

Travis Denman - Episode 849

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SPEAKERS

James Geering, Travis Denman



James Geering 00:00

This episode is sponsored by NuCalm. And as many of you know, I only bring sponsors onto the show whose products I truly swear by. Now we are an overworked and underslept population, especially those of us that wear a uniform for a living, and trying to reclaim some of the lost rest and recovery is imperative. Now, the application of this product is as simple as putting on headphones and asleep mask. As you listen to music on each of the programs, there is neuro acoustic software Beneath that is tapping into the actual frequencies of your brain, whether to up regulate your nervous system, or downregulate. Now for most of us that come off shift we are a exhausted and B do not want to bring what we've had to see and do back home to our loved ones. So one powerful application is using the program power nap, a 20 minute session that will not only feel like you've had two hours of sleep, but also downregulate from a hyper vigilant state, back into the role of mother or father, husband or wife. Now there are so many other applications and benefits from the software. So I urge you to go and listen to episode 806 with CEO Jim Poole, then download NuCalm and you see a LM from your app store and sign up for the seven day free trial. Not only will you have an understanding of the origin story and the four decades this science has spanned, but also see for yourself the incredible health impact of this life changing software. And you can find even more information on nucalm.com Welcome to the behind the shield podcast. As always, my name is James Geering. And this week, it is my absolute honor to welcome on the show, former Greenbrae. Coach and aviation student Travis Denman. Now, as you will hear, in this incredible conversation, we discuss a host of topics from his journey into the military, pre 911. Some of the conflicts, he wasn't able to get to our near deployment in Haiti, his transition story, school safety, tactical Philosophy in Law Enforcement, leadership, and so much more. Now, before we get to this incredible conversation, as I say, every week, please just take a moment, go to whichever app you listen to this on, subscribe to the show, leave feedback and leave a rating. Every single five star rating truly does elevate this podcast, therefore making it easier for others to find. And this is a free library of almost 850 episodes now. So all I ask in return is that you help share these incredible men and women's stories. So I can get them to every single person on planet earth who needs to hear them. So with that being said, I introduce to you Travis Denman enjoy Well, Travis, I want to start by saying, firstly, thank you to the lads of the collective that brought us together on one of their episodes. And that's how we met. And secondly, to welcome you on to the behind the shield podcast today.

T Travis Denman 03:29
Thank you very much.

J James Geering 03:31
So very first question, where on planet earth are we finding you this morning?

i 03:36
Currently, I'm in Central Oregon. I live in Redmond. And I go to school down in Bend. I'm in aviation program at Central Oregon Community College. And I'm learning how to fly airplanes. Finally, using my GI Bill, man,

J James Geering 03:51
I want to get to that on the transition element. Because obviously that's, that's an important part. So use that and actually forge a new career. But I want to start at the very beginning of your timeline. So we don't jump around too much. Tell me where you were born. And tell me a little bit about your family dynamic. what your parents did, how many siblings?

T Travis Denman 04:09
All right, I was born in Medford, Oregon, in 1973. My dad was, I guess recently returned from Vietnam. He had gotten married to my mom and was still stereotypical working in the lumber mill down in Medford and had me thanks for kind of early 70s stuff was kind of probably probably pretty financially tough. So my dad went back on active duty join the army when I was a baby. And and so I was raised up in a military household all the way through my graduation in high school. And I graduated from high school and also Schonbek, Germany. And I had joined the army, the US Army when I was in Germany. So we came back to the states and state of my grandparents for a month or so and then I shipped out to boot camp, you know, but you during my youth, you know, I was, like I said, I was a baby. Following my dad, my dad PCs. That's a permanent change of station for the military guys. They changed duty stations, you know, roughly three to four years. And so we followed him around I lived in elementary school, I went to elementary school in Georgia, Washington, DC, Korea, Washington State. I think I hit middle school, we were living in Texas, moved back to North Carolina, went to was a Freshman. Freshman from high school, I was in North Carolina and then I moved over to Germany. And I did my 10th 11th and 12th grade years in, in northern Germany, and graduated join the army over there. I met my wife at that high school. Her father was also a career army guy. And we met in Germany in high school, and then I joined the Army, she went to college. Luckily, for us, I was stationed in, stationed at Fort Benning, Georgia, and she attended college at Auburn University in Alabama. That's about 45 minute drive. So we were able to continue our, our high school romance into into the new army guy in college life, and we ended up getting married. Down there, we got married in Virginia. And I did 22 years in the army started out in Ranger

Regiment. And then I went to made a transition to Special Forces after about four years in regiment, and then did my first Special Forces assignment was the first group out in Washington State did three years up at Lewis, and then I PCs over to Okinawa, was Okinawa, Okinawa, almost five years not quite. And then I went back to Fort Bragg as instructor in the in the qualification course. And then I changed group assignments and I went from four from Swick the training center, I went to a third group. And then I spent the next eight years and third group, mostly in Iraq, did one trip to Afghanistan, but most of my time was spent in Iraq. And I left third groups go back to the training center, I went to a kind of a specialty course. So we have a hostage rescue course there. And I retired from that in 2014.

 James Geering 07:21

Going back to your child, because I want to kind of walk you through all this, but what were the pros, and what were the cons of moving around not just states or countries throughout your school years.

 07:37

I think easily exposure, you know, just exposure to other stuff. It wasn't you know, I lived in it, like I was a kid in, you know, the 70s and 80s. And it was a different time. I mean, it was not out of the question for me to as a, you know, eight year old take the bus from weizhong, blue Korea to Seoul, Korea by myself and do something, you know, whatever. And it was a little bit different for me because that the assignment in Korea back then. It was it was called what they call a hardship tour. So the the service member generally would go to Korea for one year. And they'd live in the barracks on base and it was called it a hardship tour. And because my dad's way he is he's like, Well, I'm just gonna pay my own money. And I'm gonna bring my family over there. And I'll just rent a house off posts. And we can live off base, you know, so that's what my, my dad mom did. And, you know, my brother and I went, while my brother was still not in school yet, but I went to a two room schoolhouse that was quite old Quonset hut on Camp Casey. And, you know, there was probably 25 kids in there. And so we were not on the we were not part of the Department of Defense school system,

 08:55

even though we had a space on the base. And, you know, traveling around there kind of as a,

 09:02

I guess, an expat living in Korea, you know, it was a little bit a little bit different than what would might have been the normal, the normal route. So just the exposure to you know, real culture. My dad was a medic, and he had a lot of rock soldiers or worked in there with him, he had a lot of Korean friends. And we spent a lot of time kind of out on the, what we call the economy back then on base, you know, it was out in the economy doing, you know, doing stuff with Koreans, you know, and meeting them and their families and spending the weekends with him and stuff, which is really cool. You know, and then we came back to the states, you know, move changing schools every three years, you get used to being the new guy, I guess. And it's

not really, you know, becomes not really a big deal. You know, we're moving, okay, you know, you go to a new school, and make new friends and you just drag on you know, that's what that's the way things are. And I think a lot of people and I found this out later in my life because I was raised up and I didn't really understand you know, but when you get new, new soldiers or some interior unit, they haven't really experienced that lifestyle, you know, they're from the same town grew up in the same town never really traveled out of that town, their whole life. And then, you know, they join the army, they drag their, you know, their wife or their wife and kid to their new base in a new state, and then they leave, you know, and then that person has no friends or whatever, you know, they have no support network that's established, you know, that it really affects them. Or I think having a military childhood, you kind of build that support network, globally, instead of locally, you know, even when I joined the army, I already knew people in multiple states, you know, different places, guys that I went to school with all over the place, who were also army brats that kind of, kind of got it, you know. So it wasn't really a big deal for me when I got into the army to, to experience that. And in addition, my wife was a army brat also. So she had grown up, you know, and Tennessee, Panama, Virginia, like she had Germany, she had moved around as well. So when we, you know, when we became a military family, ourselves, and I started deploying and moving around, it wasn't just like, you know, the status quo that was like what we did, you know, it wasn't really a big deal. And that was it was very beneficial to our lifestyle, I think.

 James Geering 11:18

What about downsides of bouncing around? Were there any cons when you look back now?

 11:23

I think the the one thing that I say all the time is I don't have a hometown. You know, honestly, when people ask me where I'm from, I'm not sure. You know, I'm from I'm American. I mean, that's a fact. I'm American, for sure. But you know, I love the Southbroom I love it there. There's no better food on planet Earth and down south and states. And, you know, right now I'm in the high desert in Oregon. It's awesome here. I love it here to, you know, there's there's no way to, like pinpoint one place. That's the best, you know, but it is something to not have really a hometown, you know, when you I mean, I'm 50 years old now. And I still don't know where I'm from, you know, I'm not really sure where I'm going to settle down yet. Because I, there's, there's parts about this place I really love but then it's like, Man, I really list. I miss North Carolina, man. It's nice there. And, you know, so I'm not sure.

 James Geering 12:17

There's a quote, and I'm totally paraphrasing, but it's something like traveling is the enemy of ignorance or something to that effect. And I realized, you know, the, the people that I know, that seem to be a lot more open minded, more often than not have just traveled a lot more, what is your perspective of that with your upbringing, versus maybe when you first came back to the states and compared yourself to some of the people that never even apply for a passport in the matter left the country? Yeah,



12:45

I think that that statement is 1,000% accurate. You know, and a big part of it is like, you don't know, what you don't know. And you're never gonna know it, unless you're kind of exposed to it. You know, and I think that's a problem that we have a lot in America with polarization. You know, and people thinking that there's one way and that's the only way and then believing that everybody should conform to that way, you know, and it's like, those beliefs, man, I mean, it's ridiculous. To me, it's, it's ridiculous. And we have so many examples through history where, you know, we, we were successful in living together with very beliefs. And then somehow some, usually, some man influences a certain side and a certain way to, to believe that those beliefs can't coexist. You know, I mean, Israel right now is a perfect example. You know, throughout history, if you really read it and study it. I mean, Jerusalem was filled with every little religion on basic or on posted at one time, you know, on the earth, and it was fine. You know, they live together, like, why do you why why go back to fighting? You know, why not just live together? I mean, you can pray to whoever you want to stand right next to me. And I'm gonna pray to whoever I want to, like, why do we have to fight about it? You know, but I think they use the religious part of it, too. You know, men, again, they use the religious part to influence people, in order to gain what they really want. And it's not. They're really, they're really not sincere in their belief of imparting religious beliefs. They weren't land or wealth, or whatever it is. And now they use religion to camouflage that desire in order to get people to fight each other.



James Geering 14:38

See, I couldn't agree more. I know we discussed this briefly before we hit record. But one of the things that I brought up and I'd be intrigued to get your your perspective on it is history has millennia of lessons like this. And one of the glaring things that that I've seen, let's just pick now talk about America for a second, the last two administrations that span both Eyes of the aisle have done nothing but force division. And when you look back at history, you know, divide and conquer whatever it is, whether it's, you know, the Nazis, or you, you name any of the slave trade anything, the Genesis them in the nuclear scuze me of that is a few people wanting, as you said, the land, the power, the money, and it always comes at the cost of the masses. Why is it that this happens over and over again, yet, the you know, the majority of the people seem to be unable to identify it until it's too late in



15:34

ignorance, that's, uh, it's just ignorance, you know, a lot of the people who, who are influenced by those preachers or Imams, or whoever, you know, the media in the States, you know, they just don't know both sides. And they don't care to hear it. You know, that's another problem is they just don't care to hear it. You know, I would rather just hold on to my beliefs, I'm right, you're wrong. And then, you know, we'll fight to the death about it, which makes no sense at all. But, you know, it's, it's really unfortunate. I mean, I there's a big misconception, and you even said it just now, there's two parties in the United States. I don't believe that to be true. I think there's one party in the United States, the, and they, you know, the political elites aligned with, you know, corporate media, and all those guys, they influence the masses, you know, there's no reason why there should be a 5050 You know, balance of power in the in America on every topic, on every topic, you know? Well, the reason that that is, is because both parties can change things based on three or four votes, one or two votes here and there, you know, if if, if there was a third party in the mix that was viable, you know, or a fourth or a fifth, you know,

these, these politicians would actually have to do some, some talking and some compromising, and some, some going back and forth and figuring things out, you know, but because there's only two, they're able to maintain control of the whole dynamic, you know, and they don't let any other parties in. And the reason there's not more viable parties in America is because of the stranglehold that the Republican Party and the Democrat Party has on the American political system.

 James Geering 17:18

This is something that I've pointed out. And again, I'll shift the focus to the UK as well, you look at you know, the Westminster there's a bunch of rich, you know, private school educated people shouting rabble, rabble, rabble and waving papers at each other, and nothing actually getting achieved. And you look at the way that we select our, for example, presidents at the moment, it's not a democracy, as a demonstrator, crazy you've got to be a millionaire or billionaire. And you've basically got to discard any ethics, because you're gonna be taking money from all these companies to get you in there. So for me, it's, it's, you know, as I say, it's like going to a ship factory and expecting a cupcake, it's not going to happen if you just the same person goes through and comes out the other end. So if you were king for a day King with the world, for example, the whole fucking world, what can we do to change that? How can we get the people to go from apathy to educate in an angry enough to demand change of the system, rather than expect some Messiah and a blue or red tie to change the world for us?

