

**Summary of Oral History Transcript**  
**Student, Citizen, Soldier: Oral History and Student Veterans**

**Stone, Dylan**

U.S. Marine Corps, Intelligence Specialist and Weapons and Tactics Instructor

*Summary of Transcript:*

Dylan Stone grew up in Michigan and eventually joined the Marine Corps as an Intelligence Specialist. This led him to travel the country training to be a better marine and eventually go on deployments to Japan, the Middle East, and the Philippines. Dylan spent a lot of time on a ship gathering intelligence and helping humanitarian efforts throughout the world. His experience and knowledge gained has helped make him the man, and student he is today.

Dylan Stone  
Narrator

Natalia Pacheco  
Salem State University  
Interviewer

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At Salem State University  
Salem, Massachusetts

Edited by Katherine Lowney and Alexander Sullivan  
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Natalia Pacheco: Today is November 18th 2019. My name is Natalia Pacheco, and I am joined by Dylan Stone, a Salem State University student and Marine Corps veteran. Thank you for agreeing to being interviewed today.

Dylan Stone: You're welcome.

NP: So, I want to start a little bit before now. I want to talk about your high school experience a little bit. What kind of student were you back then?

DS: I was a pretty quiet student back in high school. I started getting quiet my freshman year. I was brand new to the school. I got into sports, I played football and I wrestled, so I knew a lot of the popular people and a lot the athletes of the school, and I was friends with them. Besides that, I was a pretty quiet student. My mom was surprised by that because I was very talkative. But I enjoyed history as the classes there, as well as gym. For the most part, [I] did great in those classes, but had average grades, run of the mill, middle of the graduating class. That's pretty much how my high school ed went.

NP: Did you have any ambitions while you were in high school? You said you liked history and were good at sports. Were you on any teams, were you trying to pursue anything back in high school?

DS: For that, like after high school, like graduating?

NP: Yes.

DS: I wanted to be a teacher at the time, and my counselors had told me that, based on my grades, I probably wouldn't do that well in school, so I didn't go into the teaching degree for a major. At the time when I got out of high school, I went to the local community college and did some criminal justice classes, because I had planned on thinking about doing police officer, or something along those lines. That was about the most ambitious thing I had at the time.

NP: What were your expectations before joining the military, and what made you want to enlist?

DS: The thing that made me want to enlist really was, I did the semester at school. I didn't go the next spring because money was tight at the time. The state of Michigan changed its Michigan Indian Tuition Waiver for Ottawa Indian from my dad's side. Up through my entire life and up going into my senior year, I would have qualified for the tuition waiver, and they changed it to federally recognized tribes only. My tribe is state recognized, Grand River Band of Ottawa Indians. So that changed up what I wanted to do after school, which forced me to go to the community college only for that one semester.

It was 2011 so the job market wasn't that great in my area of Michigan, small area, so I was stuck at home and my mom spoke to me about what I wanted to do choice-wise. So, I looked into the armed forces, like what branches I wanted to look into. My dad is also a Marine veteran as well and he, when he found out about that, he decided to pull me over to the recruiter station, and I had a chat with them. On the second time talking to the recruiter, I signed the paperwork there to enlist.

NP: Wow.

So, you mentioned your dad, did he talk about his experiences as a veteran when you were growing up?

DS: A little bit. He didn't talk too much about it. I knew he was a marine, of course. At the time I had no idea what the military was or even what the Marine Corps specifically did as well. What I knew, at the time, growing up is that he lived in Spain, he had been on a submarine for a little bit, worked out of the Mediterranean. That's about all I knew at the time, when I was growing up.

NP: What was it like once you signed the paperwork, you are about to leave what was like the day you left home?

DS: I signed the paperwork in March of 2012, and I didn't go to boot camp, to San Diego up until August 20th. For the most part, people that sign the paperwork when they're in high school usually leave within a couple days of graduating or the first couple of weeks, but at the time I didn't have a MOS [Military Occupational Specialty], a job chosen. I was open contract to a

degree. For a few months we were waiting on positions for jobs I wanted. Initially one of the reasons I joined the military was because I wanted to be military police. That wasn't open at all. So, my recruiters were cool with me not choosing a job right away.

