, at least.

Dr. Luning:

How, um, how did those experiences impact kind of your training and prep to come here?

638:

Um, I think, like, for me at least, like... Like, I knew, like... In my head, I would tell myself, like, um, my dad, he quit on us, and I ref- Like, I put that into my mind as, like, I can't quit here, 'cause that's like quitting on my family and I wouldn't do that. So it was, like, I use those experiences to, like, push me, and it wasn't like I was doing it to get back at him, but it was, like, a motivation to not be like him at all, and it, it's not the same thing, but I had convinced myself in my head it was. So that's what I think pushed me, like, when times would get tough. I would be like, "No. Like, I'm not gonna do that."

638:

So, and then I think, like, the thing with me, like... When I was in high school and college, like, I was doing a lot of weightlifting, like, aside from hockey and, like, I wasn't in the best, like, cardio shape, and right when I decided to leave school, I, like, decided. I was like, "I'm gonna come to BUDs. I'm gonna do this, this this." Like, at that time, like, that's when I was, like, 200 pounds. Like, really out of shape, just, like, lifting weights, like, damn stupid stuff in college. Like, drinking, eating like crap. So I, like, changed. Like, I got home from college May of 2019 probably like 200, 205 pounds, and then by the end of August, I was down to, like, 165 pounds. Like, stopped weightlifting and just doing, like, calisthenic stuff. Uh, running, swimming. Like, I was doing hot yoga to try and, like stay loose, try to, like, not get hurt before I came out here, and I think those few months, like, helped me the most, in the sense of, like, training. Not just being, like, physically, like, fit.

Dr. Luning:

Yeah.

638:

But, like, we had a good [inaudible 00:16:18] mentor before we came out here. He, he would make us work out, like, every single morning at four or five AM, um, and I know a lot of guys, like, they just had one PST a month, and it was, like hands off. But for us with him, it was, like, if you didn't show up to a workout for a reason that wasn't, like, you had to go to work that day.

Dr. Luning:

Yeah.

638:

Then he would pull your contract. So those few months, like, in depth helped a lot because it sort of got us used to, like... Got me used to, like, working out, and then with him, like, working out every day in the morning and doing my own stuff. Like, after my shift, 'cause I worked at the gym that I worked out at.

Dr. Luning:

Yeah.

638:

So I would, like, go to work, go home, eat some food, go back to my work and workout, go back to my house, sleep. Do the same thing. Like, it was, it was a good repetitive process 'cause that's, like, what training is. It's, like, just getting used to doing similar things for 15 hours a day and, like, for me at least, I never felt like there was one thing here that was so difficult that, like, would make you wanna quit. Like, the most, the thing I saw a lot here was people weren't used to, like, having to do a similar thing every single, like, hour of the day, or repeat... Like, repeat the same thing very often.

Dr. Luning:

Oh.

638:

That's what gets draining. So I think that sorta helped me, and the fact that I was, like, sort of doing the same thing in high school too. Like, stretched really thin, and... But still doing a lot of stuff all throughout the day. I think that's another thing that probably helped me a lot while I was here.

Dr. Luning:

Um, how... We talked about it a little bit, but this is the question I was gonna come back to. What, what about your background that made you decide to join the Navy?

638:

Um, in... When we lived in Rhode Island, we lived right near the naval, like, OCS base, and, um, just as a kid, I would see, like, some of the, like, people just r- running down the beach or running, and I would talk to mom about it, and she was like, "Oh, that's OCS," and then she just sorta, like, taught me, like, from a young age, like, what the military was, what, um... Like, all this different stuff, and I had a friend in high school that... He had wanted to come out here to BUDs. I don't know if he ever, like, did. I haven't reached out in a while. But probably when I was, like, 14, I, like, figured out what BUDs was, or, like, what this training was, and I always, like... I never knew what I really wanted to do. Like, I thought I wanted to go to college. But I was, like, even if I get a degree, I don't know what I want to do, and I started thinking more and more about it, and it was like... This is what I wanted to do.

638:

So I think, like, learning about the military as a young kid, and then wanting to do something that, like, I felt like I was physically able enough to do. I felt like I should at least go and try, like, and not, like, later down the road, like, regret never coming out here. Not knowing if I would've made it or would've got hurt or, you know? So I think that's what... I felt, like, a sense that I was able to get the physical scores I could, and I had, like, known about it and knew what the job was, and, like, all that sort of stuff. Um... I, I think that's what pushed me to come out here, and, like, one of my best friend's godfathers is... Uh, he's on a team out here, and I had, like, met him a few times. Like, I just talked to him a lot about it.

