

MiraCosta College Student Veteran Oral History Service Learning Project

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Interview Date: November 8, 2017

Interview Location: MiraCosta Community College Library

Acronyms:

Calvin Coleman (C.C) (Interviewee)

Jolinda Trody (J.T) (Primary Interviewer)

Alec Peneschi (A.P) (Secondary Interviewer)

Kevon Belle (K.B) (Secondary Interviewer)

Daniela Mendoza (D.M) (Secondary Interviewer)

Transcript 0-15

J.T: The date is November 8th, and we're in the MiraCosta Library, I am Jolinda Trody.

K.B: I'm Kevon Belle.

AP: I'm Alec Peneschi.

DM: I'm Daniela Mendoza.

J.T: We are interviewing retired Sgt. Major Calvin Coleman.

J.T: This is our MiraCosta Student Veteran Oral History Service learning Project.

J.T: What branch of service were you in?

C.C: I served in The United States Marine Corps.

J.T: What was your rank?

C.C: I was the rank of Sgt. Major which is an E-9.

J.T: Where did you serve?

CC: Last served Camp Pendleton but served coast- coast.

J.T: What was your MOS?

CC: It's called an 8999 which is the senior enlisted advisor to the commanding officer.

J.T: What did that job consist of?

CC: The job pretty much consisted of me giving the enlisted perspective to officers before they make command decisions.

J.T: Did you serve in any wars?

CC: Yes, I served in Operation Desert Shield, Desert Storm, Somalia, Iraq, the most recent one, Afghanistan, each of those conflicts twice.

J.T: Were you drafted or did you enlist?

CC: I enlisted in 1986.

J.T: Where were you living at the time?

CC: My first duty station, was Kaneohe Bay MCAS, Hawaii. I was originally living in California and once I graduated boot camp, I received orders to Kaneohe Bay, Hawaii.

J.T: When you went in as a civilian, you were living in California at that time? That's where you originated from before you joined the Marine Corps?

CC: I was a military dependent. My father was in the Air Force, and his last duty station was in Fresno, California, and when he retired, that's when I joined.

J.T: Why did you join the Marine Corps your choice, instead of the Air Force like dad?

CC: I saw the Air Force current lifestyle and realized with the way I was acting as a kid, I probably would have tried to beat the system because I thought I knew better. At that time, I figured I better get something. I thought was more disciplined, and that when I chose to join the Marine Corps, cause in my mind at that time I thought it was harder.

J.T: So, you were looking for a challenge?

CC: Yes, definitely looking for a challenge.

J.T: How were you while you were a senior in High School, or through your High school years?

C.C: Undisciplined, no focus, no direction. I wouldn't say lost, but without a purpose.

J.T.: So you felt that the Marine Corps?

C.C: I definitely felt would give me more discipline than what I had at the current time.

J.T: Do you recall your first days in the service?

C.C: My first days in the service, I just reflect back to boot camp of 1986. May as a matter of fact, I was disillusioned because I thought I knew the military because of my background. This was exactly opposite, the yelling the screaming the standing at attention, the requesting of doing everything was very opposite of everything I've ever seen in the Air Force, and at that moment I kind of wondered if that was the right thing to do.

JT: What kind of things were they yelling, what was the yelling about?

CC: It's Drill Instructors, being Drill Instructors. Everything you do, to go to the bathroom, requesting permission to speak, it goes from requesting permission to speak, to requesting permission to go to the bathroom, which we call a "head" and they could say yes or no, shut up or correct you, which means you have to start over each time. Which means you have to learn to think quickly, say what's appropriate and basically comply to a whole new set of rules and laws, which was definitely a culture shock.

JT: How was your transition as far as?

CC: Well my transition was no worse than anyone else's. I had a pretty large platoon, what I was doing, everyone else was doing, so when they mess up you don't feel so bad, we all get penalized over one guys mistakes it just kind of teaches you to be responsible for someone else's conduct.

KB: During your drills, were you like ever the center of attention, did you ever get in trouble that caused your platoon?

CC: Everyone does, every recruit does, if you scratch without being authorized to move, "oh good you want to scratch?" everyone pays.