 18:20

I think that's, that's the number one thing is making people realize that government or organization however, it is perpetuates itself, right, it's always going to try to get more and more and more for itself. You know, the United States is a great example. You know, we, our government system, constitutional republic, and people forget about state government altogether, you know, really the way the the letter of the law, every state in the union can tell the federal government to pound sand, we're not going to participate in that. We don't have to participate in that. But because of the influence of, you know, federal dollars on all these agencies, and all this, you know, inner cooperation, you know, the the federal government has made the states basically dependent upon their funding, you know, which should be illegal in my opinion, you know, states shouldn't be taken federal money, federal money should be spent on federal stuff. And if it doesn't have anything to do with, you know, Texas, like, it shouldn't go there, you know, and if Texas needs money, Texas should raise the money, you know, and it should be that way for every state, and that way, they wouldn't be beholden to the federal powers. You know, you know, and marijuana is a prime example of it, you know, how many states in the in the in the united states have legalized marijuana now, and how many have recreational marijuana you know, and the reason they can do that is because the federal government has no jurisdiction over state law. So yeah, it's a federal a federal crime but they require federal agents to to go after it and it's just not worth it to them to go try to track down everybody and Colorado or Oregon, or Washington that's got some weed, you know. So the states have the power to negate, you know, idiocy from Washington, DC, but they pick and choose what they want to fight, because sometimes it helps those state reps. And sometimes it doesn't, you know, but realizing that government will always grow itself is, is probably the first step, you know. And we're, we're really good at every time there's a problem is trying to figure out how more government is going to solve our problem, you know, which is also idiocy, like,


government got us into the problem, we should eliminate, eliminate some of it, you know, what, what agency is it that got us into this problem? Eliminated? Over? You know, and, you know, I think a lot of that, even as a military man myself, you know, I spent my lifetime in and around the military. You know, the, the military industrial complex in the western world is ridiculous. It is ridiculous, you know, is far out of control. And, you know, it's, you know, it's because of money, you know, that's what it is because of money. Well,

 James Geering 21:15

this is what's scary for someone who has never worn a military uniform, is, of course, there was a time to pick up arms, you know, whether, you know, it's an invasion of your own country, whether it's something like, you know, the Nazi regime where, you know, I mean, it truly is all hands event, but then there's so many conflicts, and the one that really kind of dissuaded me from the military, when I was a little boy was the Falklands conflict, which I mean, again, I don't know, I wasn't there. I'm not a politician. But from now, looking back seems like it would have been possible to use diplomacy rather than all those young men dying for, you know, that one rock. And so where is the dissuasion when there's so much money to be made when we are at war, to stop our arguably children being sent off, you know, to foreign countries and coming back and coffins covered in flags? Yeah,

 22:06

the argument is always, it's the chicken and the egg argument. You know, like, as far as government is concerned, you know, our government spends more than any, any government in the history of the world on defense, defense, right. And if you're going to spend that kind of money on something, you kind of have to justify its existence. You can't just say, we're going to spend two thirds of our of our budget on defense, and then they never do anything. You know, it needs, the world needs to be dangerous. The world needs to be, you know, there needs to be unrest in the Middle East, and a conflict between China and Taiwan, there needs to be these things in order for us to justify the expenditure of your tax dollars on all of this defense, you know, and maybe if we didn't have that, you know, we would talk you know, maybe if the two guys with with pistols didn't have pistols, they would just talk it out. Maybe they'd fistfight. But after a while, they'd start talking because they get tired, you know, but, you know, when you have these things you can ever have to justify their use.

 James Geering 23:17

Absolutely. Well, I appreciate your perspective on on all of those. I want to get back to kind of some of the attributes that you brought into the military. So when you were in the school age, obviously, you're bouncing from country to country, what were some of the sports that you were playing?

 23:34

Well, I was kind of like all American kid, you know, when we were in the States played baseball in the summer and fall football time, you know, I played football up until middle school. And then I think I got to North Carolina a little late and I didn't play. And then when I went to

then I think I got to North Carolina a little late and I didn't play. And then when I went to Germany, football kind of wasn't really a thing. You know, like, I mean, they had it over there, but like, thinking that you're gonna get picked up on a college scholarship or something playing football in Europe at the time, you know, was ridiculous. You know, we didn't have the internet and all that. So like, nobody in the States, nobody knew who you were. But I started playing soccer when I was in Germany, that that first year I got there. And that kind of stuck on me. I really, really enjoyed it. I played for my local DoD school. You know, I played soccer for them and I also played in a little club league in our in our town or sold Schonbek and I also played in my indoor league there and also a charm back that was it was just really fun. I enjoyed it a lot. Several of my classmates were successful, came back and they played college soccer. I joined the Army. I also wrestled over there in the wintertime. That was a big part of my high school life wrestling. I had another big influence my wrestling coach, Chaplain Brian Kosta. He was a army chaplain and At my school didn't really have a real wrestling coach at the time. So he volunteered his expertise to the school and he coached our wrestling team. And he was also the 1980 Olympic heavyweight for wrestling. And then, in 1981, I believe he won the world championships, and 1980 the United States boycotted the Olympics because they were in Moscow. But the following year, traveling Kossi, he beat the guy that won the gold. So odds are that he would have he would probably beat him then he was awesome human being just a great dude. And he taught me a lot. I credited him with a lot of the a lot of the sufferings I went through in the military. I credit to trapline kasi for showing me that you could make it you know, if you just grit your teeth and and grind it out. Because wrestling was no joke, I think probably every I would, I would love it if every American boy wrestled, because I think it would teach them a lot.

 James Geering 26:00

I think it was voiced Gracie or one of the Gracie family saying that everyone learns jujitsu, that you do make a huge dent in bullying. And I agree completely. I mean, I think there's nothing more humbling than being in an environment, you might win one fight and then this course someone else over it, and then you just get murdered. And you're like, oh, okay, so I can't be an asshole there. Yeah,

 26:19

I mean, you, you see that in every dojo, you go to right, you know, you get a, you get a new, a new blue belt, it's like, a little bit cocky. And that'll last for a certain amount of time. And then somebody will notice it, then, you know, one of those old brands will come over and like, educate you, you know, so it's cool. It's, it's definitely a good sport, as you know, it teaches you manners, and it does builds character, you know, builds character.

 James Geering 26:46

When I think of suffering, and a lot of people in your community, you know, played at play the gamut of things, but wrestling seemed to be one of the ones that were like, Yeah, that's where I really learned, you know, my toughness. What was it about that because even to this day, it still seems that wrestling is revered, if you're if you're a successful wrestling athlete in school people know, the hurt box that you've been in for a long time. So kind of what was what was the elements of that training that served you so well, in selection years later?



27:14

I think. I mean, looking back on it, you know, I didn't really know at the time, but when you're on the mat, and you know, it's just you, you're the only one, there's no team to blame it on. You know, there's, I mean, they consider wrestling a team sport, like there's team points and all that like when your match, you win or lose your match, and being the only one there to accept responsibility for the whatever outcome occurs, then, then that's a that's a big lesson, you know, there's no blaming anybody else because you failed to win, you know, you have to take loss as a lesson. You know, like, oh, he you know, that dude, ankle pick me so easy, I got to figure out how to defeat that, you know, and, and, you know, it's on you, you have to figure it out. And then you have a team to work with you to help you. But it is on you to figure it out. And I think that kind of transfers throughout the rest of life is like being dependent on yourself. And to be successful. Is is really a lesson it sticks.



James Geering 28:23

I did taekwondo to quite high level, I won some national championships and things but I always remember coming back, and I never ever when I did lose a never was like, Oh, those judges they didn't know what they were talking about. It was always like, even if it was close, well, how did I not whitewash that person? And what can I do to fix it? It was immediately back to work. But when I contrast it with I played field hockey, which is not as many men play that in the UK, and it's funny because you get to run around with a stick and no pads. It's actually quite, you know, quite a dangerous sport. But there was a lot of that blaming. Oh, you You fucked up that pass. You missed that. Yeah, whatever it was. And so it's very easy to lose ownership because of that. How did you contrast that stat ownership element in wrestling to the team sport of soccer, the big shift in any way? So when I say soccer, I mean football. I correct myself. So yeah, the real football.



29:19

I know what you mean. I speak football. I'm not sure if there's a there's a really realization there's just I think for me, there was a recognition of the difference. You know, there's there is a team sport and at some level, if there's a you know, a team breakdown, then there is someone responsible, you know, maybe, you know, if, if you lose a ball or miss a pass or shank one, you know, like Yeah, I did that. I've always been, I think pretty good at accepting responsibility for my part in whatever happened. So, you know, that maybe is a byproduct of wrestling and like not having anybody else to blame Get on, you know, like, it's different. If you're a team sport athlete, and you come into the wrestling room and you're placed on the mat with one of the person is just you, and you try to blame the coach. I mean, the coach is a wrestling you are, there's nowhere to go. And it's like you just are discovered immediately, I guess in your, in your BS, whereas on a on a on a team sport, you know, you can kind of like, shift the blame around and around and around unless you have, you know, men of character or Athletes of Character that can accept responsibility and figure out how to how to mitigate those those failures in the future.




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 James Geering 30:35

Now, you mentioned about your dad being a Vietnam vet, you mentioned he was a medic, as well, with this kind of veteran lens that you have now having a full career under your belt. When you look back, were there any elements of his time in Vietnam, that manifested now that we're discussing the mental health side so much more openly? And we're able to understand some of the things that, you know, show in our ancestors?

 31:02


I've never, like, I'm not a I'm not a doctor. So I can't diagnose. I can say that. Both my grandpa's and my dad were pretty gruff men. You know, my dad's still alive. He's still honoree, and, you know, but they, they genuinely care, you know, they love and, you know, sometimes it's hard for them to, to express that, you know, they've, you know, my dad, I think is learned, you know, obviously continues to live. And my mom's texting me right now.

 James Geering 31:37

She's listening. Yeah.

 31:40

You know, but I, I think, probably, you know, knowing what we know now about, about soldiering, and the effect that it has on people, especially if you're employed, you know, to do your job for real, it has a pretty large impact on your, on your, on your existence, you know, so that kind of manifests different for everybody. But it seems that that men are a little bit more protective of themselves and their families, and they have a harder time, you know, being open to their, to their problems. But, you know, I think you did a pretty good job. I mean, my brother and I are doing good. Families good. My kids are all grown up and doing good. You know, so, so we're, we were able to navigate that. Beautiful.

 James Geering 32:30

Well, speaking of that career path, were you always thinking of the Army, or was it something else prior? Now,

 32:36

man, I was, I was full in like, probably from the time I was about nine or 10 years old. I was I was fully my dad was also a ranger. He was in second Ranger Battalion back in the early 80s. And kind of a standout of my youth. I remember distinctly the day that I saw the invasion of Grenada, happening on TV. And that was my dad. And, you know, he got a phone call, you know, went to work that morning at zero dark, 30 customers, you rolled out the door about all these alerts and the hell are we doing and blah, blah, blah, says bullshit. You know, I think it was a weekend, I can't remember exactly. But, you know, and he went to work, and then we didn't see him again for, you know, few weeks. So was a couple of weeks. But, you know, like,

my mom and I found out that on the news, you know, like they invaded Grenada, you know, and then, you know, I knew, you know, I, I kind of hung out in the aid station, my dad was a medic, he ran the aid station there to battalion him. And, you know, I knew a bunch of other medics and you know, I would, I would usually ride my I not usually I, periodically, I would ride my bike to the, to the battalion area after school and hanging out in the aid station, you know, and they, although the young medics would be having me stitch up dudes or give shots or whatever, you know, and I'm 10. So I'm in the Ranger aid station, you know, hanging out with these rangers and doing this stuff. So I kind of knew them like, Yeah, this is a pretty cool life. Of course, I didn't see all the all the lead up to that life. But, but I was I was digging it. And then when they went to Grenada, you know, they came home, and it was, it was kind of the first military operation post Vietnam. And America, the United States had kind of understood at that point that they really did a disservice to the Vietnam vets who came home and were shunned. So that was the first time that like any American troops had deployed, fought and then like, coming back, like as a unit. So that was kind of a big deal. When they came back to Fort Lewis. I remember the award ceremony when all the guys got medals and stuff. And it was like, you know, my grandparents came up from Oregon to Washington to Fort Lewis to see it and it was like, it was a big deal and it you know, it had a had an impact. I was like, yeah, that's pretty rad. I think I'm gonna probably want to do what they do. You know,

 James Geering 35:07

we'll speak in Vietnam vets I had Richard rice on who's one of the Delta operators at Mogadishu. He started his career in Vietnam ended in Mogadishu. It's quite a story career, like you said in that period. had Tom sassily, Matt ehresmann, but also Mike Durant, the pilot that was captured. So I know that was kind of one of the first events for you as a ranger, so kind of walk me through that.

 35:32

While I was in Alpha Company, so I got there after like, Bravo Company was the actual company that was in Mogadishu with Delta Force, and they had done the whole Black Hawk Down thing that was Bravo Company, 375, I was an Alpha Company. So when that was all happening, they alerted my company. And we, you know, went to work palletized loaded everything, and we got on a plane, and we're headed to Africa, you know, during the firefight. So when we got there, it was kind of post guys had made it back. And they were, you know, they were kind of the aftermath of the battle. And the intent when we first got there, what we thought was to continue mission, you know, we were going to Charlie Mike. And then because chief Durant was still was still being held prisoner that was kind of the focus was to, was to find and retrieve chief Durant. And I think they, you know, I was so young back then then. But as I look back on it, my number one priority was to not get in trouble. And then my number two priorities do my job well. And so I kind of paid attention to things, but we were, I think, they kind of knew that we knew where he was, and we're about to, we're about to head out the gate and come after him, and rescue them. And, and they turned him back in. And as soon as chief Durant got got repatriated, was back in our hands, you know, evacuated back to the States. We closed down the task force, and we left. And, you know, that was kind of a kick in the grill, you know, all of those guys, like it was a mission there to be done. For sure. So we thought, you know, there was a mission to be done. And then all of a sudden, I think, just because of the bad press, now, it was not important anymore. So like, even at that time, he wondered, like, I mean,

was it important in the first place? You know, like, just because we got the bad press doesn't change the fact that this is happening. And there's still something to be done here. But, you know, I was, I think I was in the army, like, just under a year at that time. So but it was a, it was a good learning experience, you know, going there, we did a lot of training with the Delta guys, you know, leading up to that. We were, we were on a training exercise for something else, when Bravo Company deployed initially. And I mean, they were over there for a while before Black Hawk Down happened. And, you know, while that was happening, my company went up to Fort Bragg and did a bunch of training with squadron that we went over with, and, you know, so that was really super awesome at that time. It wasn't the interoperability, like, I think that was the very beginning of it, like, you know, Ranger Battalion and, and delta, you know, they have a relationship for sure. But that that level of, of cooperation like on on missions and stuff, I don't think was really experienced until Mogadishu and then it's grown, you know, obviously since then. But that was the very beginning of it. And as a brand new Ranger private seeing those, like Delta Force guys, man, and was like, those dudes are amazing, you know?

 James Geering 38:54

So what made you yourself choose to go into selection for Special Forces?

