

Borne the Battle

Episode # 148

Army Veteran David Lucier—Green Beret Medic, Vietnam MIKE Force Veteran, Security Contractor, Veteran Advocate

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(Text Transcript Follows)

[00:00:00] Music

[00:00:10] OPENING MONOLOGUE

Tanner Iskra (TI): Let's get it. June 5, 2019. *Borne the Battle*, brought to you by the Department of Veterans Affairs. I am your host, Marine Corps Veteran Tanner Iskra. Hope everyone is having a good time outside of podcast land. I know I am. I am not in my in-law's basement this week. I am housesitting this week, so got a huge big old house to myself, I'm feeding some dogs, life's good. I am excited for this weekend. I'll be leaving this house and I'll be going to the World War II Days at the Mid-Atlantic Air Museum in Reading, Pennsylvania. A colleague and myself are going to be going out and covering the event. We'll be bringing to you Instagram stories, some video content, and hopefully get some good interviews from World War II survivors for the podcast. Last week we had the Facebook Live about the MISSION Act. There was lots of participation, thank you for that. If anybody doesn't know, that's a Facebook Live that's currently on the VA's Facebook page [Link to VA's Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/VeteransAffairs>]. We had some subject matter experts from the Veterans Health Administration interfaced with some- some VSO representation from the American Legion, the Wounded Warrior Project, and AMVETS. And we welcomed any responses to the video. We got over 1,000 responses. That was really great. And our digital outreach team is currently going through comment by comment, and they were doing it during the- during the Facebook Live. I was doing audio and I was watching them work their tails off. They're going through comment by comment, and they're getting together with subject matter experts and whatever the question is, and they're responding to them. So, thank you for your engagement and we look forward to answering all those questions. There are more blogs on [blogs.va.gov](https://www.blogs.va.gov) [Link to VA's official blog] about the MISSION Act. Focuses on eligibility, the services that are covered, details on co-payments and prescription medicine. One of the new benefits,

if you're eligible for the MISSION Act, is that the VA will now pay for local urgent care if your urgent care provider is in the VA contracted network of community providers and if the service is not excluded under the benefit. Most urgent care is- colds, bumps, bruises, etc. I'm sure there are some exceptions, but you have to read the- the blog and- and really dig into it. So, they're out there. They're on blogs.va.gov. They're in the main carousel. They're- they're- If you put MISSION Act in the search, you'll find them. It's brand new blogs about the MISSION Act. No reviews this week, little surprising. No ratings or reviews this week, so you know what that means. We are still holding at 74- well 73 total ratings and reviews. I miscounted last week. But I said if we get one more, I'll send out a snippet of the bonus episode, and I'll hold myself to that word. So, again, just need one more rating, one more review. Help me help you, not only in the bonus episode but also letting me know how I'm doing as your host for your podcast. One quick news release this week. The White House VA Hotline surpassed 250,000 calls from the Veteran community. Says from a media release, "Pledged by our President Donald J. Trump as part of his administration's commitment to reforming the US Department of Veterans Affairs, as of May 14, the White House VA Hotline has answered more than 250,000 calls since it went live on June 1, 2017. The hotline, 1-855-948-2311, serves Veterans, their families, caregivers, and survivors by giving them a direct, non-emergency contact available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, with agents, a majority whom are Veterans or from a Veteran family, who are trained to address general and common VA inquiries." Then you have a quote that's from our secretary, Robert Wilkie, talking about how the hotline is the VA's front door for questions and concerns. "While Veterans are encouraged to use existing VA contact centers, the hotline offers an alternative 'always the right number' approach, transferring calls when needed to VA subject matter experts, such as the Veterans Crisis Line. The hotline serves as the VA's front door to listen to Veterans' experiences, identify trends in Veteran feedback, and resolve Veterans health, benefits, and services concerns anywhere in the department." There's more, but I can tell you this: that is exactly what the White House VA Hotline is. It's the VA's front door. So, you call the line, whatever it may be. You can always call that hotline, and their job is to get you to the right person to help you with your- your inquiry. Just keep calling that hotline. Keep that call center hopping. Keep those people employed. And, uh- and hopefully it can help you out. So, today's interview was with a Green Beret. He was a combat medic attached to a MIKE Force in Vietnam that conducted operations all throughout the Ho Chi Minh Trail. And after a full career in banking and real estate and finance, at 55 years old, he became a private security contractor in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Personally, he's also a fellow Arizona State University alum, and he helped build the Veteran-friendly GI Bill model at that university that I enjoyed when I attended. He is Army Veteran David Lucier. Enjoy.

[00:05:34] Music

[00:05:40] PSA:

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[00:05:55] Music

[00:06:00] Interview:

(TI): You know, David, as soon as I heard that you were from Arizona State University, and that you were a graduate from Arizona State, I knew. I was like, "Well, that's- I'm definitely gonna go interview him."

David Lucier (DL): [Laughter] ASU, go devils. It's a- it's a great institution, and in fact, they've been very, very helpful, and, in fact, innovative in- in establishing themselves as probably the most Veteran-supportive university in the nation. I'm proud to be associated with them.

(TI): So, what made or compelled you to join the service to begin with?

(DL): Well, you know, let's look back at the time and the place. Let me start with my parents and my grandparents. My grandfather was a World War I US Army Infantry Captain, and- and in—

(TI): World War I.

(DL): He served in World War I. He served in France. My father served in World War II, was a Naval Officer, a Lieutenant Commander, and he spent a couple of years on a destroyer in the South Pacific during the- during the- the

wonder years. So, um, uh- And my mom was a Woman's Air Service Pilot in World War II.

(TI): So, it- it was in- it was in the whole family.

(DL): Pretty much so. And so, I was born and raised Catholic with Catholic family. Lots of siblings, got 10 siblings. You know, with—

(TI): Oh wow.

(DL): the, you know- I'm beginning to kind of come of age and figure what I- I'm able to discern and pick things up. I listened to John Kennedy who said, you know, "Serve your country, not yourself." So, went to- In fact, we all went to Catholic schools all the way through K-12. And then, um- then I joined the Army in February of '67 with the intent of trying to work my way into Special Forces. So, at the time, they didn't have a- a program for that, and you just had to- you had to volunteer for Airborne Infantry, and then if you passed certain tests and they interviewed you and you thought may- they thought maybe you might- might make a contribution, then you were, you know, sent to Fort Bragg. So, um—

(TI): Okay.

(DL): it was—

(TI): So, you didn't- so you were not drafted going into Vietnam. You—

(DL): No, but the—

(TI): raised your hand.

(DL): But the draft was in full swing. And so—

(TI): Yeah.

(DL): the reality is, is that had I not enlisted, I would have been—

(TI): Yeah.

(DL): would have been- would have been drafted. So- But one of the things I wanted to make sure is that I- I had some control over my destiny, and that—

(TI): Choose your own destiny.

