

Mira Costa College Student Veteran Oral History Service Learning Project

Interviewee: Josh Piero

Interviewer: Naomi Colin

Interviewer: Nick Lopez

Interview Date: October 31, 2017

Interview Location: Mira Costa Community College Library

Acronyms:

JP: Josh Piero (interviewee)

NC: Naomi Colin (primary interviewer)

NL: Nick Lopez (secondary interviewer)

NC: Hi my name's Naomi Colin, and I'm going to be the interviewer.

JP: Okay.

NL: We're here with Josh.

JP: Josh Piero.

NL: Let's get the interview started!

NC: First question, why did you join the military?

JP: I joined, well I have like a bunch of family that was in the military. I had an uncle that was in 82nd Airborne, and in the army. I have a great-grandpa that was in the Marine Corps. My grandpa was in the Army. He was in during Korea, but he didn't deploy to Korea or anything. It's kind of like a family thing, that was like the next indicated step after high school. Initially, I didn't join; I took two years to join. Iraq had just started; I was like 18 years old and I was really afraid of going over to Iraq. You know, and so I kind of like destroyed my life. I was partying a lot, I was writing graffiti, hanging out with the wrong guys. I got arrested a couple times. I was kind of at the point where the Marine Corps is like a good option for me. It completely rebuilt my life. So, it's kind of like my way out from my neighborhood. I'm from Los Angeles, not a very good area.

NL: Makes sense, so you had a bunch of family, did they all pitch it to you?

Josh: It was not so much like, "Hey this is what you're going to do". It was just kinda like "Hey this is what I did", you know it's an option for you. It wasn't like frowned upon in any way shape or form, it was like, "Hey that's an option for you". That or go get behind a trade and learn something.

NL: Yeah.

NC: Did you say you had any brothers or sisters?

JP: No I'm the only child. Yeah, it's just me and my mom.

NC: And so, why the Marine Corps specifically? I know you said your grandpa was in the Army.

JP: So, initially I wanted to join the army and go 82nd Airborne Rangers and jump out of planes. And what happened is that I had a buddy that joined prior to me and went into the Marine Corps. And I was going into some functions with him, and I remember going and talking to the army recruiters. The first words out of the army recruiter's mouth was like, "Hey, we can give you \$22,000 today if you sign". I was like, I don't know, I mean I was a broke kid from LA, but that's not what I was looking for. I wasn't looking for money you know; and

I went and I talked to the Marine Corps recruiters, and they pull out these cards like, “These are the things we can offer you, Pride and Belonging, Spirit to the Core, Giving you something to fight for”. And I chomped at that at the bit. I was like yeah, this is what I want. I do, I want to be a marine.

NL: So like, you went for it, you weren’t going for money but you wanted some structure to be able to reconstruct your life.

JP: Yeah structure, I just needed a way out for the most part. The situation I had made for myself.

NC: So, you already talked about family in the military. Any friends that joined with you?

JP: Yeah I have a buddy that, I don’t know, I was living with him at the time. I’d see him go off to like the poolee functions.

NL: Is that like, what is that?

JP: Poolee functions? So like before you join, they offer you like to, I don’t know. You’re not officially in the Marine Corps, but you sign a contract and you go to Marine Corp functions prior to enlisting. That counts towards your time off contract, for your inactive service. I mean you have to do a mandatory four years when you sign the contract; or whatever your contract says. Then there’s an inactive timeframe. The inactive timeframe is like, if there was a war to pop off, they could call you back in. And then they’re like, we still got you for four more years.

NL: So you’re promising then, makes sense.

NC: So still on friendship, did you leave any friends behind?

JP: Yeah, I left all of my friends behind. All of my friends were dirtbags.

NC: For the better then?

JP: Yeah, it was definitely for the better, I don’t talk to any of those guys anymore.

NC: Right on. Would you say that most of the friends you have now, are from the Marine Corps and the Military?

JP: I really don’t have that many because now that I’m out. I’ve been out since December, that will be about a year. Most of my buddies are back east because I did my first four years on the east coast. So when they got out, that’s where they went back. Everybody went back home. And I’m from the west coast, so I came back home too; as soon as I came back out here.

