

Borne the Battle

Episode # 170

Dale Dye, Marine Corps Birthday Episode

<https://www.blogs.va.gov/VAntage/67916/borne-the-battle-170-dale-dye-on-marine-corps-birthday-hollywood-ptsd/>

(Text Transcript Begins)

[00:00:00] Music

[00:00:10] OPENING MONOLOGUE

Tanner Iskra (TI): Aaahhh, let's get it! Wednesday, November 6th, 2019. *Borne the Battle*, brought to you by the Department of Veterans' Affairs (VA). The podcast that focuses on inspiring Veterans' stories and puts a highlight on important resources, offices, and benefits for our Veterans. I am your host, Marine Corps Veteran Tanner Iskra. [Drum roll and horns play] Happy Early Birthday, Marines! Happy, Happy Birthday! That's it. Look, if you're not a Marine, I'm sorry. I'm a Marine and you're gonna get a Marine Corps birthday episode. The Veterans' Day episode will be next week, which may also feature a Marine. Look, don't act stunned, other than Episodes 168 and 161, we haven't had many Marines on lately and this is the reason why. I've been saving 'em. Been saving 'em for the Marine birthday and saving 'em for this time of the year. On that subject, on the blog of Episode 168, there's now an editor's comment from our Editor-in-Chief. If you wanna read it, you can go to that blog at [blogs.va.gov](https://www.blogs.va.gov) [link to the VA blog page]. But I will tell you this, that blog did have two comments that I petitioned to have taken down. I'm gonna tell you right now, I'm not bringing Veterans on this show for you to try and tear them down. Look, I'm all for the first amendment but not when you go at the integrity of one of my guests. This show is here to build each other up and to share valuable information. Ethical journalism dictates that I ensure what we talk about is properly sourced and I double check to ensure that what we talk about is on a record, on a DD214, and therefore factual. Don't tear down fellow service members. That helps nobody. On a more positive note, one review on iTunes this week and we

have reached one hundred ratings. Not one hundred ratings and reviews, but one hundred ratings on their own. Thank you for that as both the ratings and reviews get us higher in the iTunes algorithms and allows more people to find the information provided in these episodes. So, thank you for that and please, go ahead, leave a rating, leave a review – uh, many thanks. The one this week is from Scotto33-45. Great work. Thank you for this podcast. It's full of good information and I really enjoy the Veterans helping Veterans feel. Keep it going. From Army Veteran Scott Cornwell. Scott, thank you so much for chiming in. As always, this show is – uh, from a Veteran's perspective and I – and I do appreciate those that – that let me know that that's how you want it. I will keep that format for you. However, I can tell you this, we are going to be launching a VA podcast network early next year, in January. And there is a podcast and we're gonna interview the host and the producer whose focus will be on nonveterans, they've never served, but they still feel the need to serve Veterans. As it gets closer to the end of the year, we will be introducing and interviewing their host. And letting you guys know a little bit more about that show. Alright, so let's take a look at this week's news releases. First one says, for immediate release. VA Health and Human Services partner to improve healthcare protections for Veterans. The U.S. Department of Veterans' Affairs (VA) and Department of Health and Human Services' Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, or otherwise known as CMS, recently announced that the two agencies will compare information on questionable Veteran health care providers both in VA treatment facilities and through purchased care programs in their communities. VA and CMS expect the first Medicare Sanction data exchange to occur – to occur by the end of the year and continue at recurring intervals. Medicare Sanctions include abusive billing practices, felony convictions, or improper prescribing practices. Employing CMS protocols provides VA with a proven tool to use data to address potential problems earlier and more systematically. VA will carefully review matches to determine employees' continued suitability for VA employment and providers' continuing participation in community care programs and will take swift action to protect Veterans. This data match for provider enrollment information is one of the many efforts planned as part of the VA and CMS partnership first announced in January 2018. The

agencies are actively exploring additional data sharing focused on identifying fraud, waste, and abuse in health care payouts. For more information on the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services, you can go to [cms.gov](https://www.cms.gov) [link to the CMS website]. So, the next one kind of goes into the last episode when – when we talked about the legacy – uh, appeals process. It says, VA finalizes plan to resolve legacy appeals by the end of 2022. the U.S. Department of Veterans' Affairs announced today that it has finalized its plan for resolving legacy appeals across the department and expects to complete the remaining legacy appeals by the end of calendar year 2022. Legacy appeals are claims for which the VA provided notice of decision prior to implementation of the Veterans Appeals Improvement and Modernization Act of 2017, otherwise known as AMA, and the claimant has not elected to participate in the AMA process. Short note: I'm one of 'em. In response to the growing number of legacy appeals, VA implemented AMA as of February 19, this year, giving Veterans more choice and control over the process of their appeals. This past year, VA decreased the number of pending legacy appeals despite receiving thousands of new appeals. VA is successfully reducing legacy appeals while also working AMA appeals to ensure Veterans receive their decisions in a timely manner. VA's three administrations –the Veterans Benefits Administration, Veterans Health Administration and National Cemetery Administration – plan to resolve their non-remand legacy appeals by the end of calendar year 2020. The Board of Veterans' Appeals will continue to work appeals from the administrations and plans to resolve its legacy appeals inventory by the end of December 2022. Resolving legacy appeals aligns with VA's strategic plan to modernize IT systems and processes and supports VA's mission to provide exceptional customer service to Veterans and their families. Veterans who are waiting for their decisions are encouraged to check the status of the appeal via the appeals status tracker, and that is at va.gov/claim-or-appeal-status [link to the appeals status tracker]. And you can sign in and check the – the status of your claim. For more information about the appeals process, you can visit VAs decision reviews and appeals, va.gov/decision-reviews [link to the VA decision reviews and appeals webpage] or you can check the last benefits breakdown podcast which is literally the last episode with the Executive Director of the

Appeals Modernization Office. Alright, moving on. Number three. This one says for immediate release. Partnership for Public Service credits VA for customer experience improvements. The nonprofit, nonpartisan Partnership for Public Service, in collaboration with the – with Accenture Federal Services, this month, released the study Government for the People: Profiles on the Customer Experience. Go ahead and google it. Finding that VA's customer experience improvement efforts are showing positive results, citing reduced – citing reduced wait times for appointments, same-day mental health access at all medical centers, and an improved online experience. The study also credits improved Veteran trust of the department to reduce number of customer experience programs within the Veterans Health Administration. In September of 2019, 88% of Veterans nationwide that were surveyed, said they trust the VA for their healthcare needs when responding to an outpatient healthcare survey, In Septem – in September of 2019, 88% of Veterans nationwide said they trust the VA for their healthcare needs when responding to an outpatient healthcare survey, up from 85% from a survey two years earlier. The percentage of Veterans who said they trust the VA to fulfill their country's commitment to Veterans increased to 72% in April 2019, up from, get this, 59% in July 2016. Four of the essential indicators encourage a mature customer feedback program. Since 2016, the Veterans Signals program has received more than 4.1 million Veteran responses and has expanded to 35 surveys in real-time across the department. These surveys also act as a call for help by respondents, to date more than 1,350 crisis alerts – crisis alerts have been sent to the Veterans Crisis Line or the National Call Center for Homeless within minutes of receipt. Big take away from that, fill out those customer surveys. People within the department are listening. And finally, for immediate release. VA celebrates National Family Caregivers Month. The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs recognizes National Family Caregivers Month this November, honoring the 5.5 million family members, friends, and neighbors who care for Veterans suffering from chronic conditions, disabilities, disease, or daily difficulties This year's theme is #BeCareCurious. I guess you can check that hashtag out and see what's on there. Encourages family caregivers from across the country to ask questions, explore options and share in the care decisions that affect

the health and well-being of their loved ones. VA leads the country in providing benefits and services to caregivers in support of Veterans. Caregivers play a critical role in the U.S. health care system and enable Veterans to maintain their highest level of independence while remaining in their homes and communities for as long as possible. Recognizing the responsibilities of a caregiver can take a toll on one's physical, psychological, and financial health, VA remains committed in creating awareness and providing resources and information. For more details on Family Caregivers Month, or for those resources and information, you can call the caregivers support line at 1-855-260-3274 from 8:00 am to 8:00 pm. Or you can contact your local VA Caregiver Support coordinator at caregiver.va.gov/support/new_csc_page.asp [link to contact your local VA Caregiver Support Coordinator]. VA Caregivers Support resources are also at caregiver.va.gov [link to the VA Caregiver Support webpage] and the VA's new implementation of the Mission Act at missionact.va.gov [link to the Mission Act webpage], on the very top, talks about expanding benefits for caregivers. Alright. On to this week's interview. So, you know how there's some bad military movies out there? You know the ones. The uniform's all jacked up, the tactics are wrong, hey – that tank was made in the 1950s and this is supposed to be a World War II movie. And especially, when you lean back and you say, I don't care what they say, that is not Camp Lejeune. And then there are the really good ones. Especially the ones that started coming out in the 80s all the way up to the - to the 2000s. Cinema royalty, like *Platoon*, *Saving Private Ryan*, *Band of Brothers*, and *The Pacific*. For me, these and military video games reshaped my view of military service and the men who served. See, other than my brother, there wasn't much of a military service background in my family. But those movies and games, like the original *Medal of Honor* series. I'm talking about the ones that were made by DreamWorks. The early *Battlefield* games. The *Brothers in Arms* series. Games that weren't just only games but were great story telling pieces. Those movies and games made me respect those that raise that right hand and to an extent, led me to raise my own. There was one man who had a hand in all of these. Marine and Vietnam Veteran Captain Dale Dye. And I'm proud to say that he is our interview this week. On the birthday, on the Marine Corps Birthday Episode of *Borne the Battle*. And of course, he's gonna

talk about his transition and his Hollywood career, but there's a lot more to him than that. Enjoy. And Happy Birthday, Devil Dogs.

[00:13:20] Music

[00:13:27] INTERVIEW:

TI: Julian – Julian Adams, the producer for the upcoming film – um, *The Last Full Measure* –

Dale Dye (DD): Sure. Yeah.

TI: Which I can't wait to see hit theaters. He came to DC for a private screening of that film at the Military Influencer Conference. Now, I don't live in the city, I live near Quantico.

DD: Yep.

TI: So, I didn't get the room at the hotel, I took the metro to the conference and I decided to stay for the screening and – but the metro was closed at the end of it. [Laughter]

DD: [Laughter]

TI: So – so –

DD: [inaudible] You were marooned.

TI: Yeah, yeah. So Julian – and I – and I parked in Crystal City, so Julian and another – uh, Veteran Tactical Advisor – um, Air Force Veteran John Pighini gave me a ride to my truck in Crystal City – uh, in John's truck and during that ride, I mentioned that, you know, as a former Marine, former combat videographer – uh, you were someone I admired and hoped to get on the show and he was like, well, I got his info right here and I had about two seconds to take your info down. I mean – [laughter]

DD: [Laughter]

TI: But I pulled my phone out and made it happen. So –

DD: Yeah, I'm – I'm always happy when – you know, I wanna be accessible. Look, I – I've had an extraordinary career, both in and out of uniform and a lot of that has been due to the fact that – that people recognize me. That – that people – uh, will listen to me and – and people want to see me so I'm – I'm not one of these guys who locks himself in a corner and says, you know, leave me alone. I must get in my world. That – that's not me. I – I wanna be out there and meeting Marines and soldiers and sailors and airmen and – and – uh, and – and representing them on – on screen. Kind of like I did with – uh, *The Last Full Measure*. Although, I play a politician in that one.