(DL): Yeah.

(TI): Yeah.

(DL): And it turns out- You know, I was- I was- I was fortunate. You know, made all the right decisions, passed all the right test, passed all the background stuff. And so, in, I think it was the f- late summer early fall of, uh, 1967, I went to Fort Bragg and started my- started my Special Forces training.

(TI): So how did you get into Special Forces from boot camp? Like, that- that's always a good, I think—

(DL): Sure. Well, the- the- the- First of all, the- the- the process has changed dramatically from when I was there to where- to where it is now. Briefly, right now, you can go to a recruiter and say, "I want to enlist for Special Forces," and there's a what they call the 18 Xray Program. And- and so, you go through boot camp, you go through AIT, advanced training, you go to jump school, and then you go to Special Forces, or you- you actually go to- you qualify for their selection program. And should you be so fortunate to get through that and you're selected, then you go through the- through- through training. There was none of that, basically, in, uh- back then. They- they had a recruiter stationed at Fort Benning at the jump school. And, you know, it was at the end of- end of the training day one day they said, "Anybody who's- who's interested in this, you know, go see, you know, Sergeant Joe Schmoe at 1830 hours, you know, building blah blah blah." So- so I went. And they had a sign-up sheet and so I signed up. And- and they said, well, you know, "We- we- we don't just take your word for it." And they hand you a- a- We went through, did a battery of tests, you know, mental tests or intellectual tests. At the end of jump school, um, uh, we- we're- we were told to report- some of us were told to report to, you know, behind a certain building and my, you know- and my- my name was on the list. I went over to the building. They said, "Listen, you- you qualify, you know, mentally and we- we know now that you're not a criminal, and so, based on our tests—

(TI): [Laughter]

(DL): we'd like you to consider trying out for Special Forces and going to Fort Bragg." And I said, "Yeah, that's a—" And- and I said, "Yeah, you know. This is what I signed up for." So, I was- I was fortunate that, you know, I was kind of seeing my dream come true.

(TI): Real quick, before we get too deep into it, what was really known about Special Forces before you even came in? Because you- you talked about that was your goal, but it was kind of early on in- in their evolution.

(DL): Yeah, um, you know, in fact, uh, Special Forces wasn't even created in- in- in- in the Army until 1952, so this is, you know, 15 years later, which in the—

(TI): Okay.

(DL): scheme of things is pretty early. And- and you're right. Not very many people knew about it, and- and then in 1963, what kind of gave them a little boost there was John Kennedy presen- or authorized the wearing of the green beret as a—

(TI): Ah.

(DL): a way to delineate, you know, who is Special Forces and who is not. So, I went to an ROTC high school, and so, you know, there was some of that orientation. But, lo and behold, there were several front-page cover stories about Special Forces on- on- in- in Life Magazine. And- and so I looked at it and kind of- I- I read it, you know, with- with a- a real interest in all of that. And then- and then—

(TI): Okay.

(DL): Then I did a little research, wrote- wrote away and got some literature. And one of the pieces of literature was a magazine with- with an A-Team, you know, on the cover. And, of course, these guys, they- they're all poster boys for Special Forces. And—

(TI): And this is before the show, *The A-Team*.

(DL): Oh yeah.

(TI): This is—

(DL): Way—

(TI): This is—

(DL): way, way—

(TI): Yeah.

(DL): before—

(TI): [Laughter]

(DL): *The A-Team*. And- and- and so, you know, I- I read through it and I thought, you know- And- and read those- those- those stories in Life Magazine about these guys and they looked, you know, I mean- they, again- they- they- they were, you know- they were wearing cool guns and, you know, leading, you know, exotic-looking people and- and- and, you know, I just- You know. My- my first thought was, “You know, I can do that.” And so—

(TI): Yeah.

(DL): that was kind of my- my pivotal transition, or my epiphany. And so, I followed it up after high school knowing that I may not, you know- I may be joining the Army. I may n- may not get a shot at Special Forces. But as it turns out, I did, and, um, I finished. I was successful in the training, and, um, went to Vietnam, spent a year, you know- combat year there. And that was- that was my rode to Special Forces in- in my Vietnam career.

(TI): So, you operated along the- the Ho Chi Minh Trail. What year were you- were you there?

(DL): 1968 and 1969. And- and—

(TI): Right there in the thickness.

(DL): Yeah. It was, and- and we not only operated near the Ho Chi Minh Trail. We operated on the Ho Chi Minh Trail [Laughter].

(TI): [Laughter]

(DL): And- and so, my- when I got to Vietnam, you know, I- I- I didn't know anything about it. So, I asked my- the- the- the- the fellow that I was working for at the time, and, you know, I said, well, you know, "Where- where do we get into the war here, you know?" And I was all, you know, gung- Well, I mean, you know. I'm 20 years old. I'm bullet-proof.

(TI): Gung-ho, yeah.

(DL): Ready to go. I'd had all this training, and now, you know, it was time to put that training to good use. And so, he said, "Well, you know, if you really wanna do something, let's-" He said that MIKE Force is the- is the place to go. And I go, "Well, that sounds like that's, you know, for me." And then I had to back up and ask what the MIKE Force was. But it sounded—

(TI): [Laughter]

(DL): It sounded good, you know? MIKE Force. It's because it's—

(TI): Yeah.

(DL): It's a- it's a- it's a- it's- it's a bit of an acronym for the Mobile Strike Force, and these were- these were—

(TI): Gotcha.

(DL): This- this was an operation that was specifically run by particular people in Special Forces. And, the- the only way you could get into is if you had a- a- a previous combat tour. That was a minimum requirement for- for who is- who was selected.

(TI): Oh wow.

(DL): Except if you were a Special Forces medic, which I was. And since they were in such dire need of and short- There was a shortage of them. I was- I was- I

got on a team, and so what we did is we recruited, we supplied, we trained, and we led. We had only two Americans with each company. We led basically, you know, your basic mercenaries against the Ho Chi Minh. But these were mostly Montagnard tribal people, an ethnic group in- in Vietnam.

(TI): Hm.

(DL): And, um, we divided up our companies by tribe. The tribe I worked with was made up of all Sedang, and uh, the other two companies in the battalion were of different tribal origins. So—

(TI): Interesting.

(DL): You know. It- it- So, we ran- we ran those operations against the North Vietnamese Army, engaged them and tried to interdict them, mitigate their- their impact, obviously, as they were bringing arms and men and materials into the country—

(TI): Sure.

(DL): to pursue the war, and we were there to- to block that. So, we got on pretty- we got on pretty good terms with the- the NVA. They knew who we were. We knew who they were. I remember it wasn't- wasn't unusual that we would shout insults back and forth at- at certain times.

(TI): [Laughter] So, these mobile strike forces, were- were these precursors to, uh, Green Berets, Delta, and Rangers? If we're to look to their lineage, who would more likely to pull- point to these mobile strike forces?