 39:00

Well, my brother says I had blue balls, right? Because of standardly. So my experience in the army, you know, this was I went to selection in 1995. And I went to the course, right after I graduated my six but I didn't Somalia, right. So I was an Alpha Company. So we went we deployed returns didn't really get into any, any tech. So there have been no gunfighting for our company. Then. I think it was 94. Like, maybe late 94. I don't know if you remember this, like, we were spinning up to invade the island to Haiti, right? We were gonna go to Haiti, and kind of very similar to what happened to Grenada and Panama. You know, like the Ranger Regiment 82nd airborne, we're all going to jump in and, you know, retake the island and all that stuff. And that was happening. We're spinning up for it. And actually we were, I was on the airplane taxiing down the runway, about to take off. And the plan was to jump into Haiti and take the island, right? So we're on the airplane taxiing down the runway. And I think we're still taxiing the plane parks, and you can hear the engines shut off. And it was like, What the heck of what's going on, you know, Joe masters stand up on the, on the back of the seats and tell everybody to grab their shit and get off the plane. And it was like the, probably the largest eruption of profanity I've ever heard in my life. Right at that moment, and so we got off the plane, start to D kit. And like, man, it was such a shit show trying to turn in ammo and stuff, because everybody had broken down their ammo, like you get into boxes, right. But then when you get it, you take it out of the box, and like kind of configure it to weigh how you're going to carry it and use it like, you know, for work. So everything's out of the box, we got to turn it in count stuff, and it's just a shit show. And there were there were other guys like loading literally loading the aircraft's the aircraft that we had just gotten off. And it was like, you know, what's the story? Like, what are those dudes doing? Who are they? You know, they're like, oh, there's a third group. Like, we're the, we're the hallway going, Hey, I'm like, what? Like, how did that work out? Like, that seems dumb. So that took note there. And, you know, just kind of felt like, I had been Ranger Battalion for almost four years at that point. And it was like, like seeing the same cycle of training events and bilateral and we almost go to combat, but we don't, these SF dudes are doing stuff all over the world. And, you know, nobody really knows. And it's kind of

cool. There was, this was just kind of post the, the all the stuff going down Central America, you know, a southern group. And that wasn't really widely reported back then people know about it now. But in the military, you knew. And, you know, so it's like, I want to go somewhere where we're actually doing something. And honestly, I didn't, even after being kind of in Mogadishu. Maybe it was just because I was too young, I didn't even really realize that kind of Delta Force was an option yet. Maybe I was just too young. Or I thought I was too young, you know, as a buck sergeant. And, you know, it's just not there yet. So I had known a couple of guys that went to Delta selection. And, you know, they basically been told, you know, go to SF and get some, you know, grow some hair and figure out who you are, and then come and see us again. So, I decided to go to SF selection. And honestly, I was pretty, I don't say scared, but I was concerned. I mean, I was concerned about doing well, you know, I had been raised up in Ranger Battalion. And, you know, we considered ourselves the best of anyone, you know, and even within the regiment, you know, third, that's better than the other two. And if you ask anybody from second, they'll tell you the same thing. But, you know, there was still a level of you have to perform at selection, because back then it was it was it was a month long. And it was, I think it was a individual event for three weeks. And then the last the final week, there was a team week, where they put you in Together with a team and you had to do team events. But there was no, there was really no Intel man, there was no, I didn't know what was going on. I had spoken to the SF recruiter, like, Hey, man, what do I need to do? And he's like, just walk with your rucksack, dude. That's it. He's like, just put your rock on, make sure it weighs 50 pounds and don't take it off ever. And I was like, okay, so I just wore my rug for, you know, ever until I went up there. And then, you know, that was good advice. Because nobody talked to you. We had to take instructions from a chalkboard, you know, that would date me again, there was talk. And they just told you, you know, the instructions will be on the chalkboard. So you had a big, like, the shack, big shacks, where dudes would say, No, we had a bunch of cots in there and beds. And, you know, we'd had just amongst ourselves had a rotation where hey, man, you check, somebody's got to check the board every five minutes to make sure that we get the instructions, because sometimes the instructions were have all your stuff on the formation area in five minutes. So somebody would have to tell us, you know, so we had to deal with that. And, you know, it's a little bit different like, than I think maybe it is now where there's some guidance, because I remember asking questions to cadre, you know, and his response was, you are being assessed. That was it. You know, I'm like, Hey, man, where I need to go for this. You're being assessed. Roger that. So figure it out yourself, you know, and then you go on a team week, you know, it gets your assembled with a team and then you're presented with dilemmas and they want to see the team dynamic and how you perform in a team and I think they, they probably build the teams very purposefully. As a result of what happens during the individual phases, so they can create dilemmas. And it was a good experience. But you walk a lot with a rucksack on. And it was pretty brutal, honestly, like we walked far carried heavy stuff. And I made a few selection went back to my unit, I was back to 375. I was a squad leader at the time, and finished out my last six months or so. And then I went to Fort Bragg which, of course,

J

James Geering 45:33

we talked about, hey, that topic seems to carve again recently. And i i ironically, I I've worked with with several Haitian people that were originally from there, came over very, very recently as served communities in Orlando that were predominantly Haitian as well. And then I went and visited on a cruise ship, they literally kind of fenced off a tiny little corner, called Labadee. And the funny because the cruise ship comedian was talking about fake Haiti, or Jurassic Park's is literally what it is these you know, like 20 foot electrified fences around it. But that is one of the most beautiful places on planet Earth I've ever been to it is such a gorgeous place. And I think if

they were able to get it to where it was safe again, that country would gain immensely from the tourism, just that alone would probably reboot their economy, you almost went there deployed in uniform, have you got any perspective on maybe how we're able to turn that country around now?

 46:33

I think initially, it's going to take some authoritarian like rule, like, it's gonna have to be somebody that's in charge enough to establish, you know, security, number one, you're not going to get anybody to invest in the country, unless it's safe. You know, and as long as it's not safe, there's gonna be no investment there. And if there is no economy, like, crime is going to continue. So initially, I think it's going to take probably a foreign power to come in and take over the place. You know, I don't know who that will be. I don't think it's going to happen on its own. Obviously, you know, it's been how many years now? When was the Haitian slave revolt? You know, 1860s, or something like that? 70s. You know, that was the, you know, the slave revolt in Haiti, where they took over, they overthrew the, the local monarchy and took over the place. And it's kind of, you know, been chaos ever since then really. They've never had a really established, well running, not corrupt government, you know, since then. So it'll take somebody to establish control before they can, I guess, have some reforms to get more freedom for the people. But initially, it's going to take, probably going to take an iron fist over there, in my opinion, could be wrong.

 James Geering 47:52

Yeah. Well, it's interesting, because you've got a unique perspective, but I know that the Asian to me, the Haitian Friends of the Asian friends, they talked about, you know, upset Papa doc, and then baby dark. And again, going back to your apartment earlier is it's a few men that ruin it for everyone else. And it seemed like he was a prime example of that.

 48:10

Yeah. Yeah. Generally isn't every conflict, you can look at him almost all the same, you know, all the revolutions and all that stuff comes back to one guy who is a good speaker, and he can rally the troops and get people on his side to oppose them and, you know, big promises, big promises of prosperity. You know, if you just if you just murder all these people, it's going to be better for everyone. You know, and then oh, wow, it's not that guy just wanted to be the king. Weird, you know. And that keeps happening again, and again, and again. And again. And again. You know,

 James Geering 48:52

I've talked about this a lot, one of my guests, I wish I could remember who it was, so I could give him credit. But someone made a comment a few months ago now. And they said, Imagine you're in medieval England. And you've told them that you've divided the peasants and told them to, you know, opposing things that they start fighting with each other is like, they're fighting with each other. Who are they're not looking at that you you in the castle. And I'm like,

that is the most perfect analogy of what's been going on for a decade plus in this country as well. Like we're so busy fighting with each other as pro or anti vaccine or pro or anti police or Republican or Democrat, or this or that, that we're forgetting to turn around and go wait a second. Don't these people work for us? Have we totally forgotten what the democracy is actually supposed to be about? Indeed,

 49:35

yeah, it's been happening forever. It was before, I mean, from medieval times, all the way through I think, in America, we kind of got, you know, when you talk about monarchies and stuff, like we we just changed the hats I guess, but we had so much, vast wilderness that people really didn't notice how they were being exploited or they were just so far removed from civilization. You know, that Uh, they didn't really care to interact with it. Now, like they talked about there is talk about, you know, civilized people, right? The civilized people usually live in, you know, civilization, right? Hence the hence the term, right. But there's been the common thought amongst civilized people is because is that uncivilized people are just not smart enough, or they haven't been exposed to modernism, right? They haven't been exposed to man, the city, so awesome. If you just sent your kids who are school and everything would be cool. And you'd be, it'd be great, you know? Well, maybe that uncivilized person has decided that they don't want any part of that. They just want to live on the side of a mountain away from you. And they don't want a part of civilization, you know, we're like, but the civilized, can't accept that. They can't accept that there's no way that anybody would not want to be a part of this. And they just try to force that upon, quote, unquote, uncivilized people. And that's happened on every continent, you know, around the world for millennia, you know, the civilized, tried to, you know, pacify the natives. And they assume it's because, you know, they just, there's no way they don't want to be a part of what we have going on. It's, it's great. You know,

 James Geering 51:26

you're telling me the Pashtoon, our elders wouldn't love pumpkin spice lattes.

 51:30

I mean, they might. So like, there's, that's that's got to be three quarters sugar.

 James Geering 51:40

All right. Well, speaking of the world, I've had numerous Greenbrae guests on the show. Now, I have an understanding, obviously, there's a geographical components at each group. So where on the globe Did you find yourself deployed? And let's talk about that area.

 51:54

Well, initially, when I was in the special when I was in the queue course, my initial, there's a funny story or leading into this. Initially, I was assigned to fifth group, which their theater of

runny story or reading into this. Initially, I was assigned to fifth group, which their theater of operations is the Middle East. And at the time, this is the mid 90s, right? 96. It was like, Man, I am not feeling that, like, we, we don't want to, like we had just fought like, the desert War One, like not long ago. And it was like, that's, there's nothing happened in there anymore. And that place sucks. Like, just don't want to go there. Right? So how do I get out of this? And I went through, you know, the proper channels in a course told me about Sam, like, Nope, you're assigned here where you need. And we were at the regimental supper, which is it's kind of a military formality. It's a kind of a ceremonial thing where the chain of command of your of the of your new units, right, all the Special Forces groups, have a big dinner with all the new guys. And it's just closed. It's all military guys. And that's it. So being that I was kind of from the west coast and a lot of family here and stuff, I went up to sergeant major effort, who was the first group sergeant major at the time, and I said, Hey, man, I'm assigned to fifth group, but I would really like to go to Fort Lewis or to Okinawa and be in first group. And he's like, Well, here's what you do. He's like, there's no way they're going to change groups. Now, you've already been done. But here's what you do. When they call your name to go to French, or Arabic, or whatever language it is, for fifth group, you just walk down the hall, and you go into Thai class. And he said, by the time they figure it out, it'll be way too late for them to change it. And you'll get reassigned to first group. And that's what I did, man. This is pre computer era, all that stuff. So I just took his advice. I changed flash on my brain. And I walked into Ty class, and four months later, they were like, me, and you're supposed to be going up to Fort Campbell. Man, what's wrong with you? I'm like, Dude, I'm anti class are you talking about? And they were like, what? You're supposed to be in first class. I'm like, bro, I've been sin attack class for four months. And they're like, whoa, like, there's like the, you know, the literal clerk like, and, yeah, they changed my stuff, man. I went to Fort Lewis, and got the first group. So that was pretty cool. Like, things you could do before computers, right. Went to first group, like I spent four months in Language School at Fort Bragg was a six for six. And during that time, you do a bunch of cultural, like, you know, training and we would go to Thai temples and my teacher was really cool. cuccia she was awesome. Her husband was a Thai teacher. Also. They were Thai nationals that had come to the States and they weren't there at the at the bank Hall teaching, teaching Green Berets, how to speak Thai. And it was good. I was lucky when I got to my unit. I went up to Fort Lewis and probably within six weeks I was in Thailand. So got to the got to Fort Lewis got to my team, teams going to Thailand. And off we went. So I got right after language school, I was in Thailand for six weeks. And that kind of solidified things pretty well. And then I came home, I think I was only home for maybe two weeks and went right back to Thailand again with another team and was in Thailand for another six weeks. So kind of like going to language school immediately followed by, you know, basically two deployments straight to Thailand was really, really good for kind of retaining all that information. And we I was in Fort Lewis for three years did several trips to several places in Southeast Asia, Laos, Thailand, Korea a couple times. We're supposed to go to Indonesia, but I got kicked. And then I went over to Okinawa, PCs, changed, moved my family over to okie and was in Okinawa for just under five years, and deployed a bunch of times there bunch of times to Thailand. Several times a career we'd go to Korea pretty regularly just to shoot us the ranges and stuff. At a time and a bunch went to the Philippines a few times. Actually, my first two OEF deployments were to the Philippines. This is 2002 2003. And I went to the Philippines for those first couple of trips. And then I got we call it swept, right we got the swig bomb, I got levied to swig to be an instructor at the Q Course. So from my left there, and oh three. So 2003 to 2006. I was in the queue course as an instructor. And then I changed groups and went to third group. And that was kind of an ordeal. But I got by this time I had been in group for 11 years and knew enough dudes that I called sergeant majors to help me out and they hooked me up and I just had to promise our major Sherlock that I'd never tried to go back to first group. I don't know why I'm like, you're only gonna be the SAR major for two years, bro. I'll go back when you're gone.