TI: Yeah – um, you – you're – have you noticed rules are changing, you know, I – I almost feel like you – you – I see a rank progression through your films. You know.

DD: Yeah, you can, you can. Absolutely.

TI: Corporal, then the general, and now you're the distinguished politician with an extensive military career.

DD: Yeah. And – and that h- that as more to do – uh, with getting old than it does anything else, Tanner.

TI: [Laughter]

DD: I mean, at some point –

TI: Sure.

DD: You're that – you're that old white-haired guy and – uh, hey, you know, he's too old to be that chairman of the joint chiefs and – and they're probably right. So, as – as long as I can keep my finger in that -that representation, I'm happy with whatever role I do.

TI: And I'm happy that they still – that Hollywood still does that. Cause – uh –

DD: Yeah.

TI: You're – you're great in the roles that you do.

DD: Thank you.

TI: I gotta say – uh, I've been a fan of your work even before I joined the Marine Corps. Um, I knew wanted to go into film and video production and I loved films as a kid, especially military films. And I would be the kid that would go through all the behind the scenes extra features on a DVD.

DD: [Laughter]

TI: And every – and every military movie behind the scenes, there was Dale Dye.

DD: Yeah, it kind of – it kind of seems that way, doesn't it? I mean, I've – I've – I've looked over the – the resume and – uh, and it – it never ceases to surprise me, how many – uh, how many films and tv – um, programs that I've – I've had a little taste of – a little – little effect on maybe but – um, you know, you're the kind of guy I do it for so I'm happy with that.

TI: And – and video games. I mean, I was a – I was a big gamer as a kid. Uh, you know, the original *Medal of Honor* series.

DD: Sure.

TI: *Brothers in Arms* – um, a lot of great story telling in – in that medium.

DD: And that kind of goes to my agenda. I'm – I'm glad you brought that up, Tanner, you know, when – when I first started this – um, I had a – a kind of a simple agenda – uh, and that was to – uh, use the popular media to – uh, and that – at that point I was thinking movies and television –

TI: Yeah.

DD: Use the popular media to shine – to shine some long overdue and – and much deserved – uh, light on the men and women who wear our uniform and – and the service and sacrifice that they provide.

TI: Yeah.

DD: I didn't think – I didn't think Hollywood at large – uh, was doing that properly and, you know, when you're ignorant you can do a lot of things people tell you you can't do – uh –

TI: Sure, sure.

DD: And- and – and so I – I went out with that in mind and what I found was that – um, not only could I do it – um, in movies and television programs, but I could I could expand the universe.

TI: Yeah.

DD: And one of the first things that jumped up was video games and – uh, it was – uh, Steven Spielberg that kind of got me involved in the – in the *Medal of Honor* thing after we did – uh, *Saving Private Ryan* and – uh, and I found that, you know, I can – I could reach a whole new generation of young guys and gals like you.

TI: Yeah.

DD: Um, through – through video games so – so it worked out and I – to this day I'll still take any chance I can – uh, to service that agenda.

TI: Yeah – uh, you know, the *Call of Duty* series, *Brothers in Arms* especially was – was great story telling back in the day.

DD: Yeah.

TI: Um, you know, like, may he rest in peace, R. Lee Ermey – uh, your voice in military entertainment, that is unmistakable.

DD: Yeah. I guess so. Lee – Lee and I – and God bless him, I sure miss him – but – uh, we – we used to be the two go to guys in Hollywood who were the real deal, you know?

TI: Yeah.

DD: And – and – and our voices were so distinct, you know, from – from other projects that we'd done that – that, you know, producers would say – uh, get me Dye or Ermey, one of the two, hurry up. I don't care.

TI: [Laughter]

DD: [Laughter] And – and we'd call each other and say, okay, you wanna take this one or you want me to and – and we'd kind of trade off.

TI: Now that – with OIF and OEF are winding down, they're – they're still going but as they're winding down, are you seeing more competition in that arena – in that arena, as the technical advisor for films and entertainment?

DD: Sure. Yeah, absolutely. And – and look, I welcome competition. Uh, you know, I'm getting a little long in the tooth these days. Uh, although I have a great staff of young Veterans who work with me and can support films on their own. Look, I – I see lot of guys and gals and – and I get – I get emails and calls and – uh, constantly from, hey – hey, I'm just getting out of the service, I wanna do what you do. Um, and –

TI: I can only imagine.

DD: and the unfortunate thing is they – they don't really realize – uh, what's involved. Uh, look, four – four years or five years in – in the Army and – and eight or nine deployments to the sandbox, while that's really, really an admirable period of a guy's or a gal's life – um, it doesn't, by any stretch of the imagination, qualify them to walk out and be the go-to military advisor. Look, you have to know all of the services. Uh, not just – uh, what – what happens if – if somebody offers you a Navy film? What are you gonna do about that if you're the Army guy?

TI: Yeah.

DD: Um, what happens if it's a historical piece that you have no idea about, what do you do? So, there's – there's a whole lot of folks out there trying to do this, but they tend to be short term – um, very specific.

TI: Yeah.

DD: Um, they – they can't cover the – the – the complete – um –

TI: Breadth.

DD: scale and scope of – of military films. So that’s a long answer but there you are.

TI: No, absolutely. No. Absolutely, that – that totally makes sense and that’s good advice for somebody that’s – that’s looking to do that in the future. It’s a hard gig. I can only imagine. Um, so, you know, basically, like I said, you and my recruiter were the only two – were the, like, the two very first gentlemen that taught be about a combat camera and, you know, and to –

DD: Yeah.

TI: and public affairs to a lesser extent. Did you know that those two occ fields have merged, finally?

DD: Yeah, I knew the occ field merged. Um, I don’t know yet – uh, how it’s all worked out and I have some problems – uh, with it.

TI: Sure.

DD: Um, but – but who cares? I mean, the – the Marine Corps is gonna do what the Marine Corps’ gonna do.

TI: We – we’re out and they’re just gonna move on, so [laughter]

DD: Yeah, yeah. That’s right. [Laughter]

TI: Um, was that ever a conversation, while you were still in? About merging those two occ fields?

DD: Yeah. Uh, it’s – it’s not a new concept.

TI: It’s not a new conversation at all. [Laughter]

DD: No. Um, but really the – the resistance – uh, came from the – uh, the 46 guys. The – the combat camera guys.

TI: Yeah.

DD: Um, they – they just thought, you know, they were – they were gonna be turned into – uh, field reporters – um, or – or documentary historians which is not at all what they had in mind. They wanna just create beautiful pictures.

TI: Yep.

DD: Uh, but –

TI: Document history and – and, you know, battle damage assessments and –

DD: Yeah, sure, and –

TI: it's – it's – it's to be – be there for the commander in the – on the ground.

DD: Yeah. They – they – they looked inward not outward and – uh, and – and I found that to be a problem and in fact, in several of the assignments I had, I just coopted those guys.

TI: [Laughter] Of course.

DD: And – uh, and I said look – uh, let me – let me show you how cool this is and – and we would – some of them were really, really great shooters. Had great eyes and – uh, and we would get great photos to go along with a little story and suddenly it would appear in some newspaper or appear on television.

TI: Now you have a full product.

DD: And – and I would always put my arm around their shoulder and say, look, you did that. You did that. And so, if – if the guys in the – in the – uh, public affairs occ field were willing to make that move – uh, towards them it always seemed to work out fine to me.

TI: Sure.

DD: What – what worries me right now is that – is that we're – we're trying to look inward again.

TI: Mmm.

DD: Uh, and we're not – we're not using our skill and our talent and the wonderful talent that we have –

TI: Yeah.

DD: in those two fields to talk to the public. We're – we're back talking to ourselves again or talking to an adversary. Um –

TI: Or an echo chamber.

DD: So, I'm – yeah, yeah, and it's a big – that's right [Laughter]

TI: [Laughter]

DD: It tends to be a circular firing squad. I object to any noodling around or screwing around with the term combat correspondent because I think that's – that's one of the things that really attracts young men and women to the field.

TI: Yeah.

DD: Um, just that word, combat, you know you're not a pogue.

TI: Yeah.

DD: Um, you're – you're a combat guy or gal.

TI: Right. Or combat videographer or, you know, combat photographer.

DD: Yeah, so – yeah –

TI: Uh, I think as long as they keep those core competencies and those core missions – uh, with what they currently have and don't try to meld them, I think they should be fine.

DD: Yeah.

TI: What is one role that you – um, you know, that was a nonmilitary part?

DD: Oh, you know, it's – it's kind of weird – um, it – we – we laugh about how typecast I am. You know, I'm – I'm the – I'm the military guy who's speaks the language –

TI: Yeah.

DD: and is – and is credible and convincing so I come in on act one and I tell the – tell the stars what the – what the jeopardy is and what the mission is and then I disappear until act three, when I come in and say, nice job boys, have a beer and here's a medal. Uh, so that's [laughter] kind of been there.

TI: I – I like that you embrace it too. That's awesome.

DD: Yeah, yeah. I mean, who wouldn't?

TI: Yeah.

DD: Um, so I'm – I'm happy with that – um, but – but, you know, we – we always sit around and talk and say, you know, you could – you could – I love doing comedy for instance. Uh, I'd really like to do –

TI: Really?

DD: a role – yeah. I mean, I've got a great sense of humor, I think. At least most of the things that happen in life are funny to me.

TI: Well, you're a Marine. We do have that special type of dark humor. [Laughter]

DD: Yeah, so I – so I got that dark sense of humor [laughter]. Um, but you know, we – we've talked off and on, you know, what would be the biggest stretch for you, Dale, you know? And I said well, you know, I could – I could be the gay hairdresser – uh, I could be the, you know, the – the weird – uh, hippy guy that disappeared up in the mountains and – and –

TI: [Laughter]

DD: you know, teaches wisdom and so, I think it's – it's become kind of a – uh, it's become kind of a running joke with my executive officer who, by the way – um, was another 43, another PA guy. He and I were – were young sergeants together in Vietnam.

TI: Wow.

DD: So, he's been – he's been with me – uh, almost fifty years.

TI: Oh my gosh.

DD: And yeah, he's a – he's a great guy and he's my executive officer, my XO.

TI: If that's not semper fidelis, I don't know what is.

DD: And he's – yeah, yeah, well that's semper fidelis, you're exactly right. Um, but he calls every once in a while. You know, when – especially when we're on a film working together and he'll say, hey, how 'bout if you do the – and it'll be some weird thing, I'll be the drunk cowboy in the – in the saloon, you know, and get shot or something, but –

TI: [Laughter]

DD: those – those roles [laughter] so far have eluded me.

TI: Gotcha. Well, you have played a couple, I think. What, *Knight and Day* you were the dad – um –

DD: Yeah, Tom Cruise's dad.

TI: Yeah.

DD: Yeah, that's fun.