NL: Did you ever try to tell any of your friends from LA for an update, like “Hey I’m doing the Marines”

JP: No, I was like for the most part it was like “Hey dude, this is what I’m doing” and I had some buddies that were like, “Oh dude, that’s stupid, you’re gonna go work for the man” you know, like for lack of better words, “Fuck the system, I don’t wanna be a part of that” and “I can’t believe you’re gonna do that either” and that just shows you the level of friends I had at that point in time, you know.

NC: How long were you in for?

JP: I was in for nine years, yeah.

NL: That’s a long time

NC: This is gonna be a tough one to answer then. Do you remember your first days when you first joined?

JP: Yeah, just super, I remember going to boot camp, and on the way to boot camp, they played the movie Full Metal Jacket. To get us all pumped up, and I guess prepare us for what we

were about to encounter. Just super anxious like, let's get this over with, and then, you know I remember getting to boot camp, and it was everything I could imagine. It was pretty intense, and yeah I was excited. Like exciting being in that type of environment.

NC: And how was it with the, was it easy to be yelled at so much?

JP: Some people like, you know, like other recruits, they didn't adapt so well, but for me, I had adapted really well, I like thrived in a structured environment, and yeah it was, I mean, what am I trying to say here. I'm not saying it was easy but any means but it was, like I was finally in an environment that I had structure, I had a direction I was going, and like that was something I was looking for my whole life. I prevailed, like I graduated boot camp as the guide

NC: The guide-on? With the flag?

JP: Yeah, and yeah it was, I loved it. It was perfect. It was fun to me. It was a game.

NC: So would you say, you said some other recruits didn't really adapt well and that would happen because they weren't, like maybe the didn't have a better life beforehand?

JP: Well, I wouldn't say a better life, but maybe their life of experiences weren't the same as mine. You know, like everyone comes from different backgrounds, and that might've been the first time they had ever been yelled at in their life.

NL: But you were looking for that.

JP: Yeah, I was searching it out.

NC: Any funny or bad, or just any stories that you can recall from boot camp?

JP: From boot camp I remember, I don't know it was like two o'clock in the morning, and they got us all out of our racks, and we got online, and there was this dude Rodriguez. MCRD San Diego it's right next to an airport, right next to the San Diego airport. This guy Rodriguez, he had come to our platoon like later on, like he didn't start with us, so to speak, and what happened was is he like, escaped, he like, hopped the fence, like his sister came and picked him up.

NL: Didn't he live in San Diego?

JP: Well I guess his sister, from what the drill instructor said, he didn't tell us much, but they're like "Yeah, that fucker got away to Mexico" and they were pissed, yeah. But he escaped you know, yeah. He's like "screw this".

NC: So you can't just leave bootcamp if you decide to quit?

JP: No! It's not like "Hey, this isn't working out for me" It's like failing to adapt, you know?

NC: Do you remember any specific drill instructors that gave you a hard time or that you connected with?

JP: I still remember all three of my drill instructors. Staff Sergeant Borja, he's like a master now, but Master Dreyhinde, and he was a gunnery at the time, but now I know who's a master, Chalmers. Yeah, they, I don't know, they were the epitome of what I wanted to be you know? They were just like badasses in my eyes.

NL: They were like, bossing you around, obviously, but that's what you want. That's cool

JP: Yeah!

NC: So you said you adapted, but would your adaptation be the way that you got through it?

JP: I'm not sure I understand your question.

NC: So like what was your inspiration to get through boot camp?

JP: Well I just, I wanted to succeed, I wanted to go fight, I wanted to go to Afghanistan.

NL: That's what got you through, very cool.

NC: You wanted to go to Afghanistan, what was the premise operation for that? Was it in boot camp?

JP: For going to Afghanistan? Well like so are you talking about the indoctrination?

NC: No, like you're specific...

JP: No well, they bring us to wanna go fight and kill you know, and some of the moto videos, you see some guys overseas, shooting these badass weapons you've never seen before. You see helicopters going around, and they're blowing stuff up, it looks like a movie, like an action movie. I hate comparing the Marine Corps and fighting in like a foreign war to sports, but one way I can describe it is like, someone training everyday for a Superbowl, and Afghanistan was my Superbowl.

NC: That's awesome.

NL: You guys were watching those videos, with those on there?

JP: Yeah they were called motivational videos, marines just doing what marines do.

NC: So was, how many tours did you go on?

JP: I've been on four deployments.

NC: Okay, were they all tied in an instant?

