

MiraCosta College Student Veteran Oral History Service Learning Project

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Acronyms: ER = Eddie Robinson Jr. (Interviewee)

CS = Chastity Suttle (Interviewer)

CR = Colleen Ramirez (Interviewer)

JD = John Duong (Technological)

CS: Good morning I'm Chastity Suttle here with Colleen Ramirez, John Duong and our student veteran Eddie Robinson Jr and we are at the MiraCosta library room 1283. Today is Friday May 14, 2017 and we are conducting an interview with student veteran Eddie on his transition from military life to civilian life. Thank you, Eddie, for being here today with us and sharing your story.

ER: You're welcome Chastity.

CS: When and where did you enlist?

ER: I enlisted February 10, 2013 and I left for boot camp February 11, 2013.

CS: And you joined the Marine Corps, is that correct?

ER: Yes ma'am that's correct.

CS: And why did you pick that branch of service?

ER: I like tough so I wanted to do the best service the recruiter recommended.

CS: And do you recall your first days in service?

ER: Like the first days of service?

CS: Yes

ER: It was different, yes! Someone telling you when to wake up and when to go to sleep yes it's different.. Big difference. The yelling wasn't that bad.

CS: Were the first days really tough leaving home were you missing home a lot?

ER: Not really but i mainly just missed my mom and my brothers.

CS: Who would you say initiated the idea of you joining the military?

ER: My younger brother.

CS: Is he in the military now?

ER: Yes he is still in. he went in 5 months after me. July 2013 because he was still in high school.

CR: Did you and your brother have the buddy system going on when you joined?

ER: Yes but it changed because I was already graduated 2 years ahead.

CS: What was the most important aspect of you joining the military?

ER: To the military it is the fact of listening and to do what you are told and when you're told. I would say helping and taking care of the other marines that you are with your friends and working as team and work together.

CS: You are walking us through the initial feelings when you were on the bus.

ER: It is too late no turning back. It was a lot of rushing and yelling and haircut.

CS: Would you do it all over again if you had the choice?

ER: Yes I would yes.

CS: Have you ever been overseas?

ER: Yes to Afghanistan camp leatherneck, the base.

CS: Can you walk us through a typical day getting up until you went to bed?

ER: Yes it was hot 120 140 degrees. Getting up we had to get our rifles and get on all our gear. Full loads of 6 mags and our weapons, cafler to walk to work you always had to have all of that.

CS: What would you advise a young man or woman that wants to join the service?

ER: To think about and if they want to actually do it then go in with the right mindset. Don't go in thinking your best. Just clear that out and just do it.

CS: Kind of like see what you become huh?

ER: Yes

CS: What did you do when you got out of the service?

ER: I jumped right back into college.

CS: What made you jump right into college?

ER: I wanted to get a jumpstart on a career plus I'm 24 and I don't want to wait that long.

CS: Do you think that your MOS determined your career path? What was your MOS again?

ER: Motor transport operator 3531

CS: What is that?

ER: we drive really big trucks some armored some not, we transported goods, loads and people. We are more of a support aspect of it.

CS: What kind of training did that take?

CR: Well military occupational specialty school, you get to learn the truck from back to front. You learn things of the truck like the things that goes into the truck. Transmission, oils, power steering like things for your car. Then you learn things inside the truck like the sticks, where everything is and you learn how to drive it. You learn how it feels to be inside of the truck.

CR: Is there a special certification for that?

ER: Yes, there is a special license you get while at the school. Once you get past that part. It's a special type of license you have to get stamped every 3 to 4 years

CS: Like recertify yes?

CS: So back to academics, why did you choose MiraCosta?

ER: I heard it was a really good school, my fiancé said that she went here a semester before i started and she said it was a good school and it close to where I stay.

CS: So you have a new baby? 2 months yes? And a fiancé? Did you meet her while you were in the military?

CR: So she is not in the military?

ER: No she is not in the military.

CS: What are your long term goals? I assume you two are planning to get married next year june?

ER: Yes next year June.

CS: Congratulations

ER: Thank you

CS: What are your long term goals academically?

ER: I want to finish school and become a physical therapist. I love the human body and i love the human body and i want to help people recover from something that happened to them.