I ended up choosing 0231 intelligence Specialist, chose that on Father's Day, for my dad, because he had spoken a little bit more about what he did and he did work in the intelligence area. That's how I found out about that, so I chose intel as one of my top choices. And then my dates to ship out to boot camp kept changing. Initially it was going to be in July, then it got pushed up to August.

NP: You said you were going out to San Diego. What was the name of the base you were at, and what was it like once you got there?

DS: So, the reason why I went to San Diego, is because for the Marine Corps you either go to the East Coast MCRD Parris Island or Marine Corps Recruit Depot, or you go to San Diego. It's based off the Mississippi River, so everyone from the East Coast area or region goes to the East Coast. Everyone west of the Mississippi goes to the West Coast. However, Michigan is a split state, so a lot of people from eastern Michigan, Detroit, that area, they end up going over to Parris Island, and anyone kind of [in the] western portion of Michigan go to San Diego. At the same time you can also be, if your father, or even your mother as well, went to boot camp on a certain coast you have an option—at least back in the day, it may have changed—you can go to the same recruit depot as them.

So, I flew out of Michigan with about six other guys, all the way out to San Diego. San Diego airport is right on the other side of the fence of the boot camp location, so when you fly in you look out the window to the right and you can see the huge tower that you climb or go down and it says U.S. Marines on the side. It's a whole different new area compared to what I was used to, being in the woods, being along one of the Great Lakes which are awesome beaches, nothing can eat you. And then plopping right down in southern California with palm trees and ninety-degree weather on a nice day, nice and sunny—I think it rained once when I was at boot camp—you get plopped down in a whole new area. You go through receiving, you're stuck with a bunch of people. By the time before you get there—you get on a white bus—you only have your clothes and a pack of paper with you. You get on the bus, you look down at the ground, they drive you all the way there, and a drill instructor comes up, yells at you to get off the bus and you run outside.

NP: That was the first day?

DS: Yes, that was the first day we ended up there, arriving there at night.

NP: Can you talk about the rest of your time there, what was it like? Was it different from what you expected it to be, or—?

DS: It was slightly different. The basic training and boot camps are kind of focused on teaching you the aspects of the military. The Marine Corps prides itself on drills, so you drill a lot. Going into it, my dad told me that everything the drill instructors do is by a book. Everything they have is planned. So, we got there, I kind of knew what was going to happen to a degree, that of course it was all going to be training. A lot of it was just a lot of drilling and a lot of practicing on understanding Marine Corps customs and Marine Corps history. A lot of people probably thought going in, that it would be a lot of physical work, and it was, to a degree, it was a lot of running but it was just to study up for the basic qualifications of passing physical fitness tests.

NP: That's interesting. I would have thought it would be more physical. But that's kind — [inaudible].

DS: There's still a lot of physical work, a lot of hikes, a lot of running around. But it's all based about creating you as—breaking you down—a lot mental stress, a lot of mental stress, definitely, because they break you down and mold you back up into a new person.

NP: I have heard so many people say that. So that's a value of the Marine Corps.

Speaking of breaking down, I was curious of the topic hazing in the military. Is there any truth to assumptions about hazing in the military and/or the Marines specifically?

DS: Due to Marine Corps orders as well as military orders there is no hazing allowed. The only hazing that occurs is in bootcamp, that's the only time frame. It used to be a big topic of discussion in the past, in the 90s early 2000s, when some instances came about, due to news organizations, and a lot of people saw, and the military cracked down on that.

NP: It's good that there's been something done about it.

Your MOS, you mentioned earlier, was an Intelligence Specialist and Weapons and Tactics Instructor, can you tell me what exactly that is, what did you do over those, what did that require?

DS: For the Weapons and Tactics Instructor, WTI, or Intel Analyst, or both? I can talk about both.

NP: Both, I would love to know.