(DL): Well, you know, probably- probably Delta. We- There was, I mean- We did a lot of direct action, but, you know, we were- we were, uh, an army, you know, that was more conventional once we- once we put them together. Most of the people- most of the Green Berets who were assigned to this particular unit were- They were- they were action figures. And- and- and, you know, our job was—

(TI): [Laughter]

(DL): to engage the enemy, and- and generally, we didn't have to look for them. You know, one of the- one of the things we did, too, was either retake or help defend some of the A-Camps that were along the border against attack. And- and in fact, some of them had been overrun and we had to retake them. And—

(TI): Sure.

(DL): you know, that was- that was—

(TI): Sure.

(DL): That was our life. And so, you know, when you- when you came to the MIKE Force, and, um, you know, you- you were- you were assured of, you know, a lot of work. There was no shortage of work.

(TI): I'm sure. David, who was your greatest mentor or best friend while you were in?

(DL): You know, my mentor. I had a couple of them that were just absolutely fantastic, and they were both team members. I was the youngest member of the team. I was an E-5. I was a junior NCO amongst all seniors N- all senior NCOs and officers. And so, our team leader, fella by a name of Captain Lawrence Kerr, who had just had a quick and great sense of humor. But he was- he was very, very protective of the team. And I think me in particular because I was just, you know, young and dumb, and, you know, everybody would just sort of shake their head and, you know, trying to wonder why these folks are, you know- why I'm here, and [Laughter] how I got there, and- and- But they- they- they were- they were- they were great. And—

(TI): Yeah.

(DL): And there were several instances of him helping me along. And then our team Sergeant, fella by the na- by the name of Bob Mulcahy, who- who was literally a Special Forces legend, and- and had been in country. In fact, he had- he had- he had been- had participated in an operation called White Star. So, in 1962, he was working [Laughter] basically for the CIA, putting together Hmong—

(TI): Wow.

(DL): tribal peoples to fight- fight the North Vietnamese in Laos in '62.

(TI): So is he- It's- it's- it's easy to say you learned a lot from him.

(DL): Oh, hugely. And then the other American that I worked with in the field, who'd had several combat tours, just really- I mean, he was a soldier's soldier. And, he- he had unfortunately later on had been wounded and blinded, but he did—

(TI): Oh wow.

(DL): And- and- and I took his partner's place, who had been killed in action just a couple of weeks before. So- But he was a soldier's soldier, and, uh- Well, there was- there was just no substitute for somebody who really knew land nav, who knew small unit tactics, company-sized tactics, who knew, um, uh, close air support, who knew how to shoot artillery. And he- he taught me- I mean, I- I was trained on that stuff, but, you know, it's one thing to be in training, it's—

(TI): Yeah.

(DL): another thing to be in, you know- in actual combat having to bring in close air support danger close. In fact, we never called anything that wasn't danger close because these- these folks that we- we engaged—

(TI): [Laughter]

(DL): It was safer for them to grab us by the belt buckle and just pull us in. So, it was- it was—

(TI): Yeah.

(DL): always close. And- and- and so, I learned those things, and they let me learn and- and had the patience. And- and- and it's not a lot to say- I mean, I was- I was a pretty quick study. So, that was good.

Both: [Laughter]

(DL): And so- But you know. We took our losses and, um, you know, because you can't be doing this kind of work without- without those kinds of losses and, uh, we- we all had—

(TI): And his name, again, was?

(DL): It- it was Charlie Carpenter. I'm- I'm sor- I'm sorry. It was [Laughter]—

(TI): Charlie Carpenter.

(DL): Charlie Challela. Charlie Carpenter is—

(TI): No, it's fine.

(DL): had been killed, and that's who's- who's place I took, and Charlie- Charlie Challela is- is the one I worked with. And he's since- he's- he's deceased, now. But he- he was- he was a soldier's soldier from the- from- from the get.

(TI): So, you were in Vietnam for a- a year, and you left- you left active duty in '69? Or did you just leave the Special Forces Oper—?

(DL): Yeah, yeah, it's the- it's the end of my tour. I had, oh, I think less than 90 days left on my contract and- and the rule was at that the time that, you know, based on where you were in the- in your contract and in the war and- So, I had- I had fewer than 90 days. At the time, the rule was that if you had less than 90 days, they just kick you loose. When I got back, they gave me a- a Class A uniform. We squared up on money, because generally, coming back, at that time, they- they quit paying you, oh, you know, so- a lot of weeks in front of your- your- your transfer day.

(TI): Oh wow.

(DL): So, I- I had accumulated- I took my R&R so I had R - and I had 30 days of, you know, free money coming to me plus what they owed me for, you know, just the standard stuff. So—

(TI): Sure.

(DL): I had a pocket full of money, a brand-new uniform, and was out of the Army. And so, my biggest question at the time was, you know, "Do I take a- Do I wait for that bus over there for the five-dollar bus ride all the way to Seattle, or do I pay 30 dollars for a cab ride- a cab ride in?" So, I looked at, you know- looked at the cab, looked at the bus, pulled the wad of money out my pocket, and said, "I'm a taxi g- taxi guy today." So.

Both: [Laughter]

(DL): So, I'm a little lack of money and- and heading for Seattle, and that was- that's—

(TI): So, I'd say you got out—

(DL): how I left the Army.

(TI): you got out - you got out in Fort Lewis?

(DL): Yes, I did. Yeah. Sure did.

(TI): Okay. I- I'm from- I'm from that area. I'm from the Pacific Northwest. I'm pretty—

(DL): Whereabouts?

(TI): familiar with it. Grays Harbor, two hours west of Seattle, if you can imagine anything west of Seattle, on the—

(DL): Oh yeah.

(TI): peninsula there.

(DL): Yeah, yeah. Yeah. Beautiful—

(TI): Yeah.

(DL): beau- beautiful- beautiful area.

(TI): Yeah. Thank you.

(DL): Uh.

(TI): Yup.

(DL): Been up there several times.

(TI): So- so, you went to Seattle. What was the transition like for service members in 1969?

(DL): Well, it was pretty much, um, uh, "Here's what we owe you. Here's [Laughter] a clean uniform. Thanks for your service, and have a good life." And—

Both: [Laughter]

(DL): and that- that was—

(TI): No TAPs, no trans- no—

(DL): No.

(TI): no- no—

(DL): Nope.

(TI): how to learn how to write a resume? Or—

(DL): Oh, no. Nothing.

(TI): Or [Laughter]—

(DL): No. No. You know, they were done with you. I mean, DOD was done with you, and you, you know- you- you- you- I mean, I- I- Like I- I've always said, you know, there- there's really only two things that DOD's concerned with, and that's a higher- a higher rate of- of- of lethality, and a higher rate—

(TI): Yup.

(DL): of survivability. Those two things.

