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- 1) What branch and unit were you in? *The Marines, 2nd Recon Bn. after going through boot and India Company, 3rd Battalion, 2nd Marines, Camp Lejune in 1982. Had two Med deployments, and a WestPac.*
- 2) What was your highest rank? *Corporal.*
- 3) Are you still enlisted as a reservist or National Guard? *No, but wanted to do so, but closest Recon base was in Las Vegas and, since I was getting married, I decided not to stay in.*
- 4) Why did you join the service? *Had nowhere else to go, being raised by a grandmother who had a stroke and ended up in a rest home. She encouraged me to join, so I went down to a Marine Corps recruitment office and, being naïve, told the recruiter I wanted to join the Special Forces. After I picked myself up off the floor, I saw a poster on the window of the office that showed a Recon Marine and told the recruiter that's what I wanted to be. He said to come on in. I chose the Marine Corps because I knew they were the most challenging branch of the service to join, I wanted to be on the point of the spear.*
- 5) What did you like the most about being in? *The brotherhood, the bond, and the title U.S. Marine. It was the perfect environment for me and modeled what right looked like to me. Earned two meritorious promotions and got to attend all sorts of schooling that embodied extreme physical challenges and real distance endurance. In firefighting, physical ability is extremely important. You have to be a complete officer in the fire service, commitment, dedication, physical abilities, studying and modeling that for your team.*
- 6) What did you like the least? *Chow wasn't always the best, there were times we did things we didn't enjoy, things that were physically uncomfortable, like chiggers, ticks, mosquitoes and having my wisdom teeth pulled without proper anesthetic. As Recon Marines, we weren't much into the corporate Marine Corps, like parade and drills. I didn't like being stacked up in a tiny room aboard ship for months on end either, but the longer you away from it the more tolerable all becomes.*
- 7) What moment most defined your military experience? *I credit the training and experience I gained in the Marine Corps with my success now. My identity as a Marine still carries over into everything I do and everyone who knows me can tell that I was a Marine. It's even carried over to my son, who is a Plebe at the Naval Academy and intending on becoming a Marine. But October 21, 1983 when 241 Marines were killed in the suicide attack on the Marine barracks in Beirut (including 17 Recon Marines, some of whom I knew personally) was the defining moment. I think that was really the starting point in the Islamic movement and I knew on 9/11 that the WTC attack was the beginning of World War III, whether it's defined as that or not.*
- 8) What made you choose firefighting as a career? *I was originally looking at law enforcement, especially the LAPD and Sheriff's SWAT Teams. LAPD failed four of us on the psych due to our combat arms background. I saw a fire on TV where firefighters going into a building window as thick black smoke poured out and thought 'that looks like fun'. I ended up waiting in lines for four days during registration and was fortunate enough to get in. I'd been treated very well by firefighters when I visited a fire station as a kid and those memories came back to me while I was applying for the job. I always like meeting young people because of knowing what an impact I might have on their lives.*
- 9) What do you like the most about firefighting? *I love fighting fire, earthquakes, river rescues, brush fires and any other emergency natural or man-made, and that mission drives and fuels a very important attitude here. I'm addicted to training and continuing to learn, to building construction, the blood borne pathogens threats, multi-victim incidents, wild land fire behavior and, the science behind the predictable enemy of fire. As an officer, I'm intensely interested in the leadership of our personnel to model what right should look like. I like the mission of leading these brave men and women and executing the mission. I believe in the integrity of our mission.*
- 10) What do you like least about firefighting? *Nothing in particular. It's a great career.*