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- 1) What branch and unit were you in? *Marine Corps Echo 212, Third Battalion 11<sup>th</sup> Marines (in the US) from 1988-2002. Was at Kuwait City when it was liberated from the Iraqis. Inactive Reserves for awhile.*
- 2) What was your highest rank? *Corporal.*
- 3) Are you still enlisted as a reservist or National Guard? *No.*
- 4) Why did you join the service? *Enlisted because I wanted to go to college, but couldn't afford it. I grew up in an agricultural area and my Dad was a contractor for the farmers, but I wanted something different. When I went to a couple of orientations with my friends I decided to join.*
- 5) What did you like the most about being in? *Motivation, self-discipline, friendships, leadership learned, learning to get along with people from different backgrounds and it's a pretty good experience to see how people from different parts of the country get raised. In Mexican culture, when you shake hands the grip isn't firm, only moderate and you don't look people in the eye. Being in the Marines changed that. Now I give people a firm handshake and look them in the eye, and generally feel better about myself. I've passed this on to my nephews and family members, that it's better in today's society to do it this way.*
- 6) What did you like the least? *Being away from home.*
- 7) What moment most defined your military experience? *Finding out from the officers how to better myself, learning from them how best to go to college because, even though I don't mind working hard, it's better to use your brain because it will outlast your back.*
- 8) What made you choose firefighting as a career? *I went to Pasadena City College to take some business courses when I got out of the Marines. I was looking at getting into some kind of agricultural business. Some of the guys I met at college were Fire Explorers for Pasadena. I needed some extra units and really enjoyed the discipline in the fire department. I started looking into benefits and the things you got to do, so I went to the academy and started taking some classes. My brother-in-law was already in the fire department, so he helped guide me a little bit. The biggest plus for me was putting myself through paramedic school. The more I was around it the more I liked it.*
- 9) What do you like the most about firefighting? *The 'Rescue Youth' program which helps mentor kids (<http://da.co.la.ca.us/cpys/rescue.htm>). I ask kids in the program 'Do you want to be the guy in charge, or the guy who does all the work?' If they want to be in charge, then I talk about how college helps. Helping people out and knowing you made a difference. Working together as a team to accomplish a goal. It gives you the confidence to get even a big job done. You have to stay level-headed when people are running out of a burning building and you're running in. My wife says sometimes that I look forward more to going to work than I do at coming home, which isn't really true, but it shows how much I enjoy going to work. USAR team member when Katrina hit in New Orleans – it was nice to be appreciated by the people there.*
- 10) What do you like least about firefighting? *Calls at 3 AM and the internal politics.*