

The Hard Path Of Resistance - Conscientious Objectors Panel - Ep 35

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Season 2

Transcript

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[0:30] Music.

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[2:10] Open the fortress on a hill thank you for joining us for those new to the show. Danny and I are to Progressive veterans who take the military and Veteran stories of the day and add some much-needed context.

[2:25] Welcome everybody to Laura are conscientious objectors a panel like to give a real quick disclaimer for for JJ, the one that said Danny usually gives a man that is that none of us speak for the Department of Defense or the Army in our opinions were giving our our unofficial personal opinions and what were what were Sharon today, conscientious objection is something that most people have zero experience with and I think that's really a shame and the greatest numbers historically have usually been in Wars. That have had the draft and I had mentioned to the guys here when were talking a little bit ago that, you know these days. I think it was the Army actually sees me army gets you know maybe 50 applications a year and they approve maybe half of them. It's so what I'd like to talk about today is I want to talk about the human cost I want to talk about the. Personal things that that pushed on us and the leaders that affected us whether positively or negatively to start us off I want to talk about our Collective motivations to join the military cuz I think those with the. Part of the really important building blocks for coming a conscientious objector and.

[3:52] The question would be if you could give one sentences to the greatest motivation to cause you to join what would that be since I get to pick on everybody today I'm going to start a song I had two major motivations in in joining the Army one was to pay for college at the time I had the best dreams

working for some kind of three-letter agency probably lawn
 and I knew that I needed College to make that happen I saw how hard my parents worked I knew that they
 would try to help me with college but we weren't well off and I didn't
 want to burden them in that way the second motivation was a career one I came from a small town where people
 told me all the time that being in the military was great,
 get a regular paycheck to get 30 days leave here and.
 Came mostly for people that had no experience with the military but it it really did tell her how I saw it at the
 beginning.
 And I think those gave the idea of the military legitimacy and and they gave me a confidence that I shouldn't
 have had.

[4:58] And I think those on challenge assumptions are really gross you know what the the military are
 professionals and quote,
 are usually only professional when people are looking up quote when people aren't looking so behave
 themselves right and quote know that that's when the truly horrendous stuff happens when service members
 believe that other people aren't looking so here is my,
 biggest unchallenged assumption and it was I went there to help but I didn't help.
 Anyone not not not in the abstract not in actually making their country better we went there we call and we
 called murdering innocent people to The Cost of Freedom with nothing could be further from the truth so.
 Rosa I'm going to pick on you first what would you say was some of your main motivation is to join in and.
 Have you observed any assumptions that that came with.

[5:59] Yeah sure so I joined it was in 2000 of Ember of 2,000 so I was really looking forward to
 if college and maybe have some some Little Adventures either fighting forest fires I was,
 I joined in Montana the Montana National Guard or traveling to Germany 2 weeks a year in the summer and I I
 had no.
 Family history of military service my family I didn't know anybody that is so I.
 Really didn't I had no friends with it but when the National Guard recruiter came in unlike the Army and the
 Marines maybe the Navy guy and I didn't want to do something full-time I wanted to.
 No do something part-time and pay for college and it seems like an ideal situation,
 one weekend a month two weeks a year that's awesome you do the math is like 90% civilian 10% Builder,
 those were some of the.
 Everything drastically changed.

[7:07] No I I I listen to your to your first episode yesterday and there was one comment that you made that I had
 that I am not sure if it was you quoting yourself for this was from one of your sister's butt,
 I was going to get college paid for and I'd be free in six years and,
 I remember having those kind of thoughts you know that no big deal in Oregon we fight forest fires to but also
 floods and so not a bad thing
 and then the whole thing changed but the reality is that it was only the politics of the time that really had the
 change we just.

[7:48] No one pointed it out to us you know no one needed that can go at any time that's at the Denny and I talked
 about pretty often is that the,
 orders can be Rewritten Moss can be changed assignments can be thrown in the garbage can there's a lot of
 control that they don't talk about
 and exactly yeah they don't they they tell you you know you have all these options like oh you got to that high
 score on your ASVAB you qualify for all of these jobs you can pick whichever one you want.
 Get well down to what units are near you and what MOS is are open there and then they they guess you buy
 thing,
 a member of a National Guard recruiter that I dealt with told people that if they enlisted in the National Guard
 and didn't like it that he had a way of,
 discharging them so they could join a different branch they wanted to
 and so that kind of it made him kind of the Pentagon it recruiters it's like I can give you anything you want and I

never checked with anybody to see if it was right there if he actually was able to make it happen I'm guessing not.

But they yeah it's this if this wide-open gorgeous apple pie to eat and then when you finally get to the pie 10 it's like a few crumbs left if there ever was a pie there.

[9:11] I like pie I just it just seemed that so.

[9:22] How about you other guys Clifton JJ were there any other were there things on the way in that that you've kind of noticed on the back in here that that really.

[9:34] Told you something without proof so to speak.

[9:43] If you can go if you want okay.

So reasons for joining for me it was I had an actual long family history of being in the military so coming up I kind of figured that I would.

That it was going to do it anyhow and then the September 11th attacks happened and so I for sure I got real fired up over that I got caught up in that like a lot of people, and,

was hell-bent on going then whereas before I maybe wanted to be a military intelligence or maybe I was going to join the Navy or something after September 11th I decided to go combat arms cuz I was really eager to till like.

Get revenge install all that stuff anything that you know so.

[10:37] So that was you know it is started out as family tradition and then it turned into you know just an intense desire to fight I wanted to fight and kill and all that stuff, and then sort of the third lurking background reason was that there were two other options for me I had dropped out of high school,

and got it at home schooled myself so I can get a diploma just so I can join the Army otherwise I never would have done that I didn't want to go to college,

but there were no other options for me and it was convenient that a war happened and I wanted fight.