CS: So that is like night and day from what you were trained for in the military right?

ER: Yes

CS: When did you discover this passion?

ER: Well, the unit I went to first was a medical battalion which is navy and when we went on their field operations (field ops) with them they would do a lot of triaging the victims and they would pretend they were hurt so they would do whatever they can. So that's when I discovered my true passion. I like the idea of helping someone after they've been hurt. They would usually let us come in and help so we could learn. I learn class combat life saver. The navy taught how to triage people and put on tourniquets and give IV's for wounded or anything like that.

CS: You could have become an EMT

ER; No I did not become an EMT, I was too late for that. The course would not have gone with my school.

CS: You didn't want to reenlist?

ER: No

CS: That's understandable.

ER: I would have I was thinking about the long term aspect. But I love the military and I have a family now and I didn't want the complications of having to deploy for long periods of time. I didn't want to put my family through that.

CS: Your life choices made the decision for you?

ER: Yes, plus I have to raise my older brother.

CS: Okay. Can you describe challenges between service and school? Mainly any anxieties in transitioning from military to college?

ER: The only thing is relearning, like in classes I feel like I overthink and second guess myself because I haven't been to school in 6 or 7 years not knowing if I answering correctly. The easy thing that being in the military is that they make you open up and speak in front of other people in presentations.

CS: So you've become more extroverted than introverted you think?

ER: Yes more so now.

CS: Did you ever think about college while in the military?

ER: Yes, they kind of pushed college in the military so everyone can have some type of backup because not everybody can stay in the military. There are sometimes that the military has to let you go so they try to encourage some type of school while in.

ER: When you're in you can use tuition assistance (TA) taking a minimum of 1 to 2 classes for yourself to get a head start on it. Makes for an easier transition when you get out.

CS: Did you do that?

ER: No I was always too busy to do that.

CS: How do you feel you are overcoming the transition from military to civilian life?

ER: I am to an extent I don't curse as much as I used to. The transition is different because I used to talk to my friends with no filter and no one gets offended so I'm working on that part now.

CS: Does that make you uncomfortable a little bit?

ER: Yes, it make things awkward. I can't talk to people like I used to it's hard to find friends that talk off the wall like that.

CS: Do you have any challenges?

ER: Like in life?

CS: Yes

ER: None that I can think of.

Oh well raising my daughter is different cursing and saying different things that I don't want her to pick up on. Like I said in our unit and even with the females in our unit we can say somethings and not they not get offended. But now that I have a daughter I can really be saying things like that to her because I don't want anyone saying things like that to her.

CS: How do you feel about the source of your support?

ER: Like my family support?

CS: Yes

ER: It is really good and they support anything that i do and they are really proud of me though because my grandpa was a Vietnam and an uncle in the Marine Corps as well.

CS: So you did have a strong influence going into the military? I didn't ask you that did i?

ER: You did but my grandpa he doesn't really talk too much about it. Nor did my uncle when he was younger either, until we actually decided to join my uncle said oh yeah the military my grandpa actually opened up a lot more to us about his military experience because back in the day he was drafted. Back in the day he had a lot of problems with PTSD. When I was in he actually sat down and talked to me about it. He talks to no one in the family not even his wife. He actually talks to us about how proud he is of us. So it made me feel really good. He's a funny character but he doesn't do serious moments like that very often like that.

CS: Wow.

CS: Would you want your daughter to join the military?

ER: No but if she wants to I'm not going to stop her.

ER: Yes and no to an extent I feel like the military can help out a lot it teaches certain people different aspects of life that people take for granted.

CS: What did it teach you?

ER: I've already had a difficult life coming up but it mostly taught me about me and brothers always were together and my mom taught me the aspect of family and how to treat everyone like family that would be one treating not just your family as family but those you serve with and the other that you would protect. Basically to care about other people than yourself.

CS: That is the essences....

CS: Is there a contrast between military and civilians can you describe that contrast. And your feelings on it.

ER: Well we feel that we are different we feel like civilians are disgusting because they complain a lot more because they take things for granted. And they get too butt hurt about things. The military teaches that gay and color doesn't really matter. We crack jokes and we know civilians wouldn't like it.

