**TRANSCRIBER NAME: ENS Bondarowicz**

**Date: 1/26/2022**

**Participant #: 670**

**Interviewer (Code in blue): Dr. Celeste Raver Luning**

**Participant (Code in black): #670**

**Dr. Luning: So it is, uh, this is Celeste Raver Luning. It's January 6th, 2022. And I'm with participant 670. So, uh, first question for you is what was, uh, your last class, last BUD/S class?**

**670: Last BUD/S class was Class 351**

**Dr. Luning: 1. Okay. Um, were you in any classes before then?**

**670: Um, I was not.**

**Dr. Luning Okay. And what phase did you leave?**

**670: First phase**

**Dr. Luning: About how many weeks ago did you leave?**

**670: Uh, Twelve-ish weeks ago.**

**Dr. Luning: Okay. At what point in the first phase?**

**670: Uh, it was the end of the first week.**

**Dr. Luning: Okay. So tell me a little bit about your childhood brothers, sisters, where you grew up.**

**670: Uh, so I was born in Cincinnati, Ohio, uh, grew up there in a suburb outside of Cincinnati, Ohio. Um, one sister, younger. I'm the oldest of the family. Went to high school, played sports there, um, went to college in Ohio. So I stayed there for most of my, well actually all of my, um, adolescence. And then after college, I moved out to the west coast, Seattle, Washington for a job.**

**Dr. Luning: Okay. So um sports, what sports did you play?**

**670: Uh, in high school, I played football. I wrestled and I played lacrosse and then I wrestled in college.**

**Dr. Luning: Okay. And where'd you go to college?**

**670: Ohio state university.**

**Dr. Luning: Okay. Did four years there?**

**670: I did not, no. I did three years there. Um, and then took some time off to figure out what I actually wanted to do. And that's what took me out to Seattle.**

**Dr. Luning: Seattle. Okay. And then what were you doing for work in Seattle?**

**670: I was a police officer.**

**Dr. Luning: Oh, interesting. Uh huh. Did you do, were you a police officer?**

**670: A little over two years.**

**Dr. Luning: Okay. Um, and then from there you joined the Navy**

**670: Yeah from there. I, uh, left at the beginning of 2020 and started the process to, um, get a special warfare contract.**

**Dr. Luning: Okay Okay, great. Um, talk to me a little bit about your personality, three traits how you’d describe...**

**670: Um, I say quiet, I'm a bit of a perfectionist and… goal-oriented.**

**Dr. Luning: um, we talked about it a little bit, but talk to me about the last five years of your life. Leading up to BUD/S.**

**670: So the last five years. Um, so I was in, when I went to Ohio state, I was, um, getting my finance degree. And when I decided to take that year off, I got a job with, uh, a major bank in the US um, and I worked there for about a year before I realized I hated sitting behind a desk for a living, um, about that time my friends were graduating. They were also taking jobs on the west coast. So I moved with them out there. And since I knew I wanted to find something that had me up and around, that's when I started looking at law enforcement. That's where I ended up. I did my two years there. And, um, it was great. I really enjoyed it. Um, but I knew I wanted more, I wanted to do more, especially with some of the assignments, like on the force. And I had always, um, always been interested in, you know, special operations, special forces, that sort of thing. So I figured, Hey, um, when I left in 2020, now's the time to do it, or it's always going to be something I might regret not doing.**

**Dr. Luning: Okay. Makes sense. How about if you think about your experiences prior to coming, to join the Navy? Um, anything like life shaping kind of crucible type of experiences?**

**670: Um, no. As term in terms of hardship goes, no, I haven't had any real hardship in my life. My parents have been very supportive of everything I've done. They've made sure, you know, I haven't had a want or a need that hasn't been, um, satisfied coming up through sports and stuff. I knew, you know, and obviously the police academy and the hardships that come with that job, I've been through some physical hardship. I know what hard work work looks like. Um, but, um, in terms of tragedy in my life, well, I'm lucky enough to not have had too much of that. You know…**

