

Oral History Transcript

Interviewer: Sharon V. Milligan

Oral History Candidate: Jim Griffith, Class of '63, Glendora Campus

June 4, 2011, Palm Springs, CA, Bi-Annual Reunion

Ok. This is Sharon Milligan. I'm in Palm Springs at the BMA Reunion and it's June 4th and I'm interviewing an alumni from the college and could you tell me your name, your address, your age, your class-year and your school?

Ok, I'm Jim Griffith, I was the Class of 1963 at Brown Military Academy.

-And what's your address?

My address is 3758 East College Avenue, Visalia, California.

-Excellent. So you're here at the reunion and I'm just very curious, you went to what institution?

-Brown Military Academy.

In what city?

Glendora, California.

So tell me, how did you get there and why did you end up there?

My dad was in the aerospace industry in the late-50s, early 60s and he travelled around a lot, so it was easier, rather than change schools all the time, my mom suggested that I go to a boarding school and I said if I'm going to go to a boarding school, I'd rather go to a military school, and that's how I got started off at Southern California Military Academy in Long Beach, grades 6 through 9 and then transferred to Brown Military Academy, their sister-school in Glendora, California.

And what was that transition like, leaving one academy to another?

The transition was very easy because going from Southern California, I already knew how to march, I already knew the system, basically, so it was a very, very easy transition.

And did you have classmates that went with you?

I had about-I think there was three of us that transferred over.

So how old were you then at Brown, when you ended up at Brown?

I was-9th grade, I was 15.

Ok, so you know, just share some of the experiences you had with faculty or classes, living on the dorm; what was that like for you?

Living in the dorm was a lot of fun. It turned out my first roommate was a senior, which was really rare, to be paired with a senior. So I kind of wound with a little bit of extra privileges, so it made it a little easier.

So most people were paired with the same age-group, like why do you think you ended up with a senior?

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Probably just the way it fell, I'm assuming. That I have no clue to why and-but it made life a little easier and the guy that I was paired with was real good friends with our battalion staff, the cadets that were in charge of the whole thing, and I had a brother that lived just about 8 miles away that was 22 at the time, and the battalion staff liked to party on weekends, so my job was to get them their supplies that they needed, and I won't say anything more about that.

Well, everyone's got their responsibilities.

That's exactly right.

Any kind of faculty that stands out, positive or negative?

Yes. No actual teacher really stands out in my mind. Of the ROTC staff, the military advisors, there were two of them-there was actually three of them-we had four ROTC sergeants assigned to our school and our-the commandant was a major in the United States Army, active duty. The ROTC sergeants, there was three of the four that really stood out and they were rough and tough and they were all EH; they were basically like drill sergeants and-but I don't think I really-they were gruff, but they were fair. But the one thing that stands out more than anything was my senior year. General Eisen-now two of the ROTC sergeants saw combat in World War II, and they were both E8 master sergeants and I guess because of their service in World War II, they gravy duty and they were sent in as our ROTC instructors and they were gruff and mean and the whole bit. My senior year, General Eisenhower came to the campus, retired-I mean, he had already been president, and they built a new barracks, General Eisenhower Hall, and he came to dedicate the building, which was, you know, a big deal and I spent-one of my jobs was I built the five-star insignia on the parade field-these huge stars that I learned how to do in geography class-not geography, geometry class, and I cut out these huge stencils and put the lime on the deal and it was a great thing. I got extra points for that, but after the dress parade, there was a reception and at the reception, these two ROTC sergeants that served in World War II and Eisenhower was the supreme commander, they went through the reception line-and they were rough, mean guys, and they got tears in their eyes [clears throat]...it was neat, but when-ok-you ready? These two E8s go through the reception line and shake hands with Eisenhower and it was like they had met their god...excuse me...that event chokes me up, it was to see these guys just-they melted. Ok...couldn't deal with it, ok...anyway, these guys-that's the first time I saw that the army is a very close unit; same with the marines and the navy. They're the people that you serve with and, you know, I really-I got in a little bit of trouble my junior year and I won't go into that, but I got out of trouble because I built these stars on the field; that's what saved me I think. Anyway, I made so many friends there that to this day, there's about 10 of us that even before the reunion, I mean, we see each other all the time. Even though we live 2-300 miles apart, you know, we've made some really, really good friends. When I-I married shortly after high school and that only lasted five years and I was going through a nasty divorce and I got drafted and it was like a godsend; this is good, this works. So I went into the service and there was actually nothing I learned in basic training or AIT that I didn't already know how to do, so it was a gravy. When I graduated from AIT, I was already a sergeant, which was unheard of. Half the time I'd be excused from different exercises, because they knew I'd do it and they would send me on errands to do