JP: No, my first deployment was the 22nd new, which Marine Expeditionary unit, the 22nd Marine Expeditionary unit. What that enables America to have a 24 hour force in readiness. We traveled to, I can't tell you how many different countries, we traveled to so many different countries training with so many different foreign militaries that it's hard for me to recall all of them. But I remember during that deployment I spent like two weeks in Pakistan, training the Paki marines, we went to Bulgaria, we went to Jordan, sat in the desert. Trained with the Jordanians, we went to Kuwait, and spent like two months in Camp Buehring, where that's the quick reaction force, like if anything were to happen in Iraq, they would call camp Buehring, and be able to send more people, more...

NL: You guys were on demand.

JP: Exactly

NL: Did anything happen?

JP: When I was there? No, Camp Buehring was awesome, they have four hour chow halls, a twenty four hour gym, like that's all you care about when you're a marine, is like the gym and food. You know, and if you're eating well you're happy.

NL: How's the food there?

JP: It's good. It's really good, yeah.

NC: Was it, I mean, I've eaten at a couple chow halls before because my dad was in the Marine Corps, how would you compare it to here, like at least the military chow halls?

JP: To the chow hall here?

NC: Mhm.

JP: So we're talking about two different, so chow halls in the states are completely different from chow halls in places like Kuwait, or like Afghanistan, or Iraq. The chow halls over there are like, anything you want to eat, it's there. If you want to eat lasagna, and I don't know, teriyaki chicken in the same meal, you can do it. Yeah they're really, really good. I don't know how to compare this chow hall, like this one sucks.

NC: Okay so was the 22nd deployment your second?

15 Minutes

JP: Yeah, so when we got back from the 22nd, the earthquake in Haiti happened. So we went to Haiti to provide humanitarian support to the country of Haiti. Our mission there was to secure an LZ, a landing zone for helicopters. Then while we were providing security for the helicopters we would punch out patrols during the day. We'd go interview the local populous and find out the damage, or they'd give us a certain name and we'd have to go find them. One time we had to go find this guy, because he'd lost his entire family in the earthquake. So we went and kind of made a damage assessment to find out his needs, and what it would take to get him in a better state. Just food distribution, mainly.

NC: Was the Haiti earthquake with the 22nd Marine Expeditionary Unit your third deployment?

JP: No, the third deployment was Afghanistan; That was a security mission, so when we were there it was mainly just providing security and maintaining, making sure there wasn't active fighting going on at the bases; like patrolling.

NC: What was your fourth deployment?

JP: My fourth deployment was the First Mue, and that was to Okinawa, Japan. They were like the big exercise operation; Cobra Gold. It sounds fancy, but all it is is us training with Thai marines.

NL: To teach them?

JP: The fundamentals of being an infantryman. Patrolling; we did like a live fire attack with them, but mainly like our job during that was just not to get shot by these guys, because they don't do very many live fire attacks; so it's pretty sketchy doing that.

NC: Did the tours differ in time?

JP: My first deployment was seven months on the boat, then my second deployment was four months, my third deployment was seven months, and my last deployment was seven months.

NC: Which one of these is the most memorable for you?

JP: Probably Haiti and Afghanistan.

NC: Why would you say that?

JP: In Haiti, it was just the things that we did there; it felt like I was actually making a difference, you know, like I was actually contributing to the world. It was an awesome feeling being able to bring food to people who haven't eaten in days.

NL: Compared to what you did in the other deployments? You were just teaching them?

JP: Yeah, definitely; Afghanistan, just like I said, was like our Superbowl, that's what we dream for.

NC: Did you see any combat?

JP: Yes, in Afghanistan.

NL: I was gonna ask you, what happened?

JP: So, when I was in Afghanistan, we were like one of the most southern fobs, or forward operating bases; our area of operations, and yeah it was pretty hectic. We got in a fire, like the first three months I was there we got in a firefight like everyday. It kinda like trailed off, trickled off, during like Ramadan. It's like their, what can I compare it to, it'd be like a Catholic Easter, like their Lent. You know what would be a good comparison, not that it's the same thing, but yeah then it kinda dropped off.

NL: How long after that were you there?

JP: Afghanistan was hectic, that's all I wanna say.

NC: Feel free not to answer this one, but were any friends or people in your unit shot or died?