TI: Yep, yep. So – uh, you – you know, you mentioned Vietnam. Um, now were you drafted, or did you enlist?

DD: Oh no – uh, I enlisted. Um, I mean I – I had – I had heard the – the call of – of the military – um, long before I ever – uh, actually enlisted. I mean – uh, I can remember sitting next to my dad in, you know, various bars in Southeast Missouri and – uh –

TI: Mmm.

DD: And I would listen to these old guys tell war stories and I was absolutely fascinated, you know, they were telling World War II stories. And I was absolutely fascinated with it. Um, and so I pushed to go away to military school – um, as soon as I could, and I did that. I mean, my high school years were at Missouri Military Academy.

TI: Oh wow.

DD: Um, and when I got out of Missouri Military Academy where I – I thrived, actually – um, I wanted to go to the Naval Academy. Um –

TI: Of course.

DD: with – with, yeah, you know, hopes of either being a Navy officer or – or a Marine officer. And – and I was unfortunately too damn dumb to pass the entrance exams.

TI: Mmm.

DD: And so, I tried – I tried [laughter] a couple of times and screwed it up. And so, I was kind of at a loss of what to do. I mean, there – there wasn't – there weren't a lot of scholarships in those days and I couldn't qualify for one anyway.

TI: Yeah.

DD: Um, and so I was – I was at a loss of what to do and – and – uh, one snowy, stormy night – uh, in 19 – I guess 63 – um, you know, I was walking past a post office and I saw this – this poster – um, that said – it had this rock-jawed Marine in dress blues and he was pointing at me and said, Ready? U.S. Marines. And I said, you know by god, I think that I am ready, and I went in and I enlisted [laughter].

TI: [Laughter] Just that quick. That's awesome.

DD: Yeah, boom – bing-bang-boom and the next thing I knew, in January of '64 I was in bootcamp, so.

TI: Wow. Uh, Parris Island or – or San Diego?

DD: Uh, San Diego.

TI: Alright.

DD: I was west of the – west of the Mississippi, so I was shipped off to the Hollywood Marine contention.

TI: As was I. I'm the son of a logger from Washington State.

DD: Mmm.

TI: Public affairs, is that something you chose or is that something that was chose – that was put upon you?

DD: Well – uh, when I – when I first joined the Marine Corps – um, I was an infantryman.

TI: Yeah.

DD: Uh, and I went through infantry training regimen and – uh, and joined the 5th Marines at Camp Pendleton which was at – uh, Margarita – Camp Margarita at the time.

TI: Yeah.

DD: And – and they made me a mortarman. So, I was an 0341 – um, for a couple of years but I was really, really getting bored with it. I mean, I have an active mind and an active imagination and at that point we weren't doing a whole lot. I mean there wasn't – uh, it was like '64, '65 so there wasn't a whole lot of chance of me, you know, go – I didn't even know where Vietnam was.

TI: Yeah, just – just some rumblings, probably at the time.

DD: Yeah, it was just some rumblings below the surface. And – um, and – and my life seemed to be climbing up big long hills carrying a mortar base plate or the tube or something and – and seeing nothing of the world of the Marine Corps other than, you know, the – the pack of the guy who's walking up the hill in front of me. So, I was getting a little bored and a little antsy and that's not good for me.

TI: Mmm.

DD: Uh –

TI: Yeah.

DD: I tend to get in trouble when I – when I do that.

TI: [Laughter]

DD: One day we're in the field training and this guy comes by. He's a corporal or a sergeant, I can't remember. And – and he's – uh, you know, he's got utility uniform on and – but he's carrying a camera around his neck and he's got a little notepad and he's talking to people.

TI: Yeah.

DD: And I said, you know, just as a matter of curiosity, I said, I walked up to him, I said, hey who the hell are you? And he said I'm Corporal so-and-so. His name was Bland, by the way.

TI: Corporal Bland. [Laughter]

DD: Yeah, Corporal Bland. And – um, and he said I'm – I'm from base ISO. Now, that's what the – the predecessor to what we know as PAO or public affairs. In those days it was call informational services.

TI: Ah.

DD: And I said yes, so – so what do you do? And he said, well, I'm like – I'm like a reporter. I'm like a photojournalist. And I said, really? Cause I had been the – the editor of my high school newspaper. I had a little interest in it.

TI: They – [laughter] the Marine Corps has that?

DD: Yeah. And he said, listen, let me tell ya. And the guy was a corporal at the time or a lance corporal. And he said, this is the greatest dodge in the Marine Corps. And I said, what do you mean? And he said, well, there's only a few of us. And if you're any good at it, if you can write a little story – uh, that's interesting, and take a little picture to go with it. He said, man, you can do anything in the world. The Marine Corps will let you do anything.

TI: Yep.

DD: Just as long as you can produce something out of it. And I said, really? He said, oh yeah, man. It's a – it's the greatest deal in the world. And I said who – how – how would a guy get into that? And he said, well – uh, they are always looking for people who are qualified. And he said, give me your name. And I gave him my name and service number and all that stuff. And who I was attached to.

TI: Mmm.

DD: And he said, I'll – I'll take this to the – to the gunny – or, I forget – the gunny or – in those days all we had were warrant officers and LDOs.

TI: Mhmm.

DD: And lo and behold – um, in a week or ten days later, I get this – you know, the company gunny comes storming up to me and he says, Dye, listen up. I don't know who you've been talking to but – uh, you're going to headquarters and you gotta talk to this – so anyway, I –

TI: [Laughter]

DD: I ended up – uh,

TI: [Laughter] Be on the lookout for the gunny that knows he's losing a Marine.

DD: Oh yeah, he knows he's about to lose one. Yeah.

TI: [Laughter]

DD: And – uh, and so I went and – and did this interview with a staff NCO and – and an interview with an officer but I was an infantry NCO and – and 5th Marines was not interested in losing me –

TI: Yeah.

DD: To some weenie MOS like, you know, public affairs. So – um –

TI: [Laughter]

DD: what happened was essentially this – this LDO officer who was the – the ISO at the time – uh, what we would call the PAO, actually got an appointment with the commanding general of the division.

TI: Wow.

DD: And I had to go along. Now, I had never even seen a general, much less had to stand at attention in front of one, so he marches me into the office and he introduces me and he says, General, this – this young Marine has just got all the talent and skill and stuff that we need, yet. And of course, I had lost – I was just staring at the bulkhead over the General's head.

TI: [Laughter]

DD: And – and you know, this went on for five or ten minutes and then they ushered me out. And I didn't know what the hell was gonna happen and – and about two weeks later – I went back to my outfit.

TI: Yeah.

DD: And about two weeks later – uh, I got orders and I was to report to the – uh, the ISO shop for reassignment and for change of MOS. So, that's a very long story and boring but, anyway, that's how I – that's how I got in.

TI: No, that's – you know, it's – it's amazing, the differences in how, what we call lat moving, you know, was back then to – to what it is now. It – it sounds like a more involved, you know, interview driven process and now it's like, hey, you wanna reenlist, this is what you can do, you know.

DD: We tended to be a little loosey goosey in those days.

TI: Sure, sure.

DD: Which – which was cool. I mean, it was one of the things I loved most about the Marine Corps is we could be loosey goosey about things. Not get overly concerned with bureaucracy.

TI: Absolutely.

DD: But – uh, so what happened was, I began to train, and I got the MOS, the military occupational specialty, and – uh, and I said, well, this is cool because I was – I was out doing all kinds of stuff.

TI: Yeah.

DD: I was riding in helicopters, I was – I was going to artillery batteries and learning how they shoot the one oh fives and the five fives and I was having a ball. Because I was actually seeing all there was of the Marine Corps.

TI: Yeah.

DD: And then of course, the – the dreaded orders dropped and – uh, [laughter] and I found out why they call it combat correspondent.

TI: [Laughter]

DD: Cause I got – I got orders to the 1st Marine division in Vietnam.

TI: Yeah, as a combat correspondent – uh, you embedded in some pretty intense fights during Vietnam.

DD: Mmm.

TI: Uh, each year from, you know, from what I've read, each year from '67 to '70, at some point –

DD: Yeah.

TI: those years you touched Vietnam, at some point. Uh –

DD: Yeah, I did.

TI: over – overall thirty – three tours, thirty-one combat operations, three Purple Hearts –

DD: Yeah.

TI: Bronze Star with the Combat V. Um, one of those Purple Hearts was in Hue during the Tet Offensive, correct?

DD: It was, yeah. That's – that's the one that still – still haunts me. Uh, Hue was – Hue was a – it was a surreal fight. Um, nobody was prepared for that. I mean, hell, we had all been – uh, trained for, you know, jungle warfare, counter guerilla warfare and – and we rolled into that city – uh, and got terribly surprised. Uh, we were- we were in a brutal, brutal house to house fight. Uh, on two sides of the river, on the, you know – uh, on the south side a more modern city and on the – uh, north side of the Perfume River, the – the citadel which was formidable.

TI: Yeah.

DD: Uh, a kilometer-long castle, essentially. Um, and – and in Hue – uh, the difference is in – in normal combat if there is such a thing as normal combat – um, you tend to – to shoot at shadows, fleeting shadows or – or muzzle flash.

TI: Yeah.

DD: It's kind of rare when you're – when you can see the other guy, he can see you and you're looking into each other's BDS eyeballs. Um, but in Hue, it was that way every day, every fight, every hour. I mean – um, and we had to learn how to do it on the fly. Nobody – I think we had one or two old master sergeants that had fought in Seoul –

TI: In Korea.

DD: in Korea.

TI: Yeah, yeah.

DD: Yeah, and they were the only ones who had any idea of how the hell you do – uh, MOUT – what’s called MOUT now, Military Operations in Urban Terrain.

TI: Yeah.

DD: By the way, I have a great – after Hue, I developed a great new acronym. Uh, for MOUT.

TI: Oh, yeah? What’s that?

DD: I call it – I call it FISH.

TI: Okay.

DD: F-I-S-H [spelling out], Fighting In Someone’s House. Um, yeah – but the Marine Corps – the Marine Corps didn’t like it.

TI: [Laughter] Keep it simple

DD: So, yeah. [Laughter] They said, keep that one to yourself, Dye.

TI: [Laughter]

DD: Hue was – Hue was – Hue was a meat grinder. Uh, it really was, it was brutal. And – uh, and because it was so brutal and so intense – um, and – and because it brought every aspect of war home to me – um, it’s – it’s the one operation over thirty-some – uh, that I – I just can’t forget. It still haunts me at night, every once in a while.

TI: Is it true Sergeant Dale Dye had a yellow flower sticking out of his helmet cov – cover? In a way?

DD: Yeah, unfortunately it is true.

TI: [Laughter]

DD: Uh, and you want me to tell the story about how that happened?

TI: Sure, yeah! Absolutely!

DD: Okay, well – uh, when we were – when we were going into Hue I – I was partnered with another 43, a guy by the name of Steven Bernson – uh, who was later hit very badly and crippled – uh, when we were in the northside fight. Uh, but on the southside fight, we had chased a couple of enemy soldiers – NVA, North Vietnamese Army – uh, into a little Buddhist temple thing. And – uh, we fired up and – and they were running and hiding and so on and so forth, and we fired up and I – I emptied a magazine at a – uh, at a Buddhist – at a Buddhist statue. Because I thought there was an enemy behind it.