J James Geering 57:15

Well, speaking of epic blue balls, you go to first group. And then in 2001, which is nine years into your career 911 happens. So kind of walk me through, because it's always intriguing as well, you know, what was the mindset as far as training prior? And then what was the shift in just the entire training ethos after that event?

o 57:38

Well, like you said, I was, I was in first group. And at the time, we were actually I was in my house, I lived on an Air Force base over there Kadena and we were under a lockdown because there was a typhoon going over the island. So we were all in our, in our houses locked up, and you know, batten down the hatches kind of waiting for the storm to go through. And my team started called me. And he's like, Hey, man, turn the TV on right now. You know, typical story, I'm like, What's up, boom, and we're on the phone. And, you know, we see the events unfolding on on the news. And I was like, dude, everybody knew, like, immediately like, Yo, this is a big, like, things are gonna change tomorrow, you know, so, so that was kind of a mental flip, flip of the switch, I think for everybody, right? Then, you know, and, you know, immediately go back to the box, like, the boxes where we used the work that we just called the building the box, because there was no windows. And, you know, get to your team room, start to get a Intel dumps from, you know, from the captain to warn, like, Hey, what's going on? Like, where are we going to go? Like, what's what's happening? I remember we had a formation. And it's, it's funny, because like you said that all the Special Forces groups are regionally oriented. So literally, they had remapped kind of the whole EO, the world in the ayos of each region, very recently. Before that, I mean, I think it was within a year or two. And prior to that, Mongolia, Afghanistan, Pakistan, all these parts, these stands were all first group EO. So I think kind of a lot of us still had that in our head, like, Yo, we're definitely like, on the way over there to do something, you know, I mean, we have guys going to do deployments in Mongolia, you know, just training deployments. And well, they had really reshuffled the map. And now all the stands had fallen under fifth group. So there was a lot of dudes that were like, Yo, like, That's bullshit. We've been studying Afghanistan, like, you know, that's our ao, but that didn't really matter at the time because they had reshuffled it and and the fifth group guys ended up going but it must have it must have been a lot of dudes, I'm not sure but I remember we had a company or a battalion formation and the SAR majors said like to everybody so Stop putting in assignment requests for fifth group. None of you guys is going anywhere, like it's not happening. So just stop doing it, you know. And then of course, this things kind of kind of calmed down initially. And we're, you know, reading and gathering, gathering information and all that stuff, kind of mapping out the world and what our responsibilities might be our battalion commander at the time, Dave Maxwell was super, super smart switched on dude in Asia, and he had already kind of mapped out a lot of the a lot of the Islamic threats that were present in, in Asia. So we kind of refocused our attention on those things. And, and got to work in our in our own ao, and our initial deployment, which this is kind of a testament to that, that thing that if you have it, you need to justify its use. Right. The initial plan was for our A OB, which is our higher headquarters to remain in Okinawa. And they were just going to deploy teams into Mindanao into the southern Philippines. And all those island chains down there were there were at the time, the Abu Sayyaf group was a, you know, Islamic militant group that was running amok down there. And we were going to assist the Philippine Marine Corps Philippine army and dealing with the other staff down there, because obviously, our intelligence collecting apparatuses were far

superior and stuff. So we're going to do that. And then as that plan got kicked up the chain, the initial team level deployment turned into a giant sea just sort of deployment, which is a huge organization all infilling into into the southern Philippines and, and having an AOP and Zamboanga. And teams deployed in various other spots around the islands. And it just grew exponentially. Because, you know, all those higher level commands, they wanted their piece of the pie, you know, and if you were, if you were a full bird colonel in Hawaii at SOC back, then you were not boots on the ground in the Philippines. So that changed immediately to, we needed a colonel level command in the Philippines. So, you know, that was the initial that was another, not the initial another. Oh, look how it just grew like this was a great plan presented by Colonel Maxwell for team level deployment with an AOP in Okinawa, and it just got basically taken over by higher command and exploded into this giant, giant footprint. And anyway, did a couple of those couple of those deployments in the Philippines. They're pretty awesome. Had a really cool time. My team, I was the dive team, we ended up working with the fifth marine beach landing team from the Philippine Marine Corps. And we had like their special operations platoon with my team. And we had a Firebase out close to Melissa. And we were there for a few months, and didn't really do any didn't do any fighting per se, but kind of built up an infrastructure there. A lot of people started moving back once we had a footprint there. And we had a Firebase and they were military guys kind of maintaining security. A lot of civilians started moving back to the area. My team actually built a little schoolhouse outside of our Firebase to bring kids in and teach them stuff. Our our, I think, Matt Dewey, who was my team, camo guy, he was actually I think, on the news, because he was teaching an English class all these little Filipino kids. And little Gilligan's Island, like bamboo hut, which was pretty cool. You know, we it was, it was rad. You know, once we got past the initial, I guess, disappointment for not being in the Middle East or in Afghanistan, and like focusing on radio and what we're doing, it was good, but there's still some Yeah, we we need to be going over there and getting on there. Getting in the fight, you know,

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James Geering 1:04:07

was speaking in the Philippines. My wife has a half Filipino herself. And I've got a real love for Southeast Asia. I was actually on my way to there and I got a job in Japan so I never made it all the way to the islands. But I've done martial arts I love the Thai culture, Thai boxing, etc. But there's it's not an area that really gets a lot of attention when it comes to what is happening with the terrorism in those countries. Same as Indonesia. Remember, some of the bombings, a lot of Australian tourists were killed. So you know, what, what are the Filipino people suffering from down there because the lenses rarely pointed their direction?

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1:04:46

I haven't really looked at it in a long time, but at the time, you know, Islamic militants, right. In my opinion, these guys were just pirates. They didn't have really, they didn't care about you know, Islamic fundamentalism as much as they did with robbing and kidnapping for ransom, and things like that. And I think they just used, you know, the, the Islamic terrorist, you know, image as an excuse to conduct their ops, you know, they're just a bunch of criminals as far as I'm concerned, really. But at the time, pretty large organization. If you look at the map, and the southern Philippines kind of gets all the way down there by Indonesia and Malaysia, there's 1000 little islands down there, you know, and these guys were kidnapping for ransom was their big thing. You know, they'd come in on boats, to a beach resort or whatever, and, you know,

tear it down, kidnap some people, and then hold them for ransom. And then the ransom would be paid and they'd make their money and then they'd go to the next spot. And it kept happening over and over and over. And there was a missionary couple, the Burnham's Martin and gratiae Burnham, who were kidnapped and being held for ransom. And, and that was kind of, I guess, one of the key the key elements of getting American boots on the ground down there as these American hostages because they had been held hostage for I think, a couple of years by the time we even got there. And so we got there. And then that was kind of the the initial, the initial mission was to try to track down find and rescue the Burnham's and any other hostages that might be there. Right. So we started doing that, you know, we were patrolling all over the islands, old school, like, you know, Vietnam, look alikes, running around in the jungle down in the southern Philippines. And the Philippine military had also dealt with Abu Sayyaf down there, because they were trying to maintain the peace, you know, and these guys were, were messing with it, and they they spouted off that they were, you know, Muslims, and then Philippines is a pretty Catholic country, you know, so there was like that, that dynamic of, of Christianity and Islam. And, you know, I think that got blown out of proportion myself, I think it was more of the state against the criminal. But, you know, again, men use those terms, because it inspires people and move some up, you know, so that happened. You know, when the fighting was going on, we kind of got the word. It wasn't initially, but we didn't really understand, I think, at least I didn't understand until I had been boots on the ground for a couple of weeks, really, that we weren't going to fight there. Like, it was literally part of like, the Filipino constitution that we were not going to, like foreign foreign militaries are not going to come into the Philippines and and fight anybody like we can, we could be alongside the Philippines, the Filipinos, and you know, they were going to conduct ops, which we did several times they were doing, you know, real stuff. And we were basically right back there behind them with the commander on the radio, like advising them, but we didn't get into the mix ourselves. Later on, after I had left, we did have some, I guess there were some some gunfights down in holo holo Island. And I know, at least I know, one guy who was killed there. And you know, but though the fighting like you would see maybe in Iraq and Afghanistan didn't really occur in the Philippines, it was more of a advisory advisory role with the Filipino military. Yeah, I think also, there's a little bit of the America shiz away from conflict in Asia, I think, based on Vietnam, I think a little bit of the, you know, like, the stigma of Vietnam still looms. So the idea of going over somewhere in Asia to fight again, was very, like the America was not having that. So we're very timid about about getting involved further in that area. I don't know that to be true. It's just an assumption. But I think so I think it has something to do with it.

 James Geering 1:09:24

Well, you mentioned about being a scientist Swick and and doing the training for several years, talk to me about how that ultimately took you to Iraq.

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Well, I went, I left Okinawa and went to Fort Bragg and I taught what's called phase two of the qualification for the Special Forces Qualification Course, SF QC. I typed the second phase of that, which is the basically the first trait the first phase of training. Phase one is selection. Phase two is the we call it the field phase back then I don't know what they call it now. Which is basically where you learn patrolling, field crafts. small unit tactics, mainly, like junk, like, I don't know how to how to put it down, that's just patrolling. Right, is the is the big crux of it, and how

to work in small units, like in the in the field, you know, it's a pretty high attrition part of the course, for a couple of reasons, I believe. I think number one, the weather has a lot to do with it, you're living out in the bush the whole time. And if it's cold, dudes quit. And then, like, people do not like to be cold. And, you know, it's in Central North Carolina, which, you know, it's a pretty moderate climate, but in the wintertime, I mean, my first winter out there. I mean, we had snow up to our bottom of our knees, you know, there was snow out there. So dudes were hating life, you know. And when you're living in that, it causes people to tap out. On the flip side, you know, in summers in North Carolina get pretty hot dude. And the humidity is high, you know, the climates a lot like where you're at now. And dude, same thing, guys. I mean, they frickin have heat casualties. And they, they tap out, you know, so the weather has a lot to do with the attrition rate. The second thing is, it's the first, the first phase of training. So I think it's the first time people are really exposed to having to do things that they've never done before. And they're held accountable for, you know, like, once it's kind of you make it past the selection phase, we have determined, we've determined that you have what it takes. And now you have to prove to us that that's the case. So kind of my opening speech, when I was when I was a walker out there was, you know, from this point forward, you're Greenbrae, you're going to be one, the only thing that's going to cause you to not be one is your your own actions. So just consider yourself a Green Beret right now. So when somebody asks you for help, you need to know how to help them, somebody asks you for assistance, you need to know how to assist, it's no longer a point where you can look behind you and see who else is going to be here to help. Because you're the guy they're looking for, you know, so you have to have that mindset. And a lot of people don't, and you don't discover it until they're put on the spot, you know, so that initial phase of training filters out a lot of dudes too. So we have a lot of scrutiny on us from the commands as far as attrition, because this is the same year that we invaded Iraq, and the United States did. And the the, the amount of guys that were being killed in action was growing. And there was direction from Washington DC, that they needed more Green Berets as fast as you can spit them out. And which is very contrary to the way we had done business in the past. You know, we kind of one of our, one of our, the soft truths, you know, you can't mass produce special operators, you just can't do it, you know, you can't create these guys in a moment of crisis. That's just not how it's done. So we were under a lot of pressure at the force to make Green Berets. And that caused a lot of stress out there. And I spent a lot of time on the phone, once I was a walker for four classes, five classes. And then I became the kind of the boss of the committee. And I spent a lot of time on the phone with the colonel talking about numbers. And, you know, stressful, I

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James Geering 1:13:40

want to jump in just for one second and tangent off that we have a hiring crisis in the US at the moment for police and fire. And from the, the journey that I had in the fire service I worked for, was arguably one of the best departments in the country where the standard was extremely high. And it was just simple that you either made it or you didn't. And their attrition rate, which for a fire department is incredibly high was 25%, within the first year would be lost. And they were super polite, and they look there's lots of other departments that you would be welcomed with open arms, you were just not the right one for you. And then conversely, I had one of probably one of the worst fire departments as my last one, where the bar was in a ditch in the ground. And they struggled to find anyone and the reason was people want it to be challenged the right people would show up in droves and shoot for that target. But when I when I look at the other one, the quality not only at the entry level rank, but all the way then through

the other ranks was so detrimental to the overall mission with this unique perspective that you had, this is the standards that we want and now you're being forced to shift it. What was your observation of the result?



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Initially, there was a lot of resistance, and we were successful. But eventually, there were people that made it that probably should not have. And they would not have a year prior. And that took a, it took a toll on the force, right, they became less effective, you know, because you're still going to have to deal with those guys, it's just not going to be at the school level, like they're going to have to their team sergeant is going to have to deal with them, or their company Sergeant Major, somebody's going to eventually find out that they, that they don't cut the mustard, you know, and it's just kind of was taken out of the hands of the of the instructors and the committee's. And, and they just kind of kick the can, you know, in an effort to appease hire like DC, basically, you know, they compromised themselves. And we compromised ourselves, you know, there were several instructors who, who tried to fight it. And, you know, they just, they there's no way that as an NCO, you're going to beat, you know, a flag officer level request, it's not going to happen. So, you know, we did the best we could, I mean, I know I did the best we could we had, there was a point in time where they actually told us like, hey, we know that the general, the general production of the SFU course, like today is, you know, 300, Green Berets a year graduate, and we want it to be 750. And that was like, That's more than double, that's literally impossible. And they were like, Okay, well, we expect that to happen next month. So everybody who has had any tenure there, I've, I wouldn't even consider myself tenured, I had been there for maybe a year, kind of had a big group meeting sit down, like how can we restructure the course to, to, to be able to fit all the new students one, and like, we didn't have enough barracks man, like, we didn't have enough beds, we didn't have enough guns, like, there's so much support that goes along with growing the course that, that we, you know, we had to have like, no kidding, sit down from top to bottom and kind of restructure the whole pipeline and figure out how to get it done. And, for me, I was phase two. So we restructured our phase into kind of little blocks. And we broke the CADRE down into like two weeks, two week blocks, so that we can handle kind of the same amount of students, but less of them at a time, but still accomplish the same tasks within our 35 Day Training window. And, you know, I think it was pretty successful. You know, we did, we did really well, with what we had, I had to order a lot of tents, and guys were no longer sleeping in the barracks, they were sleeping in tents, because there were not enough barracks. And, you know, we did it, I think it was fairly successful. You know, there's definitely, definitely been, you know, a lot of analysis of it after the fact. And, you know, a lot of the things that we said, leading into it, have proven themselves to be accurate, now that we can look back on it, but at them at the moment, you know, when when the Pentagon is telling you, we need more, we need more, you can you can just talk until you're blue in the face, and it's not gonna matter.



James Geering 1:18:21

Well, with the hiring crisis, one of my observations, having been a bit of a gypsy in the fire service, and then getting to speak to literally hundreds of people on the show, is there seems to be a pretty resounding truth that if you lower the bar, that doesn't actually increase the number of people you hire, it actually decreases it. And the ones that you get are less likely to be good candidates are



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the ones that you want, well might well not even show up, you know, the ones that you want will not even show up in. In the US Army, there's only two units that I'm aware of I could be wrong. But there's only two units that I'm aware of that have what's called summary release. And that means if you do something that's contrary to their standard, you're out. That's the 75th Ranger Regiment and Delta Force, that's the only ones I'm aware of. Somebody can correct me if I'm wrong, but I think that that has a lot to do with the caliber of people that go there. You know, like, if you don't cut the mustard, they just tell you, hey, Travis, you didn't get a haircut, pack your shit. You know, you're done. Like, well, what do you mean when you mean you have to have a haircut every Monday and if you don't have it, you're not arranger So pack your shit and get out. You know, that's just that's all it takes is you have summary release authority. So if the command deems that you're not worthy, you're out. And that has that has a lot to do with the level of the level of awesome of the applicants not to mention the people that actually make it but the applicants because people who are of high caliber see that and they see that only the best, only the best people are there and that's where I want to be so they apply and if you see guys kind of squeaking through the cracks. those people that are the best are like, man, that's not for me, I want to be at the best, you know. So it makes a big difference, not only in the output, but in the applicants, I think



James Geering 1:20:10

where your career took you to Asia, walk me through having taught in, you know, an instructor setting and preparing soldiers for combat in the Middle East, when you actually got to deploy there yourself and see the tactics with your own eyes.