KB: It was that bad?

CC: That bad, if you look in the direction you're not supposed to look at, and you get caught everyone pays. What they are trying to teach you is that one mistake or one act without authorization or permission could cost someone their life, or hurt someone, or something like that. So what they're really just saying is "Hey we all need to be doing the same things at the same time, all the time". I understand it now, but back then, I understand it was games.

AP: What was some of the consequences that you went through?

CC: I remember one time I scratched and the Drill instructor said "keep scratching" keep scratching, then he told me scratch harder, I guess I wasn't scratching hard enough and so he said, scratch harder, scratch harder, scratch harder, and next thing I know my face was bleeding, you know, I just did what he said and then just kind of a game, I didn't have to scratch that hard, but guess I wasn't scratching hard enough, so I continued to scratch, and that was a frequent game with everyone not just me.

JT: How did that feel having to be told what you could do, when you could do it?

CC: As long as you understand that you only needed to do it for three months, you know after boot camp, you're basically human again, so you play this game for three months and you want me to scratch hard for now and give us one less day to do it, and you know it is one less to do it and you know it eventually will end.

KB: Did those three months go by fast for you, three months when you look at it now it seems a pretty long time to be getting told to do every single thing and every single step, was that long for you, or did it go by pretty quick?

CC: It's, actually goes by really fast, because every minute of your day as a recruit would be planned, there is 5 minutes to go to the bathroom, there's 30 minutes to eat, there's 30 minutes after chow. It's like every minute of your day is allocated for, so before you have no control over it, so they're telling you what to do, before you know it, it's time to go to sleep. Then the next day, every minute is accounted for so three months goes by like that really, because you have no control over what you're doing, you're always wondering what the next thing? So, you're just waiting to be told what to do, and you do it, before you know it, it's time to go to sleep, one day down.

AP: What was it like as an average day for you?

CC: As a recruit or as a Marine?

AP: let's do both, as a recruit and a Marine?

CC: As a recruit, the day varied, we have what we called a training schedule, and it's designed to, I guess to train you to be a Marine at the 90-day mark, and each day kind of builds on something else. The first phase is just introduction, teaching you history, customs, courtesies, how to salute, how to wear a uniform, inspections, how to walk, how to talk, how to march, how to handle your weapon. Then after you learn that, then you go to Edson range. Which is right there on Camp Pendleton, they teach you how to fire your weapon, in between we're still working drill, teaching you how to weapon manipulations, how to engage with your weapon, some combat skills, and then you come back for that last month to MCRD San Diego to train you in other aspects, you're basically transitioning to go to the fleet for support, they don't want you to be a little puppet anymore, we want to teach you how to think on your own, and to give you a little bit more freedom as time goes on.

CC: In the fleet, when I retired, my normal day would come in look at the guys that got in trouble, look at the guys, getting recognized, go out and talk to the Marines and find out what kind of problems they were having, sometimes talking to their families, sometimes correcting a Marine who was doing something wrong, sometimes it's praising someone giving them an award, writing awards. Usually, I tried to get out as much as possible, to get to know the Marines, so I could advise the Colonel, I'd know exactly what's going on, in the conversation, this is what's going on in this shop, we need to focus on that

before it becomes a problem. I had the latitude to do pretty much what I wanted, near the end of my career, I put myself in a place to work out, which it benefited the unit the most.

JT: What does MCRD stand for?

CC: MCRD stands for Marine Corps Recruit Depot

JT: What is the Fleet?

CC: Fleet is the regular Marine Corps, is referred to the Fleet.

JT: Thank you.

Daniela Mendoza 1501-3000

CC: To keep their mind strong and try to keep them ethically sound um combat got so ugly at times, where I saw them almost turn into animals at times and then I got to be disciplinary and tell them to stop, a couple times I took people's weapons, "give me your weapon go sit in that room" and now they're mad, here they are in combat and they can't touch their weapon but I just really wanted to decompress them for a little bit and some of them after a week or so when i'd give them their weapon back i'd just watch them closely because I felt like they might not be able to make a transition to that gear because they were to overwhelmed their. So that was my biggest concern won the enemy like most people think I just saw how combat can change people, so that was my focus I guess.