DS: So the Intelligence Analyst or Specialist is the all-source intelligence individual. When it comes to intelligence field, you have the guys that work with sensors, the guys that work with satellites and mapping or topography. You have guys that work in counterintelligence, the [unintelligible] prevention of leaked information or attempting to gather information. The all-source analyst or Intel Analyst collects all that information, brings it together, and informs their command or their unit. That can range from a multitude of things because the Marine Corps has a ground side and an air side. We are like a smaller version of the military. We have aircraft, and tanks, and infantry. So, based on the unit you are with, if you're ground side you're going to be telling the infantry guys or grunts what can be occurring in the village down the road, what type of manpower there is, or personnel with weapons, or technical vehicles. Or you could be on the air side with aircraft telling them what type of threats: missile sites, or surface-to-air missile sites, guys with manned portable air defense systems, or different types of radars, or other aircraft in the area. That's kind of what it comes to, a real world situation when you're on deployment to different locations throughout the world, of course. So it's a very broad subject. You can be back in what we consider the rear or in garrison when you're stationed stateside. You're going through courses to learn more on Intelligence or you're training new Marines in the aspect of Intel. It can be as easy as just going on google.com and looking at the news, seeing what's going on and reporting that to your unit as well, letting them be informed on the current events of the world or the areas of responsibility that the unit's in charge of. So that's the basic rundown of Intelligence Analyst. It's a huge broad topic, to be honest. You usually get pushed into one area and then focus on that.

For WTI, WTI is the Weapons and Tactics Instructors course for the Marine Corps aviation that expands on an entire aspect of Marine Corps Aviation. You train multiple jobs. It's a huge, about two-month course out in Yuma, Arizona. It is the Marine Corps version of Top Gun for the Navy, which isn't just a movie. WTI focuses on giving a general knowledge level of that air aspect of the Marine Corps to everyone that's involved. You have people that work in operations, people that work in intelligence, you have pilots, you have guys that work the radars with missile systems, such as Patriot systems, you have even the guys that create the airfields. Everyone's involved. It's about 300 students per course, and there's about two courses a year, and approximately it costs about \$200,000 per individual to go through it. For the most part, it's a officer-level course. I went through it as a corporal. I got chosen by my unit to do it, because I had just come from an air unit out in Japan. I came out to California to my unit there. I got chosen, got 2 weeks heads up, and got rushed into that. For Intel, you learn threat adversary capabilities, as well as limitations. You learn about U.S., or what we call blue forces, capabilities and limitations for the intel side of it all. You learn the basic or more advanced capabilities of all our aircraft that the Marine Corps owns, all the radar systems, how our airfields are made. From the airfield guy all the way up to the satellite you learn everything in between that, as well as some other fancy capabilities of ours.

NP: What did you like most about that? Because you said it was quite broad, is there specific aspects that interested you more or that you thought you were best at?

DS: For best at, I loved the airside for Intel, understanding what our aircraft could do as well as what other nations' capabilities are and working in the intelligence field with classified information is nice to learn about that. There's nothing really too crazy that's classified; it's usually just more accurate numbers. That's how that works for the most part. I loved understanding how we countered certain systems. How did we stop an infrared missile from targeting an aircraft or radar-guided missiles? Especially liked the MANPADS or the man-portable air-defense systems. That's when you see in the movies the guy shooting the rocket launcher off the shoulder at aircraft flying by. I became a SME on that—a Subject Matter Expert—on the different generations of those weapon systems that are found all over the world. We run into a lot out in the Middle East, a lot of older systems. When I was on deployment, I became SME on the use of commercial drones, DJI Phantoms, and their capability of using weapons or explosives by insurgent groups. That became a huge thing in Syria, Iraq, as well as Yemen—not so much in Yemen, because that had not been seen previously and the capabilities to prevent those systems from operating in our airspace or U.S. controlled airspace, was limited at this time. I was the one guy on deployment that was the expert on that. That was pretty nice.

NP: That must have been a lot of studying, a lot of studying.

DS: Yes.

NP: So, you mentioned Syria, but you were also stationed in the Philippines. Can you tell me about your experiences at both these places?