1:20:28

Well, when I was probably when I was still an instructor, we hadn't really learned a hell of a lot yet, from the war going on, you know, I got there in 2003. You know, so this is, one year after the initial invasion in Afghanistan, and all that stuff. So things kind of hadn't made full circle back to us yet. So we were basically still teaching, you know, probably Vietnam era, tactics and things, you know. And then, when my, when I finally got to Iraq, myself, like the war had evolved so much, and it becomes such a, I guess, a routine, that, that a lot of things that we were teaching, I think we're being lost, especially, to me in a special forces role. You know, like, our, when I was in the course, and when I was raised up, they call unconventional warfare was our bread and butter, that's what Special Forces eight teams did. That's why we were structured the way we were, because you could take one a team, and then they could basically build an entire brigade level, Task Force and utilize that with locals and stuff. And, you know, so we spent a lot of time, you know, doing cultural awareness, doing language training, like being, you know, deployed in theater with our, you know, counterparts and, like learning kind of their side of things. And, you know, I think I think when I went to Iraq was only the second time in my career that I actually had an interpreter, like, with us, you know, and I like all those times that we had deployed to Thailand, or, you know, the Philippines, where we had guys on our team that could speak Tagalog. You know, we didn't need, you know, we had I speak Thai, so we would teach classes in Thai, and I would usually bumble through it, you know, because I speak Thai, like, you know, a seventh grader, but I could get the point across, you know, and I could

learn, and usually, between whatever guys were teaching, they could speak enough English, I could speak enough Thai and it would get done, you know, but it just became what I what appeared to me to be so routine, like we infilled, you know, we had our Firebase, and that's where guys rotating in and out of, and, you know, it's like an Airbnb, and, you know, there's, there's the gym, here's this and that, like, cool, what's your OP tempo? Like, oh, we do this, and that, which, you know, we did. But it was, it wasn't the same type of existence that we had trained for, at least when I went to the Q Course. You know, and we were training for an entirely different mission set than what was being utilized in theater. So there was a lot of institutional learning that needed to take place at the unit level, so that they can maintain that stuff. You know, and I was in bravo to three to company and third group that was, it was a sift company. So we did the same rotation, back to back to back, like year in and year out, we just did the same rotation. And, I mean, I've stayed in almost in the same room, like, year after year, going back there, you know, I have the same bros that are in the ICCF that are my bros still today, you know, I was with them for, you know, five rotations. So I know, you know, and for a period we were doing, we would do one rotation where we were training with locals and then are working with locals and then we would do on rotation where it was just unilateral American only ops, and then we would go back and forth, you know, but that whole mission set you know, was a little bit different for me and the guys going to Afghanistan probably would have a different opinion of that but but for me, it's the main portion of my experience would be going to Iraq and you know, that's what we we did over there so it was not like we've not likely learned in the cube course at all. So

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James Geering 1:24:18

what's your philosophy now because the I've again, the bad fire department I worked for we had a massive near miss with the Pulse shooting. His shooter came to our area, which was Disney Springs, the big shopping area, was seen to get out with his weapons in a stroller. Too many cops at that particular moment gets back in his car drives to pulse shoots at you know, murders 10s and 10s and 10s of people I get back I'm actually overseas at the time waiting for this huge you know, okay, we got to change X, Y and Zed and it was nothing. Conversely, the good fire department, Anaheim, California, Disneyland, but they protect it. They're a separate city. They don't work for Disney. Extremely well prepared. err. So one, I would not let my found anywhere near the other one, I wouldn't want any better. There's no better people in my opinion than the men and women in uniform and Anaheim to protect if they went to the Disney Land. And the difference really was the East Coast. One was, well, it hasn't happened. So we're fine. The West Coast philosophy was let's try and think of anything that possibly could have. And let's prepare for it. Let's train for it. Let's equip for it. So with that kind of, you know, idea, you start discovering, you know, the army, the Special Forces, that the tactics aren't, you know, that you are kind of hanging on to the Vietnam era? What was the mindset change to start thinking about projecting different types of training?

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Once dudes actually started rotating back to the schoolhouse, who had combat experience, those kinds of lessons learned from from theater started to make their way back into the course. And when you're looking at special forces training, there's kind of, there's several levels of it, right. So there's the initial training, which is the Q Course. That's the qualification course, this is your basic level Greenbrae books, we need to be able to do these things in order to

operate as a part of an A team. Right. So those things, they stayed roughly the same, generally. So like, I would say, fundamentally, the fundamental stayed there, kind of some of the scenarios that we presented during the Q Course, kind of were tailored more towards the current events, but the fundamentals remain the same. When you get to the specialty skills, right, once you are assigned to your unit. And, you know, let's say you go back for a freefall school, or you go to scuba school, where you go to sniper school, or any of these myriads of other called special skill schools, those schools adapted, they're able to adapt a little bit more quickly, because they don't, they're not teaching the fundamentals, the fundamentals anymore, was a dog walking by I guess, they're not teaching the fundamentals anymore. They're teaching, you know, a specific skill set that is needed, you know, so they were able to adapt a lot quicker like when you talk about the freefall school, I went to freefall school in, in 2002. And, you know, it was same problem with freefall school that was going on in 1986. You know, we were jumping out of planes jump a rock, like jump oxygen, you know, that's it, you know, but then, as the war kicked off, the school evolved, you know, more units, were doing actual freefall infiltration into combat. You know, they identified a lot of things shortcomings, and they basically, they built a new school, I think it was called a tick the tactical infiltration course, to Advanced Tactical infiltration. But basically, they were teaching the skill set of actually doing a full blown infiltration standoff, high altitude, high opening navigation jump, where, you know, you're keeping your team together. So those things happened in the scheme of the government bureaucracy very quickly, but probably in a civilian company, it would be considered slow, but in when you're trying to change programs of instruction that are funded, and established by, you know, a lot of paperwork and high up admin people and stuff, it's very difficult to change things. So the special skill schools were fairly, fairly quick to change, especially like a sniper school. And so far tech, just kind of like our hostage rescue school, is our hostage rescue school. A lot of the support assets didn't really need to be changed, they just needed to tweak actual TTPs that were being taught for the school. And that was faster because they didn't need to change the ammo allocation or the location or the timeline or anything like that. So those things changed pretty quick. But the Q Course, fundamentals the same, basically, no, no gross changes. You know, we're still looking for that basic level, basic level Greenbrae to go to a team.

 James Geering 1:29:22

Well, I know you ended up teaching the Husky hostage rescue side. Talk to me about your philosophy on this crisis we have in our schools, as far as the shootings, there is a gamut of you know, responses. And there's a gamut, obviously, of cities that are very well prepared, or as we discussed before, hit record, sadly, you know, some tragic examples Parkland valley where the you know, initially I mean, even though the response after in Parkland was phenomenal, the initial school resource officer did not perform the way they were supposed to. So what is your philosophy was such a story background on what we're suffering from in America at the moment you The number one

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thing that I think that America suffers from is the breakdown of the family. You know, that's the number one problem that we have that contributes to all these other problems. That's the breakdown of the family. Right? And it's, it's a root cause of so many of these subsequent history issues, right? Anybody who would walk into anywhere, let alone a school and kill anyone

in cold blood, something's something's going on up there. But something is not right with that person. And, you know, our mental health resources and the crisis that we have, you know, it's it's bad, you know, in realizing that, you know, if you want to stop school shootings, right now, you put armed guards at the schools, and they guard at the end, no more school shootings. But what happens is, people are like, well, that's just perpetuating gun violence and stuff like no, like, the only way that you're going to meet with a violent person, right. So, like, for me, I carry a gun all the time. I don't carry a gun, because I'm a violent person, or I want to engage in violence. But I do understand that once a violent person does engage someone, the only way to stop that person is to either meet or exceed the level of violence that they are presenting. And I know that, so that's the only reason I carry a gun, I hope that those same bullets stay in that magazine forever, you know, but I'm not going to be caught, where I don't have the ability to meet that level of violence, or exceed it in order to save people, you know, and I honestly, I consider it my responsibility to protect all the citizens around me, you know, if I have the skills that are required, and I understand what's happening, and somebody's killing people, I'm going to handle it, you know, and I'm gonna save as many people as I can. And I think if most of America had that same attitude, we would not face a lot of these problems, like, they might happen, but they would be, they would be dealt with far quicker, far more quickly than they have been in the past. You know. The whole gun debate back and forth, it's just, it's so polarizing, it's almost like the Christians and the Muslims, you know, it's like, you know, for me, I'm, I've been raised up around guns always had them, you know, I'm not much of a hunter. But I am a, like, I love sports shooting, you know, I participate in sport, shooting sports a lot. You know, so, you know, to me, I've had a gun since I was, I can remember my own, you know, since I can remember. And I've never once thought to myself, like, I'm going to commit any crime or violence or anything with that gun. You know, so why, when we talk about this problem, is our only response to take away my guns, that doesn't seem like it's going to have any effect, you know, and nobody wants to address the elephant in the room, which is crime is illegal. Making more laws is not going to stop crime. Right, you need to figure out what's causing it, you know, and I think, you know, the breakdown of the family, big time mental health problem, not being addressed at all, they want a quick fix, which is eliminate guns, which will never happen. And it's just gonna, it's keeping, you're kicking the can down the road. And a lot of these activists on both sides of the aisle, they use this situation for their own benefit, whether that's political gain, or whether that's you know, now charity is such a such a, an industry, you know, how many anti gun lobbies are out there that are just on the payroll that are just as long as the anti gun lobby exists? I have a six figure year job working as, you know, the president of this freakin moms against guns or whatever it is, you know. And it's, it's a shitty situation that probably could be solved easily if you could talk to the people that aren't talking. You know,

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James Geering 1:34:17

I had a quite unique perspective. I grew up on a farm. So I had guns, which is rare in England, but we did. And then I moved to the US and initially, it's not like I'm running around anti gun. I'm just like, I don't want a gun myself. And even though I've worked as a firefighter in some very dangerous areas, and seen all kinds of shooting events, it never really been directed at me specifically. I take my son to an annual physical the doctor come back to the school is middle school, sorry, elementary school, and just literally signing the paperwork to get him back to class and all of a sudden radios start going off. People are running around, and they go Mr. Geering. We've got a code red, you're going to have to come with US doors locked behind me and they take me into kind of behind the reception area. And so I'm standing there, and you know, a firefighter paramedic, but at that particular moment, one of the only children that

actually has a parent by him, everyone else is, you know, hiding under a fucking desk somewhere. And I realized just how vulnerable they are, I realize how completely cut off they are the only person who knows what's going on as a principal, I'm literally fucking MacGyvering it looking around this office going alright, well, there's a paper guillotine and I could snap the handle of that. And you know, who's that if someone comes in, there's an extinguisher. And so it really changed the way I looked at it. And I've done sheepdog response for Tim Kennedy great cars. But I still hadn't owned a gun. And I went ultimately after that, and got one because I realized, you know, I have a, I have a go bag in my car, it's got extinguisher, it's got tourniquets, it's got the kids, and you know, I've got a weapon, and it's just a tool in a toolbox in case I would actually need to and if I saw someone walking towards a school, clearly looking to cause harm. I can't throw a fire extinguisher at them, they need the appropriate tool, like you said. So it was a really interesting perspective. And then couple that with, for example, 10 of Colonel Dave Grossman has been on here a couple of times you hear about the number of shooters that are stopped when they're actually challenged when they're approached the deterrent of an armed SRO, the appropriate person. I mean, I've had had experienced negatively with my son with a middle school SRO, that no fucking business being in that position. But you add those two together, and then you have the conversation, the multifaceted conversation about the shooters, you know, the multi generational trauma that tears his homes apart, the bullying, the video games, you know, the sleep deprivation, the psychosis from psychiatric meds, you know, all those and then you introduce a gun, now you've got the perfect storm. But what's maddening is these poor families are torn apart their children murdered. And then, you know, the media divides like the fucking world war two Flanders fields can be World War One Flanders Fields. And this families, you know, what they're going through is completely disregarded. It's turned into a political conversation. And no one actually does anything at all to move the needle on stopping this happening again.

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Yeah, well, politicians are the wrong people to talk about it, because they like to have the issue. If the issue is solved, that's gone, there's nothing then they don't have that to talk about. They can't say that I'm the one that's going to take care of guns, or I'm going to be the one that's going to keep your guns, because that's what they all want. That's why again, I say that it's the unit party. Like if you think that they don't know that my opponent is going to be the guy that's anti gun, and I'm gonna be the guy that's pro gun. I think you're just foolish. Like, that's, that's just foolish, you know, and getting bringing government into it is like, that's my kids. You know, government's problem, is the problem. I think if we, if we dumbed our government down to the lowest level possible, the lowest level possible, then we could we could take care of a lot of these community based things that that are causing us so much harm, get

 James Geering 1:38:11

down on down, and he already up and it could dismantle them at least, as far as dumbing down. They're already setting the bar pretty fucking low.

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Oh, yeah, that's what I mean. I mean, like, just dismantle the whole network, you know, like, in your town, you know, like, around Florida, let's just say a state, you know, a state wants, they

look to the federal government to like, how are we going to solve this gun problem? Like, why do you waiting for the government to solve your problem, just solve it in your state, solve it in your county, solve it in your town, you know, don't wait for the, for the, you know, for the federal government to solve it, do it yourself, you know, do it yourself. And, and it's just part of it, like people so much are looking, they look to somebody else to do things for them, instead of just taking responsibility and, and fixing the problem locally, you know, everybody should be as involved in their state politics, as they are in their federal politics. You know, how many people do you know that vote for president, and they just vote party line? They're just like, I'm just voting for Republicans? Well, if you did some studying, you would probably realize that a lot of those Republicans are crooked. They are no bueno. You know, and some of the Democrats are not that pretty good, you know, and vice versa. You know, but people just don't really don't think that they just get lumped into I'm a Republican, or I'm a Democrat, and I'm just gonna vote party line. And that's it. You know, we need we need seven more political parties in the United States to like, balance everything out, so that people actually start talking again, instead of just being such a binary.