(TI): Yup.

(DL): And so, I was done with the- the lethal portion. I'd obviously survived. So, my use to the DOD was- was over.

(TI): Yeah. What was it like with employers coming out of the service going into, like, an employer? Was there any kind of, uh, you know, push back? Were- were they welcoming? What was it like?

(DL): No. It wasn't welcoming, and in fact, it was something that you generally, um, didn't bring up if you, you know- if—

(TI): Mhmm.

(DL): If somebody asked you about, you know- you know, service of any kind, you just said, "Yeah I was in the Army, and now- now I'm out." And, you know, to discourage any conversation about your time and service and particularly anything having to do with Vietnam.

(TI): Interesting. Interesting. So, you- you got out in '69, but you grad- and you graduated from our alma mater, Arizona State University—

(DL): Go Devils.

(TI): in '74—

(DL): [Laughter]

(TI): Fork- fork 'em.

(DL): Fork 'em.

(TI): So, what was your degree in?

(DL): Political science.

(TI): Why?

(DL): Well, you know, I'd- I'd experienced this thing in- about Vietnam. I'd experienced, you know, that there was a lot of things going on at the time. You know, the end of the sixties, the early seventies, a lot of protests. There was a lot of accusations flying around about how the government was lying, how they really weren't taking care of veterans. I mean—

(TI): Sure.

(DL): it just went on. It was- And it was a hostile environment. And- and so, I thought, "Well, you know, one of the things I want to do is- is- is get a little better- better handle on 'What is this thing all about?' and- and 'How did, you know- Is the government really lying to us?'" And- and, you know, even at that point, I gotta tell you, it, you know, for until 1972- So, I'd been back from Vietnam for two years, almost three—

(TI): Yeah.

(DL): and I had never voted. I had never- I was never eligible to vote.

(TI): Oh wow.

(DL): And so, my first election experience was 1972, and, again, that- it was several years after returning from [Laughter] Vietnam that I, um—

(TI): And- and over 10 years after the speech that you heard from—

(DL): Yeah.

(TI): John F. Kennedy.

(DL): Yeah. And- and so that, you know- this- this was all new territory. So, I thought, you know, "I- I really would like to learn about this and try to figure it all out." And so, I thought- And that- and it was- it was just something that interested me, and, you know, so, kind of- And then, of course, after graduation, what did I do? I- I got a job as a- a- a finance guy doing telecommunication finance, which I ended up doing for—

(TI): [Laughter]

(DL): you know, probably 15 years.

(TI): Nowhere-

Both: nowhere near politics.

(DL): But I always kind of stayed, you know. I was always interested in reading the paper and watching the news on TV and—

(TI): Sure. Sure.

(DL): doing all that kind of stuff. And- and so, it was—

(TI): And I'm a- I'm assuming- and I'm assuming you used your GI Bill there.

(DL): I did.

(TI): in that time?

(DL): And I was fortunate that using my GI Bill, I'd gotten married shortly after coming back and before starting school. I had a wife that was working. She had a nice little job at the State Bar, and- and—

(TI): Nice.

(DL): I was- I had a scholarship. So, between the two of us and scholarship and GI Bill and all that kind of stuff, I mean, we were able to afford our first house, you know, just- just north of the campus. And, you know, we bought a house—

(TI): Oh wow.

(DL): on the GI Bill and paid- paid my, uh- paid my rent.

(TI): Oh, you did the VA home loan- you did the VA home loan at the same time? So, did you—

(DL): Yeah.

(TI): Were you able to use your GI Bill?

(DL): Yeah.

(TI): Use the VA home loan?

(DL): Yeah.

(TI): Oh wow.

(DL): Yeah. So it was- And- and, you know, that was, again, before we had, you know, GI Bill, or- or, you know, Veteran counselors on campus and, you know, the accounts payable was- was- Well, at ASU for inst- I mean, you know, sometimes, the GI Bill could get screwed up and they wouldn't pay and- and, you know—

(TI): Yeah.

(DL): kids were getting notices that they were being thrown out of school for non-payment. And so, at one of- In fact, one of the- one of the things that ASU that worked out with Dr. Crow is somebody's gotta get with these folk- these folks flagging these kids as Veterans so that if something goes wrong and they don't paid, they don't get kicked out of school. They get referred to the certification officer to- to straighten it out and find out what's, you know- what- what's going on. So, there- Yeah.

(TI): Sure.

(DL): So that- that was- that was- that was a big- a big element, a big feature when we put together the- the Veteran success model at ASU. So- But that was some of the GI Bill, and- and was successful. Again, I- I graduated with Honors, and- and then away I went and I was off- off doing- And I got a job as a- a financial analyst to- for a telecommunications company. And so, I stuck with them for, oh gosh, over 15 years, and then I went into, uh- did—

(TI): Oh wow.

(DL): some banking because I was an assistant treasurer. And, you know, did a lot of cash management and bank relations and all that kind of business. And I did our short- and our long-term financing for the subsidiaries that- that we

had in the Eastern 30 United States. And so, we were able to do that. And banks like to hire outta- outta- outta those- the, you know- in those situations. So, I went to work for a bank, and then I left and started doing some things on my own. By this time, I had been living in San Francisco for about 15 years, and then I decided I would—

(TI): Oh wow.

(DL): pull up stakes and come back to Tempe where most of my siblings live. And so, I came back here, uh, in '95. So, that's been, '95, uh, 20, almost 25 years. In the meantime, I- I spent a couple years in Iraq with a- a private security kind of contract.

(TI): Yeah, so eventually you became a- you- so eventually be- you became a contractor in Iraq and Afghanistan—

(DL): Yes.

(TI): from '03 to '05 and then once again in 2008. What was it like going back to the [Laughter] DOD after almost 30 years?

(DL): Um, uh, huh [Laughter]. You know, some things change and some things never change, and- and some of the language I had to kind of—

(TI): [Laughter]

(DL): kind of re-learn. You know, I- I- I never knew of this thing called “hooah,” you know?

(TI): Warfighter. I'm sure you heard- I'm sure—

(DL): Yeah.

(TI): you heard—

(DL): Warfighters—

(TI): a lot of warfighters.

(DL): and hooah and- and, uh—

(TI): In the contracting world.

(DL): uh, you know. There's a lot of different acronyms that I, you know, kind of had to pull somebody aside so I didn't embarrass myself, you know, "What does that mean? What is that?" And—

(TI): [Laughter]

(DL): and- and of course then the- the- the equipment. I mean, you know, I'd- I'd been used to- I had- Fortunately, when I was in Vietnam, I used what- what was called then an XM17, which was a precursor to the M4, and- and so, when we- we- we were—

(TI): Yeah.

(DL): issued M16s, which where rattle traps, so most of us bought our own uppers—

(TI): [Laughter]

(DL): and tricked them all out, and- Which—

(TI): Sure.