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other stuff. It was a good life, and I went on to jump school, became a paratrooper and a pathfinder and I spent four years in the service, and everything I did in the service, it was like, I already knew how to do. There was no training-well I was trained to jump out of an airplane, which I wouldn't have done before, but outside of that, there was nothing that I had to learn to do to be a soldier; it was already-I knew how to do it. It made life really easy; it made my life in the service very easy. So I always had gravy jobs, even though I was an infantry man. I was in a staff position for the...unit...which basically meant my job was to-whatever they needed, my job was to get-period.

Do they have nicknames for that?

They're called a scrounge and there's nothing that I couldn't scrounge.

And you have to know people. You have to have relationships.

Not really. The key was just to ask. It was the simplest thing going and yeah, there was a few items that I had to borrow, but it was-I never did it for personal gain. It was especially for the unit. I've been out of the service 23 years and my company commander, we've stayed in touch-on a seven-day week, I probably get an email six of those seven days, to this day. I did my job and I made the unit look good and all that came from being in high school at Brown. Everything came automatic, you know. Somebody says get something; I knew how to get it. I knew how to march, I knew how to wear the uniform, I knew how to shine boots.

It sounds like attitude too, though. You had an attitude of doing it, you had the right attitude.

Yeah, the key in the service, you know, is do your job and if you do it right, life is...and if you don't do the job or do it wrong, life can be miserable, so you do it-I mean, I knew how to prepare my uniform, for example. When I got to the 82nd-well, right before I got to the 82nd Airborne, I spent 3 weeks in jump school, and 3 weeks in pathfinders school in-at Fort Banning, Georgia in July. I had never been to the south before; the weather was just horrible. We'd go out to train and it would rain and steam would be coming up from the asphalt as we'd march. I mean, it was just horrible. When I finally got through the six weeks of the two schools, I was assigned to Fort Craig, North Carolina and the only thing I could think was north, it's going to be cool. Georgia weather and North Carolina weather were the same and when the first-when I got to my unit, there was three of us that were dropped off at my company, and the first sergeant came in to give us our assignments, what platoon we were going to be in and that and he told us that every morning there would be an inspection; the guy that looked the best got the day off. Not a problem. I had my old boots from Brown that four-hundred coats of polish on them already; I had those with me. I had some tailored uniforms from Brown that still fit me that were immaculate. Anyway, I was off for 27 days in a row. I would go to the post theater, the only place in the post with air conditioning, see the same movie for four weeks. When it-in the afternoon, I would come back, I'd stop and have a beer and then I would go back to the barracks, prepare my uniform for the next day, so I could get off and about the first of September, I came out of the theater one day and the weather wasn't that bad, so I went to the first sergeant, knocked on his door and then he said-he was an old southern, black, neat guy and he would say, what do you want, slick? I wondered when you were going