TI: Sure.

DD: It turns out there was an enemy behind it, and I killed him.

TI: Wow.

DD: Uh, and so my – uh, my buddy – uh, goes over and – and in front of this Buddha which is now shattered by all my rifle fire – um, he sees this vase of flowers. And there's a – they're plastic flowers and so he pulls this big long yellow gaudy flower out and he says, hey, man, you – you really – you really nailed that guy and – and it was really cool and – and your – so here's your reward.

TI: [Laughter]

DD: And he takes this yellow – uh, flower and he sticks it in my helmet.

TI: Yeah.

DD: And – and so now I’m walking around in Hue with this big yellow flower – uh, in my – in my helmet and – and I didn’t pay any attention to it until a couple of days later when – uh, we’re trying to cross this street and we’re getting hammered by machine guns which have got us in the crossfire. And – and so I’m hiding behind this low stone wall and I’m trying to move down the line of guys and I’m – I’m doing the Groucho duckwalk.

TI: Yeah.

DD: And the machine gun fire keeps following me. And I can’t – you know, can’t be that the guy can see me. I don’t know – I don’t know what the hell’s going on here and everybody’s laughing, you know, typical Marines.

TI: [Laughter]

DD: We just laugh at horror.

TI: ‘Bout guys getting shot at. [Laughter]

DD: And, you know – Yeah. And – and he’s following that damn yellow flower’s sticking up from behind the wall –

TI: Oh my gosh.

DD: and – and he’s shooting at it as I’m duckwalking down – anyway, he finally shot it off of my helmet and that was the end of that. But that’s the story on the yellow flower.

TI: I saw a little bit of that on your – on your blog there. Uh, now you wrote a very detailed account of that battle in your blog on daledye.com [link to Dale Dye’s website].

DD: Yeah.

TI: Um, was that – why did you write it? Was it - you know, you talked about being – it still haunts you to this day. Is that – was that cathartic, to get that out and write it?

DD: Yeah. It was, it was, Tanner. And – and all of my books in some way, I think I’ve published twelve or thirteen novels now –

TI: Yeah.

DD: Um, but – um, the – the one that, the blog and the one called *Run Between the Raindrops*, which was my first published novel – uh, was really cathartic. It was really me trying to – uh, get some of the poison out of my system. I mean – uh, that I think one of the big problems with – with guys and gals that came home from Vietnam, primarily guys –

TI: Yeah.

DD: um, was that – uh, because the country was so divided over the war – um, that – that we didn't really get a lot of opportunity to – to vent. You know, to get that poison – uh, those – those horrible images, to – to talk about them and get them out of our system. Nobody wanted to hear about that.

TI: Mmm.

DD: And – and so I think what happened was a lot of that poison – uh, stayed in their guts and drove 'em to substance abuse and – and drove 'em to becoming hermits and – and just becoming angry and bitter – uh, young men.

TI: Yeah.

DD: Uh, I – I recognized that after a while and I said, look, I – I can't be one of those. Um, I'm not gonna be the professional disgruntled Rambo Veteran. I – I – that's just not me. And so, because I have a writing talent – uh, and a kind of a performing talent, it occurred to me that one of the ways I could – I could clear my guts or clear my mind or clear those images was simply to talk about them. Um, was simply to write about them. You know, to – to say, look, you may not want to hear this and frankly I don't give a damn.

TI: [Laughter]

DD: Um, but I'm gonna tell ya about the things that are haunting me, I'm gonna tell you about the images, I'm gonna tell you what that war was – that battle, that war was really like.

TI: Yeah.

DD: Uh, and it turned out to be great. Uh, you're exactly right, it was cathartic, it was therapeutic and I'm really glad I did it. And it continues to be.

TI: Yeah. That took you, you know – uh, I think you wrote your first book in the 80s. It was – it wasn't like immediately after the war that you did this. Uh, was there a – a time where it – it was, you know, haunting you almost every day?

DD: Yeah, there really was, Tanner, and – and I gotta tell ya – uh, it was a period of about ten years.

TI: Yeah.

DD: Um, and had I not – had Mother Corps not wrapped her loving arms around me and – and forgiven me my sins – um, I don't know where I'd be. I'd probably be in prison or dead. Uh, there's – there's a – there's a hell of a difference between the war and the warrior.

TI: Yeah.

DD: And – and as they – as the Marine Corps protected me, promoted me and – and – and sort of nurtured me – um, I began to heal. Uh, I began to – to think, you know – uh, that war may have been really horrible – um, and it may have – may have really scarred some people. Um, but the Marine Corps didn't do that. The war did that.

TI: Um, on – on your blog, on daledye.com you wrote – uh, "That fascinates me and makes me wonder why I still occasionally pick at emotional scabs this long after my wartime service. It's a hard row for me to hoe. I was emotionally shattered after multiple combat tours when the war that defined me as a person and as a Marine ended in such a humiliating and ignoble fashion. For nearly a decade I stumbled through my life in a sort of daze trying to justify the sacrifices I made and observed in Southeast Asia. It's fair to say that had I not stayed in uniform, surrounded by kindred and tolerant spirits, I might not – I might not have survived the peace that followed the war." Now, my takeaway from that was that the effects of PTSD were in Dale Dye's life and they were softened by the Marine Corps comradery. Is that true?

DD: Absolutely, absolutely. Uh, Tanner, and – and you have – you have taken from what I wrote the exact bottom line message. Uh, the Marine Corps saved me. There's no question in my mind, there will never be a question in my mind. And it was those fellow Marines – those people who – who had seen the owl and – or heard the owl and seen the elephant with me.

TI: Yeah.

DD: Um, so when I would begin to run off the rails, when I would begin to run off the – the track, those guys would say, look – uh, I get it. I was there, I saw it too. Just talk to me, don't – don't do something stupid, just talk to me. And to this day, I think that's the mission that I tried to get other Veterans to do. Um, look, PTSD is handleable, it's not a new thing. Um, and in fact it's a – it can be a character builder. It can make you different than the average slub out there on the street, you know, who – who doesn't understand – uh, who doesn't have his priorities in order. Doesn't understand life or death.

TI: Yeah.

DD: Um, but we've got to take care of each other.

TI: Absolutely.

DD: Uh, we really do.

TI: One hundred percent.

DD: And – and look, it – it doesn't make any difference whether I know you from Adam's off ox, I'll spot you as a combat Veteran and you'll spot me as a combat Veterans and it just takes talking to us, we can say things – uh, or shorthand communication that nobody else can, because we get it. Uh, and – and we get that feeling, that – that loneliness, that – that isolation that nobody understands. We get those flashbacks. We understand – uh, the images that are haunting you. Um, and we've got to take care of each other in that way. And nobody else can do it. Look, you know, we – we see this constantly. Tanner, I mean –

TI: Yeah.

DD: you see – um, horseback riding for Vets, guitars for Vets – uh, outdoor hiking for Vets, hunting and fishing for Vets –

TI: Sure.

DD: Vets on campus, Vets on this, Vets on that.

TI: Thousands and thousands, like – something like fifty-six thousands of support groups now, nonprofits.

DD: Yeah, yeah. Absolutely. And that's all fine but the bottom line is, a guy who's – a guy or a gal who's in distress, needs an empathetic, sympathetic ear. That's all it takes, really.

TI: Some comradery, some people that know.

DD: Yeah. You've – you – you've just got to – you've got to trust that I know what you're talking about. That I've seen that same elephant. Um, and – and you've got to – I have to trust that you know that.

TI: Mmm.

DD: And once – once we've established that – that – that comradery, once we've established that bottom line, once we've established that empathy, then we can talk to each other. And some of that crap that's inside us can come out. And be gone, you know. Vanished. Uh, and – and that's a great place to get.

TI: Absolutely.

DD: But we have to help each other get there.

TI: Absolutely. Now I think you've already – I think you just answered this but I'm still gonna ask the question.

DD: Okay. [Laughter]

TI: [Laughter] What is one thing that you could tell someone who is coming home today that is having to survive that piece you wrote about?

DD: I'd say, look, I know it hurts, I know that it's gonna bother you. I know it's a burr under your saddle. I know it's a tick in your ear. Um, but you're not the first guy or gal to feel that way. You're not unique. I know that it's hard to find somebody to talk to. I know that it's hard to find who – who's just interested in listening, much less understanding. So, don't bother with that, find yourself a buddy. You found a battle buddy in combat, hell you might not have known the guy. He's – he's from, you know, East Jesus, Tennessee and – and you're from the west coast –

TI: [Laughter]

DD: but together, shoulder to shoulder, in that hole or on that patrol, or kicking down that door, or stacking up outside of it, he was your buddy and he's your buddy now. You just gotta find somebody. It doesn't matter who it is as long as he understands, as long as he's been there, as long as he's worn the cloth just like you have.

TI: Mmm.

DD: Then you got a buddy.

TI: Mmm.

DD: And that buddy's gonna help ya. So, find that buddy,

TI: And I think that's where some – some VSOs come in; you know. That – that's where you go to find your buddies.

DD: Yeah.

TI: You find – you find –

DD: Yeah.

TI: people that are like you to join that community again.

DD: Yeah, yeah and – absolutely, Tanner, and – and don't come crying the poor ass, just come in and say, look, I'd like to talk to somebody, but I need somebody who – who gets it.

TI: Yeah. Absolutely.

DD: And find that – that buddy, you know. And if he's not – if he's not working or she's not working, find somebody else. But don't quit because you can't keep that crap all bottled up inside you. If you do, it'll eat your guts and it'll kill ya.

TI: Absolutely. Absolutely. And Dale, you spent a lot of time with grunts. With all those – all the operations – um –

DD: Yeah.

TI: the infantrymen, what is one thing that is always misrepresented about them in culture that you would wanna get set – that you wanna help set straight?

DD: Well I – I just think people misperceive the infantry in general. Uh, there's a tendency to think of them, and – and I guess Vietnam in – in many ways is to blame for this. Um, but there's a tendency to think of them as ignorant, there's a tendency to think of them as – uh, not qualified to do anything else – uh, you know, nose picking knuckle draggers. Uh, which is the farthest thing in the world –

TI: Mmm.

DD: from the truth.

TI: Absolutely.

DD: Particularly today. Uh, young men and women who – who carry an infantry military occupational specialty gotta be sharp, they gotta be good. And – and so I – I like the idea of – of blowing away that – that canard about infantrymen. And I like the idea of – of celebrating their great flexibility, durability, and sense of – of black humor. Uh, to me that's – that's one of the things that always [laughter] –

TI: [Laughter]

DD: just made me laugh.

TI: Absolutely.

DD: I said, by god, look – look at what we’re going through! And these guys are, you know, are just harassing each other and – and –

TI: [Laughter]

DD: uh, and I said, what great spirit that is, what – what a great example of the human spirit emerging – uh, under duress, so –

TI: And enduring. Enduring through [inaudible].

DD: Yeah, absolutely. Absolutely. And – and I wanna celebrate that.