KB: so you said that was around your 8th deployment, but how about your first deployment, how was your mindset ?

CC: I think every young marine is just so eager to go you know ? we all join and we all want to serve we all want to say alright i've been training now let me do what I can do. Picture yourself training for a football or basketball game and then sitting on the bench the whole time. You kinda feel that when you're back here and everyone else is fighting. So my first deployment they said you're going and I was ready to go, i'm out here i'm basically what they call the tip of the spear, wherever this ship goes or where they tell us to go i'm the first one there. So you feel like you're 18, so I was kind of motivated on that one but nothing happened all I did was went to ports, ports into hong kong, Thailand and drank a lot of beer and do what young men do when they deploy you know so that wasn't really what I envisioned the deployment to be when I joined the marine corp

KB: You envisioned where like you would go over there and you would fight?

CC: I thought everything was a fight, every time we'd go somewhere i'd be like "alright get your weapon let's go" and that's not the case.

KB: Which one of of your deployments did you experience your first battle ?

CC: My first battle I would say was in Somalia, I think you all have heard of black hawk down ?
Everyone: yeah!

CC: I was there when that took place and the most amazing thing is to watch thirteen ships pull up to the coast of Somalia and from the ships you see all the fighting going on and then when the marines go ashore no one's there and that was pretty amazing and just basically our presence alone stopped the fight, they were afraid to fight us and so they just left and now on that deployment uforntunaltey I didnt get to get any engagements because when we got there it was like quiet like a ghost town but if that stops battle then I guess we won our purpose

JT: you said that there was a lot of mental breakdowns and stuff while you were going through combat, was there anybody who was there while you guys were where you were at, so you would have somebody to talk to them or was there any bod implemented for them or for you to go to when you were having those problems ?

CC: We had a chaplain that was part of the battalion and he would go from company to company but honestly some of those guys kind of lost faith in Jesus in Christ and whatever their faith was because you see thing that aren't natural and that had many guys tell them, "Hey I don't want to talk to anybody because if God is God then why is this happening" I heard that almost every day so even the chaplain he's a pretty amazing guy, when we would go out patrol he would go out without a weapon and were out there patrolling and were getting gunned you know receiving gun fire and he's just right there praying and that in many ways it was reassuring to me that hey if he's out here in combat and God's going to take care of him without a weapon it kind of made me feel pretty good because I had a weapon but other than that he wasn't there all the time but when he was most people didn't even talk to him

JT: And why is that ?

CC: They lost faith, you know you see like I said you see how ugly war is and they just kind of said "okay God you kind of lied to me"

JT: Were you ever prisoner of war ?

CC: Negative.

JT: Can you tell me about your most memorable experiences?

CC: I'll just say one that was the best, when I was a drill instructor uhh 1994 to 1996 I think I was a sergeant at the time and that was my get away from the job infantry time and at that time I was employed to be a United States Marine Corp Drill Instructor and I think every young marine, I thin one of drill instructors said that the closest that a marine could come come to giving birth is making his own marines and as a drill instructor every recruit that graduates remembers his drill instructor, so I graduated nine recruit platoons that's more than i'd say about 800 almost 900 people that I made marines and they all remember me from my drill instructor days, just as I remember my drill instructors to this day and I would say that's probably the most memorable or highest level of performance I felt you know you get up at three in the morning and you're off about ten/eleven for three months straight.they graduate the next week then you do it all over again for three months, you do that pretty much at that time it was for two years now it's a three year thing so I would say and then you are in the eye of the recruit the definition of the marine corp and that was pretty motivating.

JT: Were you awarded any medals or citations?

CC: I received the legion of merit which is id say one up above the bronze star, I received a purple heart, navy accomodation medal which is fourth award marine corps achievement medal I received four of those... I got twenty three medals i'll just say that!

JT: How did you get a couple of them, can you explain that?