(DL): to me, you know, it was because I'm- I'm fif-, you know- at that time, I was 55 years old, and I'm- I'm thinking, you know, "I can't see quite as far as I used to, but- and- but, you know, with these new heads-up sights and everything, I could- I could- I could, you know, shoot the- the eye out of a bird at 200 meters. So, it was- I thought, "Man—

(TI): [Laughter]

(DL): this is pretty cool." So, there was, you know- there was some re-adjustment for—

(TI): Yeah.

(DL): you know, some of the- some of the equipment. But, you know, again, you know, I was sort of a fast learner and into it, and so I picked it up pretty f- pretty darn quickly. And, um- and- and then we practiced a lot while live fire. We weren't working. We were on the range and going through exercises and, you know, immediate action drills and, you know, all that kind of stuff, and- and- practicing with live fire, so, um- In fact, you know, just from that stand point, I was probably as good as I ever was at that time in Iraq.

(TI): Gotcha. So, what- what did you- what did you do as a contractor?

(DL): We were—

(TI): What was your role?

(DL): Our mission was to protect and defend Americans and American assets. And specifically, we worked for the Corps of Engineers in their, um, uh, disposing of all the old ordines. Yeah.

(TI): So—

(DL): Yeah.

(TI): you were actually doing security?

(DL): Oh yeah.

(TI): At 55 years old?

(DL): But—

(TI): Oh, that's amazing.

(DL): we- we were pretty cool. We had, you know—

(TI): That's- that's motivating.

(DL): cool-looking equipment and cool-looking guns and we worked with, you know- I worked with a lot of folks—

(TI): Yeah.

(DL): who had a lot a combat time, a lot of trigger time. And so, we were- we were- In fact, our- our team leader at the time was, uh, a former Delta Force kind of guy. And, um, we- we- we- we did well. We never lo- We didn't lose one American that we were in charge of, you know, protecting. We never lost- we never lost any material that we were with that was under our charge. So- And- and we did a lot of mobile security work.

(TI): Yeah.

(DL): We did some personal security work along with the, you know, securing, again, these- these, uh, operations that were- that were disposing of all this- all this extraordinary amounts of ordnates.

(TI): Yeah. So, I- I think it's amazing—

(DL): Yeah.

(TI): that at, you know, almost, wh- wh- what, 30 years later, you- you went fr- leave- you left active duty, you became- got into real estate and telecoms and banking, and then you came back into the—

(DL): Yeah.

(TI): defense contracting as far as—

(DL): Yeah.

(TI): security work. So that, you know- '74 to '03 is a- or, '69 to '03 is a big jump to get back into working—

(DL): [Laughter]

(TI): with the DOD.

(DL): It is.

(TI): Um.

(DL): But, you know, it's like riding a bicycle, though. For me, it was, is.

(TI): Yeah.

(DL): You know, I had- I had a- I had a little training up period. I had to, you know, regain my balance and all the things that you do to, you know, get back on that bicycle.

(TI): Sure, sure.

(DL): But, uh, you know, it was—

(TI): Wh—

(DL): a- a- a fairly easy transition. Perspective at, you know, let's say it, 55 years old is wholly different than your perspective when you're 21 years old.

(TI): Oh sure, I can imagine.

(DL): It just is. It's way, way different. In fact, a quick comment on that one. When I was in Afghanistan, and I was out working with some of teams around- all around the country, and thi- this one, in fact, it was the first one I went out to, and this young captain, you know, of course he- You know, all the Special Forces Captains, they all look like captains of the football team, you know?

(TI): Yeah. Captain Americas.

(DL): Yeah. Exactly.

(TI): A bunch of Captain Americas.

(DL): And so, he's- he's- he's there introducing me to the team, and he goes, well, "Now this is Mr. Lucier, and- and by the way, he was on a- he was on an A-Team, too, just to let you know." And- and then he kind of looks around and he goes, "But, you know what, that was all before you were born."
[Laughter]

(TI): [Laughter]

(DL): Oh man. I didn't know exactly how to take that, but you know—

(TI): [Laughter]

(DL): keep- keeping up with the- keeping up with the mid-20s to mid-30s, you know, kind of guys who are at the top of their game and all that, you know.

(TI): Yeah.

(DL): And- and at that time, I was 60 years old. So, you know—

(TI): Wow.

(DL): this is a couple of years later. So, it's- it's- [Laughter] it was pretty fascinating. And- and that wa—

(TI): How did you get back into that line of work?

(DL): You know—

(TI): Like—

(DL): it was—

(TI): was it, what, through associations? Or was it through—?

(DL): Association pure- You know, I was reading a book on the back porch, phone rings and says- a guy, you know, old buddy of mine says, "What're you doing?" I said, "Ah, you know, just kind of taking life easy right now." And he goes, "Well, hey," he says, "listen to this. I got- I got a line on some work. Would you be interested?" And I said, well, you know, "What, where, and how much?" And he says, "Well, it's—

(TI): [Laughter]

(DL): it's Iraq." And I went, "Holy shoo- [Laughter] Holy cow." That was the- the—

(TI): [Laughter]

(DL): furthest thing from my mind. And I said, "Well, ho- you know, when do we have to be there?" And he says, "We gotta be there in two weeks." And I thought, "Oh my God."

(TI): [Laughter]

(DL): So—

(TI): That's not even enough time to hit the treadmill—

(DL): Yeah.

(TI): a little bit, you know?

(DL): So, I said, "Yeah sure. I'll be there." [Laughter] So—

(TI): Wow.

(DL): that was- that's how that came about. And then- then my work Afghanistan came through some of the contacts I'd made while working in Iraq. So—

(TI): Naturally.

(DL): you know- And so, I came home from that and I thought, "You know, I'll be 61 shortly and do I really wanna keep doing this?" And, I think, I, you know- I just, like- I kind of said to myself, "I think I'm done." And so—

(TI): Yeah.

(DL): then of course the question was, "Well, what next?" And- and I- I really didn't have a clue. So, I- I began to hear about this thing called, you know, transition and- and going from, you know, military to civilian. And while this wasn't exactly like that, it was a lot like it.

(TI): So, it's almost like you had to, uh, almost go through that transition all over again.

(DL): Absolutely. Absolutely. The common theme seemed to be reach out to people. And so, we, you know- whether it's a- a job or- or just reconnecting, the first step is just reach out to people. And I- So, I did. And so, I made a concerted effort to talk to, you know, my- my- my social network, if you will, and let people know I was, you know, kind of looking for something else to do. And—

(TI): Yeah.

