**TRANSCRIBER NAME: MCVICKERS**

**Date: 12 AUG 2020**

**Participant #: 71**

**Length of the Interview: 24:15**

Interviewer (Code in Blue):

Participant (Code in black):

**Interview Guide**

**OK, is it OK if I record the interview?**

**Yes.**

**And what’s your participant ID?**

**ID 71.**

**71, OK great. What was your original BUDS Class?**

**It was 338.**

**And when did you get rolled into 339?**

**I got rolled after Hell Week for the CSO Tread umm along with I think we had 8 other guys who got rolled for that as well.**

**OK so that’s still first phase.**

**Yeah post Hell Week first phase I think it was two weeks got over with.**

**And so when you joined 339 you got to join though back at that same point?**

**Yep so we wait until they got to that point and then rejoined the class.**

**And we’ll come back and talk about that some more. So tell me about how many siblings you have?**

**I’ve got two siblings, two younger brothers, they’re twins, their names are Brock and Brady. Umm they’re 14 years old, 8th graders, umm yeah they’re awesome uhh looked up to me a lot growing up.**

**How much older are you?**

**I’m 23 so I’m 9 years older than they are. Umm but yeah we get along really really well but like I said they’ve always kinda looked up to me so I’ve tried to be a good mentor to them throughout their lives but they’re huge into sports just like I was when I was a kid so we were always outside playing sports and stuff like that.**

**How about parents? All the same parents or are your parents married?**

**Yep I’ve got great parents, had a really good childhood they’ve always been together, been together for about 35 years now. So yep I’ve got great parents my dad is 58 years old and my mom is 53 I think.**

**What about your relationship with them, is it close?**

**Close, really close. My whole family is really close, always has been. Family is very important to me and everyone in my family. Umm yeah so I was really lucky growing up, my parents were always super supportive,with like everything I did, it didn’t really matter umm like I said I’ve always been into sports and stuff like that but if all of the sudden I would say I didn’t want to play a sport they would be fine with it, they would never force me to do anything. Umm and same with coming to the military, wanting to come to BUD/S, they were very supportive right away so they’ve always been easy to deal with in that aspect, i’ve always felt like I had a really good foundation from them, so.**

**Did you now, go to high school, so what was after high school?**

**Yeah, so I went to high school and graduated, played sports in high school and then I decided not to play sports in college because, I wanted to play baseball in college and then decided last second that I wasn’t going to, so I just went to the University of Nebraska, graduated from there, uhh I studied business management and it took me, I had to do one extra semester so I graduated December 2018 and then shipped out to Boot Camp in February.**

**I’ll ask you some more questions about that in a minute. Anything life changing events that happened prior to you coming to BUD/S?**

**Life changing events? For me there was nothing like crazy, nothing crazy I was just when I was in college I was doing fine umm but I was just kinda bored with what I was doing, you know? It just wasn’t really for me, obviously I had finished my degree, you know my parents had saved all that money so I didn’t want to waste all that and not get my degree but ever since I stopped playing sports I just didn’t have anything to kind of go after and chase, nothing that excited me. Schoolwise I just didn’t see myself getting a normal job after college umm I’ve always liked things that are challenging and adventurous so that’s kinda why I came here but as far as life changing events there wasn’t any single event that was big for me.**

**What about your personality, tell me a little bit about your personality and how that played into your experience here?**

**Umm, personality I’ve always been a pretty outgoing guy, always had a lot of friends growing up, like I said I loved to play sports, pretty adventurous, like studied abroad in college in the Czech Republic so yeah I would just say I’m a very curious guy, I like to learn new things, very goal driven, goal oriented, I like to have something to go after. Umm pretty motivated person, umm what else, yeah I mean my family and friends are very important to me, what else, yeah that’s about it.**

**What about, I don’t know if I asked you this, you went to University of Nebraska but where did you grow up?**

**I grew up in Nebraska, I lived in a small town, Nemaha Nebraska until I was 7 and then my mom got a job up in Lincoln so we moved up to the capital city, lived there ever since, so pretty much grew up in the city but a lot of my family members are from the country. My grandparents are farmers so I got a lot of experience with the rural life and all that stuff.**

