**TRANSCRIBER NAME: ENS Kalafut**

**Date: 1/27/2020**

**Participant #: 632**

Interviewer (Code in blue): CDR Andrew

Ledford

Participant (Code in black): #632

CDR Ledford:

All right. Are you okay if I record this? And the reason why is just I can't take notes fast enough, is the way you speak. Yeah.

632:

No problem.

CDR Ledford:

All right. So the date is 5 January, 2022. I'm with #CDR Ledford. This is Andrew Ledford. And just to get started, what phase did you... were you in?

632:

I was in first phase.

CDR Ledford:

First phase. What part of first phase? Like first week, second week, third week, fourth week?

632:

Uh, first week, third day.

CDR Ledford:

First phase, first week, third day.

CDR Ledford:

Uh, were you with 351?

632:

351, yeah.

CDR Ledford:

Okay, so that's about 10 weeks ago.

632:

Yeah, about.

CDR Ledford:

10 weeks ago. Yeah, we've been... 10 weeks ago. A lot of the guys from 351 we've been talking to. Um, so a little bit... Can you tell me a little bit about your childhood? Like did you have siblings, parents together, did you move around a lot? Sports?

632:

Moved around 3 times, same state. California. Um, I had two older brothers and a younger adopted sister and then a younger brother. I played football... [crosstalk 00:01:23]

CDR Ledford:

So two older brothers?

632:

Two older brothers, and then a younger sister and a younger brother.

CDR Ledford:

Okay, so you're middle. You're smack dab in the middle.

632:

[crosstalk 00:01:32] middle, yeah.

CDR Ledford:

Okay.

632:

Sports, I believe?

CDR Ledford:

Yeah.

632:

Uh, I played football, uh, all throughout high school. Wrestled all throughout high school. And then baseball all throughout high school.

CDR Ledford:

Geez. You're busy. Football, wrestling, and baseball [crosstalk 00:01:53]...

632:

Baseball, yeah.

CDR Ledford:

And you guys, you said you moved around three times?

632:

About three times, yup. Uh, twice was in the small town [crosstalk 00:02:08] just kind of a couple streets but uh, before... well, around with my family. I went to college in another state.

CDR Ledford:

Uh-huh.

632:

In Arizona.

CDR Ledford:

Okay, so when you went off, you went off to school...

632:

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

CDR Ledford:

Where'd you go?

632:

I went to Grand Canyon University in Phoenix, Arizona.

CDR Ledford:

[inaudible 00:02:30]. And you were there for four years?

632:

I was there for two, but I... And technically I did some college in high school. So I graduated in the two years [crosstalk 00:02:41]...

CDR Ledford:

You get a BS in two years?

632:

Uh, a BA.

CDR Ledford:

A BA in two years?

632:

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

CDR Ledford:

(Laughs) That's pretty impressive.

632:

Thank you.

CDR Ledford:

BA in two years. What was your degree in?

632:

Uh, Christian studies.

CDR Ledford:

Christian studies, wow. That's pretty cool.

CDR Ledford:

So you went, you went straight from high school to Grand Canyon University for two years, and then did you go to the Navy after that? You graduated...

632:

I, I enlisted the month after I graduated, I believe.

CDR Ledford:

Enlisted...

632:

In May, May 24th.

CDR Ledford:

Month after graduation. Awesome.

CDR Ledford:

So if you had to describe your personality with three traits, how would you describe it?

632:

Um, easygoing. Uh... thinking.

CDR Ledford:

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

632:

I guess you'd say, um...

632:

Um...

632:

Uh, I guess, con... caring I guess?

CDR Ledford:

Caring, okay. Good. Okay, so I think we've covered what you've done in the last five years. Right? There's high school and then Grand Canyon University, then straight then into the Navy, right?

632:

Yeah.

CDR Ledford:

Pretty much, okay.

CDR Ledford:

Um... Is there anything from your previous experience before coming there that was life altering? Like did you, in your life, what events, were there any events that kind of changed you dramatically?

632:

Um, I wouldn't say dramatically, no. Uh, I guess... [crosstalk 00:04:57]

CDR Ledford:

Or shaped you, maybe.

632:

Uh, I guess the combination of just dealing with uh, uh, certain, certain like relationships not necessarily being healthy or great within family or friends.

CDR Ledford:

Yeah, so dealing with un, unhealthy family friend relationships.

632:

I, I would say so.

CDR Ledford:

Unhealthy...

CDR Ledford:

And do this totally voluntarily, like if there's things you don't want to get into, totally fine so...

632:

Right, yeah. Thank you.

CDR Ledford:

[crosstalk 00:05:37] friends... There's nothing... that you have to talk about.

632:

(Laughs)

CDR Ledford:

Relationships...

CDR Ledford:

And was that, was that for basically most of your childhood? Or is that...

632:

Um...