JP: Yeah Mark Bradley, he lost both of his legs when I was over there, he stepped on an IED and he was part of a scout sniper team. He stepped on an IED and lost both his legs, and they tried to save him, they sent him to Bethesda, and he died there. He was on life support, they pulled the plug. Then I have another buddy, Rob Richards; he was a scout sniper team leader, and just overall solid dude. He lost his life, too.

NC: This is really hard to talk about, I'm sure.

JP: No, not really. That's what we signed up for, you know, at least that's how I look at it. I knew what I was getting myself into, and in a lot of ways, that's the price we paid.

NL: Did you have any close calls?

JP: I'd rather not talk about that, you know?

NC: Were you ever awarded any medals or citations?

JP: Combat action ready and good cookie are all my personal awards.

NC: What's good cookie?

JP: If you don't get in trouble, or you don't get caught. That's the way we look at it, you didn't get caught.

NC: How did you stay in touch with your family?

JP: When I was in Afghanistan, or overall?

NC: Yeah, overall.

JP: So, on ships they have phones, and you buy these phone cards. If comms are up then you can make phone calls, you gotta stand in line, because everybody else wants to call their family. We'd also have internet on the ship, and all of this is like if comms are up. That's the one thing you can count on, is comms being shit, and when I was in Afghanistan we had a SAT phone, and when I was in Haiti, I think I made one phone call on a SAT phone. When I was in Okinawa Japan, that was the best because we had internet in our rooms; we could communicate everyday.

NC: So, you kinda already talked about the food, but was it pretty similar everywhere you went? I'm sure in Haiti it was different.

JP: So, MREs like never go bad, they just suck, they taste like shit, and it's like everything you need in a bag, anywhere from like 2500 calories to 800 calories in a bag. That's what we ate.

NL: I've seen videos of people eating those.

JP: On ship, they have you know, like ship foods, and they're better than MRE's, but definitely not like chow hall food, like in Camp Buehring or Leatherneck.

NC: So you really got to try the worst of it to the best of it, the food. Did you ever feel pressure or stress?

JP: Yeah.

NC: I'm sure all the time, right?

JP: Yeah, yeah, like everyone else in the world I'm sure.

NC: So this one's kind of interesting. Did you ever do anything special, like a ritual, or anything for good luck?

JP: Yeah, every time I left the wire in Afghanistan, I would sing a David Allen Coe song. It starts out with "I was drunk the day I got out of prison", and that was like the song. If we didn't sing that, odds are we were gonna get in some shit. It proved to work.

NC: So, when you guys weren't working, what did you guys do for entertainment?

JP: As far as?

NC: Just when you had free time.

JP: Watched a lot of movies, read some books, worked out, that's like a must. Everyday you work out. That's pretty much it. All forms of entertainment we had in each other; spent time with each other, harassed each other.

NL: What kind of movies did you have on DVD?

JP: No, like when I was in Afghanistan, I had a little iPod I watched; there was this movie, I think it's called Inception, with Leonardo DiCaprio, I think I've watched that movie a hundred times.

NL: That's crazy.

JP: Yeah, on the little screen.

NC: What did you do on leave?

JP: On leave? I drank. I drank, a lot. Spent time with family.

NC: Did you leave pretty often?

JP: For the most part, we got on pre-deployment leave and post-deployment leave and everything in between was kinda just training, you know?

25 Minutes

NC: Do you recall any super weird events going on on any of your tours?

JP: I remember sitting in the chow hall in Afghanistan and we were about to push out to our FOBs and we were sitting in leatherneck and the Tsunami in Japan was going on. I don't know that was like, I could remember that for some reason.

NC: 2008 right?

JP: No, 2011.

NC: Did you ever pull pranks or get pranked?

JP: No not really. I don't know, was it was like nonstop how do we fuck with people. Just all day long. You just, I don't know.

NC: Do you have any photographs.

JP: I do. Not on me but I know I do.

NC: Were they mostly of your buddies?

JP: Ya for the most part of where I've trained and been.

NC: What do you think of officers and enlisted?

JP: I definitely think that there's a place for them, you know? I've only met the select few that I can trust my life with, you know? But there's a place for them. The Marine Corps definitely needs them.

NC: I've heard a couple of stereotypes of enlisted obviously you have to respect them even though they might give you crap behind your backs, is that true?