**Did you help on the farm?**

**Yeah, yep I would go down there and help them, help him, helped my grandpa a lot.**

**What about what led you to want to become a part of the SEAL community?**

**Umm just because I thought they were the best of the best, you know? Just kinda the stereotypical things that you hear reading all the books and watching all the movies. The videos just looked awesome to me, sounded like they were the best of the best. So you know, some of these guys in here thought about being a Green Beret or a PJ, all those different things, but for me you know this was the only thing that I wanted to do umm I don’t know it didn’t have anything to do with the water. I know a lot of guys join because they like water. Umm for me it just looked like the hardest thing to do so that’s what I wanted to do.**

**Now, anybody that you know that was a SEAL?**

**No I didn’t know anyone previously, I had met a few guys who like uh they have mentorship programs and stuff like that and I had a few friends that joined SEALs so I was able to train with them before I came but no I didn’t have any family members or anybody close that I knew that was a that was a SEAL previously.**

**Any military in your family?**

**Uhh my dad’s dad was infantry in the Army, he fought in the Korean war. That was it. My other grandpa didn’t end up getting drafted because he was a farmer um and then I think some of my grandpa’s brothers were in the army but that didn’t really play into my decision to join the military.**

**So it wasn’t a big part of your life? At what point did you identify that you wanted to go into the military and then into the SEALs?**

**Um I would say college I was kinda my junior year of college I started to really think about what I wanted to do. I’ve always kinda had this in the back of my head I had a couple buddies that wanted to come here as well so we were kinda training for it together and then I would say between my junior and senior year of college I kinda said you know this is what I want to do. I told my parents and everything, really got serious about training um and then like I said as far as coming to BUD/S this was the only thing that I was really looking at. I didn’t really look at the Marine Corps or Army or any of that stuff um I had some outside influences from a couple of my friends that were thinking about it as well. I had one buddy, a training partner that came here with class 337 and we kinda trained throughout college together.**

**Now did he go through and complete BUD/S?**

**No, he quit BO so that was obviously pretty frustrating for me. Um he was able to come a class before me because he graduated before me so yeah that was a huge bummer for me. Yeah he quit when I was in BO … so I mean it was disappointing but at that point I had made so many good friends in class 338 it was like whatever, I got over it.**

**Stayed focused?**

**Yeah.**

**What about, tell me a little bit about your childhood. How were you disciplined as a child?**

**Um yeah I mean my parents weren’t like super strict they also they wouldn’t just let me get away with everything. Um I could usually always get away with things with my Dad more than my Mom for sure. Um but yeah they weren’t super strict its not like I was getting grounded all the time but they definitely kept me on the straight and narrow like school was very important to them that’s one thing they did not tolerate at all you know was me jacking around at school getting into trouble. Um I mean I was always a pretty good student at school. I knew when to lock it on and not mess around so as far like punishing me I used to get spanked as a little kid … getting grounded, I would get grounded. I was pretty stubborn as a kid so like I would always try to get myself out of it … I mean but yeah they weren’t overly strict but also they wouldn’t just let me do what I wanted.**

**And then you said you only moved once in your childhood years and not too far?**

**Yep it was only like an hour away.**

**What about your teenage years did you participate in sports talk to me a little bit more about that.**

**Yep yep I played football basketball baseball in highschool, loved sports that’s like all I did, kept me out of trouble. Like I said baseball that was my big thing I wanted to play in college. For me though it was like if I couldn’t play division one I didn’t want to play and that’s basically what happened that’s why I didn’t continue to play in college um but yeah sports was my life.**

**And why were sports so important to you?**

**I guess its just like the relationship, all my friends played sports and um that’s all we would do. When I was a kid we would always play football out in the backyard, baseball um … in middle school we would travel all around the country I was on a travel team playing baseball so that was pretty much my life. Uh and I just loved it I loved the team aspect like I said all my best friends were guys I played sports with so I was always a huge fan growing up we would always go to Nebraska football games every Saturday. Yeah it’s just always something I’ve been into my whole life, I love sports.**