TI: Outstanding. Uh, one hundred percent. Um, now eventually you become – you became a warrant officer then a captain – uh, you were a lot of ranks in service. You p – and you – and you –

DD: Almost all of them [laughter]

TI: almost all of them. And you’ve played a lot of ranks. What was your favorite rank in the Marine Corps? And how does it compare to your favorite rank in a – in a film?

DD: Well – uh, look, I – I think – I was a long time as a three-stripe sergeant.

TI: Mmm.

DD: And I just – I just found that to be cool. Uh, yeah, it was cool to be a gunny and it was cool to be a staff sergeant but being that sergeant, that three-stripe sergeant – um, that – that, you know, had charge of twelve, thirteen, fourteen men. Uh –

TI: Direct charge, you could touch ‘em, you know.

DD: Yeah, yeah. I – I was – I was – I could still reach out and get ahold of ‘em. Uh, I loved that – um, and I loved being a warrant officer. Um, because – uh, you know, once – once you’re a warrant, once you’re a Marine gunner, you’re – you’re expected to know it all and you can get away with a lot of salty crap. All of which – which frankly, I did.

TI: [Laughter]

DD: Um, so I loved those two ranks. Um, now I – I haven't been able – I've played a few enlisted men – uh, in I think on JAG – uh, I played a sergeant major.

TI: Mmm.

DD: Uh, but by the time I got into acting – um, I'd – I was a little old to be corporal this or sergeant that.

TI: Yeah.

DD: So, I was either a very, very senior staff NCO or I was an officer. Um, and – and I think – uh, in some of the officer roles – um, I – I had a good time. I played – uh, there was a – there was a tele – a short lived television program – uh, starring – uh, Geena Davis called *Commander in Chief*.

TI: Oh yeah. Yeah.

DD: Um, and I played the chairman of the joint chiefs. And I thought I brought a certain humor – uh, to that. I mean, we – we tend to think of general officers at – at that level as being, you know, humorless bureaucrats.

TI: Hey, they got jokes too! They got jokes too[laughter].

DD: Yeah, sure. And – and look where they came from. So, I – I kind of brought – I kind of brought that humor or that taste of humor, I hope – uh, to that role, and – and I've tried to do that as much as I can. I mean, the – the honest answer to your question, Tanner, is – is look, every time I do a role, and I – I love to do a role where I'm – I'm portraying a – a real person, I like to do a lot of research. For instance – uh, if you look at Colonel Sink in *Band of Brothers* –

TI: Yeah.

DD: Uh, which is one of my favorite roles.

TI: Gotcha.

DD: He's a real guy

TI: Yep.

DD: Um, and – and – and I was able to really research him. Um, and to – and to bring some of his – for instance, his family, he was dead – um, but his family was still alive, and they were kind enough to – uh, send me some tape recordings of speeches that he made.

TI: Oh wow.

DD: And – and so I would walk around with headphones on and listen to this guy speak and so that's how you get this North Carolina drawl.

TI: Ha!

DD: Um, that – um, that Colonel Sink distinctly had. And so, I would talk in that fash – and so I would – I would learn – I'm a little mimic, anyway. And – and so, I would – I would study that role and kind of bring it – bring it to the screen. Uh, I did that with – uh, Colonel Leonard Wood in *Rough Riders*, for instance, who was a real guy.

TI: That's the – the TNT –

DD: TNT film, yeah, with – with Tom Berenger playing – uh, playing Teddy Roosevelt. Yeah.

TI: Yeah. I had – I interviewed somebody else from that – that series. Um, Robert Primeaux, otherwise known as Indian Bob in the film.

DD: Mhmm.

TI: Did you ever have – have any interaction with him?

DD: Oh yeah.

TI: Okay.

DD: Indian Bob was – was right there with me on – on – when we were training. I – I trained for three weeks. Um, in – in – uh, turn of the century cavalry tactics – um, with that entire unit and Indian Bob was a big part of it. And I saw him after – after we finished filming also. He lives – uh, or used to live up east of L.A.

TI: Yeah.

DD: Uh, on a ranch and – and we would see him every once in a while.

TI: Gotcha. Yeah, he's out in – uh, out towards Colorado now. Um –

DD: Is he?

TI: he is. He's – he's had to be –

DD: What a – what a great horseman. Uh, the guy – the guy really knows – uh, horses. Uh, he's a great rider. Um, but – but, you know, it was that – it was that kind of thing – uh, I mean he – he quickly got the cavalry tactics and whenever we wanted to, you know, shift over into the Indian Scout mode – uh, Indian Bob was always right there.

TI: Well, Robert will be the November 20th episode of *Borne the Battle*. It is – uh –

DD: Terrific. Well, please give him my – my love and best regards.

TI: I will – uh, you know, it being Native American – uh, Heritage Month I figured it was only appropriate, you know.

DD: Mhmm.

TI: So – uh, his story needs to be told as well, I think. Now, who was either a great friend or a great mentor while you were in the service?

DD: Look, I – I think – I think I had a bunch of them. Um, there was the – um, there was my – my company gunnery sergeant when I was a mortarman in 5th Marines – uh, Jack Butts.

TI: Mmm.

DD: Probably – probably one of the – one of the greatest leaders I’d ever seen. And – and he kind of recognized in me, that – that I was gonna be worth a damn. And he – he spent some time with me, talking to me. Kind of that tough love gunny thing. And – uh, and boy, I – I hung on every word that came out of his mouth. He was a survivor of the – of the frozen chosen.

TI: Oh wow.

DD: And – uh, in Korea. And – and man, I – I knew that guy was on top of it and I listened to him. Uh, that was one, and then – uh, later on in my career – uh, I ran into a – an absolutely wonderful – uh, limited duty officer, public affairs officer by the name of – um, Mock Arnold. Um, Mordecai R. Arnold.

TI: Mmm.

DD: Uh, and – and Mock was – was absolutely brilliant. Um, he was – um, he was a leader. And – and he knew how to protect his talent and he did that. He taught me that, you know, you gotta love ‘em to lead ‘em. And – and – and he did that. Um, and – and I modeled my – my – my performance as an officer after Mock Arnold. He was an extraordinary man. He’s dead now, God rest him.

TI: Yeah.

DD: Um, but he and – and, you know, all the guys who work with me, all knew him. Um, and – and he was the mentor. He was one of those guys, you know. He – he’d been in the Marine Corps since World War II.

TI: Yeah. Oh wow.

DD: So, he – he pretty well knew everything and – and he would share it and he knew how to lead. And – and he taught me that wonderful, wonderful lesson. Um, you know, enlisted Marines have a very highly tuned BS filter.

TI: Yeah.

DD: And you – you can't snow 'em, and you shouldn't try. And he said, if they understand that you love them, you can lead them, and they will follow you anywhere. And – and that's just the magic of leadership.

TI: What's one of the things – what's – what's one example of that – where he did that?

DD: Well – uh, I can – I can remember at time – uh, when we had – uh, we – his Marines – um, had gotten in some trouble. And we were all – I for – I forget what it was, it was booze related, somehow or another. Something we had done.

TI: [Laughter] Yeah.

DD: I think we – we'd blown up an MP pickup truck or something that – and – and we were clearly guilty, and we were clearly out of control and – and he could've gone two ways. He could've said, you people have pushed it way too far – uh, I'm gonna set you up for court martial or set you up for, you know, a Ninja Punch – uh, Article 15 and – and –

TI: Drop the hammer

DD: Uh, yeah. He could've dropped it. But – but he said, look, I value you. I know this isn't really who you are. You are important. You are contributing greatly to a very, very difficult mission. And he said, I'm not gonna overlook this, you are gonna be filling some sandbags and burning some crappers, but I don't want this to harm your career. You're too valuable for that. And – and it was just magic. I mean – uh, he – everybody above him said, well, you just court martial those maggots, you know. Just – just get 'em out of your area. He wouldn't do that.

TI: Mmm.

DD: And, at that point the example of love 'em to lead 'em came right home to me.

TI: I think – uh, I think if there's any active duty listener – active duty – uh, listeners on this podcast, that's a – that's a good lesson to always refer back to. You know – um –

DD: Sure. Yeah. Back your people. Um, you know, and take the heat. And he did, he took heat – uh, for not, you know, frying us on the grill. Um, but I think – think he was willing to do that. I think that was wonderful of him.

TI: Yeah. From there – from there you were probably doing – willing to do anything for him, you know. With that – with that type of leadership.

DD: Oh yeah, yeah. He – absolutely. Listen, he could've sent us anywhere and – and we'd have – we'd have known we were gonna get blown away. But we'd have gone.

TI: Yeah. Dale, I didn't know that you were in Beirut. Yeah, for –

DD: I was, yeah. '82, '83, yeah.

TI: My – my very first interview here on the podcast – uh, Episode 135, Rick Robinson – uh, he was a combat videographer that filmed the very first landing on Beirut.

DD: Mhmm.

TI: And, he later became a DP out in LA.

DD: Yeah.

TI: Was he – was he one of yours? Is – is he one of the ones that you coopted?

DD: No.

TI: No?

DD: No – uh, we – we kinda crossed – uh, like ships in the night.

TI: Yeah.

DD: I knew him – uh –

TI: Oh, you did?

DD: But – yeah. Um –

TI: That is one of my – that was one of my mentors in the Marine Corps.

DD: Yeah, well, a good one.

TI: Yeah.

DD: Um, but – uh, no I – I came in, in – uh, I think September or October of '82 – uh, just at the time we were – uh, moving Yasir Arafat out.

TI: Mmm.

DD: And were having these really incursion problems and then I stayed until, I think, May of – uh, '83. I double pumped over there. Um, and – uh, and saw some – saw some wonderful Marines. And – and the neat thing was that I was looking at a – at another generation. Not many of those Marines had seen combat. Only the very senior of us – uh, really had seen combat. But there they were and there they were, putting up with an ambiguous mission.

TI: Yeah.

DD: Uh, and – and they were pulling it off just like we did in – in Vietnam so the big thing I took away from Beirut – um, although the – the deployment to Beirut ended horribly and tragically in October of – uh, of – uh, '83.

TI: Yeah.

DD: Um – but –

TI: Just had the recent – uh, anniversary of that.

DD: Yeah. Um, but – but what – uh, the positive side of it was that I saw a new generation of young Marines that were gonna do just as well in combat – uh, as – as we did in Vietnam. And – and they showed me that – uh, later on – uh, when they got involved in – in the Middle East.

TI: Very – absolutely. Absolutely. Now –

DD: You know what worries me?

TI: What's that?

DD: You know what worries me? Um, you know, aft – after Vietnam, after the pullout of Vietnam – uh, in – in 1975, after ten years at war in Southeast Asia – uh, there was a – there was an entire generation of Vietnam Veteran that – that felt – um, let down. That felt betrayed. You know, we – we didn't get in there – we didn't win that thing.

TI: Yeah.

DD: And – there was a – that – that added to the difficulty of readjustment. And – and now, now we've got you kids. You – sorry, kids – you young men and women –

TI: [Laughter]

DD: Who – who are – who've been there eighteen, nineteen years.

TI: It's amazing that some of the people from when I first came in are getting ready to retire. That's just amazes me.

DD: Yeah.

TI: Yeah.