CC: Doing my job and doing it at a higher level than everyone else. The Marine Corps is very competitive and even of something as simple as doing what we call our PT our physical training test where other people were getting two hundred out of three hundred. I would always try to get three hundred and not only do three hundred but when we would have to run eighteen minutes to get your max points I would always try to run sixteen minutes so I just raised my standards higher than the marine corp standards that I fell short I was still save me and luckily that pushde me up to the ranks and when I would achieve to be a sergeant major they look at your entire career, they do just say well you're good this year or your bad this year, they look at all that and I think there's a total of four hundred and

forty seven sergeant ,majors in the entire marine corps. So you broke yourself up the pat into this competitive mindset so it was always trying to do better than anyone else

JT: Being a higher rank were you involved in battle planning at all ? Were you involved in that and how?

CC: Yes quite a bit. Anytime a commander would try to come up with a plan I would be present for the briefs, the way it normally works at the level I was at we have a staff and each one brings their role in supported battle or combat. If I thought something was crazy I was able to ask the question and if the kernel and I didn't like it we could tell them to go back and redo that, reconsider this or add this, take that out and being in Iraq as a gunny and at the time i've spent more time in the infant than anyone in that company so I advised the commander with tactics to use, weapons that we have, types of ammunition to use, types of vehicles to use, night vision devices, things of that nature so I helped them with the planning based off the assets that we had but even in the harrowing when I had my squadron I would develop security plans for the base as well and that was all on me and to protect the base from attack was my sole responsibility when I was a squadron major

JT: Where were you a squadron sergeant major?

CC: In Afghanistan and they were attacked.

JT: How were they attacked ?

CC: Couple guys dressed up in army uniforms and tried to come through the wire

JT: What happened, what did you do?

CC: We shot them.

JT: Haha okay...

CC: They threw RPGs at us and some grenades just tried to climb over the fence

KB: So it wasn't like a high scale attack ?

CC: Well we had guards on the fence but the guards though they were army people so they didn't shoot them and they had about thirteen guys that tried to blow a hole in the wire and my

guard took action on him and got rid of them and no I wasn't engaged in that conflict they got there before I could. Hahaha

JT: Haha okay well we're going to ask a couple of life questions

CC: Okay

JT: How did you stay in touch with your family during this time, during the times of your deployment ?

CC: The first couple deployments were pretty much old school you know it was 1987 when I first went on and that was letters then desert shield, desert storm came around it was still letters in 1990 time frame the mail was free all you got to do was write free in the corner where the stamps was supposed to be. So you would write a simple letter "Hey, how are you doing?" then you'd write another one one letter and mail it because it's all free. It wasn't until early 2000's where we started to get internet and to be honest I didn't skype or anything until my last deployment because I felt like that was kind of soft compared to what the way I grew up and all my younger marines they would skype all the time, facetime and all that stuff and I was still write a letter because I was kind of old fashioned like that. I felt less I told my wife the better, I didn't need her worrying about what i'm dealing with and if she could see something in my face that would not be good. I remember one time we had phones and I was at a rooftop because I remember we got the best satellite with those things and i'm on the rooftop and I get shot at while i'm talking to her. She's like "how you doing?" and i'm over here sliding around the rooftop, i'm trying to scoot around in the sand bags and uh she's like "is everything okay?" i'm like "yeah everything's fine" she was like "what's that noise?" and I was like people are shooting over their don't worry about that and then i'm like well i got to go and as soon as I walk out the way a bullet hit my canteen. So I decided not to call that much anymore after that. So I called her like once a week maybe once every two weeks to just let her know i'm okay

JT: What kind of food was there that you would be eating, how did the food, let's say this case you said nineteen eighty seven, how did the food improve from back then to now ?

CC: Foods much better now. In early days MRE's but they weren't fancy MRE's they'd come in a little brown bag and back then it was a piece of dehydrated pork or dehydrated beef and you put a little bit of water on it and it blows up um you might have some like what you call it beans and weenies like beans and franks, porks and beans and it comes in like an aluminum bag you'd dip it in water and warm it up but most of the time you were in such

a rush so you'd eat it cold and you don't eat it for taste you just eat it because you need energy and nutrients ah nowadays they have lasagna cakes they have all these nice things and you can get fat eating those things, I used to give them to my son to go to school i'd be like here have one

JT: Did you have plenty of supplies while you were out there?