Dr. Luning:

Yeah.

638:

And sorta like that, and sorta pushed me into coming out and doing that.

Dr. Luning:

So was Air Force ever a consideration, since that was what your mom was?

638:

Uh, I... I don't know. I didn't... Before I, like, joined, I didn't really know much about, like, their, like, different communities. Like, PJ and CCT, like all that stuff. Like, their, their special forces jobs. So I didn't really look into it. I... I don't know. I never, I never really thought about it until after I joined. Like, my brother, he joined and he'll, like, talk to me about the Air Force and all this (laughs) all the stuff [inaudible 00:20:43]. I'm like, "Yeah, that sounds nice." (laughs)

Dr. Luning:

Yeah.

638:

So I don't know. So that's my thing right now. It's, like, I don't know once I'm healthy if I wanna come back, or go back to school or go to a different program, like, in the Air Force type of thing.

Dr. Luning:

Yeah.

638:

So yeah.

Dr. Luning:

How about what motivates you on a daily basis?

638:

Um, I would say probably my family. My mom and her mom probably, like, the most.

Dr. Luning:

Yeah?

638:

Um, my grandma on my mom's side. She has had, like, stage four cancer twice. Beat it both times around. Like, gone through a lot. She migrated here when she was 16 from Germany. So she's had, like, a lot of, like, stuff go on in her life, but she still is, like, probably the happiest person I've ever met in my life, so.

Dr. Luning:

Yeah.

638:

Just seeing her and, like, being raised by her and my mom, like, who have both gone through, like, more than, like, most people should have to, like, and then they're still, like, very positive people and, like, very driven and work hard at what they do. Like, I think that's really what drives, drives me the most, I guess.

Dr. Luning:

Yeah.

638:

Yeah.

Dr. Luning:

Uh, if you don't mind, would you describe your experience here at BUDs? I know we talked a little bit at the beginning, but just...

638:

Yeah. Um, in what sense? Like, did I, did I enjoy it, or?

Dr. Luning:

Well, really any sense. I mean, what, whatever kinda comes to mind when I ask that question, I guess.

638:

Um, fun but shitty at the same time.

Dr. Luning:

(laughs)

638:

(laughs) It's like, it's the most fun... The way I would describe it is it's the most fun that you never wanna have again, I guess.

Dr. Luning:

(laughs)

638:

Like, for me at least, because I got rolled so on... Like, I had a lot of really close knit, like, friends that also got hurt and also got rolled. Like, by the third week of 47, like, 47 was a really hard class-

Dr. Luning:

Yeah.

638:

Compared to my first class. It was the coldest class of the year. Our proctor was a lot more strict, a lot, like, harsher. By the third week, there was, like, 36 of us, and typically, like... My first class... My first two classes, like, finished Hell Week with over 70.

Dr. Luning:

Yeah.

638:

So it was, like, we were already, like... After I got pulled and, like, the other guys got pulled, there was, like, 28 guys before Hell Week.

Dr. Luning:

Oh.

638:

So it was, like, by that third week, it was almost all rollbacks. Like, I would say, like, of, like, the 35 guys, probably, like, 20+ rollbacks, and then, like, five or six, like, new guys.

Dr. Luning:

Yeah.

638:

So, like, all the rollbacks were, like, really close knit, like, had known each other at that point for, like, over a year and a half. So I think that was, like, what made it fun. But it was... It sucked at the same time.

Dr. Luning:

Yeah. (Laughs)

638:

It's like something you never wanna have to do twice, and then having to do it twice is never fun. But you... As a rollback, you feel a lot more prepared.

Dr. Luning:

Yeah.

638:

Even if, like... Not even, like, the physical shape side of it. Just, like, being used to, like, all the little things they'll say or do and, like, you can sort of realize, like, how much of a game it is to them.

Dr. Luning:

Yup.

638:

Like, it's not, it's not like they truly hate you or tru- Like, I think that's what messes with some guys a lot. Like, they feel like someone, like, genuinely, like, hates them. Like, if an instructor is yelling at them, it's like... They might not like you, but it's not like they're trying to, like... It's not like they are doing it for any other purpose. It's, like, just to get into your head, I guess.