**What about the last 5 years of your life before coming here, so college, any jobs in between?**

**Yeah I mean I had a lot of jobs in college, a lot of manual labor. I used to roof houses I worked on a ranch for a while for like a year. In college I worked at Coors in college, got free beer that was big um yeah a lot of like outdoorsy jobs I’ve always been a pretty outdoorsy guy, never really wanted to just sit at a desk so I just went after that.**

**What year did you graduate college?**

**I graduated in December of 2018.**

**And then that was right before bootcamp?**

**Yep.**

**So no year long stints that weren’t tied to part time jobs?**

**Nope, nothing .**

**Do you consider yourself impulsive at all?**

**Impulsive? … Sometimes.**

**In what ways?**

**Um, … man … just when there’s any opportunity to do anything fun I’ll go after it and sometimes that doesn’t benefit me you know there’s definitely times I could stay in and be more productive but if people are going out I’ll go out .. um yeah just like in college any trips that people wanted to take I was always in for that. So yeah sometimes I’m definitely an impulsive person but not to the extent where its super negative.**

**Any tattoos?**

**No tattoos.**

**Many speeding tickets?**

**Nope I think I have one speeding ticket, which actually kinda surprised me. I don’t drive like a maniac but there’s definitely guys like that like my buddy (unintelligible) driving like an idiot. But no, no tattoos no speeding tickets um as far as like run ins with the law … in college I got one MIP (minor in possession) that was like my sophomore year I wasn’t like crazy drunk or anything I was just having a beer at this, it was my fault I was having a beer at this place and didn’t have a wristband it was stupid. Like I said I wasn’t drunk at all, wasn’t a huge deal um went through that whole process or whatever. The Navy knows that I have that, that’s it. That’s all that I’ve had.**

**What do you think the most challenging component of BUD/S was?**

**Yeah, I wouldn’t say any single thing was terrible, for me it would just be like just the grind, just waking up on a Wednesday or whatever knowing that you’re going to have to go out and give 100% again that day and you’re super super tired um I would just say getting yourself out of bed in the morning … once you get the day going it wasn’t actually that bad … um but that was actually one of the good things about Hell Week. You didn’t deal with like having to wake up every day and being and like being in your warm comfortable bed you know um ... yeah I would say that was the one thing that was the hardest for me. Getting rolled sucked too. Umm just having to watch all of my good buddies go on with training and I have to sit back for seven weeks for one tread is what we failed, what we got rolled for. That was pretty tough at first but it ended up being one of the best things to happen to me. It was definitely a positive.**

**What helped you get through that?**

**Um well first of all I got lucky because the other eight guys who got rolled with me I am pretty good buddies with so being with them was huge um the guys in this class are awesome I love class 339 um … what else … just having that time to kinda grow and um it was right after Hell Week so it gave me some time to relax and rejuvenate myself metnally and physically and then you know take a step and see what I can work on and get better um you know and I figured if I have seven weeks off I’m not going to waste my time I’m going to try to come back a better BUD/S student. Um and in the long run it definitely, after I came back from that I had no issues, I hardly failed anything at all so I definitely think it was a positive thing.**

**Any practices you utilized throughout this process to go through BUD/S whether physical, mental, spiritual?**

**Nothing big really you know I tried to take care of my body during First Phase I could have stretched more, I would go get massages on the weekend sometimes … um as far as mentally I just tried I just tried to get as much sleep as I could. On the weekends a lot of times um a lot of times they would have guys in the barracks that you could pay that would shine your boots. I would always pay someone to shine my boots um … yeah I just tried to take care of my body get as much sleep as you can. You know you would see guys throughout the pipeline who were getting sick were hardly ever making it. They would get rolled or they would quit because they were always getting rolled. So that was a big thing for me I just wanted to keep my body healthy for as long as I could because you would see guys get rolled and the second time they would go through they just don’t have it in them anymore.**