(DL): it just so happened that the mayor of our fine town, I was talking to him and he says, "You know, we- we've been thinking about putting together a Veterans' memorial. You wanna- you wanna do that?" And I said, "Sure." So, I did that, and- and by doing that, I- I started connecting with, you know, um, Veterans in the community and beyond our community. And, um, uh, at the time, we- we- we just got a brand-new director of the state of- of Veterans services who was exactly my age, been to Vietnam exactly about the time I was. You know, we- we were all airborne qualified. We, you know, talked about some of our experiences, hit it off, and so, he- he helped me expand my horizons, if you will, expand my reach into the Veterans community in Arizona. And so, you know, one thing led to another to another to another. And, you know, here it is a decade later, and there's a lot of folks that I've come across in the Veterans community and also politically because a lot of what we're- we- we do and try to do is- is legislative. And so—

(TI): Yeah.

(DL): So that's the—

(TI): Gotta pass some laws to help some Veterans sometimes.

(DL): Absolutely. Absolutely. And- and they're the only ones that can do it. I mean, we can't- we can't just arbitrarily say, "Hey, everybody's gotta start doing this." And—

(TI): Yeah.

(DL): my model was kind of a, you know, if you kind of looked at three interconnected circles, one being education, one being jobs, one being wellness. And if you got all three of those going for you, you're gonna be

successful no matter what you do. And it doesn't make any difference whether you're, you know, a welder or an accountant, you- you're, you know- you're gonna be doing what you do. You- you have to be educated and trained, and- and that all helped, again, you know, bring about a good sense of wellness. And if anything does go wrong, you're prepared to- to be able to address it. But like I say, those- with those in mind, there's a lot of different things that we can do. So, education is a- is a great example. We work with the legislature so that early on, now this is federal law—

(TI): You talking about the st- at the- at the state level?

(DL): At the- at the—

(TI): Or at the federal level?

(DL): at the state level. And we passed this in-state tuition bill for Veterans at about the same time we were working with Dr. Crow on building a- a Veteran success model at ASU. So, the net res- the net result is—

(TI): Gotcha.

(DL): when we started that and ASU had under a thousand Veterans at their school, today they've got, oh, about 10,000.

(TI): Oh they're -

(DL): Yeah.

(TI): Yeah.

(DL): I mean, they're, yeah- they're—

(TI): They're one of the largest ones in the country now.

(DL): They're huge.

(TI): Especially with their- I'd- I'd—

(DL): Yes.

(TI): I'd—

(DL): Yes.

(TI): graduated there—

(DL): And there's—

(TI): through their—

(DL): I think—

(TI): online program.

(DL): Of the 10,000, I think about 3,000 are online- online Veterans. So, yeah. We- we- we see that all the time. And- and—

(TI): Yup.

(DL): we- You know, it's- it's a- it's just a- They now have, you know, I think the- the- the most Veteran-supportive university in the country. So, I'm very proud of that.

(TI): Why was your focus in education after—

(DL): Well—

(TI): after getting out—

(DL): it's- it's—

(TI): of the Army?

(DL): [Laughter] kind of- kind of strange, but—

(TI): [Laughter]

(DL): it- it had to do with the state director who had just taken over the Department of Veterans' Services, and we sat down with a group of Veterans, and he said, you know, "I'm new to this, and what're you guys thinking?" And- and I said, "Well, I think that there's, you know, three focuses that-" I said, "Education, jobs, and wellness." And—

(TI): Yeah.

(DL): he agreed. He said that, you know, "Education's, you know, hugely important. What- what- what do you wanna do? What do you think?" And I said, "Well-" I- I said, you know, "We- we build a model." And I said, "I- I went to ASU. I've got a few connects there. And- and—

(TI): Yeah.

(DL): we'll- we'll- why don't we start there?" And he said, "That'd be great." And so, that's kind of where I started with that. And- and- and he helped fund that. He helped, you know, throw a couple of bucks in it so we weren't all starving to death. And—

(TI): Great.

(DL): went to- got a hold of Dr. Crow and said, you know, "I'd like to sit down and talk with you, if you could." And he goes, "Call my office." I mean, I was stunned [Laughter].

(TI): [Laughter].

(DL): I was stunned.

(TI): That's great.

(DL): I didn't know whether he was just trying to blow me off, or- or- or—

(TI): And Dr. Crow is the—

(DL): President of the—

(TI): He's—

(DL): ASU, and he's the one who has converted, you know- transitioned ASU to the- the most innovative university in- in- in- in the country. So—

(TI): Gotcha.

(DL): there he was, you know? The man himself.

(TI): [Laughter]

(DL): And so, when I said, "I'd like to come and talk to you," and he goes, "Call my office," and he said it so quickly and just sort of, you know- And so, I was really taken aback. Well, I was polite, and I said, "Well, I will- I'll do that, thank you." And then I went on my way.

(TI): Yeah.

(DL): And a couple of days later, I called the office and they said, well, you know, whatever day it was, you know, "Can you be here at Tuesday at 8:30?" And I said, "Yes." [Laughter] So, I went in with a- a list of about, oh, I don't know, I think maybe 15 elements that I, you know- A- a one-stop shop for- for Veterans, getting this pay- the accounts payable straightened out, making sure that Veterans got a priority and- and registration so that, you know- Because you're on the GI Bill, you're on a- you're on a time track. And—

(TI): It's a weird time—

(DL): Yeah.

(TI): It's a weird time window sometimes—

(DL): It is.

(TI): the GI Bill. Yeah.

(DL): And so, we want to make sure that there was nothing that was gonna impede that, interrupt it, because it had. And- and you know this. So, there were all those kinds of things. He had all of those things done—

(TI): Well I've—

(DL): in four months.

(TI): Well I've gotta say, as a- as almost a recipient of your model, it was almost flawless when I first got out of the Marine Corps in 2015.

(DL): Wow.

(TI): I- I had a lot of- I had a lot of credits from Syracuse.

(DL): Yeah. Yeah.

(TI): And Cr- the Cron- the Cronkite School of Journalism, and- and how everything was so integrated, and how my stuff transferred so almost seamlessly.

(DL): Yeah.

(TI): And I started classes almost seamlessly. So, I want to let you know, as a recipient of that program, of that model, it, for me, as a- as a- remote student that went to Arizona State University, it worked- it worked flawlessly.

(DL): Well, thanks.

(TI): And it was almost pain- it was almost painless—

(DL): Wow.

(TI): as my experience was almost painless.

(DL): That's fantastic. That's- that is always so good to hear, and I'll tell you what, it- As I say, it- it makes my heart sing when- when I hear that. Because that's the, you know- it's the impact that, you know- that- that education has on- on people, and- and being able to have access and having that educational opportunity is- is so hugely important.

(TI): I was able to focus just on the education aspect. All the paperwork, all the- all the- all the minutiae—

(DL): Yeah.

(TI): that, you know, through the VA, through the education system, I didn't have to—

(DL): Yeah.

(TI): worry about any of that. All I had to worry about, what, was going to school, doing a good job, and then going to work. I was able to go to night school at Arizona State at the same time holding down a full-time job at—

(DL): Wow.

(TI): NASCAR.