So that's that's what I did all it was an honor thing it seems like the only honorable option for someone like me was military service.

I come from a family of a military service as well and,

I remember is a little boy looking at my my grandfather's medals and again it did it miring them but not analyzing the cost,

you know that the man is and his kids we don't do that you know we see things when we we love our,

are veteran relatives who ever they happen to be we don't always move those out but I know that my strong family lineage of service definitely played a vital role in me joining and then like you said with the.

What's the temporal Evan that calculus changed you know that the you know I.

[12:06] I tried to enlist as a ranger and thank God I have a I have a color vision issue so I got to be an MP and I'm really thankful for that.

But I certainly didn't think that way at the time but I'm really I'm really grateful that so.

[12:26] That that turn of events happened in the way it did or my experience would be very different so did you were you going to say something brother no no I was just going to tell my story if you're wrapping up.

[12:42] Yes oh I when 9/11 happened I was in first grade so.

I can't say that that's what fired me up to join the military but I'm sorry,

but I was in the military family so I knew that that meant my dad was a military you know career officer.

So I knew when that happened even that at that age that he was going to be gone and he's going to go to war and was a terrifying thought for me you know having that personal investment in it.

But I I I was invested in you know the.

What some people would call the propaganda now but I was all about it like it going going to the high school I

wanted to go to West Point.

And I was like my dream ultra high school.

And that was it like my reason for initially joining was my father's service he knows how to follow his legacy or continue his legacy.

And I wanting to serve my country so I got into West Point and that's when I started.

[13:55] Just started questioning sort of the basic assumptions of.
Some of that propaganda I mentioned earlier.

[14:07] Service to Country Inn what not mean I graduated West Point in 2016 it's 2019 now and I feel like I haven't been of service to any person on Earth,

like I don't know maybe I made a couple dollars for some defense industry folks but that's about it.

So that's why I meant.

Like I said I said questioning the that the assumptions at West Point but I still graduated got through and games Fort Campbell here so an infantry unit and.

Some of the.

Show me the commentary but the people around me were talking about this relationship War really made me.

Start a double down on these questions cuz I already heard somebody West when I was so you know people try to hide themselves up my dad calls a Bravado.

But it's a thumping sprays natural we talked about going people's heads up you know Anna and I kind of highway so.

[15:13] I guess who really got to point a crisis and January 2018 thank goodness I.

Been in contact with another conscientious objector a buddy of mine by the name of Matt Malcolm.

He put his packet in right after West when he was a classmate I was went but.

And he talked me through the process and I was like this is it for me I'm doing that January 2018 so February 2018 I have finished I'll leave the packet and turn that in it's been a year now and I'm just now finishing up the process.

[15:48] Do you have any idea how much longer do you think.

[15:52] So I'm in contact with Quaker house out of Fayetteville North Carolina great people have helped me throughout the whole process.

They say that once it reaches the department of the army conscientious objector review board it should be 2 to 3 months.

[16:10] So hopefully maybe the next six under 6 somewhere in there he said that once I got to that point the DEA review board.

It took about 11 months so anywhere in 11 months.

Well I'm still going to keep my fingers crossed for you I hope I hope it goes quickly.

So the next thing I wanted to next question I wanted to throw out there was about the first.

Leader that you told that you wanted to apply to be a CEO and you know where.

I would think most of us you know you want to pick somebody that might seem favorable to it but.

You guys may have been in situations where there wasn't where there wasn't someone that seemed trusting enough that you could ask for advice or,

even just say this is what I want to do now you know I don't know that I had any ncos or officers when I was in that I.

Would have been able to do that with but I want to hear from you guys you know did any of those experiences color how you move forward with your with your packet in with your end end of time in the military.

[17:32] Well I'll start off I guess so for me as I was in a Cavalry Squadron and we had just got back from Iraq when I decided that I had to do this,
and there was.

I know there was absolutely no Helping Hand of course and also you know in in their defense they nobody knew

they were completely ignorant.

Of not just the process but they didn't even know there was a regulation covering at the end also they were all ignorant of what a conscientious objector even was they didn't even have a definition for it, everybody thought that it was some kind of pacifist or something.

What you could be but so for me it was a whole big process than this was in late 2004 early 2005, I was on a relatively what I would call a relatively remote small base in Germany it was only eight hundred of us on the base and no females for example, and nobody over the rank of Lieutenant Colonel so it was not a lot of like oversight.

And chain of command kind of got away with a lot more than I think maybe they would on a bigger base.

[18:49] And stuff like that so I knew about like the Inspector General hotline and stuff like that so they up I was always calling up the Inspector General and raising hell and.

So they they they knew I was a troublemaker and stuff and then it was sort of became known that I wasn't going to go back to Iraq.

But stoke the hope I'm leading up to is there was no internet on our page so it was a really shitty is really difficult for there was internet in the in the NCO barracks

which I didn't have access to I was I had just been demoted to E1 and it just called my way back up to E3 so I was nowhere near the internet on the NCO barracks and fortunately for me.

[19:32] When I got in trouble in Iraq which is a whole separate story and I got in trouble they pulled me off of my tanks I was in a tank platoon they pulled me out of that put me in headquarters so now I work back in Germany in the orderly-room.

I had access to the internet because I was an office worker all of a sudden,

so only because of that I was able to type in I said there's got to be and started researching on the internet and somehow I don't even remember how but I pulled up the

Army regulation covering conscientious objection which if I'm not mistaken this AR 600 - 4 3.

So I pulled that sucker up hit the damn print button,

and on the tax dollar you know printer machine printed out the whole thick regulation so I went home that night and I read it cover-to-cover and then I think,

you know the next night I better cover to cover it again so I read the damn thing twice and I finally figured out that,

I qualified as a conscientious objector on moral grounds not on religious grounds.