**Was there a time you had to make a difficult decision or watched someone make a difficult decision?**

**In BUD/S you’re saying?**

**Yeah.**

**Difficult decision … um nothing is really popping into my head right now, my class was pretty good at holding each other accountable so we didn’t really run into any big issues for that um yeah you know since I’m not an officer that wasn’t really my place all the time … um for me if there was anything big I would obviously step up and say something but most of the time I would just kinda try to mind my own business and uh try to do the right thing myself and just worry about myself.**

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

**Um for me it was just like I pretty much gave up my whole life to come here um I’m not going to say there were never times where … I never really thought about quitting at all I knew I wasn’t going to quit for sure but just having that in the back of my head, having been though boot camp, I gave up my whole life to come here I knew that there was no way I was going to quit. I wouldn’t say I was a … I wasn’t a great performer by any means in BUD/S. I passed all my stuff you know I was fine um but its not like I was leading the 4 mile runs or the swims I was more of a middle of the pack guy. But for me I think one of my personality strengths that helped me get through is I was pretty stubborn and there was no way I was going to let the instructors see me quit. I wouldn’t let them win. Like I said my parents were always very supportive um honestly if I were to quit they would have been the parents that said that’s OK they wouldn’t have been super disappointed or anything like that um … but yeah there wasn’t anything big it was just not quitting you know and just passing all the tests you need to pass. And a little bit of luck too you know, not getting injured, not getting crazy sick is big. That’s the advice that I always give guys going through First Phase you know, just take care of your body because once you get sick or injured there’s not much you can do, you’re kinda screwed.**

**What about anything different about those people that made it versus those that quit. Not those that got sick.**

**Um anything different … like personality wise?**

**Anything that stands out if at all.**

**For me I felt like most of the guys that made it through I kinda knew that they would make it through I don’t know if that makes sense.**

**Was there something about them? Like a demeanor?**

**Yeah kinda their demeanor. We used to say a lot in First Phase that he’s got the eyes. Like we knew somebody was gonna quit just by like their demeanor every day um so just the guys that they could beat us all day long and they could wake up the next day with a good attitude. A huge thing was um being able to have a sense of humor that was huge. Like a ton of these guys in here have a sense of humor, that’s huge in making in through BUD/S um a lot of the guys that took everything way too seriously when we were in Prep and in BO, a lot of those guys did not make it. Um so just um being able to lock it on when you need to but also having a sense or humor was big for me um … yeah just guys that don’t take themselves too seriously, guys that are able to, you’re gonna have a bad day in BUD/S where you get embarrassed or you’re a poor performer or you know you might get called out. Just not letting that eat you alive … and then just guys that didn’t take into account what the instructors were saying, not taking that too seriously. I saw a lot of instructors get in guys heads and then they’ll quit so basically just not caring about what an instructor has to say to you. Kinda just knowing the game, knowing that they’re just trying to get you to quit and not taking that too seriously.**

**How did this experience change you as a person?**

**Um … change me as a person … what definitely helped me as far as getting rolled that just helped me to deal with failure that taught me to come back a better person. Learn how to use that and turn that into a positive that was huge … um its definitely made me a less selfish person being around all these guys you know um just doing what’s best for the class not yourself and seeing how that returns as a positive to you. Uh as far as toughness and stuff, I came into this telling myself I wasn’t going to quit and I never felt like I was going to quit so I don’t really feel like I changed too much in that aspect um but obviously you do learn like how far you can push yourself and uh how far your body can go basically if you just don’t give up um I feel like that’s a lesson that everybody learns. Kinda a cliche lesson but its true … other than that … I don’t know uh I’ve learned a lot about leadership I’m trying to become a better leader. That’s something that they stress a lot here and if you’re just an E Dog, an enlisted guy, being able to step up and lead your buddy that’s something too that’s what you get from working on it. That’s something I’m not great at but have gotten better at since I’ve been working on it.**

**Great, we’re done interviewing.**

**That’s it? Thank you.**

**Congratulations.**