Dr. Luning:

With, with that, um, uh... Do you think you realized that because you got rolled back, or did you realize that from the get-go?

638:

I think I realized it from the get-go, but also being, like, rolled for as long as I did, for, like, over six months. Like, it just... Interacting with different instructors. Like, what their roles in PTR are, like, first phase or, like, talking to some of the first phase instructors when you're not in first phase. Like, I think it sorta, like, helps to show you that they're just a normal dude. Like, it's not...

638:

People, I think, in their head before they'll come here, they're like, like, they put this image of an instructor of, like, this, like, huge, like, dickhead who's gonna make you hate your life. Like, and it's, it's just not really how it is. Like, yeah. They might make your life suck for three or four or five weeks. But it's not like they're a shitty human being.

Dr. Luning:

Yeah.

638:

That's just trying to ruin your life. It's... So I think I knew it from the start, and then just being rolled, it helped me, like, realize even more how, how much of it is, like, almost, like, scripted to them. Like, they know what they're gonna say when they show up in the morning.

Dr. Luning:

Yeah.

638:

Like, some stuff might pop up that, like, peaks their attention. But it's, like, they know they're good at their job. Like, it's... Yeah. I, I just viewed it as their, like... I guess that's what I viewed it as. It's them just doing their job, so.

Dr. Luning:

Well.

638:

Yeah.

Dr. Luning:

Um, I- if... I'm just gonna ask you one question about that. Um, with the rollback, uh, just to make sure I'm accurate. If you get rolled before Hell Week, you start at the beginning, right?

638:

Yeah.

Dr. Luning:

Phase one.

638:

Yeah.

Dr. Luning:

And if it's after then you roll back [crosstalk 00:26:21]

638:

Yeah, exactly.

Dr. Luning:

Okay. So when you got rolled in 344, you started the phase one again.

638:

Yeah.

Dr. Luning:

In 347.

638:

Yeah, so you, you redo everything. Like, BO all the way through. So I think it's a little different now because prep is out here now. I don't know exactly how it works for them now.

Dr. Luning:

Yeah.

638:

But the way it was for us is if you were pre Hell Week, you got sent to PTRR, and then once you were [inaudible 00:26:46], you had to, like, wait to class up until the next class, and then join their BO, do all their BO, finish, like, those three or four weeks, and then you would start [inaudible 00:26:58] again.

Dr. Luning:

Okay.

638:

Yeah.

Dr. Luning:

Okay, I didn't realize you had to do BO again too.

638:

Yeah.

Dr. Luning:

Okay.

638:

Yeah.

Dr. Luning:

Um, if, if you tell me a time you had to make a difficult decision when you're in training at BUDs, could you talk me through that decision?

638:

Um, yeah. So I think, like, the most difficult decision for me was, like, wh- when I tore my Achilles, it was on a Thursday of the first week, and I, like, I knew it was torn. I, I've, like, broken my ankle before. I've messed up, like, my feet before, like, and I knew it wasn't that, and when I... It was on our way to the O-course before land portage, which is when you have the boat on your head and you're doing the running, all that stuff.

638:

So I got there and I, I knew it was really messed up. I went to the corpsman, and, and, like, told her what happened. She had told me, like, took off my boot, and she was like, "Oh, you just rolled your ankle," and I was like... And she sent me back to the class and, like, I was, like, "Holy shit. Like, they, they think I just rolled my ankle," and I've, I've rolled my ankle plenty of times in hockey or football or different sports, and I knew that wasn't that. But I was... I think, in that moment, I was like, "Do..."

638:

That was the only time where I was, like, "Do I quit 'cause of how bad it hurts or, like, do I just get through this O-course and land portage and then go at it in the morning?" So I did the O-course. Failed it miserably 'cause I couldn't bend my ankle any which way, and then luckily, I had a really good, I had a really good, like, boat crew. Like, a lot of the guys in that boat crew screwed Hell Week and we were all really, like, good friends. So... And they knew I was, like, hurting really bad. So they, like, helped me get through that evolution.