 James Geering 1:39:48

I couldn't agree more. Especially people start talking about what they stand for, rather than what the other person did.

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Yeah. Yeah. You know, and crime, you know, that the whole thing anything I've done crime there, you got to hold the criminal responsible. That's it. It doesn't matter what the crime is or how they committed it, you have to hold the criminal, responsible. You know, I don't know what's going on right now, with all these these district attorneys that are not prosecuting crimes like that is beyond my comprehension, I have no idea why or how a local municipality would allow that person to continue to represent their city, you know, and there's many cities you can talk about across the country, but pick any one of them. And like, why is the city allowing that da to continue? Why have they not been removed and replaced with somebody who's going to help the community?

 James Geering 1:40:45

Let's stay on that for a second, because you and I spoke before we hit record. And it's obviously two parts of this conversation, the proactive community policing element, how we restore relationships with law enforcement, but also, I've never heard this mentioned before your perspective as an operator on some slivers of the law enforcement community that are almost kind of falling into the tactical element, when the separation between law enforcement and military because it was a unique perspective, I think people need to hear

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I think that there is a growing opinion of the law enforcement community that they've been militarized. And they are no longer like there to protect and serve. And I sympathize with this. This notion you know, the trained several departments, HRT or SWAT units, and things like

THIS notion, you know, I've trained several departments, HRT or SWAT units, and things like that, and good groups of dudes, ladies, awesome, you know, but I'm going to tell you that some of them are hungry for action. And when I say action, they want to get into a gunfight, they want that, you know, there's places that you can find that. But I don't think the police force is where you want to look for it. You know, in my opinion, there's no reason that a police officer should ever wear camouflage, ever, you know, you need to be there to be seen by the community, as a protector, as a servant of the community, you know, understandably, you're going to have to deal with criminals, that's, that's great. That's part of the job. You know, it's part of the job. When, you know, there's a lot of video that comes out now, and it's, it paints police officers in a negative light. And it's unfortunate that those occurrences happen, you know, they're on video, so we see them, and we don't get to see the millions of interactions that they have that are perfect, you know, but what's getting attention are the negative things, you know, I don't believe that every department has to have an HRT unit. You know, if, you know, whatever County, South Carolina and Beaufort as you know, HRT like what, why did they have a major when's the last time that they needed an HRT element to respond, you know, you should have maybe an HRT unit at state level, you know, but that's it, you don't have to have them all over the place. But they do that the departments do that in order to get money, right. And when they get money, and they start buying kit, that's what we talked about earlier, now you have to start justifying the use of these units. Right. And unfortunately, a lot of these units are being used to serve warrants. Right, and then they serve warrants and then things go sideways. These people may be not trained up to the standard that they think they are. And then there's a unfortunate video on YouTube about whatever, law enforcement department doing something not

 James Geering 1:44:00

awesome. All that getting killed themselves. Indeed, yeah.

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You know, and it just adds to the negative image of law enforcement. You know, I mean, I don't think when I was a kid I ever thought about talking back to a police officer, or that a police officer was there to harm me. You know, I always thought like, you know, and I was a little skateboard punk dude. Like, I was probably not the most wholesome kid, but I didn't have any fear of the police. You know? And for everybody out there as like, your, your, your little white kid, like, no, cops gonna be mad at you like, Dude, I was a skateboard little punk rocker. And they chased me off out of mini mall parking lots and things like that, you know, they were not wholesome to me. But I never thought that they were going to harm me in any way, you know. And I skated with a lot a large group of other kids and we never had brown like that, you know, we usually, we're just get, you know, so this, this media portrayal of the police is having a big negative impact on how cops are perceived, and the only people that are going to change that are the cops. You know, the police have to actively counter that narrative. And they do that by doing good for their community. You know, keep it local, keep it local, you know, you should know, what neighborhoods are patrolling. And you should know some people in those neighborhoods, if your area of responsibility is so large, that, that you kind of don't know who's around, like, you got to tell somebody, man we got, you got to do something about that, you know, the, the perception of the police should be positive in the community and the people, they're going to make that happen or the police.

 James Geering 1:45:55

It's a vicious circle as well. And I've had the actual fellow officers on the show talking about this, that, you know, obviously, there's an increase in the protective gear that they wear, because it is very dangerous. And I've been I know, police officers where I worked that were murdered in the traffic stop. But at the same time, the other side of the conversation is the more tactical our police officers look, the less, they're more that relationship is broken down, the more threatening they now appear. So it's a it's a really hard vicious circle to navigate.

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Yeah, I mean, it's not that tough. Honestly, there's, there's like, when you break it down, there are dudes that want that appearance, they want to look like that. If all of your kit is multicam, then you want to look like that, you know, our logo, local police here, they were full kit. And it looks like they look like chips do they have like khaki, body armor with all their stuff on it, their badge, they from far away, they just look like a thick punch and drawn from chips. You know, they look like police uniforms. And they're not threatening at all. But when you put that guy next to a dude that's in OD green, or camouflage from head to toe, that's the difference. You know, I've worn that uniform. That uniform does not scream, I'm here to help you. Okay. And when you put it on, there's there's a mental, there's a mental change that happens, I think, you know, so when those guys stack up outside that house, it's just a different mindset. Well,

 James Geering 1:47:30

there's two sides to the other part of the conversation, obviously, one that never gets spoken about in the media is why are the streets of America so fucking dangerous compared to Oslo or you name you know, Lisbon wherever it is. And that needs to be brought in. Because we are asking our men and women to operate in so much more dangerous conditions than for example, where I'm from originally. But that being said, you know, also the there's a resounding truth in the fact that if our officers are well trained, if they're in great shape, if they have done jujitsu or some applicable grappling art, that in itself is a huge deterrent, but then also the, like you said, the relationship with the community the ability to, to interact with people now, of all the special operations, Special Forces groups, the Green Berets are known to be the force multipliers, you are the ones that interact with indigenous forces and relationships are the, you know, your superpower in a way your ability to interact. So from that expertise, what if you again, king for a day, what would you bring to the law enforcement community to be able to infuse that into the men and women in America in uniform?

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I'm not sure that they're not doing those things, you know, maybe just trying to get the word out. But that's what they're doing more foot patrols, you know, get out on foot, walk around the neighborhood, introduce yourself. I love like seeing video of like, a couple of cops on the beat, just like playing basketball with like, the neighborhood kids. That's great. That's awesome. That's exactly what you need. You know, they're networking, you know, you're, you're, you're finding out what's what's happening in your AIO. You know, by talking to people, you know, you

can't expect to sit on a squad car at an intersection for your shifts, and then go home and then do the same thing day in and day out and learn about the community. You know, you can't you have to get out there and interact with people and learn about them, you know, introduce yourself to the neighborhood dudes, go door to door ding dong. Hey, I'm Officer so and so. This is my beef, you know, and let me know if you need help. You know, things, little things like that, you know, I mean, it's a super, super tough problem, but those are the things that those are the things that make the community appreciate your presence, you know, and generally, you know, even I'm, you know, you get the media to I'm inundated with negative, you know, so I'm susceptible to it myself, you know, but I know that most communities when you ask the locals, do you want more or less police, they say more. We want more police more police, you know, why is it that those communities who are demanding more police are cutting the force? Why is that happening? Those people need to be more involved in their political process, and ensure that the people who are representing them represent what they want. And they're not there for their own end game. You know, it's, unfortunately, most people do not participate in the political process, which puts us in so much more problems, you know, because then we start bitching about it, and everybody wants to fight each other. You know, where are you? I mean, how, how can you bitch if you're not, if you're not participating? You know? It is, it is a challenge, man, it's big one, you know, like I said, I sympathize with the police. But I also understand that you have volunteered for a very dangerous job. And, and sometimes that's part of it, man, you gotta risk yourself a little bit. To protect the citizen, you know, you got to risk, you have to take risk, there's no point that you're going to have no risk. You know, now you can change the levels a little bit. But it's risky business. You know, when you're dealing with the worst of the worst of society, and you put yourself in that position, you have to except that, you know, there's a lot of opinions about who should do what you know. But I think when it comes down to if you know, your community, if you're a appreciated, contributing member of that community, then those people generally are not going to throw you under the bus. You know, they're not one

 James Geering 1:51:54

perspective, again, from a firefighter, never one law enforcement uniform, but it just seems insane to me. And it seems that, you know, if it was addressed, it would also make the streets safer for the officers. And you know, far less likely to go to lethal force for other people, but this one officer to a car, so you respond, and you know, say you're in a nightclub. If you're a normal sized dude, and the bouncer picks on you, you're probably going to get your ass kicked. And just because you wear a police uniform, why is that any different? In unsaved, me do a traffic stop, if there's two of you, and one of us covering from the other side, the chances of someone drawing a gun is probably a lot less, because they know they're gonna get shot by the second guy. So to me that deterrent element not only down, you know, being able to be a lot more friendly, because you are less threatened by the people that you're interacting with, but also maybe you know, less, resulting in deadly force, either by the officer being murdered or vice versa than having to kill the person because the force multiplier of two versus one to me through my complete white belt firefight arise, just seems like plain common sense.

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Yeah, I mean, I'm, I am the same way. I've never worn a law enforcement uniform. I'm speaking as a former Army guy. So, you know, just in the things I know, with dealing with high levels of threat is the only way that I have kind of coupled the two but you're absolutely right. Like, you

know, one guy, we always two is one and one is none. That's common, right? For every level piece of kit that you have two is two is one, one is none. And I think the reason that we put one officer into a squad car is because that department has to justify why they have 10 cars. You know, why don't you have five cars? You know, well, you got 10 officers, right? Put all the cars out there. I mean, it's something as dumb and simple as that. You know, you have to justify the amount of squad cars you have. So put an officer in every car and get them out there driving, you know, we have to justify the existence of this car, this fuel, this maintenance, all of these line item things that we have to justify has gotten us to the point now where we have officers patrolling by themselves stupid, very stupid. At no point in any military organization, have I ever been a part of where they were like, Go by yourself? They always battle buddy Ranger buddies. Like, you know, it's always take a buddy, you know, never is it? Yeah, just go alone. But those departments were put into a put into a bind, somebody's telling them to go alone. You know, who is that person who is telling you to go by yourself at what level? Do they think it's a good idea to be alone? You know, find that level and replace it. You know, but that takes participation also takes time. You know?

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James Geering 1:55:00

Brilliant. Well, I want to hit just one more area and then go to some closing questions. So I can be mindful of your time you transition out, you find yourself working as a military advisor for a film working ironically with one of my friends, some friend. So talk to me about the Thai cave rescue and how that kind of soak around to your time with the CLC as before.

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That was I mean, it's awesome. The whole experience was great, met a lot of cool people. It was awesome. My younger brother, he worked in the film industry for a while as a military advisor. And the he had worked with the second unit director at one point. And on a previous project, and that guy called my brother, it was like, Hey, I got this thing going down. It's in Thailand, and it's a bunch of diving, Thai Navy SEALs. And, you know, we want you to come on as a as a military advisor for it. And my brother, former Ranger Battalion guy, he basically said, like, I don't know, shit about diving, and kind of not interested in it. And, you know, Thailand visas, like I know, a guy who was a diver and went to Thailand a lot and has a lot of time in Thailand. So call this dude, he gave Kevin my number. And he called me at the time I was working for Mark sock. And I had a team of Marine Raiders up in Alaska training. And it just happened that we were at Denali National Park, and had some phone coverage. Like there's a lot of places in Alaska with no, no cell service. But we're in a spot my phone rings, I pick it up. And, hey, you want to go to Thailand, and I was like, I'm gonna need more detail. So give me all the details, you know. So we talked for a while he tells me and I was like, that sounds that sounds good, man. Let me call you back. And so I called my wife. And I was like, Hey, I got an opportunity to go to Thailand for a little while and work on a movie. And you want to go to Thailand for a few months? And she was like, yes. So, um, and I called my boss at the time, who was a former teammate of mine, who was now in charge of the company I was working for and that camp was June. And I said, Hey, Dave, man, I gotta quit. He's like, what's going on? And I was like, Man, I gotta drop in Thailand. He's like, Oh, Nuff said, dude, fine. So, finish that trip, got back to capital June. signed out of that place. And then I got on a got on an airplane with my Well, my wife followed me on an airplane. This was during like super COVID time. So I got over to Thailand and I had to quarantine for two weeks man had to go into quarantine. So I got

to Thailand was in quarantine for a couple of weeks and then got out and went to work on this. The Thai cave rescue which Netflix documentary about the the rescue of the soccer team that had gone into tumble and cave. Let's say that tombola means cave anyway, but going into the into the cave, and and they were rescued by a contingent of Air Force pj's and Thai Navy Seals and cave divers from around the world all kind of came together and coalesce around this rescue efforts. And it's a miracle, a miracle that what they pulled off, they're rescued all the kids and their coach. They were trapped in a cave for a couple of weeks. And they did it was a huge operation. If you haven't seen it. Go on to Netflix, Thai cave rescue. It's awesome. And true story. So it's, it's pretty. It's pretty epic. What they what they pulled off.

 James Geering 1:58:54


What did your Thai seal friends say about the one seal that they lost? There's talk about him put his story out there.

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Sam could like a guy was a legend. Right in the Thai seal community. And he was actually retired. And they they called on him because like, he was such a stud. Right? He's just an awesome dude. And he went there to assist, you know, do what he could. And, you know, he sacrificed himself to in an attempt to rescue these kids, you know, so he's really I mean, he's a hero, dude. Like, he's a hero. This is not in the context of like military heroism. It's it's kind of a standout because he was on a rescue, like operation like and I mean, it's significant. Like, I've been in that cave, like we went in the cave as part of the as part of the filming and you know, several of us and parts of this stunt crew we went, we went back to where, you know, the kids were actually at and looked at it and it was during the monsoon season. So there was water in there. We were there but it was not nearly what had happened during the during the rest Few times. And there was still, like, parts of the kit and the ropes that were there from the rescue itself, like, still there. So it was amazing what they accomplished. And I can't like, even after the fact, like, going into that cave, dude, it's the pucker factor is high. It's like, I mean, imagining that like, completely underwater, we, it would be a challenge, you know, that challenge big time?