DD: But – but now – uh, we're gonna pull out of the Middle East at last and – and I think we're gonna have another generation of you ng men and women Veterans of the – of the sandbox – uh, in one form or another: Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria. And – and they're gonna be feeling the same thing. You know, what – what did it all mean? Uh, why did – why did we do that, why did we go through that? And now it's over and inconclusive. And – and so they're gonna have the same problems that we had when we came home from Vietnam. And that's why we gotta – us Vietnam guys who – who know about that have gotta step up. We've gotta say, no look, don't get the war and politics confused with the warrior. You did great over there and you served your country well but you gotta remember that.

TI: Yeah. I – I think that's gonna be the big difference. And that would be – that's gonna be the – the big positive. For all that it was worth, Dale – um, when you guys came home, when those guys got out after Vietnam – uh, the public was incredibly distasteful against them, you know.

DD: Yeah. Yeah.

TI: And – and – and there's nothing that – uh, myself or the VA or service organizations can do to change those memories. They're always –

DD: That's right.

TI: They're always gonna be there. Um, but for what it was worth, everything that that generation had to go through, coming home, is the reason that the pendulum swung the other way for us. And it's the reason that the – um –

DD: Yeah.

TI: that the public is so receptive of the Veteran today.

DD: You are dead right. You are dead right, Tanner. You've hit it – you've hit it right directly on the nail head.

TI: And I – I can't thank those Vietnam Veterans, I mean it – it was a hard bridge to cross –

DD: [Laughter]

TI: but they are the reason that we're so rece – we're received the way we are today. And I can't –

DD: Yeah, it's – it's knee-jerk.

TI: And I can't thank – I thank them, yeah – but I – I thank them every day for that. Any – any – any Vietnam Veteran I can.

DD: Good.

TI: Because that's, you know, if there's any solace take, please, if you're a Vietnam Veteran, take solace in that.

DD: Yeah, yeah. I – I think – I think there is solace in that. Um, I think if there's anything we did, whether it was overtly or covertly – um, it was to force the public not to treat returning Veterans – uh, badly just because they don't happen to agree with the conflict or the war that – that – that those Veterans were involved in.

TI: Yeah. Absolutely. Now, Dale, you retired in 1984 – uh, kind of – kind of during that tre –

DD: Mmm.

TI: Is that correct? '84.

DD: That's it, the summer of '84.

TI: Now, your first credit wasn't until 1986. What was your transition like, what did you do for those first two years?

DD: [Laughter]

TI: How did – and how did you end up starting Warriors, Inc?

DD: Well, look – um, I – I was kind of lost. Um, I went to work for about a year for a thing called *Soldier Fortune Magazine*. Um, and I ended up –

TI: I think that's still around, too. Isn't it? Yeah.

DD: I think so, yeah. I – I ended up, I – I thought it was gonna be, you know, combat correspondent related job and really it turned out to be training – uh, counter-guerilla warfare guys down in Central America, in El Salvador and Nic – Nicaragua and – um, and areas like that. Um –

TI: Interesting. So, it was like a – you thought it was gonna be a combat correspondent gig, it turned into black water.

DD: That's right. Yeah.

TI: [Laughter]

DD: Yeah. [Laughter]

TI: Wow.

DD: But – um, and then – um, Iran-Contra happened. Um, and – and if you don't re – remember what Iran-Contra was – uh, google it.

TI: Yeah.

DD: So, I – I came home – uh, from Central America and – and I said, you know, what the hell am I gonna do, now? And – uh, and I sat down one night, and did, you know, what Marines do. I took one of those long yellow legal pads and a box of crayons.

TI: [Laughter]

DD: And – uh, and a case of beer.

TI: [Laughter]

DD: And – and I started trying to figure out what I was gonna do with my life, you know. And – and one of the things that I discovered was that – uh, you know, I'd always been – I was kind of like you, Tanner, I'd – I'd always been a movie fan.

TI: Mmm.

DD: And I'd seen – I'd seen every military movie there was, I think. Uh, and the upshot was – the bottom line was that – uh, they – they pissed me off.

TI: [Laughter]

DD: Uh, because they – they simply, you know, didn't reflect who we are, what we are about and that sort of thing. Uh, they were just full of clichés and nonsense. So – uh, you know, as I – as I said earlier – uh, you can do a lot of things when you're ignorant that people tell you, you can't do. And – and that was certainly my case because what I decided to do was look, I'm gonna go out there to Hollywood and I'm gonna find out who these technical advisors are that I see in the credits. And – and how – and find out how they can be that screwed up. Or how they can allow that to happen. Um, and – and so I came out to – uh, LA and I started hanging around with people, you know, I made a big pain in the ass out of myself.

TI: [Laughter]

DD: I started hanging around, trying to find people who made movies and to find out how this works.

TI: Yeah.

DD: Um, and – and I did. I – I found out a lot of things. Um, we – we don't have time for me to tell you all of the things I found out.

TI: Sure, sure.

DD: But basically, I found out that – uh, what Hollywood did, prior to my coming on the scene and – and succeeding – uh, was that they – they would hire some guy that did six months in the California National Guard, you know.

TI: [Laughter]

DD: And they'd – they'd pay him five hundred bucks to tell them which side the ribbons go on.

TI: Oh my gosh.

DD: And – and then – and then tell him to go to sleep until they woke up. And – and that was – that was really a matter of hubris. Hollywood felt that anybody who – who wore a uniform – um, especially wore a uniform as a career choice – uh, couldn't conceivably have a creative bone in their body or they – or they wouldn't have done that.

TI: [Laughter]

DD: Um, and that was the prevailing attitude. Uh, I think part of it was post-Vietnam and – and so on –

TI: Yeah.

DD: and so forth.

TI: Yeah.

DD: But I knew it wasn't true, I knew that was absolute nonsense. And I knew from my Marine Corps experience – um, that the way to fix that was to introduce these people – uh, not just by lecture but by actual experience, into what the Military's really like. Who we are, how we talk, how we relate to each other, how we love each other, how we care for each other. Um, how we treat each other. And so, I would – I would try to get that done. And as – and as trying to get that done, I established a company – um, which was a military advisory service – uh, called Warriors, Incorporated. And – uh, and I brought in my executive officer and some other people and – and I tried to get us work. The problem was, when I would try to sell our services, people would say, look, we've – we've been making military movies for thirty-five years – uh, fifty years and we've made zillions and trillions of dollars and – and now you wanna change the method, you wanna fix it? It ain't broke.

TI: [Laughter]

DD: Well, it was broke. Uh –

TI: Yeah, I paid the money, but it pissed me off. [Laughter]

DD: Yeah, yeah. But – but try to tell them that, you know.

TI: Yeah, yeah.

DD: We didn't have a voice. And I wanted to be that voice. Um, and – and it was really frustrating and – and I – I got a little job on a – on a remake of a science fiction movie called *Invaders from Mars* –

TI: I was gonna say, Dale –

DD: Yeah.

TI: You know, I remember your lines from *Saving Private Ryan* –

DD: Yeah.

TI: others might remember *Platoon*, especially the generation before me, mo – and after – that was your second movie credit, *Platoon*.

DD: Yeah.

TI: But not many mo – not many people know about this first credit that you're gonna talk about.

DD: [Laughter]

TI: [Laughter]

DD: [Laughter] Yeah, nor – nor should they.

TI: Nor should they [laughter].

DD: Yeah.

TI: I watched the trailer before I did the interview. Um, and – and I've seen – I've seen *Platoon*. I – I'm just gonna say that they're not in the same category.

DD: Yeah, they aren't.

TI: [Laughter]

DD: Um, but hell, I had no compunction about killing Martians, you know. So –

TI: Yeah.

DD: so, at any rate. Uh, what happened was – uh, was a director by the name of Toby Hooper – uh, did that. Uh, he's dead now too, God bless him.

TI: Mmm.

DD: But he sent me to film school. He was an old Texas boy and – and he had pity on me. And – and he let me look through the camera and – and I learned what every department did and I – it was a mini film school. And I really loved it. Um, but now I had to put what I now knew to work. I had to find somebody who would trust me – uh, as the – as the senior military advisor and as a pivotal part of the movie making experience.

TI: Of the – of the – of the whole process, yeah.

DD: Yeah, yeah. Not just, you know, sit in a chair and tell us – uh, whether that's the right weapon or not.

TI: Nah, it goes into writing, it goes into preproduction, it goes into everything.

DD: Yeah. All of that. Every bit of it.

TI: Yeah.

DD: So – uh, the – the – the upshot of this whole thing was that – uh, I – I saw a little notice in a trade paper, I had learned at this point to read the trade papers like *Hollywood Reporter* and *Backstage* and – and so on and so forth. Um, and so – um, I saw this little notice that said a heretofore relatively unknown writer/director by the name of Oliver Stone – uh, was gonna do a war movie – uh, based on his own experiences as a combat infantryman in Vietnam and I said, whoa.

TI: Bingo.

DD: There it is. If I can get to this guy, he'll get it. Nobody else might, but he will. And through – through a series of – a long series of machinations and maneuvers – uh, I can't really tell you about them because the statute of limitations may not have run out yet.

TI: [Laughter]

DD: But, a series of machinations I – I got to him. Um, and I – I did my best two-minute drill and I said, listen, here's what's wrong with most military movies and here's how you fix it. And – and being – being kind of an unconventional character to begin with – um, he bought it. He said, yeah, yeah, you know, I think you're right. And the bottom line is – uh, that he gave me thirty-three actors – um, including luminaries who – who at that point weren't anything, I mean, Forest Whitaker, Johnny Depp – um, Charlie Sheen – uh, Tom Berenger, Willem Defoe.

TI: Yeah.

DD: They weren't names at that point.

TI: Who's who, yeah.

DD: Yeah.

TI: Neither was – and like you said, neither was Oliver Stone.

DD: That's right.

TI: Yeah, yeah.

DD: So – uh, he let me – he let me take them into the mountains of the Philippines, into the jungle mountains of South-Central Luzon, and train 'em for three weeks. And man, no contact whatsoever. They lived like grunts. And – and –

TI: [Laughter]

DD: and I, I mean, I was hard on 'em. Uh, so the upshot was that when we brought 'em down out of there, they were who we were as nineteen-year-old kids in – in Vietnam. And – and Oliver recognized that, and he said, look, you – you need to help me. We don't have much money, we had less than ten million dollars to make that entire film.

TI: Wow.

DD: Um, he said, you gotta help me and – and I want you to be my eyes and ears everywhere, and I was. So, I really was used as a military advisor should be used. And of course, the – the upshot is that we – we brought that little film home – um, and we showed it around and – uh, lo and behold it won four Academy Awards including Best Picture. And Oliver was kind enough to recognize me. I went to the Academy Awards event in my dress blues.

TI: Ah, that's great.

DD: And – uh, yeah [laughter]. That – course the cameras all came to me.

TI: [Laughter]

DD: But, uh –

TI: But you knew that. Who can – who can deny the blues [laughter]?

DD: Yeah. Right. So he – he recognized me from the stage – uh, as being such a pivotal part of the success of *Platoon* and – and from that point on – uh, all those people who used to throw me out of their offices and throw me off of the lots, they were all calling me and saying, oh, you gotta help us do this, that, and the other. And – and that's kind of how it built.

