**TRANSCRIBER NAME: LOFTUS**

**Date: 19 AUG 2020**

**Participant #: 352**

**Length of the Interview: 12:49**

Interviewer (Code in Blue):

Participant (Code in black):

**Interview Guide**

Alright so I'm here with uh partici… participant number 352. Time is 0732 on 10 Feb. This is Commander Ledford. And uh we are doing the interview. Do you consent to be interviewed?

I do

Alright awesome. So some warmup questions just to kind of get you started. Uh how many siblings do you have?

Three.

All younger?

Yes

So, what are there ages?

Uh one of them is 22,

Uh male or female?

Male. 22 year old brother.

Ok.

19 year old brother. So male 19, and then female 16.

Uh what were your male brothers?

Oh 19.

19.

Yes.

Nice. and your age is?

24 so I’m the oldest.

And then uh your parental situation growing up. Are your parents married or divorced?

They are still married now.

All the siblings?

Same parents yeah.

I got your birth order and siblings uh and how was your relationship with your parents?

Very good like extremely strong relationship with both parents, still today.

Strong. So prior to BUD/S uh what life changing events do feel like if you were looking at the span of your life what events were like some major ones that probably shaped you in some way?

Well growing up I played a lot of baseball you know I always wanted to be a big baseball player but uh I had shoulder surgery in highschool uh and uh after that another like finger surgery uh it kinda limited my physical ability so I had to learn how to commission it back like playing with a hurt shoulder when I wasnt supposed to.

When did that happen, the shoulder surgery?

It was uh Junior to Senior summer in Highschool. That was like the big recruiting season so like once that happened I kind of realized that baseball might not be my thing and I had been thinking about this for a long time and that kind of i guess directed me this way I think thats one of the bigger ones like huge life changing events I cant really think of any bigger ones.

So pushing through that injury?

I mean that that was one thing that really taught me to play through pain i guess.

Yep

And I guess it showed me I could do a lot more than I thought before i guess.

And how did that kind of factor into your experience at BUD/S? Like uh

Uh I learned how to push through pain I was told not to play baseball for a year but I was very stubborn and I started playing within three months after having surgery so I learned what I was capable of I dont know more than I previously thought as a teenager that kind of deal. So

Sweet. What do you think about your personality that contributes towards your sucsess at buds?

I guess I kind of have like a very serious personality um I found more serious than a lot of the guys in the class honestly very disciplined and focused um so I was able to latch onto the goal for a long time without really having much else to distract me i guess thats probably a trait that helped me I suppose.

So uh going back to your background did you have any seal friends or family? Do you have a military family?

My dad just got out of the navy he was a surface warfare officer for thirty years. So uh he always i guess kind of inspired me to do the whole military thing even though he didnt push me towards it at all and then just kind of by chance I read a book that interested me about seals and I guess directed me this way so

So going into a little bit about your childhood uh how were disciplined were you like did your parents put you in timeout did they spank you uh

Iguess

Withholding toys?

It was pretty standard like timeouts they never spanked me at all uh when I was a teenager standard groundings like no phone no going out with friends for a week pretty standard nothing too profound I dont think they were very uh they were very quick iguess to lay down the hammer with regards to i guess mild discipline like I couldnt really get away with a whole lot which I guess was pretty good in the long run so kept me on a straightened arrow

Did you move around a lot or all the time?

I moved eighteen times before I moved out of the house so i think at least once or twice a year so it came in waves so

So about your teenage years what about uh your participation with uh team sports were you in any tightknit communities

Just baseball yeah I was always playing baseball year round down near southerncalifornia so always on some kind of team and it was just strictly baseball since it was all I cared about at the time so

And then in the last five years before you came to buds, what were you doing in those five years before you came to buds?

So I played college baseball at a small community college for a couple years and actually I came to buds with class 321 and dored out of that class and spent a couple years in the fleet.

So first you went small community college

Small community college and played baseball

So you did that for two years?

Yes two years uh then I at that point I enlisted with class 321

Class 321

Dored out of that class and I was a bostwains mate in the fleet so just a lot of painting and then I came back

How long did you spend in the fleet?

About two and a half years pretty short compared to a lot of guys but

Would you consider yourself compulsive?

Not at all

Not at all uh any tattoos?

No

What do you think was the most challenging component at buds? Think about your

hardest days at buds

Basically for me the hardest … (Inteligible 7:52-8:09)

And what motivated you to push through it

Well I knew that I had to do it I decided this a long time ago and I knew that if I didnt

pass it and if i did drop that my life direction would be non existent (inteligible

8:26-8:30)

Hey guys can you try and keep it down a little bit ok for the interviews? Please thanks Uh

um what what practices do you have any practices that helped you especially during the challenging phases of buds so peaceful practices mental practices spiritual daily practices

A lot of in the moment ones its kind of like the very stereotypical box breathing that definitely helped like in the moment like on the pool deck before pool comp to calm me down um and then just like a lot of reflection like at the end of the day I really I really would think about the reasons for being here and be like yeah this is sometimes terrible sometimes not and I just kinda reflect the long time it took to get here the first time and get back the second time and be like well theres no other option so i guess just intentionality mindedness for lack of better wording

And did you find yourself doing that reflection each day?

Yes very frequently even throughout the day when things start getting low I kinda would look back at the past couple of years and remember why I was here and who I was and all that kind of stuff. Sounds like what we talked about before its the mindedness portion i think thats the biggest thing.

Yeah. So uh when you made a difficult decision during uh BUD/S what went through your mind as you made that decision? Was there a decision that you really struggled with while you were here?

I cant think of like one decision in particular um I just really thought about long term consequences like if I do this now am I going to be able to live with myself in five years, ten years whats my wife going to think about that um what kind of legacy would that leave behind … (inaudible 10:15-1020)

Why do you think you were successful in BUD/S?

Because I decided I had to. I had made this projection for this life and the man who I wanted to be and (inaudible 10:32-10:38) looking back to now i decided there was there was no other option so thats really it once you make that kind of commitment. Kind of game over in my opinion.

Did you notice anything different um from the guys who didnt make it?

I think a lot of the guys who didnt make it through were kind of here for the I guess the status, they didnt necessarily want to do the job and be the man that this requires. I never really thought too much about that though honestly, in regards to other people I kind of just you know like remained focused on my own development and tried not to judge other guys so I dont know if I have the best perspective on that.

How did you feel like this changed you as a person?

Ive uh yeah Ive grown a lot ive matured a lot I feel like ive aged significantly from coming here and then trying to come back and then actually making it through on the second go around (inaudible 11:36-11:40)

Is there anything that you think uh I should be asking you about what helped you or hurt you coming to BUD/S?

I wouldn't even know what to begin with for those kind of questions I think these are probably a good place to start for your background checks. I guess (inaudible 11:59-12:02) more questions about mindfulness. Once you know who you are and what you want you can truly articulate that and there is nothing else that can stop you so I think mindfulness is (inaudible 12:10-12:18).

Awesome. Sounds good. Alright that is all I got, Hey thanks a lot.

Thank you Sir.

I really appreciate it.