[20:33] So I got the application the initial application together which I remember just maybe being a couple Pages or something that you initially,

put in and you have to have a big statement and then maybe a questionnaire or something like that and you had to turn it in I think you're supposed to turn it in to your supervisor or something or some kind of leadership person.

I don't know who the hell to give it to and I tried to give it to my immediate supervisor who was an E-5 not a bad guy nice guy but he was terrified to touch it so he actually refuse to accept it.

[21:06] So I had to go I just went over everybody's head and,

after after hours one evening in the orderly-room there I slipped over to the troop commanders office a captain, and I slipped the application in his inbox like desk so he directly got it and then the next morning when he's going through his stuff all hell kind of broke loose over that you know,

but so the process they're really there weren't any leaders there was only one,

act leader who actively obstructed the in the process and actively trying to provoke me into getting in trouble so that he could anytime I was facing,

UCMJ process that day they stopped the packet at that point,

if your if your under under any kind of Investigation or if you're an Article 15 process your CEO package gets put on hold and he figured that out and this was our first sergeant,

who was the real you know cowardly bastard,

type guy he figured that out and then he actively trying to provoke me and put me in situations and in the

evening,
 light up frame to me one time but long story short my process only took 8 months
 and that was after being significantly delayed several times because of that that one individual and the one other
 quick thing I'll I'll I'll say before I stop talking to them.

[22:36] There weren't really two kinds of leaders that I noticed and of everybody who had been with the unit and
 gone to Iraq all of those leaders my troop Commander.
 You know my my immediate supervisor the executive officer of our troop.
 Come on up the line you been up to the sergeant major in those guys anybody who had been with the unit in Iraq
 was was neutral about it you know they were like oh you I could totally understand why you wouldn't want to do
 this anymore.

And,
 yeah you should you should probably be out of the army or they were hostile you know in their support like oh
 you you know you're like a coward now you don't want to fight well get the hell out but yeah my chain of
 command who.

[23:23] Who had not been with the unit in Iraq and in fact and deployed anywhere at all there was a lieutenant
 and that first sergeant they had never been anywhere before they were just vicious and insult and obstructive the
 whole time.

So there you know at no point was there a favorable NCO somebody who was not edited.
 At least fair with you if not understanding or accepting that they treated you fairly group Commander treated me
 fairly,

yeah he was cool and he had me out here he had been with you and before he was actually a good dude and
 eventually down the line a few months later that first sergeant.

It is a long story but he got in a lot of trouble and he got he was about to get his get his first sergeant rank he was
 still in 87

and so they they they screwed him over on that prevented him from getting from getting the first sergeant Rank
 and he was out of our troop and then we got an actual first sergeant in and then that guy was really cool really
 good guy.

So I was I was lucky in that regard and like all the enlisted people around me all of them who'd actually been to
 Iraq understood 100% what I was doing,

and then it is not supported it they were neutral about it you know they understood what I was doing and they
 agreed that I should be gone.

[24:51] It's a it's a real careful dance that people try to do there that they want to protect their career but they.
 Feel conflicted about what's happening you know it end I.

[25:07] Thankful for some of the services some of the resources you know being able to you being able to print
 that thing out,

you know it it had things been happening in you still been in Iraq and you wanted to stop.

You wouldn't have accessed information you wouldn't have be able to look up resources or anybody to call or
 any anybody who had been through it before who could give you a tiny bit of advice to know.

Absolutely and there was one other guy in my Squadron who before the deployment he tried
 you tried to do it to he was denied and of course he had access to zero information he wasn't able to get on the
 internet you know like I was able to do.

[25:50] No I'm looking at the regulation yesterday I noticed it hasn't been updated since 2009 and the.

[26:00] Like you said you know there's no no one in a specific size unit company Battalion where ever gets,
 trained or certified in any part of that you know they they read the regulation it's passed off to the investigating
 officer and,

will you you hope you get an impartial one so.

[26:24] Before before I go on to the next thing that anybody have anything else they wanted to share any.

Stories about leaders supportive or don't support of anything like that I'll share a little bit. The first of all question your story is the incredible strength of will get that done when I turn in my packet they had, no idea what you doing.

[26:58] Turn it in my story is kind of complicated because. I I was called in 2004 but the ROTC recruiter at my school.

[27:11] Found out somehow I'll me and said if you join ROTC you can finish your college degree.

[27:20] Yeah I'm not in ROTC which is what I did so I got myself in a real pickle by signing up.

[27:31] I'm in the guard to do ROTC.

The whole problem was I had no idea the conscientious objector, assistant I thought it only applied to the draft in Vietnam where people bring their job card, I probably was a conscientious objector maybe in 2002 or 2003 just because the journalism major in school I was really paying attention to how the War unfolded and what troops were. Saying when they came home and things going on and then I started listening to democracy Now Wichita.

[28:14] What makes videos. I'm growing more and more disturbed about what I was hearing and seeing the news. Conscientious objector until like I still had to go through out processing or two had to go to the Motions to deploy even though I had sneaked into it already at the last minute, and it was on there at that appointment on some paperwork I saw this little boxes and are you a conscientious objector and it was like.

Fireworks in my brain like of course that that is exactly what I am that's what I am I'm not just depressed and conflicted and regretful of a conscientious objector.

An objectivist war on multiple ground but, no. Contract extension just join ROTC or try to suck it up for another six months before I started researching it more came across the line.

[29:22] And by that time by the time they sent me that whole huge Army regulation that question talked about I was due to go to ldac which is the leadership development.

Camper whatever were you.

Going to be like the first of two things that are CT I'll just have to go through conscientious objector like thinking about how I'm going to write my my big long essay for my application and I was doing it on moral grounds to and I wasn't really just at all still and I'm still not, and it's a lot harder to prove your your belief that way that's the the wording is that you have to prove. Which is ridiculous because how can you prove your beliefs you can you can say them you can argue them you can.