638:

Um, but that day, like, one of my best friends from, uh, bootcamp and prep and everything. Like, he knew I was hurt and he came up to me and he said, like, uh, I’m going to DOR. You can come with me if you want, 'cause he knew I was, like, really jacked up. But that was probably the only time where I was, like, "Should I?" And I decided not to. Got through the O-course, land portage, and then the, the next morning... By the next morning, my leg was, like, a balloon. So I knew, like, I knew it was messed up. But I think I was, I was more mad at, like, the corpsman for not actually checking out my leg, than I...

Dr. Luning:

Yeah.

638:

I, I focused on, like, how mad I was in that moment, rather than, like, the pain.

Dr. Luning:

Yeah.

638:

Then, like, after a while, like, my leg was just numb.

Dr. Luning:

Yeah.

638:

Yeah, like, after the evolution, after dinner that day. Like, we were, like, going back to barracks, and I couldn't, like, walk on it at all. So, like, my buddies helped me get back, and then I think that, like, that was the only, the only moment where I was like, "Ugh." Like, on edge of whether to stay or DOR. But yeah.

Dr. Luning:

Is there anything you would've done differently when you were at BUDs?

638:

Um, not necessarily in my, like, second class or my, like, last class. But maybe, like, in my first class. Like, I think, like, you can't take it serious and, like, you can't... Like, you can get mad at other students if they're, like, screwing over your class and stuff like that. But, like, when you are, like... When you take stuff so serious when other people, like, the instructors are, like, already so serious, like, on you, then I think that makes your time there so much worse, because you're almost, like, beating yourself up, or, like, yelling at some 18 year old kid who's already getting yelled at for, like, the first time in his life by 20 people.

Dr. Luning:

Yeah.

638:

So, like, I think that sort of side of it, like... It... Like, in my head, it's a game. It's a game, like, you versus the instructors. But, like, once it's you versus you versus the instructors, like, you're gonna lose that battle. Like, if it's, like, a close knit group of 30 or 50 guys, like, and you guys are all super close, then that's a lot easier fight to win than the-

Dr. Luning:

Yeah.

638:

-20 people hating another 20 people versus the, the whole staff. So I think, like, trying not to think stuff as serious, and just, like, going with the flow more, and I think I realized that as a rollback in my last class. All the rollbacks at that point had been through, like, two classes, had been at California at this base for, like, over eight, 10 months. So you just pick up on stuff, and you're like, oh. Like, it doesn't really matter. Like, they're gonna, they're gonna beat you anyways. They're gonna do this anyways. So, like, I think stressing out about stuff, or, like, trying to be perfect... Like, 'cause you're never gonna be perfect in an instructor's eyes. So you should do your best obviously, but don't, like... If you fail something, like, you fail a PI, don't beat yourself up on it, because they're gonna do that for you, you know what I mean?

Dr. Luning:

Yeah.

638:

So that, that's what I sort of... If I could go back in time and tell my first class self, like, yeah. Like, you're, you're fine. Like, don't, don't stress out.

Dr. Luning:

And by your, by 347, did you kind of mentally have that piece down?

638:

Yeah, yeah. Mentally, I was much better in 47, and it... Even though it was a much harder, like, physical class, and, like, so much colder and, like... It was a way worse class in general, uh, I had more fun in it, just because I was, like, less on edge and less, like, "Oh, I have to do, like, everything perfect, or else I'm not gonna make it through Hell Week, or they're gonna single me out." It's, like, they're gonna single every single person out when the class is 30 people, so.

Dr. Luning:

Yeah.

638:

Like, there's... I, I had a lot more fun in 47, I guess. Just, I think that's because of the mental piece, and because of, like, the friendships that you had built over those, like, eight months, and the friendships you build while you're in the class, because of how shitty that class was. Like, how, how much more difficult it was, and, like, how much less sleep you're getting doing all the stuff. Like, some of my closest friends for life were in that class, I guess. So, like, the shittier times made for better, like, friendships and bonds. So that made those shitty times not as bad, I guess.

Dr. Luning:

That makes sense.

638:

Yeah.

Dr. Luning:

And I, I don't know if this is even a possibility. But would you ever be, try to come back, and [crosstalk 00:33:52]

638:

Uh, so it is, it is a possibility. Like, that's where i sorta have to decide. I'm sorta on edge on it. Like, 'cause I've already been, I've already lived, like a year and a half plus here.

Dr. Luning:

Yeah.