TI: How it took off so – so what were you saying, you know, a hundred and forty-one credits in film between – uh, between film, television, and gaming. Um, probably more than – that are on I – probably – you probably have more than what's on IMDB.

DD: Yeah, there's a – there's a few on I've – I've intentionally not included. [Laughter]

TI: [Laughter] Well, you – I mean, you've got *Invaders From Mars* on there but yeah, I gotcha.

DD: Yeah.

TI: That – that is – that was the first one –

DD: Well I had to. That's an homage, that's an homage –

TI: That's – that's the –

DD: to Toby Hooper.

TI: That's – exactly. And that's the first one, you know. You always gotta recognize your first – where – where you started.

DD: Yeah.

TI: Um, but four of those films have gone for – nominated for Best Picture – um, what is one movie – uh, that, you know, doesn't get as much recognition that you think should.

DD: We talked about – we talked about *Rough Riders* – um, that I really think is a – is a terrific – uh, film.

TI: Yeah.

DD: Uh, but it was – it didn't get – uh, half the attention that it should have gotten. Um, and – and I – I'd like to see that one get a little more attention. Um, I think that if you talk about the tv series, *The Pacific* – um, I think we will always live in the shadows of the predecessor –

TI: Yeah.

DD: uh, *Band of Brothers*.

TI: Yeah.

DD: Although we – we could've done better with *The Pacific*, but I'd like to see that one get a little more attention.

TI: Yeah.

DD: Uh, and – and there are – there are some little gems that we've done here and there. Um, we did a – we did a film with River Pheonix – uh, called *Dogfight* – uh, directed by Nancy Savoca. Uh, that – that I think should have gotten more attention.

TI: Mmm.

DD: Um, so I – you know, there – Hollywood is a – is a really fickle mistress, but – um –

TI: [Laughter]

DD: you know, there – there is a tendency to – to roll the dice and bet, you know, that this is gonna be good and that's gonna be good, rather than just running it out there and letting the audiences make that decision.

TI: Yeah.

DD: Uh, so I think – those are a couple that I think deserve more attention than they've gotten.

TI: Uh, let's talk about one coming out for our – for the Military community. Uh, you got – uh, *The Last Full Measure*. Uh, full disclosure, when I walked into the screening of that film, I didn't know what kind of film it was. Meaning, I thought it was a student film or something when I went – when I was at the Conference.

DD: Mhmm.

TI: And when I opened that door and it was during the final act, I was not prepared for Sam Jackson, Sebastian Stan, Christopher Plummer, Ed Harris, William Hurt, and of course Da – of course you. Um, this film has some star power behind it.

DD: Yeah it did. Uh, Todd – Todd Robinson – uh, who's the director, and the writer – um, took – took that film – uh, which is about a – an Airforce PJ – uh, in Vietnam. Parachute – uh, jump – uh, parachute jumper rescue – uh, guy.

TI: Uh, William – William Pitsenbarger. The very real story –

DD: Yeah.

TI: of how it took forever to get his Medal of Honor upgraded.

DD: Pitsenbarger, yeah.

TI: Yeah.

DD: And – and – and Todd – Todd really got into that story. Uh, he brought me in early to talk to him about – you know about Vietnam and about – uh, you know, how Veterans – uh, felt and how they did and so on and so forth. We had many, many hours of conversation. And – and he cast me – uh, in it. Uh, he's a – he's a big – I didn't know it at the time, but he's a big Dale Dye fan. He'd seen a lot of the stuff I had done.

TI: Yeah.

DD: Uh, both in front of the camera and behind the camera. And – um, and so – um, and – and he – Todd really worked his bolt. Um, he talked to, I don't know how many people and – and – and called and – and just wanted to get some star power into it. Um, and – and he – the story appealed, I think – uh, to guys like – uh, Sam Jackson and – and – uh, and a number of other actors because there are such beautiful emotional pieces in it.

TI: Yeah.

DD: Uh, and Sebastian Stan did a great job, I thought.

TI: Yeah.

DD: Um, and – and I didn't suck – um, as the –

TI: [Laughter]

DD: [laughter] as the Veteran – uh, Congressman.

TI: I think you did just fine – I think you did great. I think you did, great. I loved it.

DD: But – uh, but that's another film I'm – I'm afraid might not get – uh, all it deserves. Um, it is a – it is a wonderful story of – of love between Veterans. Uh –

TI: Yeah. Absolutely.

DD: Who – who – who will not – who will not let those memories and – and the heroism – uh – uh, exhibited by people like – uh, Pitsenbarger, they – they won't let that go unheralded. No matter how long they have to work, no matter how many hurdles they have to climb. And that's really the story, that's the attraction. Uh –

TI: I think it's gonna mean a lot to that – that pararescue commun – community. Wouldn't you agree?

DD: Oh yeah, yeah. Absolutely, it will. But – but we need to – it needs to mean a lot to the public at large.

TI: Yeah. Yeah. I agree.

DD: And so, we'll see. It's – it's due for release – wide release in January.

TI: I – you know, I think in the era of Marvel, and other comic book films – uh, a lot of funding that traditionally would go to Military films –

DD: Mmm.

TI: are going to like the – the fantasy and – and comic book genre.

DD: [Laughter]

TI: You know?

DD: What else is out there?

TI: Yeah.

DD: Yeah.

TI: How important is it for the Military community to support Militar – Military films like *The Last Full Measure*?

DD: Yeah. It's – it's absolutely vital. Look – uh, Hollywood is a follower not a leader. Uh, Hollywood will do and make the kind of films that make money. It's that simple. They're businessmen. Yeah, you can say they're creative artists and so on and so forth. Well, that's horse crap. They're – they're businessmen. And – and they're gonna pay attention to the bottom line. So, as we do these Military films – um, the Military community, and that extends not just to the guys and gals wearing the uniform but their families, their – their immediate families and their extended families. You – you gotta do what you can to get 'em into the theaters. Uh, the – the –

TI: Yeah.

DD: point of fact of the matter is that theaters – uh the theater experience – uh, in America is dying.

TI: Mmm.

DD: Um, because we have a – a generation that's addicted to devices of one kind or another and to streaming, and they can get anything they want. But we don't make those films to be seen on your phone.

TI: No, no, no.

DD: You know, we make them to be seen on – on big screens.

TI: At the very – at the very least, on your eighty-five-inch home theater system, if you have one [laughter].

DD: Exactly. Something like that.

TI: I mean – yeah. I mean that's – that's where I think – for me I think that's where a lot of cinema is dying is that, heck, you could almost – almost, maybe without the smell of, you know, the same type of popcorn, have that same experience in your home now. It's amazing with the way technology is.

DD: You can, but – but it's a little harder and a little easier – uh, and a little more expensive maybe – uh –

TI: Absolutely.

DD: the point is –

TI: One hundred percent.

DD: The point of the matter is that the – the Military community has got to support good films about their experience.

TI: One hundred percent. Um, now Pitsenbarger, he was an airman assisting and rescuing soldiers.

DD: Mhmm.

TI: Did – did they ever support Marines out there in Southeast Asia? The – the pararescue community?

DD: Everybody had to support Marines. [Laughter]

TI: [Laughter]

DD: And – and – and the reason was because, you know, we're – we're typical – uh, dollar job on a dime budget.

TI: Yeah.

DD: Um –

TI: Yeah.

DD: You know, and – and I, you know, the couple of times I was Medevacked, I was Medevacked by Army dust off choppers.

TI: Wow.

DD: Um, because, you know, the Marine Corps just didn't have the – the kind of assets that we needed. And listen, the – the one thing we weren't too proud to do is accept help from anybody.

TI: Sure. No. No, if it got you out of a tight spot. You know, I –

DD: Yeah, absolutely.

TI: don't know how many grunts I've talked to that's like; my best friend is – is the wing. You know [laughter] especially in a tight spot.

DD: Yeah. You – you love those air wingers and you love those cannon cockers and –

TI: Yeah.

DD: and anybody that's gonna help you out.

TI: Yep.

DD: And – and I certainly know that, you know, the jolly greens – uh, chased down and rescued a bunch of Marine pilots that were shot down. I – I know that's – that's true. And – and they're – they were wonderful guys – they were absolutely willing to put themselves in harm's way just to save a life.

TI: Yeah. Yeah. You know, I did a lot of research before today's interview, your Indiegogo Campaign. Uh, for *No Better Place to Die*?

DD: *No Better Place to Die*, yeah.

TI: And I wish I would've seen it beforehand, when you actually had it out there. Sounds like an amazing story. Um, and it could possibly be your directorial debut? You have, like two projects –

DD: It is, yeah.

TI: oh – oh, it is, okay.

DD: Yeah, it – well it's my first unit directorial debut. I've done a bunch of – uh, second unit directing.

TI: Roger.

DD: But this one I wrote – uh, and I'm gonna direct. Uh, we've got some wonderful people, Tom Hanks is the Executive Producer – um, Gary Sinise is gonna play – uh, General Ridgeway and I've got some – some wonderful Veteran producers who are – who are helping me try to get it done. Uh, the big problem right now, Tanner, is – is – uh, casting.

TI: Hmm.

DD: Um, the budget is about forty million dollars and that's – uh, you know, it's – uh –

TI: So, since the campaign you've been able to receive funding. That's great!

DD: Yeah. Uh, but the problem is I can't get all the money I need to get rolling. Um, and that's because I've got to cast it – uh, when – when people are gonna give you that much money they wanna a little bit of insurance.

TI: Yeah.

DD: And to them – um, the insurance is casting A-list actors. Um –

TI: Gotcha.

DD: And – and that's what I'm having trouble with. I'm having trouble finding an approved A-list actor who will do the lead role. Um, and – and – and we're working on it. Uh, we just got a – a wonderful letter from Ryan Gosling, who I was pitching to do it – um, but Ryan has another project that – it would – it would conflict. Uh, so he wrote a great letter saying what a wonderful project it was and he's sorry he couldn't do it.

TI: Mmmm!

DD: So, we're out after – we're out after a couple of new guys, we're out after Chris Pine – um, yeah. Uh, we're out after Chris Pine and Jake Gyllenhaal. Uh, so we'll – we'll see if I can – if I can lure one of those guys in and if I do – uh, the – the money'll cut loose, and we could start rolling.

TI: Both would be very, very, very good choices. Um –

DD: Yeah.

TI: How about ole Sebastian Stan, there? The old Winter Soldier? You know?

DD: Yeah, that – absolutely, and – and I wanted Sebastian. In fact, when we were making – uh, *The Last Full Measure*, I talked to him about it a little bit. The problem was he’s not on the insurance list.

TI: Aah, okay.

DD: One of those stupid things you have to deal with in Hollywood. Uh, frankly, you know, one of – one of my missions with *No Better Place*, is to use as many genuine Veterans as I can find. Uh, who can do the job.

TI: I saw that in the campaign.

DD: Behind the camera, in front of the camera. I’m absolutely committed to doing that.

TI: Outstanding. Uh, you know, not many people know and you – you mentioned earlier, or – or talked about it. But you’re also an author. You’ve got twelve books.

DD: Mmm.