[30:16] Talk about them explaining but I I don't know about proof it's not like.

You know nothing tangible that you can show someone yeah even even you know letters and diary that support it's not true but it's convincing like convincing, document,

got my packet already cuz the deer right told me that that's what I should do I should get everything absolutely perfect before I turn it in and they thought that I needed to turn it into Seaside National Guard side.

So

[30:58] And it was something that I was dreading for months and months and months but when I finally went there that I was really impressed with how the major handled it like I could tell he wasn't happy and he was like more exhausted than anything

that I came in there and said told him you don't like I have something to tell you I'm sorry that I didn't tell you sooner but I was advised not to and then I email you could just,

just like Harden and be like oh shit I'm a conscientious objector I'm going to be applying for discharge.

And I took out this big binder you know and he.

Don't let me give it to him because he's like no personal are you sure I don't think I even handle this and I need to do a lot of research to find out what I do with it.

[31:51] And he was pretty sure that the National Guard side handled it but they didn't it did and I think that is on to go through the ROTC side.

But she was and I thought that.

[32:03] Everyone all the cadets would know and I still had to go to class with these people and and PT session has been all that stuff in the lab.

[32:12] But I think he only told the other instructors and one of them gave me a real.

A string and told me to withdraw my application and I was making a big mistake and now it's a piece of shit blah blah blah blah,

the one in charge of the ROTC program at the school I was going to was very level-headed and professional about it and.

I'm really grateful for that because it's super stressful unless.

Angles of glasses and be overwhelming absolutely.

When you find yourself in that place where you know that you don't belong anymore and you're you're waiting for people's eyes you know you you're waiting for what you perceive is going to be there their judgment and.

[33:05] You don't even without people talking about the idea of it you know that that especially among.

The men in the military that you know but did you fight hard enough did you do this hard enough even if you you hadn't and.

There's that those those questions of whether or not you're your comrade see you as a legitimate Soldier you know and then the things that go into that.

But being you know saying right there's I'm not going to fight I understand you guys have to fight but I'm not going to it's the it really really crystallizes for people.

You know how it is. You guys talk it seems like that the people's response fits into a just a few categories yet people that were.

You know they were kind of right in the middle that they understood that they could not support you they could not you know be out and about about it there were the people that this is number 2 that that's.

[34:01] Like that instructor that you just mentioned that they you know.

Remove it take it back there's no way you can't you can't say that that's not the you know how can you be that without understanding that it's about your morals not theirs and and the armies is also not about the Arby's World either we spend so much time hearing about,

the Army values and all that shit and,

we don't ever actually work on learning the values are not in other. Crystallized or a says things that are actually helpful so.

So

[34:34] A big step in the process of becoming a CEO is the investigative officer and I'd like to hear from you guys if you have any Impressions on.

Dealing with them through your process.

You know where they were they accommodating what's the assholes you know that that.

Because it seems that there could be a lot of a lot of subjective ideas when it comes around to that which officers chosen how they decide to do it and self.

[35:10] I've been with my experience I kind of was he was clear sailing for me it was he was a young Captain who worked at Brigade.

He just got selected didn't he didn't know anything you know I've never done it before,

and he pretty much as far as I could tell he did his job tried to do is to his job to the letter,

he handled me like I was mean. He basically just went through the checklist was going to where I had the one on

one interview with him he just went through his check list,
 he asked me all those questions and,
 you know like like Jorge I was in contact with the with the the local Mennonites in Germany so these people
 hadn't had they had other company besides that I had the regulation on my own but the Mennonites over there,
 they had other materials to help me prepare so I knew every question he was going to ask before he knew.

[36:07] So the only do what the one place where I tripped up was I was just answering his questions like perfectly
 and so that was the one thing that he did that pissed me off was he,
 he is in his final opinion he mentioned that he was certain that I've been coached,
 you know by an outside group and that we should they should take that into consideration that that I wasn't fully
 genuine you know because I had given all these coach 2 answers.
 You know but whatever that he was right about that and I guess he was right to include that in his report,
 observe that I had been coached or it seems likely that I coached but yeah he seemed to just he was just some
 guy didn't want to do it he wanted to get it over with as quick as possible,
 and he didn't want to get in trouble which is kind of how people operate in the military am I my investigating
 officer was a.

[37:03] Like I don't know the kind of a the guy on a Witch Hunt I'm not sure where he's from maybe I think
 another rgc unit but.
 In from the very first moment I met him you know you're called into the meeting with him and I asked to record,
 the hearing which you're allowed to do I had to tape recorder right there and he said she said no.
 You can hire someone to record like a like a court hearing like a stenographer but you can't record it,
 with the tape recorder and give me a copy immediately made me on guard because there is three of them kind of
 gang up against me my.
 RTC commander and then another captain and then invested investigating officer and he kind of acted like.
 Like a lawyer trying to trying to get me on turning points in that time I was I've been seeing a.

[38:09] Like a therapist to counselor at school cuz I was depressed about everything going on you know and he
 ended up in his.
 Summary,
 no basically accusing me of the crime of depression and accuse me of fraudulently and lifting and recommended
 me for administrative action,
 and he didn't go so far as to say that he found my claim is conscientious objector convincing and everybody else
 did to the chaplain the psychiatrist,
 my letters of support was strong but he he just took it so personally that I was doing this and he said that I
 should.
 Servant example as an example and a warning to other RBC unit.
 When National Guard members come knocking on their door which isn't the case like already being recruited
 me.
 What you be a warning that all these people are trying to get out of deployment.