CDR Ledford:

During high school days or...

632:

Probably, um. Probably mostly high school.

CDR Ledford:

High school, yeah. So those are definitely years that kind of shape, molding you.

632:

I would say so.

CDR Ledford:

Yeah. High school years... Okay.

CDR Ledford:

Do you think, is there anything within those experiences that impacted you with training here... in some way.

632:

Um, I would say, uh. I think wrestling was a hard, hard sport and [crosstalk 00:06:43] as far as physically. Um, being able to think independently.

CDR Ledford:

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

632:

That's probably from the... Uh, I guess relationships and... Uh, I would say like, uh... The Bible was definitely a, a big thing for me as far as like finding, um, my thoughts on life and like what is right and what's wrong.

CDR Ledford:

Yeah.

632:

Uh, I'd say the big reason I want to be a Seal is just uh, help, and uh, help people, and so I guess I was very driven through that. Um...

632:

I would say those would be the top ones at least.

CDR Ledford:

Mm-hmm (affirmative). Perfect.

CDR Ledford:

Um. Okay, and you kind of just covered a little bit about your background that lead you to join the Navy.

632:

Mm-hmm (affirmative). Yeah, um. I always wanted to go into the military growing up, and then I found about special forces when I was about 12. Um. And then I wanted to be a Seal since then.

632:

I was originally planning on enlisting after high school but I realized I had in college and I decided to do that first.

CDR Ledford:

When did you find out about, uh, NSW and Seals.

632:

Uh, age 12. Uh, I found out, it was actually from a movie, "Lone Survivor". I had never heard of them until then and then I started doing my research and reading books and...

CDR Ledford:

Yeah.

632:

Um, good one.

CDR Ledford:

What motivates you on a daily basis?

632:

Um, I guess...the... partly is to do well and to achieve. But I think, uh, helping people and, and being in relationships and doing what you can to, um, impact and do better...

CDR Ledford:

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

632:

...I would say. Um, also I think as far as like if were doing working out, I think working out is a healthy thing for people to do.

CDR Ledford:

Yeah.

632:

Um, whether it's mentally or, or also just physically.

CDR Ledford:

Good.

CDR Ledford:

Can you describe your experience at BUD/S?

632:

I think I must be a little confused. Um...I think, I went and, uh, I guess I didn't really want to quit when I did so it was kind of a, a weird thing as far as I just wasn't keeping up and uh, there was surf torture in the class and then kind of the class was kind of like "It's time for you to go". And they kind of just booted me out. Uh...

CDR Ledford:

The class did this?

632:

Yeah, yeah. Yes sir.

CDR Ledford:

So, like, who in the class? Is... a crew leader, or...

632:

Uh, it was just like 23 guys. It was like, cause we were doing swim or surf passages on Wednesday and um, so it was the 23 guys I was with. And uh, I just kept coming in last, um, in all the races, and they, I had a buddy carry my [inaudible 00:09:55] back in every second, and every second that's how many rocking chairs I had to do in the surf...

CDR Ledford:

Mm-hmm (affirmative)

632:

And then, uh, they were doing the rocking chairs and then they started telling me, cause if I quit they would just be done and so they started yelling at me to quit, and I asked the instructor if there was anything else I could do, uh, because I didn't want to quit.

CDR Ledford:

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

632:

And then, um, he said no. And then I had also been sick too, um... And I, and, well I guess my view on being sick is that if you need to get pulled they would pull you. Uh.

CDR Ledford:

You were getting sick? Like throwing up?

632:

Oh, I was coughing up blood and just, uh, I had a fever, uh...

CDR Ledford:

You were coughing up blood?

632:

Uh, yeah. Yes sir.

CDR Ledford:

Holy cow.

632:

Um. And then, uh... I was crapping myself (laughs) which wasn't awesome but uh, I never threw up though or anything.

CDR Ledford:

Yeah.

632:

Uh, so I don't think it was major. Um, I ended up having pneumonia when I went to medical the day after, because I, I asked to go to medical, and they said uh, no. That I was just falling apart. Which, I... And then I asked again if there was anything else I could do to get them out of the water and then said no. And then I, I... sat there and thought about it for a few minutes. It wasn't, I took my time with the decision. I, I thought that was uh, the right thing to do. And [inaudible 00:11:17] torn them, whether that's the right thing, I guess. So...

CDR Ledford:

Just remind me to tell you about something afterwards [inaudible 00:11:28].

CDR Ledford:

Um... So question, next question which I think you answered. So tell me about a time when you made a difficult decision during BUD/S? And I'm assuming that would be it...

632:

Oh, it was my most difficult decision.

CDR Ledford:

Yeah.

632:

By far.

CDR Ledford:

And... What was going through your mind when you made that decision?

632:

Um... Uh... It, it wasn't a rushed decision but it seemed to happen really fast, I guess you could say.