DS: I wasn't in Syria. My deployment for that one at least was, I was on a ship, Marine Expeditionary Unit. Pretty much, you hop on a ship you go from California to the Middle East and back. Took about seven months. When you're on a ship it's a little bit different. A lot of the guys that go into Afghanistan and Iraq, you have very specific areas that you're in charge in. When you're on a ship, you kind of have to think on your feet on what's going to happen next in certain areas. A lot of people get bored on a boat. For Intel you're constantly busy working twelve on twelve off. We did support operations in Syria, Iraq as well as Yemen, of course. We floated all through that area around the Arabian Peninsula. That was a long-time frame, as well as potential support in Africa, but we did do a lot of stuff out there. That's completely separate from the Philippines.

When I was stationed in Okinawa, Japan, with the Marine Aircraft Group three-six, MAG-36, I was part of the command element and we were deployed to the Philippines for a humanitarian disaster relief operation or a HADR [Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief]. That was in late—I think October of—2013, we were deployed there because they were hit by a Cat 5 typhoon that wiped out a good portion of infrastructure and also led to a lot of casualties, a lot of people that were definitely injured or passed away from it. It was huge, it had gone through the

central location or the central islands of the Philippines. We were in a field op, like doing some training, got word that we were going and hopped right on a C-130 and went back to my unit, back to my barracks grabbed all of our stuff and we left the next day down to the Philippines. I was young at the time—I was brand-new to the Marine Corps, at least to my unit. I'd only been there for a couple months, so at the time frame what I assisted in was the locating of people that needed medicine, supplies, shelter, anything of the sort, even evacuation. We had about six maps printed out laid up on a wall like this, and I kind of pinpointed the areas. You used Twitter, you used different sources of information, of course, even from the Philippine government from these locations and I would brief it to the officers in charge of me in my office as well as people that work in operations and planned out the daily flights around that information and would send out MV-22 Ospreys to those locations to drop off aid or to assist anyone. We were only there for maybe 3 weeks—it wasn't very long. When it comes to the US Military involved in humanitarian crisis abroad, we are pretty much there for a very short time. You get sent out, you kick as much stuff out as you can to people, and then you would have U.S. A-I-D or US AID [Agency for International Development] finish up the rest and they take charge of the military in certain situations, or at least the forces involved. We were there, worked twelve hours on twelve hours off. That was new to me. Definitely kicked up our idea of what we need to do for humanitarian operations later on in the future. We ended up helping with Nepal in 2015 after the earthquake. I did not go. I was supposed to PCS, or Permanent Change Station, over to California and I was on call to get sent out to Nepal for a couple of weeks, and I told them, “No I'm not gonna go. I have to go to California to my new unit.”

NP: You said you were gathering information from the government, but also Twitter. Did you work closely with locals or maybe police forces or anything like that to try and find people and target specific areas?

DS: For the most part, due to how we operate and especially the units I was with—or at least the sections of the units—I was for the most part with the command elements—you would have maybe some squadrons—we had squadrons, where the unit that actually had the aircraft, we were the unit above them, we kind of told them what to do. Those guys at a ground level would end up doing that. So for my take on it, we had guys that worked in counterintelligence that would assist in certain things, mostly, just the protection of materials that we were getting rid of or had around, but personally I didn't go out and assist during my deployment or in my time in the Philippines.

However, it did change when we sent people to Nepal, because of how much damage there was. They didn't really need anybody working intelligence. So, my marine that was sent he actually didn't really do his job. He helped though with casualty evacuations, taking people on stretchers off the aircraft. He definitely did a lot more hands-on approach. For the most part, I was more the guy in the back, which is sad at certain times.

NP: Well, also very important. You had to show people where to go.

Do you think you had a big impact on that deployment, or which deployment or place do you think had the most impact on you?

DS: I think assisting with humanitarian operations were probably my biggest things. We helped out with, of course, the Philippines and we also helped out with Nepal. That was probably the biggest things that were important to me. A lot of people join the military and hear a lot about people going into combat. Which is obviously of significance, but you don't necessarily hear too much about the military assisting people. You know, building schools or anything like that. We usually do a lot of kissing babies and shaking hands. We try to do that to have a positive influence on the local population that we're interacting with. I think the biggest thing for me, really was being involved in two humanitarian operations. Seeing that it assisted thousands or tens of thousands just depends.

