**TRANSCRIBER NAME: ENS Taylor**

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**Participant #: 652**

Interviewer (Code in blue): Celeste

Participant (Code in black): #652

This is Celeste. It's January 5th, 2022. And I'm here with participant number 652. So first class a question is what was your last class at buds?

351, the most recent one.

Okay. Were you rolled before that at all?

I was.

Okay. And then what phase did you leave?

First phase.

Um, and how many weeks ago?

Uh, I couldn't tell you, it was during week one, uh, Tuesday morning.

Okay. So it was probably like October timeframe.

Yeah.

Um, so tell me a little bit about your childhood, where you

Grew up in Bel air, Maryland. It's a small town, 30 minutes north of Baltimore. Um, middle-class middle upper middle-class brothers, sisters, one younger brother. Uh, he's two years younger than I am.

Okay.

Grew up playing sports and whatnot.

What sports?

Uh, I mainly wrestled and played lacrosse.

Okay.

Yeah.

Um, did you always grew up in Maryland or?

Oh yeah, I, we moved recently, uh, when I was. Or after I graduated college, I moved down into, with my grandmother in Rehoboth Beach, Delaware.

I know exactly where it is.

And then my family moved it same place in like two years afterwards.

Okay. Okay. So they're also

They're also there now as well.

Good place to be.

I can't complain.

I take my kids there. We go a bit.

Yeah, it's awesome.

So a college where'd you go to college?

I went to Virginia Wesleyan, Virginia Beach. I studied environmental science. I played lacrosse there as well.

Okay. Um, why'd you decide to enlist instead of going, OCS.

I was looking down the officer route and it would just be too long for a chance to get an officer contract.

Okay.

So I just decided screw it. I was already like in, through the whole opposite, like getting started with the whole officer program. Going to be too long.

Yeah.

So I got out and enlisted.

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

Um, I guess hardworking, um, character traits. I like to have fun and have a good time. So I got. Um, optimistic.

Okay.

Um, yeah. Uh, and I, I guess the same thing optimistic, I always try to look on like the good side of things. There's always, even if something bad happens so you can always get something good out of it. Um, um, so

Um, so we talked through probably a little bit of it, but what have you done in the last five years prior to?

Um, last five years, I took two year and a half off of school once I got it. Well, once I graduated, I took about a year and a half off. I believe I graduated in 2019. Um, then I bartended and taught surf lessons. Uh, but before that I was a college athlete. I was a lacrosse goalie, um, led a couple. Li like the environmental leadership groups on campus.

Yeah. Did you, um, why didn't you want to go into what'd you say? You say like environment science.

Yeah.

Yeah. Why not go that direction?

Um, so I wanted to, but I feel like it's going to be cliche, cliche to say, but I've always wanted to do this.

Yeah.

But they just kind of family, like my grandfather and my great-grandparents or great-grandfathers, whatever you call, um, we're all in the army, Vietnam, world war two and all just kind of some that I feel like I kind of necessarily had to do, but like needed to do a deeper down.

Yeah. Do you know anybody in the Navy?

Uh, no, no.

So, um, and you said this is something you always wanted to do and you mean Navy seal?

Just be an operator, I guess. And I decided to choose, to try to become a team guy because I like, I enjoy the water. Um, even though that ended up being, but, um, yeah, that's why I chose the Navy was just the water wise didn't really look too much into it. If I did a would’ve chosen differently.

What do you think you would have chosen?

I'd probably go in army really. What I want to do, I guess there's not necessarily more options to do what I really want to do, but I mean, I can't really complain. There's nothing, there would've been nothing better than to be a team guy.

Yeah. It makes sense. How about anything, if you think about your life experiences prior to kind of come in here, um, anything that's life shaping kind of crucible type of experiences.

I not particularly, I've only had to deal with the death of one grandparent, my grandfather, but that's just kind of one of those things where I've left goes on. I guess it sucks, you know, it's wearable and all that stuff. You miss him. But, um, I guess the biggest thing would be in sports. Uh, I was starting going my sophomore year.Um, Then for whatever reasons, uh, didn't play the last three games of that season. And then my junior year, the senior was starting over me. I then got whatever you let a bunch of goals. When it not halftime. I was, we were tied up. I was supposed to go in and save the day, let up five straight goals. Um, so that kinda sucked.

And then senior year I was supposed to start and a kid came in from Canada transfer. And ended up starting the entire season. I didn't play a single game. Um, I didn't even play on my senior day. I was still elected as team captain that year. And I was kind of going from something that, you know, or do you think, you know, it should be, uh, that just kind of taught me a lot about it's more than just performance. It's about being a naturally good person and a good teammate.