**Dr. Luning: anything like, even if it's not, tragedy like on the other end of the spectrum, super pinnacle. Great.**

**670: Um, again, becoming a police officer was very cool. It's a achievement. I feel I can wear. Um, I wear that on my sleeve a bit, having been there and been through some of the, especially with the way it's been the last couple of years, um, policing having been through that, um, that day definitely gave me some emotional intelligence coming into this pipeline.**

**Um, to be able to kind of mentally work through the daily hardship that is entailed.**

**Dr. Luning: since. How about, um, how do you think your experiences, your experiences as a police officer and even in college impacted your training?**

**670: Um, obviously the work ethic, parts of part of it and in college, but again, you're not doing, you're not sitting behind a desk here, you know, doing homework for hours on end.**

**I would definitely say the police work. Some of the techniques and stuff that I learned during the police work came into, uh, came into play here, just, you know, whether it's, um, compartmentalization, keeping everything separate, you know, not letting the stressors build on top of each other, um, or, you know, uh, prioritizing tasking that also helped a lot.**

**So those things definitely the, the more, the mental side of it, the stress inoculation, the stress management definitely definitely played a part in it.**

**Dr. Luning: Huh? What led you to join the Navy?**

**670: Uh, like I said, it was always something, well, not particularly the Navy, but, um, special operations forces. You know, I grew up watching, you know, um, post 9/11 watching people go to war and protect us. And I was always something I had been interested in. Then once I joined the police force and saw the real life side of it, I knew I wanted to try to test myself at the highest level at what higher level, than, you know, the Naval Special Warfare pipeline, make sense.**

**Dr. Luning: uh, anybody in the military and your family?**

**670: No, I'm the first one.**

**Dr. Luning: Okay. What motivates you on a daily?**

**670: Um, well beforehand, um, before going to Phase and everything, it was becoming a, becoming a Navy SEAL. That was my li-, my day revolved around it. You know, what can I do to get better? Or what can I do, um, to better my chances of making it through the pipeline. Now, um, it's moving my life forward. You know, this, it was a good experience. Um, I've accepted the fact that, you know, didn't make it through. So what can I do now to, you know, get back up better my life moving forward. And that's kind of what motivates me day in, day out right now.**

**Dr. Luning: Um, how about, describe your experience here at BUD/S?**

**670: Um, my experience here at buds was. Obviously it was, it was tested my soul. Um, it, there was, uh, there wasn't an aspect of it that wasn't as extreme as I thought it would be. It fully lived up to my expectations of how hard it would be. Um, and no, no individual thing was very hard. It was the fact that it all compounded day after day and uh your body just gets no recovery. I mean, you're working, we're working your body 16 to 18 hours a day. Um, you're getting two or three hours of sleep a night. And I think the hardest thing I found specifically was my body just couldn't recover. Um, so I think that's what led to injury I have now. Um, there's just no time for your body to physiologically clear some of that workload.**

**Dr. Luning: Yeah. Makes sense. Um, so tell me about a time you had to make a difficult decision here at beds. What went through your mind?**

**670: Oh, the day I, um, the day I dropped, um, we were, we had just gotten done with surf immersion and I was, we were running back from breakfast. Um, I don't know if I should disclose this now or not, but I have two ruptured discs in my back that I didn't know about at the time. Uh, we were running back from breakfast and I was basically dragging my leg behind me. And, um, we got there and we were getting ready to start a two, two mile ocean swim. And I knew I probably, I shouldn't do it. And I would be, um, I be screwing over my swim buddy if I try to go out there and you know, I'm only swimming with one leg.**

**So making that decision that, you know, even though I might be able to do it, it's not the best um, it's not the right thing to do to keep going. Uh, cause you're gonna hurt yourself more. You're gonna screw over your swim buddy and you could cause issues for the entire pipeline. So making that decision to, to drop then and there was the hardest decision I've made.**

**Dr. Luning: Um, anything you would've done differently?**

**670: Um, I thought about that a lot and know there, there isn't anything I would've done differently. I think I trained to my max potential coming in. Um, uh, I kinda, I think I just getting injured and then having, like I said, the word compound on top of it.Wasn't in the cards for me. Yeah.**