NP: That's so wonderful.

You were away for several months each time. Did you communicate a lot with family or friends back home during this time?

DS: Back in the day before iPhone was a big hit type thing, I had a small Android and would text my friends and family when I was at my intel—intelligence—school over in Virginia. It was super simple like text and stuff. For the training school it was like a nine to five type thing, for the most part. A lot of the times you did stay later. Of course, you couldn't bring your phone in the building because classified materials and all that stuff. When I left the intel school, I immediately went out to Japan to that first unit, MAG-36. What I ended up doing was my mom forced me to get an iPhone 4S, so I could FaceTime her. Then you can use Wi-Fi to send messages—text messages—rather than having to use long distance or anything. So, I was able to keep pretty- good contact with my family and some of my friends, but over the years, at times you just lose communication with people. I don't really talk to a lot of people from way back in high school. When I was deployed with eleventh MEU [Marine Expeditionary Unit]—that's when I went out to the Middle East and stuff on the ship— [I] did have access to the internet, but it was super slow. I worked on three different computers. One of the computers was unclassified, so you could hop on google.com, facebook.com. You couldn't load any pictures or anything, the bandwidth was so slow, but you had email. You could email people and you received packages. You could order something on Amazon and then every time we made a port, or you stopped at a country for a few days, I would run up my phone bill by like a hundred bucks texting people.

NP: At least you could kind of keep in touch with people, you mentioned everything was slow, so you lost touch with some people over the years. So, do you think that time in the service, because you were kind of disconnected, affected a lot of relationships you had, or it was it the ones that were important stayed.

DS: The ones that were important stayed pretty strong. Not a lot of my friends joined the military at the time, a pretty good group of people but they kind of got stuck doing the same thing. Landscapers, plowers, that's kind of what they did. Mechanics, nothing wrong with it, but they I think they all still do that same work. They'll be 27 in like December so, they're kind of stuck in that field. Definitely communicated, of course, with my family a lot. But, had some implications with my sister, who is my full-blooded sister. I have a bunch of stepsiblings but she's the only one that I've known all our lives really. She's only two years younger than me. She was annoyed that I had left, but that only lasted for like a year or two. We just talk all the time. Everyday. But when it came to impact on relationships it was just some of my friends from high school doing the same thing. Just kind of lost contact with them because of being stationed out. I was at school in Virginia, so I couldn't really go home. I was stuck there for like six months and then of course when I went out to Japan, tickets were like a thousand dollars. It was weird I paid like fourteen hundred to go home. That was sad, but I only went home once. At like my year mark on the Island and the next year I went straight to California. Then I only went home about three or four times when I was in.

NP: So, was it common for people—it wasn't that common I guess, for people in Michigan to enlist, or at least where you were?

DS: My school had some people that really wanted to join the military, and then they didn't. I would say maybe [because of] the area that I had lived in. My parents were divorced. I lived with my mom. The area that I lived in a lot of people probably just didn't go for the military because they went straight for school. It was more of an upper-middle-class type of area. But I enlisted out near my dad's house, which is a more low-income area, and you would see a big difference in the fact that a lot of people in the area, that I knew from back in the day, enlisted. About three or four people I think I know prior to high school enlisted. I only knew one person from the town, that I knew very well. He enlisted, he came in 0231 intel analyst like myself and he ended up on the same deployment as me. When I went out to the Middle East. So that was a surprise to see him walk into my office one day. Yeah, that was about it. The area I grew up, in high school at least, weren't too many people enlisting in the military.

NP: Well you mentioned that someone from back home was kind of with you for one of your deployments. Did you like connect with a lot of people, or who did you connect with most while you were away? Because you were away on a boat for like seven months and then again later on in the Philippines.