[39:12] And then yeah I'm basically said that they should take back any financial assistance they'd ever given me
 any tuition assistance.
 Any type in any bonus everything he wanted me to pay back everything I get like demoted and he wanted my
 case and I'd and that's why I hire lawyer.
 I can fight it by myself.
 Did having to having the attorney make it easier with dealing with them but give you kind of a a bit of a barrier
 there.

[39:50] Yes absolutely.
 Amer at that point I was like 20 or 21 so you know I composed every bottle all the points that.

[40:03] But I thought I should say but taking that to the lawyer and having him drafted in more legal language and
 in an official document and all that stuff and I think they.

I think it makes them notice a little more to that you're serious that they can't just steamroll you, name of a lawyer in the next lawyer I had to get my move to the Bay Area once my case was finally denied at like it went all the way up to the top took a year to do that and then when it was denied they said my options were I could.

[40:39] Enlisted active-duty immediately commission as an officer and then go to active duty. Or face administrative action and nice I said no I'm not so I had to hire a lawyer who is ready to sue the government on the writ of habeas corpus which is, he said so they denied you but they can't just say no you're not a conscientious objector they have to give you a reason why you are not, and they didn't do that that was the mistake that the investigating officer made in my case he was tasked with. I'm trying to see if I was a true conscientious objector and instead of doing that he like you know went went to. And all these other areas and try to make me feel like a schmuck.

[41:33] Which you already feel like a schmuck be like at least for me I feel very proud, but I stood up against the war and I also know feels shame and guilt and about a lot of things to.

[41:50] Sounds like he showed his ass big time yeah definitely.

[41:58] And then what do you do in those circumstances you know what that if. You know if you hadn't been able to get a lawyer in that same spot you know what would. How bad would that be for me to just in different situations and stuff and I'm really really thankful that you were able to do that and that the that's where he went going to court, JB's Corpus explained to us you've already told us this lady is a conscientious objector why is she still up. In the military how is that that happening and it it's not it sounds a little like that they were you know that they tried to hit the ball up in the air as much they could until they knew it was going to hit the ground and then they finally.

[42:43] So

[42:50] Everyone I really hope you're enjoying the podcast but truth be told I need your help. No I don't need you to move a couch or borrow a leaf blower know I need you to hit pause on your podcasting up right now, and share this episode with somebody you know somebody who you might think might be receptive to it could be up a friend a relative who's considering joining the military or a veteran you know who might be interested in hearing a little more truth in their news about the military and veterans, we rely on you all to help us reach as many people as possible so please hit that pause button right now and share this episode with somebody.

[43:37] Cheryl Dunn.

Okay good deal I know Uncle Al will cuss a lot listening to the episode but he'll appreciate it when the cursing stops. No I want to mention something about patreon, we are always in the market for more patreon supporters so if you get the chance please come out and support us you could support us for as little as \$8 a month, and what do you get for your dollar you ask well you get a 1-minute drop on any topic you choose want some. Just email us your question or comment and will give it the old penry Danny breakdown on air. Guaranteed to have 60 seconds of our time we may spend more on it that we prefer to do military and Veteran topics but whatever topic you think might be pertinent. And we may spend a whole bunch more time talking about it depending on the topic, ever contributors a bit north of a dollar a month we have some bonus episode some essays of mine and a few other things as well, we're still in the process of a building a rewards so if you have any suggestions for patreon Rewards please let

me know now back to the podcast.

[44:50] Fortress on a hill is expanding we're going to start doing, chapter series as part of our lineup there are some topics that are simply too big and important to leave to discussing in a single headline and with that in mind I'd like to thank all of our honorary producers who are helping us do just that we rely on the support of our patrons through patreon to help keep the podcast success thank you to Matthew Howe will Lorenz gauge counts faheem shirazi Henry Zmuda James Higgins and James o'barr, anyone who contributes \$10 or more a month on patreon will be listed here as an honorary producer into all of our contributors on patreon thank you for helping us do this.

[45:50] DJ we are earlier you wanted to jump in. Yeah and I was just I mean thankfully I haven't had that much of an issue with any kind of leadership having you know impeding the process or anything like that, it was a little bit slow going up the chain command as far as legal review or and things like that but. Mom is getting off so same as as Clifton was he was doing his job doing it to the letter of the law. You know trying to get it on the way out of the way so he could progress his career whatever the most. The most that I've gotten is is from. Like the final legal review guys and I've never interacted with them but they're their recommendations and all that are a little snarky and and wanting me to repay the the West Point. I guess that you know recruitment. Which is sundown one working on the rebuttable on right now over the weekend. The turn it in next week or goes to the department the Army review board.

[47:03] So other than that it was pretty you know everyone's pretty much neutral about it a lot of the soldiers I mean.

Like I understood it was a lot of the soldiers they if they join the military for the economic stability like that nothing really else very few join for like the who will like you know the things you see in movies. They understood a lot of them understood it and people app you know my peers in my commanders there just knows whatever like. I'm just supposed to something else that someone else you know what's going through. So yeah I never never really had too much of an issue obviously like especially in the infantry battalion when I started thinking about this I did feel some of that like you were looking down on me but. You know if that was never meant to be an infantry battalion in the first place so.

[48:00] It wasn't a big deal it's hot it's it's hard when it's a.

[48:08] The stronger the sense of community is the harder it is to know that you're set out from them you know that that it's not it's not the same.

[48:19] Alright let me get some more of your next question here.

[48:25] Sorry I lost my spot.

[48:35] Okay so.

We're in an age now where censorship of the military and of combat is it is a huge thing and that unlike in the Vietnam era word-of-mouth doesn't have, the same power that it did you know that the the Vietnam era anti-war movement. You know they they work in groups but it wasn't you know we weren't on email lists we didn't you know do a maybe maybe your phone tree I guess back in the day but these days in the age of Thrones, it requires far fewer pulls of a trigger to cause massive death. But that also means fewer eyes get to know what happened in potentially report to someone, add that the natural compartmentalization of the military how how you don't know what the other guys doing in

of the

whatever other parts of your unit are doing because you're doing your job it's not your job to watch them at your job to do your job.