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to show up. What do you want? I said, Top, I need a job; he said, can you type? I said, Top, I can do anything you want; I can do it and I turned out I went into operation and I was on staff and I, basically, I had a gravy job for a couple months and then I became the unit readiness NCO and then we got our new-a new CO came in to replace the old one, the one that I'm, to this day, very close with, and life was good and at the end of my tour, I could have got an early out-a three-month early out, but my CO wouldn't give it to me; he says I have three months to go and you're not leaving until I leave and what can I say? I would have re-enlisted if I could have stayed with him, but he went on-his next assignment was his masters degree. He was a West Point graduate and his assignment was two years in North Carolina, University of North Carolina for his masters degree, then he taught tactics at West Point for two years, so there's no way I could have followed him. He retired from the army as a three-star; his name was Charles Beckwith. He's the one who led the raid on Entebbe. He actually was wounded there, but he as a commander was-not seriously-but just a great that that went on to be-and so we stayed friends for years. When he found out my daughter was going to OCS, I knew-I told him about it and let it go at that and he wound up attending her OCS graduation. Made sure she had decent assignments until she retired, and even then had clout enough to make sure you got this job, you don't want that job, I'll get you another one. But all this comes back to Brown, my training there. If you were to call up my daughter, she worked harder than I ever did. But if you get the right people and the right training, it's a lot easier.

Help me understand, did everybody go through ROTC?

Yes, everybody at Brown Military had it.

So you had your academic classes and then you did ROTC. How often was the frequency of your ROTC training?

It was daily, it was-

For how long? An hour a day, two hours-?

It was one class. A lot of Saturdays, we'd do special stuff, maneuvers possibly. As seniors, as the class of '62 and '63, I believe we were the first class to, before school started in September, we had to report to Camp Irwin, in California out in the desert and we got to do real, I mean, fire machine guns, and loading tanks and army personnel carriers and how-and that was the other thing I learned how to do. I had my license already to drive an APC when I got to basic training.

Sweet!

Yeah it was, I mean, there was nothing that I learned in basic training that I hadn't learned at Brown.

Do you think it was comparable, do you have any knowledge of the comparison between that and a public high school? Do you think yours was more intense?

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Oh there was no-I mean I knew how to prepare my uniform, I knew how to dress, I knew the weapons, I knew the-there were certain things that we had to learn. Now graduating in '63, at that time the army had 10 general orders, which later, they condensed it to 3 general orders. My first IG inspection, which, you get an-an IG inspection is where the inspector generals come in. They're not generals; they work for the inspector General and they are to inspect a unit to make sure their training is there, all the paperwork matches, all your equipment is there-everything that's supposed to be done and then they'll come in and ask each individual soldier soldiers questions. The battalion sergeant major during that inspection, along with a couple IG, we were in formation, they were asking different questions to people and my command sergeant inspector asked me what the second general order was and I don't know why it clicked in my brain, I was like oh my God, I know two of them; I know the second of the ten and I know the second of the three. Now I cheated. I gave him the second of the ten, cause this guy was a 30, I mean he was sergeant major, he'd been in the army for 30 years. I knew he knew the 10. I got halfway through it and stopped and said, oh excuse me sergeant major, that's the old one. The new one is-and he just laid his hand and said, that's okay soldier and he moved right on. I did that intentionally because I knew this guy-and he asked me a couple days later, how did you know that? I spend time in a military academy. Oh he said and that was it. And I think any of us that went into service after Brown could do the same thing. It was-basic training is hard if you're starting from scratch and we didn't start from scratch. We were already on third base. It was a lot easier to get to home than first base and so that made the big difference. If there was military schools-if there would have been military schools-if Brown would have still been around, I have a son-my youngest son would have gone to a military school, but there just isn't anymore.

What do you think about that?

It's very sad. It is sad. Now I say that-there are some, in Virginia. There's some on the east coast. General Swartzgoth graduated from Virginia Military Academy and then from there went to West Point, so I mean he spent his high school at Virginia Military and he became general. And there's a good portion of my class, of '63 and the class of '62, the classes were-I mean, half of my real close friends were class of '62 and half of them were '63 that, most of them were officers. Very few of them were career people, but they put their time in, and they did very well. And again, to interview any of them, I tell you, they were on third base when we started.

What do you think about the times that you were in, the 60s?

You know, the 60s, that was good times. Life was simple. I mean, in every aspect. We didn't have computers, it was a slower pace, no one was in a rush.

Cool cars.