DS: So, for deployment on the ships when it comes to intel you work in a very close-knit group of people and it's multiple different ranks. Depending on the unit, you can be in a huge unit full of intel guys. It might be like a very small shop with three to four people, and you work with a range of ranks. You work very closely with officers, with staff NCOs or non-commissioned officers. You can be a private working with a captain. Definitely changes the professionalism, not the professionalism to degree, but the workplace etiquette to a degree—how do I explain that? When you're eighteen years old or nineteen years old, you're brand-new to the Marine Corps and you're enlisted and you see someone, who is only like 24, 25 years old with something shiny on their collar, usually, you start freaking out a little bit and get worried, you know, the officers coming by you and, [unintelligible] messed up, but when it comes to intel you become very used to that because you work hand-in-hand with other Marines that are going to be officers and that are going to be someone who's been in for twenty-three years and you've only been in for two. So, my shop there was about four or five of us who had been roughly the same amount of time and then there were people, you know, who had been in for 20 plus years and we're all somewhat friends, of course. You know, in the shop you're all friendly, you work together. We played board games or something on our free time or watch a movie in our office with the with the Navy, because their intel section was on the other side. But besides that you always used ranks. You always spoke to them professionally and then outside of work you hung out with people within your own rank structure, rank area.

NP: And did those relationships end up lasting once you left? Or is there anyone you're still in contact with?

DS: Oh yes. plenty of people that I was on deployment with I talk to a lot, of course. My staff NCOs or my chief warrant officer, you know I have them on Facebook, I have them on my resume on LinkedIn, so you definitely have very strong connections with these people, especially when it comes to a deployment you become someone like family together.

NP: So what were the stated objectives of your deployment and do you feel like you accomplished what you wanted to once you...?

DS: So for the Philippines, assisting our real objectives was really to get a better understanding of what occurred, the type of damage, and casualties, that did happen [*sniffs*]—excuse me—and what we could do about it. So it was—we were always prepared for it and that was a long time ago—but for the objective it was really for that to assist as much as we can until we determined. We were kind of like the Band-Aid, I guess for humanitarian operations. When the US military gets involved, you know, at the start it's a brand new cut. Wipe it clean, put a Band-Aid on it, and then wait a few days, rip it off, and then it should be healed and then the body kind of takes care of it. It's pretty much how it goes for us, you go in, you do a lot of work right away. Once

NGOs or non-government organizations start stepping in, those are the people that can be helping with the rest of the humanitarian crisis, almost always civilians from other countries or even locals in that area. They're going to step in, start taking care of everything else, and then you pull out. So we definitely accomplished that.

For my MEU deploying on ship, it's a little bit different because the mission can change within a moment's notice. We were just sailing past Hawaii when we got word that we had to check on a boat. Chinese National, he actually did a like a single, like a lone, what's it called, like a lone sailing from mainland China all the way to the United States. He actually went from China to the U.S. and was on his way back, and he had an emergency team that was a few nautical miles away, and a storm popped up, and his GPS safety device went off on the boat because I guess it was off course. So we got wind of that, and immediately started helping out, finding out what happened. He ended up getting blown over. The storm was about twenty knot winds so the ship, the boat he was on, the catamaran, was flying through the water. There was honestly, no way that a person could catch up to that, so something even small like that can happen.

When we went out to the Middle East, you get word of different missions they may have to be involved in, different operations that may occur. We did assist in assist in, Special Operations raids in Yemen against AQAP Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula. The U.S. wasn't very big in Syria or Iraq before our ship went in, we actually sent a lot of our artillery people. Artillery men going in, I think that was like one of the first units into Syria. Potentially I don't remember off the top of my head. And then also with, embassy evacuations. U.S. has embassies all over the U.S., sorry all over the world, of course, so if there's an upheaval in a country the U.S citizens are sent to the embassy or to a safe area and that's something that we'd help in. And that's one of the things we were preparing for in South Sudan because of issues occurring there, so a lot of the stuff can happen last minute. Somali pirates, Islamic State going between the Middle East and Africa. You just kind of pick up on some of this stuff going through. It's weird, it's like being on a boat or like a video game, I guess, you get side quests all the time, just running through a town, and that's kind of like what it is being on the ship.

NP: Were you excited, it sounds like there was so much going on the ship?

DS: To a degree, it can be somewhere exciting. It can be very boring because you hear about the stuff and you prepare for it and you get excited that you are gonna to do it and they turn around and they say, "No, we're not going to get involved or someone else is gonna take the reins on this one," and then all your excitement dissipates.