CDR Ledford:

Mm-hmm (affirmative)

632:

Uh... I, I knew I didn't want to quit and I knew this was what I wanted, and I'm planning on, I want to go back. Um... But I, I guess I was, like what would be the right thing to do? And that was the conclusion I came to at the moment. And I... uh, I... I did it.

CDR Ledford:

Okay.

CDR Ledford:

Is there anything that you would do differently?

632:

Um, I think I could back and forth on whether I should've, I guess, left them in the water. Uh... I, it bothers me a lot because I always wanted to be a team player and uh, the team was begging me and sacrificing for the team. So I, I go back and forth on that, and uh, I'm not really sure what the right thing is.

CDR Ledford:

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

632:

I think maybe if I left them in the water, uh... that maybe that just how BUD/S is. I get a little confused on that still.

CDR Ledford:

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

632:

Um... But I, also I wasn't keeping up and performing so that's a big part of it.

CDR Ledford:

Yeah.

632:

Um...

CDR Ledford:

Okay.

632:

I think that's what I would say for that.

CDR Ledford:

Yup.

CDR Ledford:

And you, you just said that you, you are interested in coming back?

632:

Hooyah.

CDR Ledford:

Yeah, okay.

CDR Ledford:

When, when you answer "hooyah" to that, because someone has to transcribe this (Laughs)...

632:

(Laughs)

CDR Ledford:

I gotta, I gotta, I gotta be able to explain that. "Hooyah" means yes. It could also mean no, it could also mean a whole bunch of other things, but yes.

632:

(Laughs)

CDR Ledford:

In this case, "hooyah" means yes. Okay.

CDR Ledford:

Um, what practices, physical, mental, or spiritual, um, as an example, did you use possibly help you get through hard times?

632:

Um... I think one of them, uh, as far as visualization, self talk...

CDR Ledford:

Mm-hmm (affirmative). Nice.

632:

Uh, positive thinking. Um... And that whole list that they gave us at BUD/S was something that I was, I was practicing long, long before so that I even, I felt [inaudible 00:14:36] I use in high school. Um. I did a lot of reading about uh, BUD/S and the Navy as a whole just because I was really interested about it.

CDR Ledford:

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

632:

Uh, so visualization was a big one for me, um, but also just like, uh, looking at like my "why". If I, I feel like I had a really good "why" going in. I think that was really, uh, big driving point through all the hard times, and, and the challenges that did come up. Um, I wasn't in there super long but [crosstalk 00:15:08]...

CDR Ledford:

And why? What's, what was your "why"?

632:

Um, my "why" was, uh, it has so risen. The biggest one was to help people and, and to, um, do good things for the, the country is what I, uh, believed, uh is what the team's all about.

CDR Ledford:

Mm-hmm (affirmative). Yeah.

632:

Um, and then also just being a team member was just a really big deal to me, and, uh, the idea of sacrificing, um, and giving it everything you, everything you can.

CDR Ledford:

Uh, how has this experience changed you as a person?

632:

I feel like I haven't changed too much though it. I think I've, kind of a little bit confused on some things that I wasn't necessarily, I, confused on before. Um, I don't know if I would say I necessarily got... it, it was the hardest thing I've ever done. I don't know if I'd necessarily say I feel tougher. I'd just say I feel like I'm just kind of the same. Um... Or... I guess I was really confident that I would never quit, and so I think I, I ran into a situation I never expected.

CDR Ledford:

Mm-hmm (affirmative)

632:

So that caught me, um, off-guard. Uh, still working through that one I think.

CDR Ledford:

Yeah.

CDR Ledford:

Is there anything that we should be asking you in regards to the things were looking at, resilience and getting through BUD/S, you know. Is there a question you think, "You know what, if they ask me this question, that would have been pretty interesting"?

632:

Maybe, uh, I think class community is a big, is a big deal.

CDR Ledford:

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

632:

Uh, so how the class interacts with each other and the attitude of the class.

CDR Ledford:

Yeah.

CDR Ledford:

How was your class community?

632:

Um, I got moved up into this class so I didn't know anyone really. I knew about 20 people, so I was originally 352.

CDR Ledford:

352.

632:

And then, they, because of the whole COVID thing.

CDR Ledford:

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

632:

So we had, we were in, we were in prep for about four weeks and, and when, and then we got moved up with them. Uh, and so I didn't know them super well. Uh, I would say too also when you get to BO you get a rollbacks and stuff. Um, but the overall attitude was more kind of doing whatever and sacrificing, I guess, whatever to get through, almost a little bit selfish I would say but there's also a lot of good guys I would say who were in that class.

CDR Ledford:

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

632:

I think, um, I would also maybe describe it as scared attitude.

CDR Ledford:

Okay. Awesome, all right. That is all the questions we have. I'm going to turn off the recorder now.

632:

Thank you.