638:

Trying to do this one thing. Like, I gave it my all twice. I got hurt pretty bad twice. So that's where I'm, like... But it's still, like, in my mind, like, the only job I really wanna do. So I think it would come down to how my body feels after, like, the [inaudible 00:34:26] process and, like, if my neck is better and my Achilles isn't flaring up or anything like that. Then if my body is good, then I might try to do, um... But if not, I'll probably just go back to school and then from there, if I wanted to come back, I could, or I think 'cause I'm only 21 right now...

Dr. Luning:

Yeah.

638:

So I have a lot of time to decide, I guess. So I'm trying to focus on getting healthy first.

Dr. Luning:

Yeah.

638:

And then going from there.

Dr. Luning:

Makes sense.

638:

Yeah.

Dr. Luning:

Any, um, practices; physical, mental, spiritual that you do to push through challenges?

638:

Um... I don't know. I think the only mental thing I really did, like... They, they had a lot of classes on it and stuff, but I think, like, the main mental thing I did was if I was, say, on, like, a really shitty run or land portage. Like, I would repeat, like, five names in my head, of, like, important people.

Dr. Luning:

Yeah.

638:

Like, on the inside of my cover, I wrote, like, the people's names that, like, meant the most to me and why I wanted to do the job, and people I wanted to keep safe, or, like, just make proud, I guess. So that, that was, like, my, my edge I guess. Like, I would just repeat those names, like, for like an hour, two hours straight.

Dr. Luning:

Yeah.

638:

That's, like, the only thing I would say in my head, so.

Dr. Luning:

Who's, who's name you have?

638:

It was my mom's, my grandma's, my brother's, um, my uncle and then my, uh, stepdad. Those were the five names.

Dr. Luning:

How'd this experience change you as a person? If at all?

638:

Um, I think it made me more tough, and, like, realize that... It helped me realize that's a lot of the things in, like, high school or college that I thought were stressful, like, were not stressful. Like, I used to, like, complain about shit as a kid, or, like, think, like, "Oh, my life is so hard," but it's like, "My life was really easy." (laughs) So...

Dr. Luning:

Yeah.

638:

So, like, this sort of showed me, like, how tough something can be, but, like, how rewarding something can be. Like, through, like, the friendships. Like, even though I got dropped, like, I still talk to, like, a lot of my friends that are either, like, already graduated through everything by now, or still, like, about to graduate, or, like, just other people that either quit or got dropped also. Like, I think that's the best thing that came out of it, is the, the friendships I've built.

Dr. Luning:

Yeah.

638:

Yeah.

Dr. Luning:

Any, um... Any events in particular here that you struggled with?

638:

Um, like, evolutions?

Dr. Luning:

Yeah, evolutions.

638:

Um, the O-course was the worst for me.

Dr. Luning:

Yeah?

638:

I was a good runner. I was a really good swimmer. Like, the O-course just, for whatever reason. I think I was good at it, and then after I tore my Achilles, like, I couldn't jump as well, and, like, I've never been the best with, like, pull-ups or, like, overhead strength, I guess.

Dr. Luning:

Yeah.

638:

So, like, it's a lot of overhead and, like, jumping. So I was, it was my least favorite activity. Like, I got more stressed at the O-course. It wasn't like I was scared of heights. It wasn't anything like that. I just was never good at it, and I would go, like, every single day when I was a rollback after work or whatever, and I just never got it down the way I wanted to. Like, I would've taken... Most guys, like, love the O-course because it's, like, easy.

Dr. Luning:

Yeah.

638:

It's supposed to be the easiest, or one of the easiest things you do here. But for me, for whatever reason, I could never get it down. Like, I would've rather done an extra land portage or logs every week, and don't do the O-course.

Dr. Luning:

(laughs)

638:

That, that was my worst. And then after I got hurt in 47, like, I got hurt the day before the O-course, and that's why. I hurt my neck, and, like, I couldn't even, like, put my hands over my head. So I failed in the third week, and then that's when I got dropped.

Dr. Luning:

Yeah.

638:

But I was gonna get dropped either way 'cause my neck was not the most fun. (laughs)

Dr. Luning:

Anything I should ask that I didn't ask?

638:

Um... I don't think so. I think you, I think you did well.

Dr. Luning:

Okay, great. I'm gonna turn off these recorders.