JP: For the most part when I was a recruit I would never talk shit to my Lieutenant but once I got back from my first deployment, that was all that we would do and talk behind her back when she was in boot.

NC: So, you don't regret not trying to become an officer?

JP: No, I never tried to become an officer. No, I don't regret not going that route. It was not the route that I wanted all.

NC: Do you remember the day your service ended?

JP: Do you mean the exact date?

NC: No, just what went on.

JP: Oh yeah. I remember there is this whole process you have to go through and it involves running around like a chicken with your head cut off. I remember getting all that paperwork and taking it into IPAC and and I really didn't believe I was leaving the Marine Corps. I was like holy shit this is over.

NC: So when you first signed up, did you do a four year contract?

JP: Yeah I did a four year contract.

NC: And then how did it go from there?

JP: So, I went on and got back from Afghanistan and I had two months left on my contract I was kind of unsure of what I wanted to do and during that two months I would talk with my wife, at the the time, and I decided I wanted to reenlist. That was kind of our compromise. That I would come back California or that we would come back to California and then I got to reenlist because she has family out here.

NC: So when you reenlisted that was five years from there?

JP: No it was four years and what happened was I got diagnosed PTSD and I went to get treatment for that and they sent me to wounded warrior Battalion. So, from the wounded warrior Battalion the whole med board process started.

NC: So that was about a year then after your 4 years?

JP: Yes it was about a year.

NL: You have a wife?

JP: I have an ex-wife.

NL: Did you meet her before you were in?

JP: No I met her before I deployed On my first Deployment In 2009.

NC: What did you do after your service ended? Like the days and weeks after.

JP: I went to Mexico. I went to Baja On a surf trip. I was talking to one of my buddies for a long time about going down there. In the Marine Corps you can't leave the country without submitting a bunch of forms. There's a lot of red tape and when I got out, on my way to my retirement, I got this notification from an app that I have called Surflife. It informed me of a swell that was good in El Hondo. We left. We packed up all the stuff and we left, yeah.

NC: Did you surf this past week?

JP: I did yeah.

NC: Where did you go?

JP: I live off of Oceanside Boulevard so I went just out right there. Where did you go?

NC: I went out to the south jetty. It was firing all week. It was pretty good.

JP: It was super fun.

NC: Did you ever get time to surf while you were in?

JP: Once I was in wounded warriors. I did that's when I kind of picked up surfing I grew up bodyboarding and always had a love for the ocean and when I finally had some free time to get some hobbies surfing kind of gave me an outlet for life, so to speak.

NC: So because you have always had a connection with the ocean did you ever consider Navy?

JP: No because the Navy doesn't fight. I mean except for the seals and I wanted to go fight.

NL: Are they tougher on the guys in the Marine Corps than the guys in the Navy?

JP: In my experience they are. I don't want to speak for the entire navy I can only speak for the Corps but yes, in my experience I think so. From my vantage point we're a lot tougher on ourselves than the Navy is.

NC: When did you decide to go back to school or to school?

JP: So, when I was in wounded warriors I went to like job placement. Like reeducation because most of my skills don't transfer into the civilian world and what happened was I went to a school to teach me how to weld and I learned how to weld and I spent like four months down in San Diego and the biggest thing I took from that school is I don't want to be a welder. So, from there I'm like I don't want to be in work with my back. Before the Corps, I built houses before I joined the Marine Corps so I was like let's make a living with my mind.

NL: What you studying right now?

JP: Right now I'm just taking Gen. Ed courses. My end result is I want to be an English professor.

NC: You had Strona as a teacher, right?

JP: I have him currently has a teacher.

NC: So is he kind of inspiration?

JP: Yeah so I had English 49 with Prof. Guinan and we did an essay on Maslow's hierarchy of needs in self-fulfillment and self actualization and we did a bunch of research on career paths which I needed because when I first got into school I just kind of didn't know what I wanted to do I knew I was on the right avenue I just know what I wanted to approach. We wrote that essay him from that I was like dude I think I can be an English teacher because for the most part that's what I was in the Marine Corps. At least in infantry I was like, when I want something from my senior who got out, now I have to teach it to a junior guy. So it was like nonstop instructing in the last part of my career in the Marine Corps I was in an instructor and as a strategic rates branch every guy had to conduct grades. So, I don't know, I have a passion for teaching and I had Strona come in as a substitute for Prof. Guinan and he was like yeah I was a carpenter and I was like, what? You were a carpenter, you know? It kind of just sprung from there. I saw this guy that was a carpenter for like 30 years 35 years and he completely changed his life. He changed his life to completely opposite direction and I can relate to that and they give me some hope, I was like dude.