Cool cars, yeah, cool cars and the drive-in theaters and I don't even know if they have drive-in theaters anymore-a couple, but I mean, it was-I can remember every now and then going to town, when I was in Brown Military Academy, for-my junior year, I was a day cadet for half a year. It was about a 20 minute commute to and from school and I, like I said, I got into a little bit of trouble then, so I decided I wanted

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to be a day cadet for a while and after one semester, I said, ok, now I want to go back. But I can remember being pulled over for speeding one time, and I'm in my uniform and he looked at me and he goes, are you in the service and I said I go to Brown Military Academy. Well you were speeding; take care. Well that was a CHP and CHPs don't do that, so-

Do you like that uniform? What'd you feel in that uniform? How'd you feel?

You know, a uniform makes you feel equal. That's-now it's like you want to go to a dance and one guy's wearing levis, another guy's wearing a tuxedo, from, you know, one extreme to the other. Our uniforms were uniform. Now high school girls in our days would kill to go to our Prom-to, not our Prom, but every other month we had a military ball.

Every other month?

Every other month we had a military ball, and that was a very formal-we wore our co-t's, which, that was an identical uniform-dress uniform that West Pointers wore: high collar and brass buttons going up the sides. Back in the 60s, the gals wore [distraction] back in the 60s all the Prom dresses were huge, you know, hoop skirts and I remember dating a gal that, oh I met her-along with private military school, I went to a co-ed Catholic elementary school and I knew this girl. I think I fell in love with her when we in the 7th grade or 8th grade and her parents were real strict and it was my Sophomore year. I invited her to a military ball, and her dad let her go, but he came to the ball to-

Keep an eye on you.

And he was so impressed that right after that, I could go get a date with her and her dad would let her go with me, because that was-

So girls liked the balls.

That was-their social calendar was-I mean that was a big-and it was, I mean it was very impressive; it was very formal, extremely formal.

What was the time-frame, like when-did you do dinner first and then what time did they start, what time did they end and what'd you do after?

It was dinner and then a formal ball.

What kind of music? Who played the music?

They had different bands.

Bands, ok.

It was all live music and it was-well we're talking 60s, so it was-

-Music of the time.

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-Music of the time. It wasn't pop. Yeah, that was-and it was mostly slow dancing. I mean and it was just-course you couldn't get too close to the gal because her skirt took up 8 feet, you know.

They were smart.

It was-I think the girls enjoyed it more than we did and we had a social director at Brown that brought in people to teach us how to dance. Oh yeah, that was-

So before a dance, was that once a month you went to dance lessons, or-

No, I think the dance lessons started at the beginning of each year and it was a two week course. It was like two days a week for three weeks and that was-

That's life training right there. You wouldn't even think about it, but that's a life skill, learning to dance.

Yeah, I mean I was never a good dancer. Actually I think my mom taught-my mom was a good dancer; she grew up on Catalina Island and lived at the casino, dancing. That was her thing when she was single, before we were born, but, yeah, the social events were great and I mean the social director, for guys that lived out-of-state or you know, didn't know any girls there, the social director was there to get gals from the local high school, which really created-we didn't get along good with Glendora High School-the guys. They were-they couldn't get a date that night of the military ball. The gals were booked up.

-Created mortal enemies.

Yeah, it wasn't a drive-in movie. This was-I mean the gals just ate that up. That was fun.

Did you go to most of them? Did you have an option to go? Was it kind of like you were expected to go?

Oh no, it was strictly optional, but everyone went, I mean, I would say everyone-80% went. There were guys-

No alcohol, or I mean, not supposed to be alcohol, but you had a meal; supposed to be a good, clean affair. When did they end that night? Do you remember? Was it a certain curfew or-?

11. If I remember, they would start at 5 for dinner, and it ended up the dinner was very formal, you know, candles on the, you know, banquet-type thing and very formal and I know it was before midnight. A guy going to Brown did not have to worry about getting a date.

-Which is a confidence-builder, just to be around girls, even if you're awkward, you knew that you could learn to interact.

Exactly, because we, you know, it's really funny, because going to high school, to a boarding school, it's kind of different, but-

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But what do you think, because there's still always discussion about girls going to a girls school and guys going to the guys school, because there's something about the learning in the environment of being in the same gender. What's your take on that?