 James Geering 2:00:30

Well, I appreciate it really. And that story that I mentioned, there was a British firefighter that was part of the international diving cruise, I'm trying to see if I can sneak around and get him I need to probably look at the, the documentary first and see if there's any info on there. But I mean, you know, it's such an incredible story. And again, I mean, I dive a little bit, and that looks absolutely frickin terrifying to me what they had to do.

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I mean, there were some points, like, we're going in there, where you're, you're kind of like, scooting through the cave, you know? And it's like, Whoa, dude, this is so sketchy. Like, you know, just being in there is sketchy. Couple that with being on scuba gear, is like, that just

takes it to the next next crazy level, you know, but I mean, it was an awesome experience, met a lot of cool, cool people. And, you know, I got to get to live in Thailand for a few months with my wife, and she got to experience that it was, it was really good. I had a super great time still got lots of friends have I talked to you almost, at least every week, from that, from the filming of that, you know, and not to mention, like, the most of the crew was Thai, you know, there was, you know, a Western contingent from like Netflix. But, you know, most of the crew, most of the actors all the more tie. So it's, it was really cool to be a part of

 James Geering 2:01:54

amazing, but one part, I just skipped this one to hit that quickly, before we move to the end, the transition out of the military out of the first responder communities can be jarring. For many of us, you know, we have that sense of purpose, we have the identity as a soldier or a firefighter, you know, we have that tribe that we were surrounded with for so long. What was your transition, like for you?

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Think I'm still transitioning. I think I'm doing good. You know, there's some moments where it's like, I need that my bros, you know, I need to be in the team room, like I need to talk to people and stuff. That's,

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it's a challenge, man. It's just, I don't know, I mean, there's got to be something

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unique, obviously, about being a part of a team or a fire crew, or, you know, being a police officer, something that, that, you know, maybe it's the threat level, whatever it is, but you know, you miss your boys, you know, you miss your crew. And when that's gone, it's tough to I don't know what the word is, honestly, I don't know what it's just a challenge to do it, you know, and I tried to stay in contact with everybody. And then you know, you, you, life happens. And then it's been weeks since you talk to whoever you're like, oh, shit, man, I gotta call out but like, you know, like, I haven't talked to him and what however long you know, so, it's, it's, it is, you know, it's a challenge. It's just something that you it's another thing that you have to actively engage and continue to transition. You know, like, I'm never gonna not be who I am. You know, I've spent freakin half a century being me, you know, so it is who I am, you know, no matter what job I think I'm always going to bring my past experience into it as everybody would. And so it's just who I am now. And, you know, I'm, I'm open to new stuff, you know, I'm not gonna say My way is the right way. My way is a way you know, so I'm always open to learning new things and, and, and continuing to flourish. You know, but it's definitely a challenge to, to leave that behind. You know, I think I think I'm happy that now there's a, there's more of a awareness amongst us. Not really, amongst the community. I don't want to say I don't care about that. Really, it's like it's I appreciate it. But I'm glad that there's more awareness amongst us as former action guys that we know that we needed to call our bros you

know, you need to stay in contact. If you haven't heard from somebody in a while. Probably a good idea to pick up the phone and give him a give them a ring, you know, and just to just to make sure, you know, just to make sure. Oh, obviously, we've we've dealt with all the or we've we've heard about out all the dogs barking at the mailman didn't? Yeah, we've heard about all the, you know, all the suicide numbers and all those things. And, you know, it's kind of like the, it's kind of like the problem with these shootings, there's, there's a mental health aspect of this that cannot be ignored. And I think a lot of it has to do with the drugs, man, those psychotic drugs like antidepressants and stuff, they affect you in a certain way. And it's not good, you know, there's other means to deal with it. And I, I think those drugs have a large part in the in the equation, and I think more than we really realize even at this point than they do, you know, I have one of my friends who was in a, in a, in a situation in a tough situation, you know, he was, he was one of those stereotypical guys. And I mean, he told me, he's like, you know, the drugs didn't really make him feel better. He said, That just made them not care about nothing. And that's not the same as, as feeling better, you know, not caring that you're depressed doesn't mean you're not depressed, it just means you don't give a shit no more, you know. And that's, that's not a good way, that's not a good route to go. So, luckily for him, he was able to recognize that and cut himself off pretty much immediately, but, but it did recognize that response, like, just a not not a concern, you know,

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James Geering 2:06:35

we talked about the government a lot. I mean, one of the things I've spoken about recently, a huge amount is prohibition. I mean, so many of our, you know, our collective communities now are having incredible results from MDMA, low counselling, psilocybin, Ayahuasca, Ibogaine, you know, all these things that are, quote unquote, illegal. And that are, you know, they're more than happy for our men and women to go fight for this country. But they come back and then told they can't have the therapies that are actually working so much better than psych meds for a lot people, nothing is perfect for everyone. That's the point. But making that toolbox much bigger than it traditionally was, I think is the answer for for most, if psych meds work to bridge the gap, fantastic. But at no point is a psychiatric med fixing the nucleus of the problem. It's a band aid on a bullet wound.

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Yeah. And those, I mean, all of those protocols, you know, psilocybin, Ayahuasca, you know, all of that stuff has been used for 1000s of years. Why is it illegal now? Why, I mean, why? I mean, because if Ayahuasca works, then Pfizer can't sell you had meds? Because you don't need them. You know, the reason that they're illegal is because the pharma industry has a massive lobby in Washington DC, to make them illegal. You know, but this is where the states come in, go ahead and make it illegal and the federal government, I don't care, but it's legal in this state. You know, in Oregon, every drug is legal. Every one, like you can get whatever you want. You know, where's the federal government kicking in everybody's door? They don't have the manpower to do it. You know, they don't have the manpower to do it. Do I think that's a good idea? Probably not, you know, may feel, you know, it'll work itself out one way or another, but, you know, lobbyists are, are another, we keep coming back to government here, and I really don't want to do that. But we keep coming back to it. It's just like, there's so much so much that they're involved in your life, you know, what I mean? Like, every part of everything you do is got some kind of like, government stamp of approval or disapproval on it, you know, I mean,

try to go fishing, you know, can't do it, you know, try to, you know, grow this plant in your yard and sell it can't do it. You know, it's always the man, you know, telling you what you can and can't do. And that's crazy. You know, it's just crazy. It's like, the expenditure of man hours, figuring out what I can and can't do is just not worth it. You know, why do you have high taxes? Because you got a whole platoon of idiots in DC saying that you can't grow plants. And you got to pay him? No, somebody said that was okay.

 James Geering 2:09:29

Absolutely. Well, the other thing as well, when you look at the mental and physical health of a nation, if we were just thriving, then you'd be like, Oh, it seems to be working. But when we are 70%, obese or overweight, and we consume 75% of the world's opiates, and the list goes on and we have 20% of the world's incarcerated population, then you can argue that you know what I mean, it's time to swallow your pride and go you know what, Norway? Tell me more about your prisons, Finland Tell me about your schools England, tell me about the NHS. So One government kind of philosophy that I like, if it's run well imagine a tax base system where everyone has health care. But there's also there's a push then that make people as healthy as possible, which is not happening in the UK. They're getting fatter at the moment too. But if you do it right, you lose less and less and less of the tax money. Now when I will in, you know, a baby that struggling or an elderly person or you know, someone who got hit by a car, they just like, Okay, we're going to help you not oh, I need your social so I can start the billing, which is what happens to every paramedic any anywhere in America, the first thing that the patient's asked is their billing information. Not you know, how can I help you? Yeah,

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man. Yeah, my brother, not too long ago, got back from kind of like an extended European trip. And he was like, dude, ate like a pig the whole time. He's like, I ate like, everything I wanted. I didn't turn away anything. drank beer, like, awesome. He's like, I lost eight pounds. Like, how did that happen? Like you're just crushing beers and pizza. And like pasta, and like, you know, bread. Like, you lose weight. And it's Yeah, because our food is filled with garbage.

 James Geering 2:11:14

And a man is pedestrianized. A lot of Europe, you probably walk a lot, too. Yeah.

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You know? And, yeah, that's, that's one of those places where government should be on our side, but they're not, you know, another place. But, you know, you're like, Oh, you want to complete freedom? Like, we don't have that. We don't have that already. I would much prefer if we had not complete freedom, and they were doing things on our behalf rather than against us, you know?

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Yeah, the food thing. I owned a one of my endeavors. When I got out of the service,



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I had a CrossFit gym for several years. And I kind of went full into the paleo and dieting and exercising crazy. But I learned a lot about the food industry in the United States and the farm industry and all that stuff. But it was, again, not awesome.



James Geering 2:12:06

No, I had Joel Salatin on the show a couple of times now. And he's the the farmers on food and consumers are the ones and just, you know, farming the way that people farmed a long time ago. And one of his books is called Everything I do is illegal. I mean, that, you know, nothing needs to be said he's a farmer for Christ's sake. Yeah.



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I mean, it is wacko man. And, you know, it's, it's something when you like, when you really, like, just write a list of all the things that you all the times that you yourself interact with the government in some way, in a day. And it's like, whoa, dang. Like, I mean, so much stuff that they're involved in, and they don't need to be, you know, absolutely.



James Geering 2:12:49

But I think it's important to have these crit because this isn't talking shit, this isn't complaining, this is just bringing problems out into the the open air. And the people that are in the conversations just got the the collective does really well, you know, are have important perspectives. You know, you're a soldier, you're a farmer, you're a nutritionist, you're neuroscientists, whatever it is. And the Venn diagram overlaps in the middle, which is the common sense, you know, do we need anarchy? Of course not. But is there too much government overreach in a lot of areas? Absolutely. There is. So where is that middle ground?



2:13:23

Yeah, I think the unique thing about the United States is that we have the power to turn the government off. You know, and I believe that that power lies at the state level, you know, so the, the citizens of the states need to if they're really, really serious about kind of curtailing federal overreach is they have to get involved at the state level. You know, they have to, and then those states can, I mean, the powers that are not specifically given to the federal government, in the Constitution are reserved for the states. You know, that means the only things that the Fed is allowed to do are the things that the states and the people have said that they can do. You know, so the states have a lot of power. And I just think they, I don't know, the states, I think a lot of the politicians realize it, but I don't think a lot of the people realize it, I think a lot of people assume that the federal government, Trump's the state government, and

it's actually the other way around, you know, and I just, I just think, you know, a lot of people Americans think if we elect if we elect this guy, or this girl or, you know, whatever, if this guy is the speaker, then we'll be good to go. And it's they're always looking for one person. It's not it. You know, that's why we have the Republic, because the federal government doesn't matter to us as much as our state government does mean even look at COVID in the United States, like the federal government never enacted any lockdowns or mandatory vaccine stuff or nothing. That was all done at state level. You know, and then those sub those subordinate You know, jurisdictions, counties and stuff like they followed those or not. You know, at the time where I lived in North Carolina, it was very rural, coastal communities. So it was a lot of fishing and farming. That was it. And they kind of opted out of the whole COVID thing. They were like, Yeah, we're not doing that we got to go fishing. Like, that's how we make our living. We got to fish. So now we're going fishing, and no one who could do anything about it. Nobody, you know, because the fact of the matter is that the state governments are have the power to, to either lock them down or not lock them down. Or, you know, and I think because the states are so much closer to the community, it doesn't seem like it maybe in some bigger states, but you like you can walk into your state capitol building and like, state your case, you know, like that's more more viable than or more feasible than going to DC to try to do the same thing. You know, that you can do it at the state? Yeah, you can do it at the state level. And I think that'll have more impact. So focus on your statement.

J

James Geering 2:16:03

Beautiful. Well, that's a good place to go to some closing questions and quickly. So the first one, I love to ask, is there a book or are there books that you love to recommend? It can be related to our discussion today, or completely unrelated?



2:16:18

Okay, completely unrelated, I guess. But like, love it. It's a Vietnam book. It's by Frank Miller. And it's called Reflections of a warrior. And he was legendary Greenbrae Makhni saw guy in Vietnam. And the school where I worked at the very end of my career in the army, referred to as res 37. That compound is named after in his honor. And he's, I don't want to give away a lot of book it's read. It's it's very easy to read. And it's just a cool story of his experience in Vietnam. It's like a memoir, I guess. That's very, very awesome. Any history books, man, grab history books and start reading them. Oh, man, I can't remember him now. Have you heard of the book? There's another memoir, another war memoir. Like I guess that's what I do. But like, the storm of steel, storm of steel. I've never heard that one though. Hans Umer? He's, he's a German infantry man, World War One. And he goes all the way from do day one, on the train on the way out to the front all the way to the end, he gets wounded in the end and evacuated. But it's almost the almost at the end of the war anyway. But super rad book, there's a couple of scenes in it that were that were very similar to things that I had experienced. And it's really good. I'll give away one, right? He's, I can't remember which battlefield he was at. But he found a place and in the town there was it was all bombed out. Right. And but there was this one corner of a library that had basically we're still standing and There was debris falling around it, but he kind of crawled in there. And there was a leather chair, and like a row of books, and like some light coming through. So he just sits in this chair in the middle of like World War One, you know, right behind the front, and sits in his chair and smokes a pipe and reads this book, that he just pulled off the shelf. And it's like, completely peaceful, quiet, you know, you can hear


birds and stuff. And it's just like, here I am in like, the middle of war torn Europe. Sitting in a leather chair reading the book that the sun shining on, you know, it was just kind of a cool moment in the book. That's a good one. Storm of steel.

 James Geering 2:19:01

Really, I've never heard of that, man. look that one up. Thank you. Yeah. All right. Well, you mentioned the Thai cave rescue. What about any other documentaries or films that you love?

 2:19:11

I'm kind of romantic with the World War Two history. You know, I just think it was a great time in American history. And seemingly, we were doing the right thing for the right reasons. And everybody was all on board and it was great. You know, so I really love that generation that era. So all of those you know, World War Two Docu dramas are awesome. The Band of Brothers, you know, Saving Private Ryan, all those things are great. I'm really anxious to see the new one coming out on Apple about the Eighth Air Force. That's probably going to be awesome. I just love that. That era, it was like kind of the birthplace of like the Special Forces lineage was World War Two, you know, like the modern Rangers. Kind of birth there and carrot Ferguson like it's there's just So much like history, that's kind of touchable. You know, like we still have due to participated in that, you know, this year, well, next year, excuse me next June, will be the 80th anniversary of the invasion of Normandy. And it's probably the last, like big zero or five year, mark that we will have veterans who are participants actually present. So this will be a big one. If you if you ever thought about going to Normandy this probably be the year to do it next year.