CC: Yes, like I mentioned the time I was in combat that for my most intense time in Iraq. I felt realistically that we were not prepared for that battle, we went in with a mind set that of we were gonna help rebuild the city and you know secure the areas of their government and take care of themselves. We didn't go into fight we went into broad security for each city and while we were there there was enough bad guys that had integrated with the local community that turned on us. So we didn't go in there with all the gear that we needed, there was no armored vehicles. We didn't have all the night vision devices that we needed, we ended up ordering it and as time I would say about a month in the combats that stuff started showing up but we went in not really prepared and I believe that's part of the reason why we had so many casualties but nowadays everyone has everything they need there are no problems with it and I guess we were kind of the guinea pigs, so now we go with more stuff instead of less stuff and if we don't need it it just sits over there just in case you need it and we didn't have that luxury on my tour

JT: Was there anything special like was there something special that you did before deployments or during deployments for like goodluck ?

CC: I don't believe in luck I believe in destiny and what you put into it, normally we would train train train they'd give you like a couple days before you left normally it's like a month off before you deploy due to the need of tier initial push in Iraq, we didn't get that luxury. I think we got like a week and all I did was went to the beach, drank a lot of beer, and spent time with my family you know for that week then launched. So I didn't have any regular ritual that I did before I went out the door, just enjoyed family time and do it out.

JT: Were there other marines around you that did have rituals?

CC: There were some pretty religious ones (30:02)

Kevon Belle: 30:03 - 45

JT: Were there any marines that did have rituals, if so what were they?

CC: There was some pretty religious ones that were pretty deep in their faith and if that worked for them then good. I can't really think of anything, nothing really stands out, a lot of people praying before they go out the door who didn't normally pray.

JT: How did you guys entertain yourself when you were on your own time ?

CC: Marines have funny ways of finding things to amuse themselves. Some guys made a swimming pool out of sandbags you know they stacked up sandbags this high and put some plastic in the bottom went back and forth to the river and put water in it, then you 8 marines in green shorts acting like they're swimming, or they would play poker with bullets because we didn't have any money, we didn't need any money. I've even seen just about anything. They turn to little kids when they're just inside the area

KB: I mean that's understandable. You guys are out there in combat and stuff

CC: They were like children without supervision. They would find ways when you go to sleep to pour things in your mouth. Pretty much horseplay. They would try to light things that were flammable when they were pouring it in their mouth just to scare you while they are pouring it in their mouth. We have a saying a boring marine is a dangerous marine. They look for ways to amuse themselves which usually don't end well

KB: Kind of sounds like a frat

CC: Pretty much

KB: So like you as a person did you like mess around with the younger marines when you became an older marine?

CC: All the time

KB: What are some things you did?

CC: I would like say those sandbags look lonely they need some brothers, like all yall get up when I catch them horseplaying and have em fill a hundred sandbags keep in mind it's about 120 to 130 degrees outside, and then they'll come out with their shorts, and i'll say you'll probably catch a mortar out here go put your flack and helmet on and then they'll go put all their gear on and usually that'll make them tired so then they'll go to sleep and not horseplay

KB: So they'll be thinking you're serious but you're just joking around

CC: Oh I was serious, seriously playing

JT: Did you do any personal traveling while you were in the service? Let's say ike one time you were in italy did you have a chance to go anywhere else in italy you know be a tourist.

CC: You know I didn't do much tourism, most of the time I would in my role I was so worried about them becoming an international incident for messing with the girls, drinking too much, as to where I needed to be available. Most of the time I would go out into town and enjoy a good meal or something like that or maybe sightsee in the area. I never really

got away. The young guys I would let them do it but I didn't do it. As a young guy I was the one to go around and do stuff but as I get older I wanted to be around in case I needed to be available for something that happened.

JT: When you were younger where did you go?