[49:36] And then how classification has changed things that these days I've had several interviews with people who said that they find things that are embarrassing, or insulting but they don't need to be classified but yet they're hidden away so that it doesn't make them look bad and consequently the army look bad good examples of this would include like when the Bush Administration forbid filming of returning American coffins during operation Iraqi Freedom which was an image that was very very powerful and influential during Vietnam and that actually got changed when Obama was elected.

[50:17] My question for you guys because you guys hold unique roles in the anti-war community so to speak. How do you think the community can best use your guys's experience to inform how we fight for peace are there are there any of the four started that it's it's. No soldiers most most troops probably have never met a conscientious objector, but people need to know about you guys they need to understand that they need to know that it can be done that people deserve the right to be heard and to have their morals vindicate them. And the nll goes back to me earlier when I mentioned about the Army values is that, I know I went in believing that the people in the military were trying to Aspire to that like I was. That's not the case JJ you mentioned earlier you know most people join for economic reasons not for who I kill people reasons.

[51:24] So what do you guys think how best can do any work Community get your guys's experiences, to be helpful for the the bigger thing and I realize it's kind of a bigger question is it is it just shooting around ideas but again you guys have very unique experiences Rosa what you've been through delays that you went through the treatment you received Clips in the fact that you wouldn't have known anything had you not gotten that internet access and gotten that regulation JJ I'm sure you can speak to being on YouTube at being ghetto and then hearing people talk about their experiences knowing that you're not alone. What the process is but I think that you guys hold the older really unique place and so I'd I'd like to you don't know how do you how do you think we can best get that out there.

[52:20] Well I mean there's working together, there's the GI rights hotline which which doesn't seem to do a pretty decent job I actually volunteered with them for a while when I first got out my first came home that was 05 and in those days they actually were receiving quite a few calls. And I spoke with a bunch of people myself and went am I was going through the process I contacted them to. And just just a you know get more information and stuff really the main thing is is information if. The young Soldier or yeah yeah young service member knows that they don't want to fight they don't want to go kill or they don't want to go back and do it again if they've already done it before in this day and age that you know there's enough, access to information is is is not what it was back then you know it's a lot that's a lot easier I think I assume from what I from what little I pay attention to that people in the military have a lot more internet access now. So as long as the information is out there and there's some kind of supportive, you know Community out there and whatever is left of the anti-war movement if there is it's not really a movement at the moment I don't think but there is a community.

[53:36] So there's that and you know there's tons of pod there's tons of like veteran and even active duty podcast right now and most of them ahead of everyone that I found is is sort of anti-war, so maybe just that's just keep doing that it's not going that doesn't hurt that make the information available you know.

[53:59] Yeah I agree I came across some about face on Twitter I was only on Twitter like.

All these groups are popping up in their vocal and, to be honest I completely feel myself off from any kind of Veteran community and if I find out that the one was a better and I certainly did not tell them my story. But to see about faith you no tweeting. All these things these things very political things and their veterans veterans against the war. Just knowing that Community without there was and of course I never gone looking for it until recently because I just maybe wasn't ready but it's awesome and you feel included.

[54:56] One thing I do I definitely wanted to mention is so is your podcast Rosa breaking Cadence that the I think I'm.

I'm just a couple episodes now but the the really drying out people stories in that light and also contrasting it with your own I've learned a lot from the, full episodes Usher podcast that I listen to and I hope that you continue that because you're going to find so many other stories people that you know it, even stuff that after doing it for so long just like wow that was crazy.

[55:34] But yeah thank you thanks for listening and.

I think those are that those are the most important things and actually you know like like lips to mention we now have you know my four or five of us that do, and you were stuff in different ways and in different formats and so, you know I think that that is a really helpful thing for everybody so that they can you know we we all lean to certain voices certain personalities and so if we, get information better from One Source or another but to have that Community like you said I did the same thing for a while after I got out I was like I didn't do any better than anything and I fixed finally figured I was because I didn't fit in at the VFW I didn't fit in at the Avi didn't fit in a lot of these other organizations where, we support veterans and we support the military and that means we support war and so.

[56:30] You know I like I'm I'm I think I'm still technically a member of the VFW but knowing you said about face Veterans for peace.

That these these organizations have really it's nice to have a sense of community it's nice to have a sense of belonging and to feel safe that you can share those opinions that in normal better in circles. Is an acceptable in a mill vet Twitter is usually a gross and horrible place to be for the most part I mean some of us are tweeting about the news or making fun of Ben Shapiro or whatever we have to be doing on Twitter at that. Given point in time.

[57:11] What's up any other any other resources guys any other than any other things you think the meeting in do Ramon iknow you're there a man how's it going.

[57:25] Yeah yeah I'm doing good. Just been listening you know obviously this is episodes about Checkers I want to be here as someone who didn't, it wasn't a conscious objector but you know looking back I wish I was going to hear to support your voice isn't it lift you up, I think.

What we need to do I mean is start trying to have conversations with reviews with students you know I remember in high school the recruiters were always in their always talking to us I think that's, is to provide an alternative voice and alternative like a worldview, that discusses what the military actually doesn't know what is it actually mean to be part of this stuff.

[58:16] Of this Force.

And so you have like an individual projects that people have like there's hard in Austin who does a sustainable options for youth where they went through the actual use into the high schools in and set tables up next to the recruiters and they they they provide information you know as far as like, weighing all the options what are the reasons for joining why don't you know what are these other alternatives

are available to you you know I joined.