(DL): That's just fantastic. It really is. It's just—

(TI): So—

(DL): Well that's- that's—

(TI): I- I—

(DL): what we're trying to do is. And- and I'm- I'm just really, really happy to hear that that was your experience. In fact, I will- I will pass- I will pass that along to Dr. Crow next time I see him.

(TI): That's great. So, what're some Veteran issues that you are currently working on?

(DL): Well, the- the- the- the big, I guess, physical item right now is creating a- a Fisher House. Phoenix doesn't have a Fisher House, which is a kind of like the Ronald McDonald House for Veterans. It's- it's- it's free—

(TI): Sure.

(DL): to Veterans and their families. You know, a place to stay while- while the, you know- the Veteran's being treated.

(TI): Gotcha. Who's buying the land? Who's—

(DL): Well that's—

(TI): Who's putting through all that?

(DL): That's gonna come from a couple of different sources. We'll- we'll- we'll get some grants as well as we'll private fundraise, and- and then acquire- acquire the land.

(TI): That's great.

(DL): Once it's built and- and everything, the- the facility is then granted and- over to the- transferred and gifted to the- to the VA. And then it becomes part of the VA operating environment.

(TI): Oh yeah. Oh yeah. I'm very aware about the Fisher House. If you look in our very, very, very—

(DL): Uh huh.

(TI): very, very recent archive, Dave Coker—

(DL): Yeah.

(TI): the President of the Fisher House Foundation, was a—

(DL): Ah.

(TI): very recent guest on the show. So, if our listeners are- so if our listeners are- are curious about the Fisher House Foundation and what they do—

(DL): Oh, it's just amazing.

(TI): They do- they do some amazing things for- for Veterans and families. Definitely, they can look into the archives [Link to Borne the Battle archives:

<https://www.blogs.va.gov/VAntage/category/borne-the-battle/>] and- and take a look and- and listen to Dave's story [Link to podcast episode with Dave Coker: <https://www.blogs.va.gov/VAntage/60487/borne-the-battle-146-dave-coker-army-veteran-president-of-the-fisher-house-foundation/>]. Not only is he the president, he's also- he was also the number- the very, very first employee.

(DL): Yeah.

(TI): Employee number one.

(DL): Yeah.

(TI): Also, an Army medic, and al- also—

(DL): Yeah.

(TI): just like you—

(DL): Yeah.

(TI): he was an- he was an Army medic. Speaking about mental health, you were recent- you recently took part in a VA campaign.

(DL): Yeah.

(TI): *The Moment When*—

(DL): Yes.

(TI): campaign—

(DL): *The Moment When* campaign—

(TI): that was in May?

(DL): which is part of the Make the Connection.

(TI): How did you get involved in that?

(DL): Well, the- the- they- they reached out to some of the Veteran organizations here in the- in the- in the valley. My name- my name came up as a somebody who might be interested in- in talking with them. And so, I, um, did a- did an initial interview with them, and- and then they asked me back again, so I did another- I did another clip with them, another video. And then, two- just a few weeks ago, they asked if I would come to Washington DC and do some interviews—

(TI): Yeah.

(DL): there. And it was kind of like speed dating. I mean, you sit in a studio and—

(TI): [Laughter]

(DL): and you do- you do, you know, the three- to five-minute interviews for over a time span of about five hours.

(TI): Yeah. Yeah. In NASCAR, the- in NASCAR- in NASCAR, they called that media days. They would just put all the different media in different rooms, and they would just shuffle the drivers—

(DL): They- Yeah.

(TI): from one room to the next room.

(DL): Yup.

(TI): [Laughter]

(DL): Yup. Yup. And so, that- that's- So, we- we- so, we did that, and- and from that, we- we did a lot of morning shows and radio shows and newspaper interviews and, you know, all of that kind of stuff. Multi-media, you know- It was a multi-media event, that's for sure. So—

(TI): What'd you guys talk about?

(DL): Well, we talked about, you know, *The Moment When*, and- and what it- what it is and what it means and what it's sup- you know, what- what- what some of its goals are.

(TI): Yeah.

(DL): And so, it's the moment when you kind of realized that you needed help. And then the moment when you decided or- or felt that things were- things were, you know- you- you- there was impact on you. And the moment when you really felt- felt whole again—

(TI): Yeah.

(DL): after- after, you know, depending on what- what modality you went through, whether it was a kind of a group therapy, or individual therapy, or- or, you know, a number of a- just a whole, you know- a plethora of- of modalities as far as, you know, bringing around a- a better sense of wellness through better mental health.

(TI): Yeah. So, I- I cheated a little bit. The- the Make the Connection folks sent me your video, and you talked about your history and your relationship with PTSD.

(DL): Yeah.

(TI): Talk to us about your that moment when. How did you get a handle on it?

(DL): Well, it was one of my siblings that kind of kept after me and- and urged me. And I finally did. I finally got the message. I'm a little- I'm a little slow sometimes, but—

(TI): [Laughter]

(DL): I finally got the message and sought help at the VA, and went through that process of, you know, you know, just kind of—

(TI): Before you went—

(DL): if you will—

(TI): Before you went and got help, how were you treating your PTSD?

(DL): Oh, you know. Self-medicating, it- it- it is the common term. I- I would, you know, ignore- ignore the signs that, you know, I was probably drinking a little too much. I- I was hav- You know, I never had a hard time establishing, really, uh, meaningful relationships with women. I had a hard time establishing a meaningful relation- relationship with my- with my- with my siblings. And- and so, it became evident that, you know, there was- there was something- something wrong going on here. And—

(TI): Gotcha.

(DL): so, it, uh—

(TI): And that's when your sister stepped in?

(DL): Yeah. And she said, "You know, there's some things I've been noticing that you may wanna consider." And I kind of blew it off. And- But she was persistent, thank God. She was persistent, and I finally went to the VA, talked to them, and- and, you know- about what my- I was experiencing. And, it was, um, you know- it was just- it was- it was a time that was pretty difficult for me, but things, you know, it, you know- the moment when. At least I- I sat myself in the chair and got talking with somebody who- who actually knew what they were talking about and I didn't. And so, uh, that went on for quite a period and- and- until I found the moment when. I felt a whole lot better, and started doing thing differently and, uh, you know, it was that moment when. It was, "Gosh, this feels a whole lot better than I used to feel." And- and so, that was—

(TI): Yeah.

(DL): That was my moment when. And so, I've, you know- I've- I've stay- kind of stayed with the- in contact with the folks at Make the Connection, and- and talking with folks like you, and- and just really, really—

(TI): Hm.

(DL): I don't know. I've- I- I'm- I'm- I'm thrilled with the- the relationship I've been able to establish with Make the Connection, and- and talk about, you know,

how- how really important it is to reach out, make that connection. That's, you know, just to kind of use the term. And—

(TI): Yeah.