I dated a couple gals that went to girls school and they were kind of forward.

-Lonely.

I mean, yeah, if you were halfway shy, these gals would intimidate you. I don't know how to-

No, I get it; it's pretty clear.

I mean, whoa. We had a school right below us; it was a Catholic girl's school and I mean there was an 18 foot barb wire fence; it was like a prison. We couldn't get over there and the gals couldn't come over our way, and they-for some of our military balls, they were allowed to go to that and they had their chaperones and I mean you didn't, yeah-formal dance, two feet away from each other. I mean, they were; They were a lot wilder-the girls were a lot wilder than we were and I don't know why, but they were just-

Not always a bad thing.

Not even a bad thing; that's right, I mean-probably because going to military school and not having gals there, we didn't, you know, I started out in the 7th grade. Well I didn't have any girls in my school from 7th grade to high school, so you know, I didn't know what they wanted or what to do with them, but it worked out. I mean, I actually wound up marrying a gal from Glendora that would come to these dances and that only lasted five years, but-

Two children from that marriage?

Two. Two.

So wrap up and just tell me what-if you were just to think of a key component that's stayed with you your entire life, what would you say was kind of a key, maybe value or ideal that you gained from Brown, that has stayed with you?

Well our motto was duty, honor and country. That was the motto at Brown and I think I did my duty, I was honored for it and I strongly believe in this country. So-and I'm really pro-military and I think, yeah in the Vietnam years, that was tough. We had the draft and there were people that just didn't want to go and our country generally during that period of time was torn apart. I always assumed that that was my duty to go and like I say, I was older when I got drafted and the duty part, it was like okay-one of the reasons I didn't enlist in the service, I had two daughters; they were four and five at the time. They're living in California and I'm living in New Jersey-I'm living in North Carolina and, you know, I always took Christmas leave and with the 82nd, they just didn't shut down for Christmas. If you-in my case because I had kids, I always got-I could take leave during Christmas-time to go see them, but I'm, again, through

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what I learned about the military and scrounging and I could find different ways. I found that I could drive 45 minutes to Camp Aju, North Carolina and every Saturday, they had what they called a school flight. A school flight was a C1-30 and the pilots who flew them had desk jobs, that were pilots, but if they didn't get enough hours in, they would lose their flight pay. So they would take these school flights; they would go from Camplajune to Deltoro. They'd leave at 7:00 on Saturday morning, arrive California time at 3:00 and my mom would pick me up at Deltoro and that weekend she'd always have my kids, so I'd go spend the afternoon with them and the next morning, I'd go back to Deltoro at 7 in the morning to fly back to North Carolina. And I was always assured-and these were stand-by flights, basically, so I had, through my first sergeant, who was really cool, he would right me orders so I couldn't get bumped, so that-and again, that was because I did a good job. I knew what my job was and I did it. All those principles I learned at Brown. If you get things down, life is easy. If you-if you leave a mess, it's going to come back to haunt you and you going to have to do it over and do twice as much work. All that I learned at Brown. You do it right the first time, life is easy. You know, that's what life is all about, you know, just go through it. The smoother it is, the easier life is. I'm maybe a bit lucky, but it's always been that for me, so, that's it.

That good?

Yeah, and you know, it's really funny. If it wouldn't have been for my two kids, I would have probably been lifelong, but I couldn't be on the west-and being with the 82nd, I would have always been on the east coast or overseas and I just couldn't, I couldn't abandon my kids.

And that's duty as a father.

Yes.

It's thinking of your responsibility to your children and kind of measuring that and saying-

Right, and like I said, my youngest daughter-my oldest, I mean my two daughters nine months apart.

Irish twins.

They're-yes, I don't know how that happens and I'm still trying to figure that out, but we won't even go there. But they've both done very well and my youngest daughter now being a colonel that has-I guess, you get back what you put in and they have both done that for me. I mean, they have done well.

So where's your daughter? What's her rank and where is she serving?