NC: When you said you could relate to that, from being on the wrong path to completely changing your direction to the Marine Corps?

JP: No more or less it was I was in the Marine Corps making my living with my back you know and kind of doing like I'm not saying like the stuff I didn't Marine Corps was my list But it was an environment that I had been an for nine years and I was really comfortable and like it And the super high stress very physical work More Bronson brains you know And see the scarlet was him some more path making is living with his pack And he was like a carpenter news like hey now I'm going to make my masters and become an English professor. It Was like okay this is rad.

NC: Did you make any close friendships while you were in the Marine Corp?

JP: Yeah definitely, I talk to guys at least like once a month you know? I have a buddy in Florida, his name is Reiko Sardui. He was machine gun squad leader, I talk to him about once a month. I have a buddy named Corey Thomas, he lives in Ohio. I talk to him about, I don't know, once or twice a week. I try to keep in contact with the dudes I served with.

NL: That's cool.

NC: And do you guys ever plan to meet up?

JP: Um my unit when I was in Third battalion Second Marines in North Carolina. And I don't know, they talked about having a reunion but it's not feasible for me just because it's on the East Coast, I got school going on.

NC: If it was here would you consider going?

JP: Yeah definitely.

NC: Did you join any Veterans Organizations?

JP: No, ahaha the VA.

NC: Yeah haha. So you're planning on becoming an English professor, what are you going to after? You're going to do two years after MiraCosta I assume.

JP: Yes, I'm going to do two years at MiraCosta, then right now this is all subject to change, but I'd like to go to Santa Barbara. And maybe go to school up there, UC Santa Barbara. Just because the surf's good.

NL: Do they have a decent English program there?

JP: Yeah, as far as my research, I'm kind of doing it backwards. I'm picking places I want to live based on the surf versus how good the school is, you know?

NC: I hear they have a pretty good gym with good food too right?

JP: Right haha!

NC: So have you picked up any jobs since after you got out?

JP: No I haven been fortunate enough to not have to work right now, so school is my main priority.

NC: Is the GI Bill paying for your school?

JP: Yeah.

NC: And it's going to for as long as you go to school?

JP: For thirty six months.

NC: Nice. Was that something that kind of influenced you as well to come back?

JP: For me is was like- because money didn't really play a factor in it. Because my dad, he owns his own construction company. He's a general contractor, he builds and remodels houses. And he offered me a position right when I got out of the Marine Corp, making two hundred bucks a day. You know? Under the table. So money wasn't really a factor for me, it was more or less I want to change my life and go a different route in everything else I've done.

NL: That'll be really fulfilling in the end too.

JP: Yeah definitely.

NC: So kind of, you compared construction to the Marines a couple of times because it's labor.

JP: Yeah it's labor intensive, and as a grunt, that's what we did. We carried heavy stuff from point A to point B. And made sure nothing happened to this stuff, or nothing was going on at that time. Just very labor intensive.

NC: Would you say that it wasn't so much that you were tired of labor or did you just want to change what you were doing just to change?

JP: Well, I mean I'm going to be thirty this saturday. And I've already had a knee surgery, I have a pressed L4 and L5, I have tears in my rotator cuff.

NC: Is this from the Marine Corp?

JP: This is all from the Marine Corp. And I don't know, I'm just trying to take care of myself these days. When I was younger I could handle twenty, thirty mile humps, with an eighty pound pack. Not so much anymore.

NL: That hurts my back just talking about it haha.

JP: Right? Haha.

NC: So do you think the Marine Corp changed the way you think?

JP: Oh yeah definitely, definitely.

NL: You went into it knowing exactly what you were going to get out of it.

JP: I didn't have any misconceptions in my mind, I didn't think that I was going to join this organization and it was going to be easy.

NL: Sure.

NC: So would you say that it changed your thinking for the better?

JP: Oh definitely, definitely.

NC: And how would you compare it to the way you used to think to the way you think now?