NP: I guess that's fair because you're intelligence at this point, right, [DS mumbles in agreement] you are just kind of like looking for stuff, but do you feel like the time in the service was worth it for you?

DS: Oh yes, I had a grand time. It was the most fun I've had in my life probably. There was a lot of really crappy parts, of course, that you always have to deal with when it comes to the military specifically the Marine Corps, but I mean I had never traveled outside of the United States, prior to. I've been to eight different countries, went all over the United States for training or different events. As part of the color guard for Seattle Seafair, so I went up to Washington State to go to Seattle to be the right rifleman. So, you see those guys at these, you know at sporting events, guys with the American flag and the dress blues walking. Well they had no events signed up for us, so we got to do four days of day drinking for that and then you just got hopped on the boat and went down back to California. But there was a lot of fun. I probably would have stayed in, had not, I thought of getting my education done while I was younger. Sometimes it's kind of sad to see all these guys who've been in for like twenty years who only have a high school diploma or they might be getting their Associates taking one class at a time, which is definitely they're worth keeping in the military for the most part, but I just couldn't see myself sitting in a classroom at the age of thirty-five to get my degree. Some people do it, I have nothing against it, but I figured get my education done nice and early.

NP: So, education was very important to you, at least enough to leave?

DS: Yes, some other things had popped up. Some of the command in my unit that I had deployed with was pretty, a lot of us consider it toxic, but it was definitely not worth being around at times. So, that was pretty sad to see and deal with. So we kind of just thought it was like, no I don't want—don't want to necessarily deal with that, but education was super important to me from the get-go that was part of—of course, the recruiters preach to you about all the benefits that you can have going to bootcamp and joining the military and I saw it as one avenue of completing my education. It's free for me and I get paid to do it.

NP: And so, what made you want to enroll in Salem State?

DS: Let's see, to want to enroll at Salem State. So, initially I would say, I'd go back to— when I was on deployment I was trying to decide if I wanted to move back to Michigan or not. There's great schools out there, very far from where I live, and we do get BAH for school. Basic allowance for housing and that's pretty much free money each month and it's very low in Michigan it would be like \$1,100 a month if I lived in Ann Arbor and went to the University of Michigan or it would be like \$900 or \$700 where I was from. Pretty low, so I actually had a friend that is from Massachusetts, so I moved out here, because of deployment, and because I got back out of deployment in May of 2017 and I was actually getting out of the Marine Corps in August of 2017. I didn't have time to sign up for schools. Salem State was going to be one of the ones that I was going to sign up for, so went to North Shore Community College got, did the two years transfer program there. I chose Salem State specifically because actually one of the

professors, Dr. Lawrence Davis, over at North Shore spoke highly of Salem State when it came to the history program. And they do a lot of— a lot of traveling, especially to historical sites in Eastern Europe and everything and I thought that was pretty cool. I had never really heard of a lot of colleges doing that. Could just me being ignorant, not knowing, but Salem State I only really heard good things about it. My girlfriend goes here, one of my roommates goes here now. It's also like 10 minutes down the road from me.

NP: Checked all the boxes.

DS: \*Chuckles

NP: And so, you were talking about the history department and how they do a lot here, how it drew you here. You want to pursue public history. What about public history interests you?

DS: For public history for the most part, I love educating people on anything and everything. I mean, like I said, I like the idea of being a teacher from since high school. When I was in the Marine Corps actually one of the aspects I didn't speak about when it comes to being a WTI is that you go back to your unit after being trained and you actually train more people to the standards that we want, so that I became a subject matter expert in certain things I did because that was the things that I taught a lot of to Marines especially new ones. I liked the idea of becoming a teacher for a long time and then I kind of fell back from it, a little bit. I have nothing against teaching, of course. I still think it's an extremely important profession, but when it came to public history, I thought it would be really interesting to actually work with the things that you talk about. Intel, where I worked, everyone else did all the work then I compiled it to a PowerPoint and briefed a couple people or couple hundred people and, if you're a historian you might be working in a location, public library or public historic site where you're hands-on with the things that you want to talk about, even collecting information for yourself or the organization or you're a curator at a museum and talk to people in there, I don't know.