She is a colonel attached to general staff, Army Inspector General Corps. She works 50% of her time at the Pentagon and 50% of her time at Fort Bullhorn. Every 6 weeks, she teaches a class for new IG recruits and she's-then her Pentagon job, she's a head-she helps write new regulations. In fact, right now, over the-getting rid of the Don't-Ask-Don't-Tell, that's a whole huge policy change, so now they're rewriting and that's what her main job has been for the past 3 months, is how you write this in and that and women in combat. Which now they're very seriously thinking, yeah, it can be done.

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Well and some women want that, but I don't know, you know.

I have a negative opinion on that. I can't see how women can be in combat situation for a lot of-

Personal, logistical reasons.

Yes, yes, logistical reasons.

It would be a huge challenge.

It would be and I think that would interfere with a combat mission. You know, my daughter has a real good friend that has served in combat areas, but not as a combatant and she even says that that's-it's tough. You've got, you know-yeah. That doesn't have something to do with Brown, but-

And what's your other daughter do-your older daughter?

She was second in command at-second in command, I can't think of her title. She was the number two person at the Orange County register for-

Voting? For voting? The register-

No, the newspaper.

Oh, the newspaper! Oh, awesome!

Made beaucoup bucks and she married an attorney and then when they had kids, she retired, so I've got three grandchildren from her.

And you have a son.

I have a son.

And what's he doing?

He's a truck driver.

Hey, nothing wrong with that.

Nothing. He's a long-haul truck driver.

I drove for two years actually a peter-built.

Oh, well don't say that. That's funny that you just said that because he's a team driver with his-I guess girlfriend. They're-

His partner. I always called male driver a partner when I referred to him with my children. He was my partner. We team-drove.

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Ok, they team-drive and he was supposed to be home about a week ago, and he's stuck in Columbus, Ohio. His peter-built, brand-new, engine blew and they kind of figured out why. It was a flaw in the engine. He's been stuck back in a little motel and so they've already promised him-there's a brand-new international truck that has a bigger cab, I don't know.

Hey, there's lot of ways to see the world. You can join the military, or you can be a trucker.

You know, I kind of pushed my son to join the military. I think it's a good learning experience, but he didn't want any part of that and that's fine.

Like I said, you want to chose it, cause you're probably going to have a better attitude.

Oh, exactly. I think that's where today's army is twice what it was in my time, because of the draft. The guy would get drafted and he had a hard time adapting because he didn't want to be there. So he bucked the system and it didn't work. But today, I see the reenlistment is unbelievable and I had-when I was at Fort Brad, we got paid cash once a month. One of my jobs was to follow the pay officer-I carried the money. The pay officer, I hand him his money, his 80 bucks, and then I would initial that the money was-

Received.

Yeah, was received. We had about 4 in our unit that had to sign their name with an x. They could not really write.

Which is hard to imagine, I mean it's hard for me to imagine in this day and age.

Sure. This was in 1970.

It's hard to imagine then.

Yeah, I mean, but we had a lot of southern boys there and I mean, oh. That was a learning experience for me, because I had never seen-I'd never heard of anybody that couldn't read or write. Today, I'll bet 30% of the enlisted personnel are college-educated or at least have two years of college. It's unbelievable. And they turn right around and reenlist, but they get good pay and the benefits.

It's a career. It's a career to be in.

It is a career. It wasn't back then, when I was in it.

Yeah, that's what you're saying, that you've seen it become more of a career choice, verses being forced to be in it; it was a job.

Yeah.

But did you feel that way when you were in it? It was kind of more of a job?

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Oh, I, you know, it was a fun job for me. Again, I didn't-there was nothing that I had to learn, that I hadn't already done. Okay, yes, I had never jumped out of an airplane before, so I learned how to jump out of an airplane. But as far as, you know, living in a barracks, it was no big deal, although I chose-I met two people that were on the staff position of the company-I was the unit readiness NCO, the quartermaster, or supply sergeant and the reports clerk, which is a staff position. We moved up first together. That made life a little bit simpler.