CC: Oh everywhere I went to all the trails in Okinawa to look at all the places where battle took place, where else um I went to all the sites. I can't even remember the names of all the site. Just if it was a sight we'd go there and take a picture and look out of place.

JT: Do you have any pictures of when you were in the service?

CC: I do.

JT: Is there anyway we can get access to them?

CC: I can get my wife to send them because she has them. I don't look at them.

JT: Why not?

KB: Well because they are in your mind, you already saw them.

CC: I knew what it was.

JT: What did you think of officers or other fellow soldiers?

CC: When I was younger I had the utmost respect for officers as I moved up I realized they're immature and kids too and being a senior adviser to the general if I do something bad to them who are they gonna go tell the kernel? He is telling me what to go tell them to do,

so I really have no fear of them. I could mess with them now because that was my position. if I salute you I need one back. When I was younger I had to give them total respect. With the other services, like when I was in Bagram I had to work with the Air Force and the Navy and I was the senior man on that big ship. So I got to see some of the differences in the service the good and the bad. How we do things. The army and how bad they were to control. The Air force and how technical they were and how the navy was a lot more disciplined than the other services in their own weird way. How they were a stickler for rules, and then how the marine corps where the wild children that we don't kinda control, not as disciplined as the other services or as we like to brag about. I see how we believe in our history more than other services. Other services view their job as a job and marines view it as a lifestyle or they see it as a way of life. Those are things I learned but all in all we do the same job but just in different ways.

JT: In your initial introduction when you came to the class, you talked about how you weren't interested in the mesac program. Can you talk about that and also there was something called becoming a mustang, have you ever thought about becoming a mustang and if so did you wanna become a mustang or why not?

CC: There was this time when I was younger that I met a young officer and he was black and he told me about becoming an officer. He told me you give up the right to speak, you only

do what your commander tells you to do, and that scared me because if I saw something wrong I wanted to be in the position to say it. So I talked to a few more people as I moved up the ranks and as a sergeant major I'm in the perfect position. I remember when I was stationed in West Virginia I was stationed with about 70 to 80 officers and they would come to me to go tell the general something, because they couldn't say it because they would look bad because they had to be the yes sir guy and I would just go to the general and say sir that is the stupidest thing I've heard in my life, this is why, and if the officers had to say the same thing they would get passed for promotions. Being enlisted gave me the opportunity to speak right on. With my experience I wouldn't have given that up for nothing, and being a mustang sometimes those guys were confused they don't know whether they were an officer or if they were enlisted. To the officers they were enlisted and to the enlisted they were an officer so they're kinda like in the middle they're a hybrid they don't fit, and even then they still have to report to another guy and follow all the officers orders. I can sit there and say sir I think that order is ridiculous let's change that, here's a new policy, here is what I think we should do and I think it works. You give up that power if you become an officer and those things are what increases morale and discipline when people see that you change things and officers can't do that unless they report to someone else. So I didn't want to give that power up.

JT: Did you keep a diary while you were there while you were in the service?

CC: No

JT: Why not?

CC: Didn't have time I mean I was too busy doing what I do I didn't have time to write it all
down

JT: In what ways or were there any special things you looked forward to doing from those
deployments?

CC: It varied each time. Most of the time, my son is 27 and for most of his 27 years of life I
think I was gone at least 8 or 9 times for six months or longer and on some occasions it
was 11 months and one occasion it was 12 months so I missed a lot of his life. So when I
was home a majority of my time was with my son, like let's go do this let's go do that,
doing all the father son things trying to make up for lost time, even now I'm in school i
feel like I still owe him time even at 27 I robbed him of so much when he was coming
up.

JT: Was there anything you guys would do before or after you were deployed ?

CC: Go surf, go fishing, go snowboarding, pretty much whatever he wanted to do. Like I tried to
be that superdad like on the weekend then when i came back i would just chew his butt.

JT: Do you remember the day your service ended ?

CC: Yes I do

J: Can you paint that picture for us?

Alec Peneschi 45- 55

J: Is your education supported by GI Bill?

C: Absolutely

J: Did you make any close friends in the service? Anyone you stay close with?