NP: So, do you have a long-term goal for this, since you are not you don't want to be in like a classroom specifically?

DS: Long-term goal? it's kind of iffy right now. I'm trying to decide if I want to get my Master's degree and be more competitive in the market for it. I've been looking, of course, at different careers and different locations in Massachusetts. There's a lot of museums, a lot of historic sites. You have the national parks which also use historians as well, so I've been kind of looking around to see which kind of niche I can drop myself into.

NP: And then, how do you think military service has affected you as a student, if at all?

DS: As a student I mean I did pretty poorly back in high school. When I got back, you know everything, started school again. I figured, you know, I'm using taxpayer funds for my GI bill so I might as well get good grades. But when it came to military really, I don't like the idea of not turning in work or turning it in late. I guess, that can be derived from being in the military, so I always make sure I get my work done on time. If that means staying up until one in the morning, I don't know but I think that's one of the things. I also talk a lot in class. I definitely open up from- from high school. [I] find it extremely annoying when you're in a class with nineteen-year olds and no one wants to answer a simple question, so I'll raise my hand, you know, even if I have no clue what the answer is.

NP: That's a good habit to have, honestly, at least turning in work on time, some people are not like that here.

DS: *[Laughs followed by a brief pause]*

NP: So, do you think that your combined military and college experience has shaped you into a different person than before you did these things because you went to some community colleges, joined the military and now you are at a university. How has that changed you over the years?

DS: I would say how it changed me is. I mean back in high school, I was quiet, did my sports, I was on the teams. Varsity teams and stuff, went home, played video games. Now it's more so, I go to work, go to classes, do my homework and then I try to find something to do, you know. I got into different hobbies. I do a lot of photography because it gets you out of the house and also like traveling the world as well. When I was in Japan, I went all the way to the northern tip of the island, which is beautiful. Took pictures with my iPhone 4, you know. They looked terrible, so I ended up getting a camera and that's kind of how I got into that, so I guess shaped me as a person. I became a little bit more adventurous, a lot more outgoing, just probably due to the military and the Marine Corps. You're friends with everyone, people of all sorts of different backgrounds. Very diverse backgrounds, so you hang out with someone that, you know, you might not ever meet in your entire life outside of the military and you pick up on different aspects of how to act, how to talk, how to carry yourself, so when you get out of it, you're kind of a different person, of course. And then attending a University, you kind of go back into that school mindset with that military background and you kind of become more, I would say more, like more like a professional student. Not to knock other students because that'd be wrong, but, you know, sometimes you see students walk around in sweatpants, you know, just waking up for class at ten-fifty and you're dressed up wearing jeans and everything, just depends.

NP: That's fair, and then just to kind of wrap up, if you had to give one piece of advice to someone going into the Marines right now, what would it be?

DS: For going into the Marine Corps. My dad told me that the Marine Corps is what you make of it. You can be sent to a really crappy unit or have a really crappy job and do a nine to five type of work schedule, or you might be Infantry and you're all sorts of all over the place. I don't have a lot of knowledge on what they do specifically for, you know, work but, you know, at the end of the day, you pretty much clock out to go to back to your barracks or back to your family to, you know, you can have fun with your friends. Do whatever, you know. When I think of that saying, I think of even when you're in a really crappy situation you kind of have to embrace the suck is what we also say. Try and get some enjoyment out of whatever you're doing. California can be cold during the winter, you know, might not enjoy it, you know, but go out and do something, or you might be on the East Coast when it's really hot and sticky out, still go outside and do something. I knew a lot of the guys that just kind of hated the unit that we were with. Hated the fact that they were in Japan and played video games in their barracks room the entire time, binge drink on the weekends, and it was kind of sad, because you're two years in this tropical location, consider Japan as Hawaii you can go surfing, you can go super cheap to learn how to scuba dive out there. I never scuba dived. I'm not much of a water person, but I like traveling around. So try to make the best of, you know, certain situations that you're stuck in so, the Marine Corps is what you make of it.

NP: That's a really wonderful [unintelligible].

That's the end of my questions. Thank you.