Brown prepared you is what you're saying.

Sure. You know, I had-when I got out of the army, my CO invited-he said, we're having a little party for you; it was the day before I got out, and invited the three-the three of us got out all at the same time. And invited us over to his house, you know, we'll have a few drinks and that's it. So, you know, we went over to his house. When we got there, my company commander, who invited us, was in dress blues and we were just in civilian clothes, the battalion commander was in dress blues, the command sergeant major was in dress blues and my first sergeant was in dress blues. And we're going, uh-oh, did we miss the-was I supposed to be in uniform, and they go no. We had a beer or two and they said, hey you guys come here, line up and they played some, I don't know, John Phillips Susie song. The battalion commander gave each one of us our commendation, which was so cool, because it was a private thing, you know, it was away from the company-no. I would have never wanted that in front of my unit, because a lot of people thought I had a gravy job, which in a sense I did, because I was on my own; I could do whatever I wanted to do, but I'm the one who provided the company the stuff that they needed.

And you did it well or you wouldn't have kept that job.

That's right.

You did well at the job that you did, so I think when we're working in our gifting or the things that are natural for us, maybe it does seem gravy, but not everybody can do it.

Well it's funny, because going into the service, I was a pharmaceutical rep and I was a salesman and my scrounging-I could beg, borrow and steal just about anything, but 90% of the time, all I would do is go ask. I'd say, I need this. Do you have any paperwork? No, but I really need this. Well let me go see if I have one. And they'd give it to me. It was a boneheaded job. I was becoming a hero because I could get all this stuff.

What did you end up doing professionally, after the military?

I went back to my job as a pharmaceutical rep.

For what company?

Warner-Lambert Pharmaceuticals, which is no longer-

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They're tough jobs, I mean, it's a tough job to have. I interviewed for Eli Lilly; it's been a while, but yeah, I did interview them once, thought about it-

It's not easy.

But it didn't strike me-yeah I felt it would be a very challenging job.

Sure, I can remember detailing doctors, and they would charge you for it. You know, if you saw them for a half-hour, they'd charge you whatever-and we're given them free samples and you know, all this good stuff. And I left the company-actually, two months after I felt the company, I got tired of Orange County, San Diego. The traffic was bad and it was like-and so we moved to Visalia, and I worked for a paper company, an independent paper company selling janitorial supplies and that only lasted about a year and I'm not that mechanical, but I wound up buying a diesel-fuel injection shop and I ran that for-well I ran it for 14 years and I sold it for a bundle. Then I retired at 50.

So would you attribute your success to your education, preparedness for life?

You know, I was very lucky.

You know, this is what I've heard about luck, so tell me what you think: preparation meets opportunity.

Well timing is important.

Opportunity's timign, the timing, things happen.

Yeah, we bought our house in Lake Forest, brand-new house, we paid \$34,000 for it. We lived in it for 7 years. We sold it for \$360,000. We moved to Visalia in 1976. We bought a brand-new house that we paid-it had more square foot than the one in Lake Forest, we paid 28,000 for it; we sold it I think for 90. You know, and then we traveled in an RV for 8 years, with no agenda; just point it this way or point it this way and if we find something that looks interesting, we might stay a day or three days or a week. We'd always leave from the south end and always come to the north end, following the weather and when we-one year ago, it was about a year and a half ago, that's when we decided, okay, traveling is over. Now we've got to-where are we going to live and we decided to go back to Visalia and we came back with this housing crisis and we bought-found a home that was built in 2002, that was a re-po, brand-new, bank-owned, they put in new carpet, new paint, the whole bit, and we paid 95,000 for it cash. And these houses sold new for \$238,000. So through sheer luck, and that's just timing.

That's definitely timing.

And it was-made things very, very nice. And my only regret in life is-again, probably not staying in the military again. So I kind of live-because I think so highly of the military, I kind of live my life through my daughter and I've got to meet-we've got a hummingbird right there-

Cute.