Yeah.

And it's like, there's more to it than just performing.

Um, but so when you say there's more to it than just performing, what do you, what do you think about, what do you mean by that?

Um, cause like, you know, we all look at performance, but you can look at somebody, um, like you can have a good player, but in order for it all to work, you have to have a good team behind you.

Um, I mean you can kind of look at it with like football. Somebody like Tom Brady, he performs. He's unbelievable. Um, but he truly makes the people around him better. And that's the only reason why it works out for him now is because he makes people around him better. And that creates a good team.

That makes sense. How about, um, how did your kind of experiences experience you had with lacrosse shape your training and prep to come here?

I guess it didn't really like, I mean, just being an athlete in general and playing it off. Uh, you kind of gain a bit of like keep moving forward from that. Um, and he gained the idea of it and what it really means to it.

Like I wrestled at a national level all through high school. So with wrestling, you know, good weight cutting and stuff, um, you realize that you can do a lot more and you can push yourself a lot further than you really think.

Makes sense. Um, what about, we talked a little bit about your background that led you to the Navy, but anything else specifically in your background that led you to kind of like why wanting to be an operator?

Um, I guess my grandfather served in Vietnam with the first cav. Um, so he saw tons of real first air Cav saw tons of combat over there. Um, and just kind of like the stuckness of him and I. Like the aura about it. Like he didn't talk about it much. And just to kind of knowing that he'd been in it. Um, and then like my great uncle, I believe he jumped into occupied France with the hundred and first, um, in world war two, obviously.

And it was kind of stuff like that. It's like, I don't know. I've always thought that what. Quote unquote, the gates of hell, open up. Like, I want to be the one standing there waiting for it.

What about what motivates you on a daily basis?

I think my family is a big motivation behind it. I'm not like letting them down my family and friends.

Um, and that's kind of where I've had to reset and think of, you know, get back on track to the thinking that now.

Yeah.

Um, And then just knowing that, you know, once again, it's kind of cliche, but you really only get to do this once you don't have to get to, you know, do this lap once in your life, you know, once, um, to kind of make the most of it and have a good time, have a fun time with it and see how far you can go.

Yeah. That makes sense. Um, if you don't mind describing your experience with buds.

Uh, I mean short lived, I guess, but it was everything that I had ever wanted. Just a group of guys and one gal just getting after it for however long, we ended up being here from prep through BO until my day and a half here. Um, but just, yeah, just great. I enjoyed it.

Um, what's your. So with, I'm just curious. Cause I know they recently changed it when you, so why did you do the 800 thing or not?

I did not do the hundred division. Um, I went through normal. Like you shouldn't normally when they come here and then, well then we went to great lakes. They just moved everything down here.

Um, we then would go up to great lakes, Chicago or Illinois, whatever. Um, we did our prep up there. We had eight weeks of prep. And we came down here for BO

Okay.

Three weeks ago and then started phase.

Okay.

So, so boot camp at great lakes, um, and then straight to BO bootcamp to great lakes and then prep prep here over there.

Okay. Prep there. Got it up there. And then we came down here to start. Okay. Okay. Um, and you'd mentioned earlier that you, you kind of found out you didn't enjoy the water. Can you talk to me a little bit about it?

I not necessarily didn't enjoy the water. Um, I've surfed my entire life. Um, I surfed cold water back on the east coast.

Cause that's just how it is. That's when the waves are better. Uh, it was the underwater stuff. Not necessarily doing things under water. Like I was okay at the knot tying, it was like the 50 meter underwater. And I had, I had think like I was hurt. And then just thinking of all that and sitting on the pool deck, it just kind of got to me upstairs.

Makes sense. So, and, and if you want to or not, but if you tell me about a time you had to make a difficult decision here, here at buds. Um, what went through your mind and making that decision?

Um, well, I guess quitting was kind of the worst. Um, it, I didn't really think much. Uh, so when we were sitting there, I was sitting on the pool deck, just trying to work through everything, trying to breathe and whatnot.

And I looked at the guy and one of my buddies in. And I just said, Hey man, like I'm done. And he looked around and told me now, like, just breathe, relax. So I had a couple of people before us, before we went. Um, and I just made an emotional decision at a time where you can't let your emotions get to you. Um, and so then once it was my turn to go, I just stood up and looked at the cadre and said on my own, I'm just done.

And anything you think you would have done differently to prep for being able to deal with that?