 James Geering 2:20:34

Absolutely. I actually get to sit down with to two Jima vets in December and do an interview for one of my friends. He's having a fireside chat. And yeah, I mean, sadly, they're, you know, they're all late 90s now, so it's not going to be much longer before they're going to be joining the World War One veterans that we lost not too long ago. Yeah.

 2:20:53

Yeah. My grandpa was a World War Two guy, he was at Normandy and did he was a Navy guy. So they were in Normandy, and then they shipped off to the Pacific after. And he did the whole Pacific Rim, basically. And he's one of my, I took a lot from his example, you know, gruff, another gruff dad but, but squared away dude. hours going with that? Just awesome. Yeah, those guys are important to our history now. So learning all that stuff is good. And I'm, I've actually taken I'm on my second history class. Now, this is just a modern, it's called Modern History. And it's basically about the Industrial Revolution and stuff. It's more of a world history class. And, and it's very interesting. It's another thing you you had said earlier about, you know, everybody has their own kind of two cents, you know, whether you're a fireman or a cop, or a soldier, a teacher, a farmer, whatever, you know, well, I'm a college student now. So, being that I'm an old one, you know, I have a lot of life, I have a lot of life behind me that I can kind of

reflect on as I'm learning, you know, which is kind of, I think, a unique or unique perspective. I wish sometimes that I could give that to the younger students, you know, some, sometimes I think that they are obviously idealistic, you know, they're young. And they do things, I think, just be just a little bit of Mavity, you know, they're, you know, they're young. So things they say, kind of, like, you know, but, but it's cool to, it's cool to be back in that learning environment. You know, I haven't really been there in a long, long, long time. And I enjoy it a lot. I did a history class last term, and it was the basically 1914 until 1946. So it was one, the mid the, between more years, and then World War Two, were kind of breezed through World War two real quick, but it was very, very awesome. And I took away a lot from that class that I didn't know before that course, you know, I thought I knew everything. But there's a lot out there that that are still left to learn. So any history books, go for it.

J James Geering 2:23:20

Now, you mentioned about obviously the world war two generation being amazing. Are there any people that you'd recommend to come on this podcast as a guest to speak to the first responders, military and associated professionals of the world? Again, it can be any background.

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I only feel comfortable recommending like kind of people I know. And given I guess kind of like, perspectives is a good thing. And he's kind of in your shoes too. He's

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a Falklands veteran. His name is Mark Spicer. I can connect you guys via text or Instagram or something like that. I think I tried to get him on collectable so.

 2:24:04

But I met we met I was. Mark is a he was a Falklands veteran. And he big sniper, British Army sniper guy and extraordinaire. And he had gotten he was working at the time for Macmillan group, which was What year was this? Dude, this was like, maybe 2008 or nine, something like that. And I was a team Sergeant for sniper team took my team out to Arizona to train with them. And we spent a few weeks together training doing some desert antics. And we've been friends ever since then. I mean, we've stayed in contact since that time and I just recently stopped at his place in Arizona, when I was coming out here to Oregon. But he's got an interesting story. He's written a couple of books. And if you dive into that a little bit, I mean, I think he would be a very good, good, good person to talk to because he has a lot of his tenured, and he's dealt with some things.

J James Geering 2:25:13

Beautiful. Well, thank you as you just had to Falklands vets on probably about four, four and five months ago now. Because that's what I grew up in. I was a little eight year old boy when

nive months ago now. Because that's what I grew up in. I was a little eight year old boy when that happened in my country. So I think that would be an amazing conversation. So thank you.

 2:25:28

And you could link up with Messi since he's in Florida. Now. That would be awesome. Oh, yeah, I'll

 James Geering 2:25:33

make that happen. Yeah, me in line. Oh, like this. Actually, that being said, I just watched the David Beckham documentary on Netflix. I've got to say that was fantastic. I was so impressed.

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Yeah, there's supposedly there's one coming out about Messi on Apple. Okay. His guess his plan, you know that he's gonna what he's gonna do. And who's your team, Premier League team?

 James Geering 2:25:59

I don't have one. The reason being growing up as a young boy, firstly, my dad wasn't a huge football fan, which is normally how kids you know, get that team. But secondly, I grew up in the 80s when men were murdering each other over 11 dudes in shorts. So even as a young boy, I was just like, This is madness, what it was. So ever since then, I've always been England. So if England plays on, I'm all for it. But if I was, geographically, I lived in North London for a few years. So Arsenal would be technically the closest like Premier League team that I've been, you know, arch rival

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arch rival, but I doubt it. I love Tottenham, Tottenham has been, like, I watched Premier League for a long time. And then if you ever heard of the TV show, it's a man who's around prime. And it's called All or Nothing, I believe all or nothing,

 James Geering 2:26:54

I don't think I've seen it.

 2:26:56

It's a series. And basically what they do is they embed a media team with a football club, or an American football team, or a college program or something. And they follow them through the whole season. So like, you watch the whole season of these guys like doing their thing. And of

whole season. So like, you watch the whole season of these guys like doing their thing. And of course, you get to know all the personalities, you know. And I stumbled on that show. And first, the first one I watched was about the All Blacks in New Zealand. Awesome, just so rad. And then I watched the one about Tottenham. And then that's my team now. Because like I knew all the guys like yeah, this is my team now. And it was during the COVID big when COVID blasted in England. So they have to go through all that stuff. And it was great. And now because of that show I follow. Now I'm following buena sleep because Harry Kane went to Germany and I'm just spreading out. It's like, it's pretty rad. But that show is really cool to watch. All or nothing. It's interesting to note the difference between the European programs and the American programs as well.

 James Geering 2:28:00

Okay, so what's that interesting, again, I'll

 2:28:03

say something about the way that they it's just the way that they do things. You know, the way you have a football club in Europe that has, you can play for Tottenham from the time you're four until the time you're 50. You know, because they have, you know, all the kids teams are all part of the club and goes up, and they're free. You know, the kids don't pay to go there. They're just snatched out of the crowd by the team, you know, so it's different than America. I think the reason we don't have a strong football or soccer presence in the world is because our clubs you have to pay for, you

 James Geering 2:28:40

know, yeah, there's so much money in the travel bowl and all that stuff, right?

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Yeah. And in Europe, they just get a kid that's good as soccer man. And then they pay for him. And then later on down the road, they can sell that player to another team, you know, but it's just a different. It's a very cool, very cool program. I'd start with the All Blacks though, because that'll that'll set the hook and you'll be you'll be I got to watch all these.

 James Geering 2:29:04

Brilliant. Yeah, well, I want to I want to get some people from the All Blacks on because obviously at one point the the leadership side of their team was pretty phenomenal. But it's interesting as well, I've had this observation and discuss with a lot of people that will high level athletes or high level coaches. But where I see a huge contrast is in the UK, people play football and the level and then you graduate school. And then you keep playing a lot of people, they'll keep playing sports, and whereas in America will forge this high, high level of performance out of our children, but a lot of times at the detriment of their wellness. So you have these Uber

athletes at 18-19-20 and then these uncle Rico's that are now you know, totally deconditioned and broken at 30. And so I think we do a disservice of maybe, you know, looking at the Wellness element of college and high school sports in America and going okay, how can we find that happy medium in between, I want to in my games, of course, but I don't want to have an 18 year old that needs ACL surgery that should really not be seeing a surgeon for another 40 plus years. I

 2:30:11

think American youth sports have become a place that the kids are striving to get a scholarship. They're trying to get a scholarship. And that's it. You know, in sports, I believe sports exists to teach character. You know, they're there to teach sportsmanship, fair play, camaraderie, teamwork, all of those things. That's why sports exist. But we've lost track of that in the States, and we just push for, and parents are probably a prime motivator of this. Then because of financial reasons, they want their kid to go to the best schools. So they think their only way to get there is to play football. So you got to play football, you got to play football, and then that becomes the focus. And it's unfortunate, but like you said, in Europe, you know, they play sports for the team, you know, it's part of life and learning and team work. And it's just, it's a different, different. I think when you watch the all or nothing, you'll see a little bit that come out. Once you watch, I think is the Cowboys, the Dallas Cowboys episode, watch a couple of the others first and then watch the Dallas Cowboys. And you'll see like, big difference. Brilliant.

 James Geering 2:31:30

Yeah, I'm having to pull the reins of my son because he's all about scholarships. And he's a track runner, which I'm likely not encouraging him as far as the track side. But telling him like, you know, you can get into college first you might earn a walk on place, and then a scholarship year to making sure that it's not the scholarship for us. And then the running that it's you know, if you love running then run, you know, but if you fall out of love of running, then we'll find a way if you go into school, you know, a different way. But yeah, it needs to be a love for that career or love for that sport. Not like you said the logistics of scholarships and college fees and all those things. Yeah,

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my daughter played travel, my youngest daughter played travel volleyball her whole life, she went to college, played college ball, two years, and she, she's like, I'm over it done. Join the Air Force. Like, like, I'm out. And like, it just got to be, you know, like, there's never a point in her life. I think that she remembered not playing volleyball, you know, like, not playing it. You know, she's, she's killing it. Now. She's loving it. You know, she's over in England, but like you said, it becomes like such a drive to, you know, perform, I guess that that it becomes it becomes a job and no longer fun part of your life. So,

 James Geering 2:32:50

absolutely. Well, the last thing I want to ask you before we make sure everyone knows where to find you. Speaking of sports and wellness, what do you do to decompress?

and you. Speaking of sports and wellness, what do you do to decompress?



2:33:02

There's a there's a few things that I do. I mean, getting out is a big one just being outside at some level, you know, I'm in an awesome spot right now, being an Oregon hiking here is super rad, you know, like I can, five minutes away is Smith rock, you know, State Park, and it's an epic place to go, like, just tons of that. I like to ride my motorcycle, just kind of get my own space and my own headspace and just ride. You know, there's a lot of cool canyons around here and go into the twisties. And, and just kind of quiet your mind, you know what I mean? I can't, I found that in old age now that I can't like meditate. Like, I can't just quiet my mind by sitting or even reading like I can't I have to be I have to be focused on something. Right? So writing, probably writing a little bit, like right on the line is that you have to stay you have to pay attention. You know, you have to be focused on a thing so that you can't you can't have thoughts in the background like muddling up your focus, you know, I really like shooting sports. You know, that's a that's another thing to me is metal meditating, you know. Coming comes along with that is you know, reloading ammunition is a good way to quiet your mind because you got to pay attention. You know, you have to be aware, even using a progressive load limiter, you have to still be switched on and watching everything function and making sure that the powder drops are still clicking along and that you have powder in the machine and there's things you do, but it's doing something that requires focus is kind of where I find peace, whatever that might be, you know. I like skydiving, you know? Unfortunately, I didn't do a lot of skydive then this summer because the drop zones like three hours away which garbage. But I was really disappointed when I got to Oregon because I had done a recon. And there used to be a drop zone like 40 minutes up the road. And I was like sweet man, I'm just gonna go to the drop zone like every week and they closed. So now I got to drive over the mountain. But you're lucky Dude, you're in like one of the one of the skydiving, like mechas of the United States right there and the land is a good spot. Super good spot. I jumped there last summer, probably 10 times 10 times or so. Good spot. They got a nice little nice little restaurant there too. Yeah, just focus, man. That's my thing. Some that I can think about. And if I like, am allowed to let my mind wander. I'm thinking about 40 different things at once. And that's that's not relaxing.



James Geering 2:36:00

Beautiful. Yeah. I found jujitsu was pretty good for for that. Because if you do start wandering, then they end up choking you.



2:36:09

Yeah, you know, you weren't paying attention.



James Geering 2:36:10

Exactly. But I've actually just stumbled across another thing. It's, it's an app now. But it's, it used to be in SEAL teams, NASA all these these high performer spaces. But it was a big \$6,000 machine. But now the smartphone is getting so advanced. They've made it into an app, but it's called New calm and you see a LM and I'm Yeah, it's amazing because it's passive. So you

basically lie down, put an eye mask on and as if you are going to take a nap for 2030 minutes, but what it actually does is neuro acoustics, so you listen to music. But under that music is this kind of undulation that is telling your brain to down regulate. I have to say, you know handle my heart. And I've chased them to become a sponsor of the show. I chase them because I think it's so bloody good. But for me having a monkey mind from hell. That is one of the most incredible pieces of technology I've come across in a long time. So just so that seeds CFS something and they've got a free trial for a week as well as you don't even have to commit. But phenomenal, absolutely phenomenal. Cool. icon I think got it. Yeah, new. N UCA LM. And you Yep. All right. Well, the very last thing that I'm sure a lot of people, you know, I'm fascinated by this conversation. If people want to learn more about you, or reach out on social media, where are the best places?

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The best places be on Instagram. That's that's my that's where I exist on social media. I have a Twitter but I don't really Twitter much. It's not, it's not beneficial for anyone. So I just stay off there. But new coach whiskers coach underscore whiskers is my my instagram handle, though. I'm right now I'm in pursuit of my private pilot license. And I thought that I might, I might change my handle once I acquire that. But I've been running coach whiskers for many years now. And that's where I'm at.

 James Geering 2:38:09

Brilliant. Well, Travis, I want to say thank you so much. It's been such an amazing conversation. Like, you're asking what are we going to talk about when we first started chatting, I'm like, I have no idea but we'll get there and we've gone all over the place which is what I love about his conversations. So I want to thank you so much for being so generous with your time today.

 2:38:25

Hey, no problem, man. Thanks for having me. And I'm looking forward to being down into land next and we can maybe I can drop your drag you out to the drop zone and attach you to somebody

 James Geering 2:38:37

absolutely had done two skydives both tandems one was in New Zealand years ago. And then the last one was in above the pyramids in Cairo out of a Russian helicopter so so yeah, I was pretty lucky. The only two I've done so far pretty epic.

 2:38:52

Yeah, my you're gonna it's gonna be hard to top the pyramids. My brother jumped there. And he's like, Dude, my brother jumps last year they did. He was part of the seven and seven. They did seven continents in seven days. And they did Antarctica and he's like, out of all of it. The

pyramids was like, the topper. It was just surreal, you know? So you're gonna have a hard time but it's cool to go by yourself. And you're right there, dude, you gotta go.