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I follow her career, you know, sometimes my daughter will say dad, don't ask me-but I've met older Cos, especially when we were traveling. If she was transferred, we'd make sure we'd go and she'd take me into the unit and introduce me to her boss and all that, so by me not staying in the service, I'm kind of living it through her.

Yeah, it's blessing that she's given you an opportunity to still keep your hand in it, so nothing wrong with that.

So it's been fun; it's been a good ride.

Thank you. I appreciate you 15 minutes with nothing to tell me, so thank you!

[Track 2]

-thing was the military schools

John Brown Senior, not John Brown-

-Junior.

Okay, so is Junior in charge?

Yes.

Okay, so Senior's the one-

He's the one who closed Brown Military Academy and Southern California Military Academy.

Okay.

I think John Brown Jr.-or John Brown Sr. rolled over in his grave when his son closed the academy, because there is a need for military schools; I really think so.

Or, like they do in some countries, mandatory two years military service, for men, just because of the discipline and training, you know, something.

Well, I tell you what, we did have-we had some kids go to Brown that came in that were there because it was either you're going to a military school or you're going to juvenile hall. We didn't have a lot of them. The cadet corps would break these guys. We would break them. You're going to be in our company; you screw up, we're going to get punished for it, something that you did, no; it doesn't work. You learn teamwork.

Okay.

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You work together and if one guy's going to ruin it for 40 of us, it ain't gonna work and we'll fix it. Now that sounds-

No, but that's clarifying, because you were a team; that's part of what a team does.

And that's I think-I should have maybe said that earlier, but it was team-building that you learn to get along as a team, together. I think I figured that out really when I was in the service, because now you're drawing-yeah there's a lot of kids that came from higher end, wealthier people could afford to send their kids to military school, because it wasn't cheap. In the service, now you're getting a mix of everybody and you've got to learn for it to mesh, so you've got to team-build. Well our team was already built at Brown, so we could adapt when we went into the service, any of these guys from Brown that went into the service; it was no big deal-hey, I already know how to do this. In fact, I can it better than anyone that didn't go to a military school. So it was easier for us to serve in the military and I think-it would be interesting to see stats on people that went to military schools and served in the armed forces, how they did contact-wise and how they advanced over someone who just went from a regular high school.

And that may be something we end up researching at some point.

That would be very interesting to-but I think there's only a handful of military schools in the country today. It's-

Well you could look back and see-just surveys from back in the day.

I would be very interesting. I mean-I just, you don't talk back to a senior NCO or you don't talk back to a CO if you ever talked to them. I mean, we already learned that.

-Get knocked in the head a time or two.

Yes, and you know, we were really hard on the freshman class. I mean they were-we got to beat up on them, I mean, not physically, but-especially if you were a senior. If you were a senior, you were assigned a freshman, and that was your freshman. That was your little puppy which you're going to break. And you did; you ruined him. But that's what life is. You've got to go through a learning experience and you need a teacher and a peer-group teacher is better than a professional teacher, I think; end of story.

[Track 3]

Okay, so what did you get called out on?

The only thing that was different in Brown versus the army, we had our ROTC sergeants, regular army, and we had four of them assigned to us, and we called them sir. In the army, you did not call an NCO sir. Their response was, I'm not a sir, I'm a sergeant, and I earn my living. That was the comment. And that was-from six years in a military school, it was hard for me to break, because that was an automatic to

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me, and that was the one thing I had to-but you know, it doesn't take that long to learn. You get jumped a few times and you learn to say sergeant instead of-

And what would they have done if you did it? Like drop and do 40, or-?

It wasn't a horrible thing, but they'd, you know, yell at you. But you wouldn't get disciplined for it, but it was just a-something that you don't do in the army. And that was the only thing that didn't-that we did there that didn't match the army-thing. And why, I don't know. I think, I guess it was a respect for- actually, Sergeant Bowling one time said, it took them-it was hard for them to be called sir, because they wouldn't say I'm not a sir, I'm a sergeant. They were instructors to us, so it was I think a sir. I think that's maybe why they allowed it, you know; they were instructors, they were teachers. Anyway, that's it.

Ok.