CS: Can you describe what's working for you here at college.

ER: Can you elaborate more on that/

CS: Mayne services here, have you utilized them and are they working?

CS: This is a two part question

ER: The veteran services and the staff are very helpful. I've set up several appointment and it helps to h=get direction on what I'm trying to accomplish. And they help you figure it out.

ER: If you're having trouble in class or need to study or people to talk to if need be.

CS: Did you have any previous college before the military?

ER: I did I had a semester of college at home in Lincoln land after I graduated from high school when I was seventeen. I graduated a year early from high school.

CS: You graduated a year early from high school? Why was that?

ER: Yes, I was selected or a summer academics program in high school because I had really good grades coming out of middle school so they offered me extra math class and English and another class and gave us extra credit. It was on 12 of us selected in all the schools so it allowed us to graduate early from school.

CS: So you're really smart?

ER: Yeah probably not so much now. (24:09)

ER: These are pics of my brother and cousin at my mom at her funeral.

CR: Fiancees name?

ER: Edith

CR: Edith?

ER: yes.

CR: what made you nervous about school?

ER: The only thing that really made me anxious was like relearning so like in classes i feel like I don't want to overthink it or second guess myself. I didn't know if i would have the right answer because i hadn't been to school in 6 or 7 years, until now. So i was second guessing myself not knowing if the answer would be correct, i just gave it a shot anyway. But the easy thing is that since i'm in the military where they kind of make you open yourself open up and speak in front of other people it makes it more easier to speak up.

CR: Charles or Jackie?

ER: That is my brother's name named after my grandfather.

CR: Do you see anything in the video that you want to add to it.

CR: Did edith register you for school before you got out? Did she help get you in school before you got out?

ER: Yes she helped me with the process like the things i would need as far as how to enroll aside from the veteran side of it.

CR: Registered and enrolled.

CS: Do you have a picture of your whole family?

CR: Yes

ER: My whole family?

CR: Yes that's what we wanted to do that last night.

ER: Like my mom and my brothers?

CS: Yes.

CR: Where are your grandparents now?

ER; At home, my grandma is coming on the 25th.

CS: How do you think your fiancee supported your transition to school from the military?

CS: How do you think your fiance is pushing you through school?

CS: Define that push.

ER: How my fiance is helping pushing me through school is like everyday literally everyday she knows I have schoolwork and i have to go to work. She's really patient with me with not being able to help with the baby as much not being able to do this and do that. She's so understandable even when i get mad by not waking me up for a diaper change. She's like babe you have to go to

bed and sleep and when we're watching t.v. she will say babe you have to do your homework. She makes sure that i stay on top of my stuff.

ER: And family, my cousin is going back to school to get a higher degree so my family is really supportive of it too it's making them want to do something better.

CR: It's like you're an inspiration.

ER: Yes, my little family.

CR: Charles is still in right?

ER: Yes he gets out next month.

CS: Do you still talk to your brothers

ER: My Marine family?

CS: Yes.

ER: Yes, we were just over because one is about to get out and go back home to idaho.

ER: Well I'm a nerd so this is my nerd Marine family we are the ones that sit and play xbox all day and night.

We played drinking uno. He doesn't really drink but he will do it for me. After uno we played teching while my baby girl just watching us have fun. He's about to leave me.

CS: Once your brother always your brother.

ER: Yes. I tell them all I'm gonna come and visit and I'm glad that they all live in different states. I have one brother in Japan but when he gets back he has a cabin where he stays in Minnesota and he said we can come and if we want to honeymoon there we can come and stay for free.

CS:What are the particular events that drive you through this transition to college from the military?

ER: Honestly, to keep my mom proud and being able to provide for my brothers and my new family I have now. Because I had to take in my brother and that's my big responsibility and I want treat him just like my child so I want him to have a better life than what we had. That's what me and my older brother are aiming for.

CS: That is awesome. That is the essence.

CR: That is the essence.

CS: I am so proud of you and I'm so proud to be apart of your life and just to capture your life and you and your service to this country and your dedication to your family and your dedication to your future and your transition to college and staying with it and doing well, I'm so proud of you. We are proud to be apart of this project and we will do our best to represent you. (18:30)