No.1 purely out of economic necessity you know I was a daughter I was married I was fresh out of high school and that was the the option need to provide a paycheck for my family and if I would have known that could you know,

there was a,

no programs are available in my community that you know where you know your students for trade schools and stuff like that then I could have done that college wasn't for me.

But you know I'm near the paycheck so I joined and that was the only option that I saw but you're looking back at it now and you know joining because it's early because of economic necessity doesn't negate the fact that I was

I was fighting for a paycheck at the expense of other people's communities right,

you know being a part of the invasion of your Ogden and and all that so now you know what about face veterans against the war and other you know.

[59:42] Community members with allies units are it's our job to get out there and to the community and I have those conversations because I think everything is so everything is online in his information available, but it's always good to to have a face to talk to someone to actually had that conversation face to face in an end-to-end to have to talk about topics that are difficult, I'm so I think being there in our community trying to you know, provide the information that's available.

You reminded me of something that I wanted to mention for today.

And it has to do with guilt over over doing certain things is Rose I thinking in your email that when we were emailing you had mentioned about,

dealing with the guilt of still being affiliated with the military in some way specific like for me it's the VA.

You know that the the disability money that I get.

Is because of my participation in something that I'm now ashamed of and trying to figure out.

How to feel about that and I think that that that's.

[1:00:59] Where you guys will come in the most strongly is on trying to find sanity among conflicting views.

You know that there's a even with leaving the military even with not wanting to be in combat you made friends you know submit maybe if you went to a comment with them you made you know brothers and sisters, cuz I do I do still think that there's a there's a friendship Under Fire that people don't get but that's mostly stressful situations. Specific combat.

But the point is is that you know how do you do that how do you accept that you know.

[1:01:37] You might not work again and your sustenance comes from the one of the sources of your pain.

[1:01:47] Absolutely it's easy to make friends in the military like especially in training and that's all you know that I know cuz I never I never served.

Oregon but it's so easy to identify and laugh with and and like,

your peers until you know conversation turns to politics and then you're just like who am I like you.

You have so much in common with these people and then so much you just can't understand how they're doing what they're doing.

[1:02:30] Now it's a it's a it's a really hard pill to swallow and.

[1:02:36] I think you just got to let Leaf I'm with it I guess but it said it's a very hard pill to swallow.

[1:02:44] You know with my experience we were we were all totally ignorant of politics we were a political.

None of us voted I was one of the only enlisted people who voted and we were on a training exercise out and in Germany in the field at the time so it was very difficult to vote.

[1:03:03] That was one. John Kerry tried to run against George Bush so I sent in my absentee ballot for John Kerry is very difficult to vote,

but I will say there was you know as we as time went on and we started to seeing you know we all kind of all of us who'd been there knew that the war was wrong, and so at that point it was just like well are you going to be okay with doing something that's wrong or not and we're supposed to this unfortunately we're, decided that they would they were going to just go along with something that was wrong which is human nature when you're faced with the army but but I have to say there was a result there was a sort of a core group of us who are little bit more serious about you know that a lot of us did get out and unfortunately most of the guys I know who were politically conscious and were who were you know, get in touch with their morals enough to want to actually get out of the military the way they did it was by using a bunch of drugs and getting caught, and several of my friends did that on purpose to get out, I'm just failed urinalysis test one after the other until they got bad conduct discharge has one of these guys was a friend of mine he was discharged just for using cannabis is he.

[1:04:22] He pissed hot several times in a row,

I got a bad conduct discharge I'm pretty sure he actually have was awarded the Purple Heart during our deployment he was a medic and he was in a in an m113 that rolled over a couple anti-tank mines, and one of the guys the driver of the 113 was killed.

[1:04:41] And he had a purple heart for getting wounded and a bronze star for dragging the dead body out of the of the burning one one three.

Nnn doing heated first date on everybody and stuff as he was going to himself anyhow and he wound up getting a bad conduct discharge that's just one of several of my friends who did that, cuz that was you know we were in a painful place we were depressed of course and we knew that if we got busted using drugs you could go home.

I was using drugs myself too but I make sure I didn't get caught cuz I wanted to get out with an honorable discharge

and and so yeah now and I do I collect of the modest check from the VA for PTSD and tinnitus and I have a busted nose.

This that and the other the way that I get over that conflict my dogs are being really loud right now so it's way that I get around any kind of feeling of guilt or whatever about that and you can have complete the feelings y'all better go you have to go away, and he is basically I honestly feel without a shred of bum, without a shred of a second thought that you know the the Department of Defense probably owes me about a billion bucks for what I did.

[1:05:57] And this little \$600 a month you know that's nothing.

Yeah it mean for me there is that more than that that moral injury of the the fact that you know I helped. All right participated in the B invasion of a of a country destroying the super structure and you know causing.

[1:06:28] Enormous amount of damage and end in death.

That now like something that I'm absolutely again so then now getting you no disability for it is it something that I've come to terms with that can't question that as far as like.

I can only try in like work like.

Every day to try and right the wrongs of participating and not standing up and not even realizing you because you know I was we were political like.

[1:07:00] Getting all these apps into the back like that there was like the largest marching largest protest in history against the Iraq War I mean I was at Camp Pendleton and if you're not one thing about March or, anti-war nothing like that cuz we weren't so insular was your start to you know our universe getting ready to deploy and everybody's excited like yeah we're going to go overseas and it's only until you get there until you see the destruction Star City such a question, I'm so now it's like I use my.

[1:07:29] My time you know each day trying to to to work as best as I can to create a better world and you know I'm hoping that at one point in the future that I'm able to like be able to sustain myself without having to rely on my disability, and be able to like donate my disability entirely for, it's a good cause as you know not something that's going to be for me you know I'm sorry I'm hoping that's my my goal at some point is to be able to like with that to where I'm financially stable, that I don't need a disability money in that bed that goes to to furthering good causes to help our or Society, the great so that's a great goal brother it really is something I wanted to mention, Clifton going back to you talking about your buddies trying to get caught using, I worked for almost two years as a as a drug investigator when I served I was an MP and it was you can get attached to the CID office there Port Lewiston and you would talk to people who missed out on UA's and the occasional you know, drug dealer like soldiers become big drug dealers but.