CC: Yes i stay in touch with almost all the guys as a matter of fact one of the guys was one of my recruits and we asked me to be his guest of honor, and i have another one on the 19th from another marine. Been out almost two years every year I go because of someone i expired.

JT: How is it when you see them?

CC: Awkward because there are still Marines and then when the balls over your not. Kind of a reminder of what I used to be but I'm happy where I am now.

JT: What are some experiences you apply to?

CC: Attention to detail I hate failing, not completing a mission, I don't sleep until it's done. Respect courtesy. Honesty in general is big in the army. Trust is everything to me. I believe you if you give me your word I'll give you my word. I was checking my watch cause I didn't want to be the late one. One of the things that shaped me to be on point

JT:Are you involved in any veteran organizations?

CC: The VFW Veteran Foreign Wars I got an old team member but realized it was a big drinking expedition but they drink a little too much for me. I say hello every once in awhile.

JT: Did your military experiences influence your thinking about war?

CC: My combat time changed my whole perspective. Combat made me see the good in some things and the bad. And it made me appreciate some things and question others. And we would do raids and separate the woman and the men. Think about me going in your

house you know any man would want to help his family. So those i struggled with it made me say are we doing this the right way. I think we created the next group of insurgents. They were young boys many of those kids were young and i'm sure that shaped them to hate americans. Made me question if we're doing it right

JT: What did you think about retirement and what it would be like retired? Did you imagine what you would be doing?

CC: It's exactly how I thought it would be. I'm only in charge of me. If I get sick of school I can stop and come back again when I'm ready. I wanted to have that freedom and freedom i didn't have.

KB: What are some things you would change about your transition ?

CC: I think took more time on active duty to prepare my mind for the transition. I worked up to the last day and then I had a parade and then someone hit the off switch and it kind of hit me.

JT: Were there any fears during this transition ?

CC: The civilian world doesn't know how much responsibility that came with my rank. I was in charge of 3000 people. And when I thought about applying for jobs I realized I don't have college. And when I told them I was a senior advisor they really don't know how much responsibility comes with that. My wife goes "Oh you're going to get hired easy". But when I go to turn in my application it's almost blank. And I can sit there and say I managed this group but what credentials do I have. That kind of threw me back I thought they would give more credit. They don't know what you do in the service I guess they just think you wear a uniform and yell at people. So how do you put that on a resume.

JT: Why did you choose MiraCosta ?

CC: I started in oceanside 2 semesters ago because Palomar was close to my house and I was taking the little mini quizzes so i just decided to make the drive. I like the community more or less.

JT: What did you think about when you got here and how do you feel now?

CC: I felt like the old man running around school and most people looking at you like what is he doing here. And why does he have so many questions. The only thing is I'm doing this because this is something I want to do. This is something you need and have to do.

JT: Is there anything you like to add that we haven't covered?

CC: No I think we got everything.

KB: I have a question in your opinion do you ever think of becoming a sport coach to kind of get that authority back.

CT: I don't want that authority I had it for 30 years. I know what it feels like smells, like i know everything about it. My goal is to give back to help those who struggling. I seen too many soldiers to such a great thing and then come back and can't function. And that bothers me and I feel like I'm the only one that can reach them, because marines are competitive and judgemental. So if i was going to get in a room and be like what's going on and tell him my experiences so he would rather talk to me than anyone else. I don't want to be at the top level. I want to be down at the roots level helping the people face reality because most of them aren't ready.

JT: Do you have any strengths or weaknesses as a student?

CC: Math

JT: What math are you in

CC: 30. I'm terrible at it but i'm passing. I say I'm bad but i just know it's not my strong point. If it means im staying up all night i'm going to pass that class. It's the way it is even if my wife is like I'm here like hold up I'm doing a problem. I struggle with all the technology so yeah. Kids can walk around with there computer. So when I have to watch a video i have to go to the 22 year old.

JT: Do you use any resources?

CC: I do they know me well I use the research lab I use the math lab I know them all by name. So yeah I reach out to them as much as I can.

JT: Alright, thank you so much!