**Dr. Luning: Would you, um, if given the opportunity, would you ever try to come back? I know it's an easy path.**

**670: Yeah I think due to my age. Yeah. I wouldn't. Maybe if I had tried this at 18, I would have come back, but by the time I'd be able to come back now I'd be pushing 30. And if my body couldn't handle it now at 26, it probably wouldn't be able to handle it at 30. So as much as I'd like to come back, realistically, it's probably a fool's errand. Yeah.**

**Dr. Luning: Makes sense. Um, what practices, physical, mental, spiritual do you use to get through challenging things? If any?**

**670: Um, if any, I mean, I, I'm a practicing Christian, so I've played on my faith in hard times. Um, Obviously, that's not everything you need to get through the program, but that was big, especially coming into the pipeline. And, um, just knowing that there is something beyond, um, but then just the, I think the, the, the program I adopted beforehand, I trained for a year before to come through this. Um, and being just the day in, day out grind kind of mentally prepared me. Um, like I definitely went through a mental hardening being able to kind of do the grind day in and day out, and then just physically is treating your body right. And making sure you're getting enough sleep, you're eating right. You're getting so, you know, the multivitamins and you're doing everything you need medically to recover. Um, that's about it. Preparation wise**

**Dr. Luning: Um how did this experience change you as a person, if at all?**

**670: Um, it's definitely given me a, um, a different outlook moving forward that, um, I don't think anything, I will find moving forward in life. I will have as much of a challenge with yeah. Um, it's given me if I can do this, even as short as I was in the pipeline. If I can do that, there's nothing out in the civilian world that should be able to challenge me. Yeah. So I guess it's a confidence booster. It's a double-edged sword because it's a confidence booster, but it's also, you know, there is disappointment and not making it through.**

**Yeah, absolutely.**

**Dr. Luning: Um, any sper, specific evolutions you struggled?**

**670: Uh, no, like I said, there's, there's no nothing specifically here, but there wasn't one thing I could say wow that I don't think I could do that again individually. I could do all of the events. It's when you stack everything on top of each other 16, 18, 20 hours a day, day after day. Um, it's just the human body, the 99% of people out there, there, the human body just can't take it. And that's what I've. With mine as well.**

**Dr. Luning: Makes sense. Um, how about the dynamic of 351? What was the class dynamic?**

**670: Um, the dynamic for 351 was like, I don't have anything to compare this off of, but I found it. We came in with 185. We started phase, I believe with 185. Um, and whether intentional or not, it seemed like there were a lot of smaller groups of guys who kind of kept to themselves, um, as a not great, you're not going to have 185 guys come together and be one big, great unit. That's just, that's not going to happen. Um, but it didn't really.**

**I didn't really see the class ever come together as a class. Um, we all had our individual groups, maybe the guys that we went through bootcamp with or something that we all kind of hung out with and we stuck with, um, we didn't really notice those groups start to intermingle until we were down to about less than a hundred guys, maybe 90 guys.**

**Um, I think the Tuesday, Tuesday night's dinner. We were down to like 90 or something. And he finally started to see some of the guys, all intermingling because all of their friends had left. Um, so yeah, we probably could have come together as a class better, but that's hard to do when you have 185 guys and you know that by the end of the week, more than half of them, aren't going to be there..**

**Dr. Luning: Um, anything I didn't ask that you think is worth sharing?**

**670: Um, no, nothing in particular. Um, like I said, I think the hardest everyone asks, like when I went home for break, everyone asks, you know, what was the hardest part, you know? Um, and there isn't a hardest part. It's, uh, it's the fact that you wake up on Tuesday or Wednesday morning after your first day, and you feel like you're just going right back to an evolution. You didn’t feel rested, your body's broken. Um, it's, it's not one particular event that gets you. It's just the mileage nonstop. Yeah, absolutely.**

**Dr. Luning: It makes sense. Well, I'm going to turn these off.**