[1:08:52] The thing that I learn the most from going through that process was hearing about how people who have been down range or medicating, with these substances and I heard it so much that.

[1:09:08] To include one guy who actually told me that he tried to kill himself and, but it is really crystallized in my view about the the weight that we had all come back with and to meet I was even reminded me of the weight that I was ignoring. You know that it took me years after getting out before I started to question roles question bigger parts of the machine you know. But.

I tried to listen as much as I could when I was when I was an investigator when ice when I started knowing the people were were hurting so much and still in uniform and cooks and you mention the guy that you know he he did it did it a whole bunch just to get it done and we had a guy who I think. He had like nineteen hot urinalysis test, order up for THC from marijuana and we always laughed about it that made us in the office laugh it's like this guy clearly doesn't want to be in the military anymore but you had other people in there too, the other one that was really hard to stomach was when guys would tell you.

[1:10:23] That they were using on the outside they told the recruiter. Recruiter told them to lie and now they were someone with the substance abuse problem in the military and. I had to treat them like a criminal you know that ended in the drug world you know they're there aren't specifically victims the victim is the state or the people that use the drugs.

[1:10:49] But I I I think about that sometimes and but I'm real I'm grateful that I went through it because I wouldn't have had all that time to consider. Everything that I did and everything I participated in.

[1:11:05] But that really told me the State of Affairs for guys trying to deal with PTSD at the time, their best option no 40506 right in there was to medicate get in trouble and get out. Ask for help and possibly get some help or possibly be ostracized because it's weakness of some kind so. Argos, so the closest out today on we already talked about a few of them I'd like to if you guys have any organizations that have resources for cos anything that you want to recommend and if you don't remember it right now you can email it to me I'll throw it in the show no but the PlayStation people that were most helpful to you when the Witcher process.

[1:11:56] Yeah well I mentioned earlier the Quaker house out of Fayetteville North Carolina and I've got there their number here.

The number is 919-663-7122 and these are the folks that like basically held my hand from beginning to now in my conscience is objective process, they made sure that I'm doing the right things and going according to regulation so they helped a lot. Say the number one more time that number is 91966 3. 7122 and I actually got in contact with them through calling the GI rights Network first, yeah they there I think that they should be kind of. First stop One-Stop shopping for people it got to help them find resources that are better for them and also some places maybe. Places may not have resources but others might so.

[1:12:55] Well you done GI rights hotline I've got it pulled up that's one 877-447-4487. And their website is GI rights hotline. Org easily you know they got the number right there at the Top If You pull it up and if you call them usually you leave a message it will go to a local call center the way it works when I was volunteering and you leave a message with your number and what your issue is and I'll call you back another really good resource is the. I pulled up the Department of Defense and opposite of Inspector General they have a hotline you can call.

[1:13:40] Panel arm can't find not seeing it right now but it's it's not difficult to find I think if your Google it and throw it in there yeah it's been based on your branch I believe each each branch has it as a Inspector General office I was always calling the local, IG office for the Army in Germany over there and do the thing that they're most useful that I found them in those days most useful for is if you're getting like undo heat somebody's harassing you outranks you and they're violating rules or whatever at least the IG will contact your chain of command and put it back on them and usually it's almost always enough to make them stop. So you'll get some relief that way and then really the final resource it's almost cliché but Jack The Judge Advocate General of the damn Army lawyer, when things got really bad for me and that the acting first sergeant was really harassing the instructing me, we actually started lying about me and getting you got some Junior some Junior ncos to file false sworn statements against being stuck when all that started happening I went right down to Jag.

[1:14:50] And explain what was going on and, and the Jack people actually already knew that my unit was a shitstorm and was doing this kind of stuff and they put serious pressure on him and actually that acting first sergeant got in a world of trouble over, over that issue. And wound up not actually not getting promoted to First Sergeant over three sample so a Jag is actually at least in my experience they actually were honest honorable people who were who were trying to do the right thing.

[1:15:23] 2 more than, I'd like to mention the center on conscience I know the GI rights hotline has been referring some people there to do Co application and I was listening to an interview with the director head of that, she said that they had a 100% success rate on Co-op application, that you're going to be a CEO like definitely hit them up and then code pink code pink helped me out I ran into them at the height of the height of, my co application that's when the investigating officer just giving his report and it's them they connected me with a lawyer in my area. To do my rebuttal Pink Ladies have some resources and are connected to lawyers.

[1:16:22] I got I would say the same for like the other outside organization is like Veterans for peace and I guess about face what used to be Iraq veterans against the war Definitely Maybe Veterans for peace is a little bit more widespread I think and so if there is a chapter around you, or even if it's not around you if you contact them you usually get a response and somebody who's knowledgeable who wants to go.

[1:16:47] Yeah this is a remote, ization that's out there is called a courage to resist they primarily hit support punches injectors that aren't have gone public but they provide resources were anybody that's interested in and being a CEO and and and they trying to connect people to, they they committed to come yet they're approaching a little bit different their project of the of the objective church at CenterState non non denominational peace and Justice Community that's a rooted in religious humanism, I'm so they they support you know a lot of the. Public like very prominent but they have all kinds of resources so check out their website at courage to resist, all right I think I think we got a good mix here so. I want to thank you guys for being here today it's been a great great education for me and I'm sure it will be.

[1:17:56] Music.

[1:18:30] On Spotify you name it almost anywhere you listen were already waiting for you and hey are always in the market for more patreon.

[1:18:39] Music.