Um, I'm not sure. I guess maybe through training. Uh, I would have, you're always, you're so worried about getting hurt beforehand and then not being able to ship. I would have pushed myself more to where you get hurt or where you feel pain. 'cause like, you know, coming in. That's what it is. Everything you've ever read.

Everybody, you talked to all your mentors, you know, that's your, you tell yourself that that's, you know what, you're going to be here for it. Um, but actually experiencing it is just completely different.

Yeah.

Um, anything you would've done differently leading up or while here, while here I'm, you know, I wouldn't have quit.

Yeah.

Yeah, definitely not. I, yeah, I miss it.

Um, do you think you'd ever try to come back?

Uh, no.

Okay. So any idea where you're going to go to try to make it?

Um, I, um, an undoes airmen right now, I got to Hawaii at the end of this month.

Okay.

Um, so I guess just while I'm out there, just get stronger, get faster.

Yeah.

Be ready for it.

Um, any practices, mental, spiritual, physical that you do to get through challenging things?

Like breathing, I guess is one big thing for me. So I've always thought about, or always had, have done as like being a goal. You have to have a short term memory, um, and you gotta be able to reset, like in an instance while you're there.

Um, so that had always been something I had done and I guess it kind of strayed away from it a little bit while preparing for here. Um, but yeah, I guess like breathing exercises, I I'd say I'm more spiritual than I am religious. Um, so nothing much there, uh, But, yeah, so I guess I mainly just breathing actually, I've taken a second counting, so I like that.

So you said to be a goal that you have to have a short-term memory.

What do you mean by that?

I mean, in lacrosse you're, it's not like soccer where you're going to give up, you know, two goals, three goals normally, um, and lacrosse, you're going to give up anywhere from nine to 15. And again, you're gonna give up 10 goals on average.

Okay.

So it's about knowing, Hey sure. I got squared on here, but it's all right. Game goes on. Make the next, if yeah. Um, just stuff like that since, um, anything you like to develop that anything you do specifically to develop that or just talking like self-talk. I'm realizing that it's not the end of the world.

Um, like, cause I mean, you're going to be able to like the game goes on kind of deal. Um, just like self-talk realizing settling down, trying to be more mentally mature.

How has this experience changed you as a person?

If at all I found out I wasn't as tough as I thought I was, um, definitely. By the whole experience. Um, yeah, pretty much. Um, any evolutions you, you kind of struggled with, even at Beau anythings in particular, I mean, logs is just the grind for everybody. I feel for 99% of the people logs, it's just a grind. Um, but overall I really, really struggled. Um, I'd say no. I mean, you struggle in everything you do. I just tell it is, but like to where I could stood out, like, that was way worse than anything else that I have done here, no, not really.

Um, did your class, I understand class 351 was an interesting one. Did your class like you?

Uh, I think so. Um, from what I, I know, and from like the people in my class that I've talked to at all. Yeah. I mean, it doesn't seem like it. You know, had anything out for me.

Yeah. Talk to me a little bit about the dynamic of 351.

Uh, those weird was kinda rocky leadership was I think it came from a place of fear for the leaders we had at first, rather than like, I think they were truly frightened for what was coming. I mean, as we all kind of were, I mean, everybody's scared about, you know, scared at some bit, but I think. It was just different. Um, it was, it was, it wasn't in a sense. I knew it. Wasn't going to be all like hoorah. Like, let's go everybody, nobody quit kind of deal. And like, everybody's going to hold each other's hands. I knew it. Wasn't going to be like that, but I expected it to be a little more like helping the other dude out in places where he needs help at and not so much like, dude, you suck, you go.

And is that when you say fear from leadership, is that, was that attitude from leadership like, oh no, no, wait, we weren't fearful of our leadership. I think the leadership had senses of fear of the cadre should be, should be. Um, but I think the way that they implemented that on the group wasn't done in the best levels.

So in what way did they implement that?

Um, in like, it's just like, if you. As you just like, weren't good at something. Or if you messed up once like that you were called a shit bag and you were told to quit kind of deal.

That makes sense.

Instead of like, Hey man, if we all make mistakes, like we'll all bounce back from this now.

And you think that was stemming from them being afraid of what's be a little.

I mean, probably because, I mean, you know, you know that if you continually mess up in BO sure, you're going to get beat by the instructors, but you know, just that much more, that that first day of phase is going to be that much worse.

You know, the first phase instructors only know you as the group that fucked up in BO and just kept fucking having BO.

Got it. Uh, um, anything I didn't ask that you think I should have asked?

Um, no, not really.

Okay, great. I'm going to turn these off.