(DL): And get those resources, because they're out there. All you got to do is kind of step up. And a lot of times that's the- that's one, you know- That first step is really, really difficult, but very, very worthwhile.

(TI): Absolutely. Absolutely. Which- Now, you- you first stepped up in- in your own Make the Connection about a couple decades ago, correct?

(DL): No, they were talking a couple of years ago [Laughter].

(TI): A couple years ago? So, you were- you were- you were self-medicating—

(DL): Yeah.

(TI): through your entire—

(DL): Pretty successful.

(TI): Pretty successful. So, you were kind of a—

(DL): I was functional. That, you know—

(TI): Functional.

(DL): Th- That- that's the other side of it.

(TI): [Laughter]

(DL): I mean, the fact of the matter is I was functional. And- and, I mean, I wasn't a falling down drunk or anything.

(TI): But—

(DL): I just probably drank more than I should've, uh, you know, on occasion. And- and—

(TI): Yeah.

(DL): That was really a symptom, and it—

(TI): Yup.

(DL): you know- as opposed to, um, you know.

(TI): You- It was something that- it was- People were noticing.

(DL): Yeah. Yeah.

(TI): People were noticing it.

(DL): I mean—people who're close to me noticed. Other people- other people really didn't.

(TI): Sure.

(DL): And- and—

(TI): Sure.

(DL): so- And- and that's- that's a lot of, you know- Kind of depending on the situation, that's- that's not unusual.

(TI): No. It's funny how that happens. Those closest to you—

(DL): Yeah.

(TI): can see things that—

(DL): Yeah.

(TI): most don't.

(DL): They go—

(TI): They know [Laughter].

(DL): “Oh, you know, maybe things, you know- maybe you want to consider x, y, or z.” So, I did.

(TI): What- what resource was the most beneficial one to you that the VA offered?

(DL): Well, I- I- I think the- the- individual counseling. I got to ask my questions in private. You know, I felt- I felt secure. Uh, I- I trusted them. They were- they were remarkably professional and remark- and at the same time, remarkably personal.

(TI): Okay. So, you- you had a pretty, pretty interesting life and career. What is one thing you learned in service that you still apply today?

(DL): I think it- I learned leadership in the Army.

(TI): Mm.

(DL): And- and- and I learned that leadership was based on trust.

(TI): Yeah.

(DL): And- and I think, those two elements are- are so important today no matter what you do. It’s applicable whether, again, you know, you’re- you’re in the oil fields, or you’re- you’re in the classroom, or you’re in, uh, you know—

(TI): Whatever you’re doing.

(DL): training.

(TI): [Laughter]

(DL): Yeah, whatever you’re doing, those are- those are the things that you need, I think, to- to really succeed.

(TI): Gotcha. Is there a non-profit or person in the Veteran community that you are looking at right now going, “Dang. They’re doing it right”?

(DL): Yeah. And- and- and, you know, one of them is, uh, Barbara Hatch in the- in the space that- She- she runs a non-profit called *Veterans Heritage Project*. And she gets young students to interview Veterans. They write a story based on that interview. That story is put in an- an annual, and that annual book then goes to the Library of Congress—

(TI): Very cool.

(DL): for archiving. And we've got about 25 schools here in Arizona and, uh, you know, always expanding. And it's a- it's a great program for both Veterans and the students.

(TI): David, is there anything that I haven't asked that you'd like to add that you think is important to share to our listeners?

(DL): Well, I think, no matter what, it's important for people to reach out if- if they're not feeling well, they don't- they don't think things are quite right. It's really, really important that they reach out to, you know, someone, whether it's a- a next-door neighbor, a si- a- a- a sibling, a- a pastor, a- a mentor. But reach out. And my second- second suggestion is, you know, if you're- you're- you're a Veteran, this- this opportunity to get well comes from the VA and it's- and it's free. And so, I would urge- urge you to- to- to reach out to the VA. Talk to those folks. They're very, very helpful. Don't be afraid to say that, you know, maybe this- this- this person wasn't working out for them, and you'd like to talk to somebody else, or maybe a group is a better setting for you. But make that connection. Do it. You'll be better off for it. And- and- you'll have that- you'll have that ah ha moment, and you'll be better off for it.

[1:00:40] Music

[1:00:48] PSA:

Man 1: I served in Vietnam.

Man 2: I served in World War II.

Woman: I served in Afghanistan.

Man 1: And VA serves us all.

Man 2: No matter when you served.

Woman: No matter if you saw combat or not.

Man 1: There are benefits for Veterans of every generation.

Woman: See what VA can do for you.

Narrator: To learn what benefits you may be eligible for, visit www.va.gov [Link to VA's website]. That's www.va.gov.

[1:01:14] Music

[1:01:20] CLOSING MONOLOGUE:

(TI): Thoroughly enjoyed that conversation with David, there. Always good to connect with an ASU alum, and he's done a lot of good things, and I really want to thank him for his time. This week's Borne the Battle Veteran of the Week is Marine Veteran William Tully Brown. William was born in October of 1922 in Black Mountain, Arizona. He enlisted in the Marine Corps in 1944, and he served in the Battle of Guadalcanal and Iwo Jima. He was one of several hundred Navajo Code Talkers to use the native language to outsmart the Japanese during World War II. The Navajo language had no written form, which made it hard to decipher. From 1942 to 1945, the Navajo code was never broken by the enemy. In 1946, William was honorably discharged and went on to serve in the Tselani and Cottonwood community in Arizona. To recognize the service of these men, President Ronald Regan, in 1982, declared August 14th National Navajo Code Talker Day. Sadly, William passed away this last Monday in Winslow, Arizona at the age of 96. Today there are only three living Code Talkers left. William is a recipient of the Congressional Silver Medal, the American Campaign Medal, the Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal, the Navy Occupation Service Medal, the World War II Victory Medal, and the Honorable Service Lapel Button. We honor your service, William. That's it for this episode of *Borne the Battle*. If you would like to provide some feedback, you can always email me at podcast@va.gov, or you can reach out onto any one of my blogs at blogs.va.gov [Link to VA's

official blog]. Or, you could follow us on the VA main social media at Facebook [Link to VA's Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/VeteransAffairs>], Instagram [Link to VA's Instagram page: <https://www.instagram.com/deptvetaffairs/>], Twitter [Link to VA's Twitter page: <https://twitter.com/DeptVetAffairs>], YouTube [Link to VA's YouTube account: <https://www.youtube.com/user/DeptVetAffairs>], and RallyPoint [Link to VA's RallyPoint page: <https://www.rallypoint.com/organizations/veterans-affairs-va-department-of-veterans-affairs-va-washington-dc>]. US Department of Veterans Affairs, DeptVetAffairs, no matter the social media, you can always find us with that blue check mark. Thank you again for listening, and we will see next week.

[1:03:34] Music

(Text Transcript Ends)