JP: Before I had joined I had a more, "Fuck the world" mentality, I had a lack of a better term. And now, it's more or less I'm thinking of how to be a positive, or how to have a positive effect on society. How do I contribute to the greater good? How do I not be a problem?

NL: I think of that sometimes too, you're in this world anyways so might as well make good out of it.

JP: Right.

NC: So you'd say the Marine Corp would be a pretty good option to people who want to help?

JP: Oh definitely, definitely. I think if you're struggling for a way to pay for school, or if you're looking for some adventure in your life, it's definitely an option.

NL: Did you want to travel a lot when you were going in?

JP: Yeah, I tell people that I've been around the world twice. And there is still more to see.

NL: That's really cool, I haven't traveled, ever. I've just been here.

JP: Yeah there is a great big world out there.

NC: So would you say that was one of the takeaways from the Marine Corp? You got to travel and see different things?

JP: Yeah, definitely.

NC: So on a day to day basis, do you think about your experiences, and your service in general?

JP: Yeah absolutely.

NC: Everyday?

JP: Yeah, everyday.

NC: So it changed you for the rest of your life?

JP: Yeah, definitely.

NL: For the better. It's hard work huh? You're just tired but it's all worth it in the end.

JP: Yeah, for the most part.

NL: That's cool.

NC: Do you have any regrets?

JP: Do I have any regrets? If I could do it all over again, I'd still choose that route. It's made me into the person I am today. I every man has a regret looking back, but none that'd I like to talk about right now.

NL: Sure.

NC: I kind of skipped over this question, but what did you think your job was going to be?

JP: Haha, I thought I was going to be a door-kicker, the tip of the spear. In a lot of ways the job lived up to that, and in a lot of ways it didn't.

NC: What was your label in the Marine Corp?

JP: As far as what?

NC: What was your labeled job?

JP: Oh, 0311 Rifleman.

NC: Is that infantry then?

JP: Yeah infantry.

NC: Oh okay, what was it like living with women in the Marine Corp?

JP: I never worked with women.

NC: Do you think that would be a kind of weird thing? Would having that female presence around would affect the way you do your work?

JP: I don't think I really understand the question.

NC: This is kind of a stupid question in a way, and it's probably a pretty obvious answer. But do you think that if there were a female in your unit that you would do your job differently?

JP: Ummm, you know what I don't really know. I can't really answer that question because I never worked around females when I was in the service. I'd encounter them if I had to get my paycheck adjusted or I don't know. But as far as the job we had, I think there's a male instinct to protect females. If you're asking me if a female should be in the infantry, then I would say no. I don't think they should, not because um I don't want to go off on a tangent right now haha.

NC: No my dad and talk about this a lot. Just the chemistry I think between men and women affects the way they would think if one was there and one wasn't.

JP: Right, I definitely think that in a combat situation, a female would create a distraction. And not a positive one, I think males have it programed in us instinctively, to protect women. So whatever that mission would be could distract whoever was operating during that time.

NC: Do you think because you were in infantry, I think there is only few women that are in the infantry in the Marine Corp, that was the reason you never had women around you.

JP: Oh definitely, because it was my job. I didn't have a lot of women around me.

NC: You would say that if you had a different job there would probably be a lot more girls in your unit right?

JP: Oh there is definitely different MOS's out there that have females in, that do that job. Yeah.

NC: Nice, haha.

JP: It's not just men that make up the Marine Corp.

NC: Pretty broad question, but would you say the Marine's made you the man you are today?

JP: Haha definitely. Definitely.

NC: I think we could wrap this up, is there anything you would like to add that we didn't really cover?

JP: No I'm just grateful for you guys taking an interest in this, it's pretty cool.

NL: Definitely.

JP: Thank you for letting me be a part in this.

NL: Thank you for being a part of this.

NC: Yeah, any advice?

JP: In relation to what?

NC: To someone that would maybe want to be a part of the Marines?

NL: And that you're older than us haha!

JP: Right, one thing that I think about a lot is the decisions I made when I was younger, I really didn't think, or have any inclination in how they would affect me when I was older. And I kind of didn't care about a lot when I was younger, so my only advice would be: the decisions you make now do have the potential to structure the person you are going to be.

Young people hear that all the time, but that's pretty much it.

NL: Cool, I think we're good. I think we have a good idea.

JP: All right.

NC: Signing out.