TI: And you eventually started your own publishing company – um, Warrior – Warriors Publishing Group.

DD: It’s – it’s just the same sort of thing. Um, you know, I – I ran out of ways to – uh, to celebrate – uh, Veterans and – and Military people and their stories and so on and so forth. And I said, well, hell. Some of ‘em actually do read – uh –

TI: [Laughter]

DD: And so, we – my wife and I just said, okay, piss on it, you know, let's – let's start a publishing company. We did and it's grown like topsy, it's very, very successful. I think we got something like twenty-five titles out there now. Not only my books, but – um, you know, we got – we got the rights to John Del Vecchio's *13th Valley* – uh, and – and several others. And we – and you know, we're – we're really expanding, we're just about to put out our – our first book – uh, written by a – a female combat Veteran.

TI: Oh wow.

DD: Uh, that's coming up. So – so we're, you know, it's – it's another venue – uh, to get those great stories told.

TI: Nah, that's a great way, I think – I think it's great that you're publishing others – uh, in the community. Um, how do you decide which books make the cut and what do authors get out of signing with a publisher now? Like, Warriors Publishing?

DD: Well, look – uh, what they get from us – uh, is a – is a straight up deal. No nonsense, no B.S. Uh, we divide profits straight down the line, fifty-fifty.

TI: Yeah.

DD: Uh, plus what they get with us is a – is a – is an access to the Veteran community.

TI: Mmm.

DD: So, the sales, my – in the Military communities go way up. So, they get that – that voice, they get that ear, they get that access to the audience. That's really – um, what we provide. Um, and, you know, it gives me a venue, I got this great series that – that Marines love and you probably haven't written – or haven't read – uh –

TI: Yeah, you write fiction, right? Like your – it's like –

DD: Yeah.

TI: Ah, that's great!

DD: It's – it's the Shake – it's the Shake Davis series. And if you like – if like Lee Child and Jack Reacher – uh –

TI: Oh wow.

DD: it's that kind of thing. Except that – uh, that the main character, Shake Davis is a retired Marine Chief Warrant officer. And – uh, and he gets himself in all kinds of problems. And the neat thing is, in every book – uh, there is a – a reference to Marine Corps history in one fashion or another. Um –

TI: Noted.

DD: He'll find himself on some – on some battlefield or he'll find himself having – um, researched the Battle of Chapultepec for instance, or something like that. And – and he gets himself into these adventures – um, and – and Marines – uh, with the exception of you – uh, Marines love these things. Uh, so we sell a lot of them. [laughter]

TI: [Laughter] That's awesome. Um, back in Episode 165, I interviewed Jeff Struecker of – uh, *Black Hawk Down* fame.

DD: Yeah.

TI: Also, an author, both fiction and nonfiction. And we talked about digital publishing and how Amazon has changed that entire game.

DD: Mmm.

TI: Uh, what advice would you give a Veteran looking at – looking at becoming an author and going and trying to make a – a career out of it?

DD: Look, simply write. Uh, and a good way to start is blog.

TI: Mmm.

DD: Uh, you know, do – create a site and – and just start writing and talking about things that interest you. Um, and – and that will allow you to polish your skills with language and polish your skills as a storyteller. And – and as you – if you enjoy it, if you find that that's a great outlet and it's fun for you – uh, then – then look for a big story that you can tell in a book. Um, and go to – if – if I could give them one advice it's – it's watch the New York publishing arena.

TI: Mmm.

DD: Uh, it's old school and – and they may – they may publish your book but they're not gonna support it and they're not gonna push it and they're not gonna spend a lot of money to promote you and your story. Um –

TI: Noted.

DD: Unless you happen to be Tom Clancy or Lee Child or somebody like that.

TI: Or someone with a movie deal. [Laughter]

DD: [Laughter] Yeah, or somebody with a pending movie deal.

TI: Yeah.

DD: Uh, and so – and so look for these independent publishers. There's a bunch of them in Florida, we're one. Um, and they're out there and they'll get your stories out. And – and those are the publishers that the Military audience goes to.

TI: Yeah.

DD: Because they know we get it. Uh, but before you do anything, find out if you're really a writer. Find out if you're really a storyteller. Um, and you do that by – by just writing.

TI: Hmm.

DD: By – tell a little story, six paragraphs, five paragraphs, four paragraphs, see if you can tell a story that's in entertaining fashion. See if you're vasal with language. See if you can – see if your vocabulary's sufficient to use the right words and the interesting words and – and just find out if you're a writer. If you are, go for broke.

TI: Very good. Very good. Dale, what's one thing that you learned in service that you apply to what you – what you've done in your post Military career?

DD: Well, I've learned dedication and endurance. Uh, I've learned to deal with adversity. Um, I've learned, I think, that – um, no matter how tough life seems, it could damn sure be tougher. Um, nd – and you've got to be open and I think appreciative and loving of everybody that's around you. Um, you – you can't lock yourself off and get yourself all twisted around your personal axle. Uh, you've got to be open and understanding. And lord knows, you've got to have a sense of humor. Um, and –

TI: [Laughter]

DD: and the Marine Corps – the Marine Corps taught me that.

TI: Absolutely. [Laughter]

DD: Uh, so I – so I think it's a matter of perspective and endurance. Those things are – are I think qualities that the Marine Corps engineers into us – uh, whether it's at Parris Island or San Diego or at Quantico. They engineer those things into us and as a result of those – um, we have a great empathy and understanding for – for all kinds of people around us and that's invaluable no matter what you do with the rest of your life.

TI: Very good. One other question that we ask every guest on the show is – is – is there a nonprofit or a Veteran in the Veteran space that's a good example for the Veteran community that you see right now?

DD: I think very few people do as much – uh, for the Veteran community at large as Gary Sinise's – uh, the Gary Sinise Foundation. Those – those guys, led by Gary, just do magic – uh, for Veterans. Uh, I love the Disabled American Veterans, they do magic.

TI: Yeah.

DD: Um, and – and I think if – if you’re bound and determine to do something, those would be good places to start. Um, I love – I love the American Legion and the Veterans of Foreign Wars, I think both of those organizations do an – an enormous – uh, amount for Veterans, not so overtly – uh, but just as a – as a place and a community.

TI: Yeah.

DD: Uh, I think they’re wonderful. Um, and – and there’s – there’s all kinds of them out there. Uh, it’s not hard to find one that interests you and that you could support.

TI: Absolutely. Dale, is there anything else that I might have missed –

DD: [Laughter]

TI: [Laughter] that you think it’s important to share?

DD: Frankly, no – uh –

TI: I hope I’ve done my research well [laughter].

DD: Yeah, you have! You’re scary with that, I mean, you actually brought up stuff I didn’t even remember myself. But anyway – um, it’s really a delight – um, to – to talk to somebody who gets it – uh, who asks the right questions and who listens – um, and who has – uh, a podcast audience like you do. I mean, if – if – if you missed anything, I don’t know what the hell it would’ve been. Nice work.

TI: [Laughter] Thanks – thanks, Dale.

[01:34:30] Music

[01:34:36] 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 1: No matter if you saw combat or not.

Man 3: There are benefits for Veterans of every generation.

Woman 2: See what VA can do for you.

Man 4: To learn what benefits you may be eligible for, visit www.va.gov. That's www.va.gov [link to the VA website].

[01:35:04] Music

[01:35:12] CLOSING MONOLOGUE:

TI: I wanna thank Dale for saying yes, to be on the show without hesitation. You can find more about Warriors, Inc. at Warriorsinc.com [link to Warriors, Inc. website], more about Warriors Publishing at Warriorspublishing.com [link to Warriors Publishing website]. You can also follow the film, *No Better Place to Die* and its development at nobetterplacetodie.com [link to the *No Better Place to Die* website]. And *The Last Full Measure* is set to release January 17th, 2020, nationwide in Theaters. You know, like we talked about in the interview, in the era of the comic book and fantasy movie, which are great in of themselves, it is important to support good Military film. So those stories keep getting told, as well. November is also Native American Heritage Month and this week's *Borne the Battle* Veteran of the Week is Marine Corps and Army Veteran Mitchell Red Cloud. Mitchell served in the Marines from August 11th, 1941 to November 9th, 1945 during World War II. He also served in the Army from 1948 to 1950 during the Korean War. Mitchell was born in Hatfield, Wisconsin, as a member of the Ho-Chunk Native American Nation. He dropped out of high school to enlist in the Marine Corps. He was assigned to the Pacific Theater after the attack on Pearl Harbor and as an infantryman, he served on the islands of Guadalcanal and Okinawa. Mitchell refused medical discharge after falling ill with a tropical disease in – on Guadalcanal. He also saw frequent combat and was honorably discharged from the Marine Corps in 1945 after being wounded on Okinawa. Upon returning to the United States, Mitchell got married and had a daughter. Mitchell then rejoined the military in 1948 as an Army infantryman. His unit was

assigned to – and I hope I’m saying this right – Kyushu, Japan, and later to the Korean Peninsula. On 5 November 1950, Mitchell was occupying a listening post in front of his company’s base near – and again, I hope I’m saying this right – Chonghyon, North Korea. From there we’re not gonna go into the Medal citation but a writeup that cites five different publications, that I think goes into a little bit more detail. On the night of 5 November E Company, 2nd Battalion, 19th Infantry was holding positions on Hill 123 near Chonghyon, just north of the river. Red Cloud, then a corporal, was manning a forward listening post in front of his company's command post positioned on the hill. In the middle of the night, he began hearing suspicious noises, before spotting a number of Chinese troops intent on surprising the Americans. Red Cloud raised the alarm and began firing on the advancing Chinese troops with the BAR. The assistant BAR man with him in their foxhole was killed by the Chinese returning fire. Red Cloud was then shot twice in the chest. Despite of these wounds and after being attended to by a company platoon medic, he refused to withdraw from his post, and continued to fire accurately on the Chinese troops which caused significant casualties among the advancing force. Crucially, his actions alerted his company to the impending attack, preventing the ambush. After he was hit again and attended to by the same medic, Red Cloud propped himself up against a tree and continued to fire, exposing himself to intense Chinese fire. He was shot at least eight times in the firefight. Suffering from severe injuries and too weak to support himself, he ordered a soldier near him, to tie him upright to a tree using the soldier's web belt, and then ordered these men to withdraw with the other wounded men to the main positions. Eventually, the Chinese overran Red Cloud's position and the hill. Red Cloud's actions gave E Company time and warning to blunt the Chinese offensive, eventually repelling the attack. His actions are also credited with allowing his company to evacuate several others wounded in the attack. When members of the 2nd Battalion returned to the hill and arrived at Red Cloud's position to recover his body the next morning, they found it surrounded by a large number of dead Chinese troops. For this action, Mitchell Red Cloud was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor. And the medal was given to his mother in 1951. An Army camp in South Korea, a Navy ship, a memorial park and several other locations have been named in his honor. We here at *Borne the Battle* honor his service. That’s it for this week’s episode. If you, yourself, would like to nominate a *Borne the Battle* Veteran of the Week, you can. Just email us at podcast@va.gov, include a short writeup or a link and let us know why you would like to see him or her as the *Borne the Battle* Veteran of the Week. If you like this episode and haven’t subscribed yet, please do. We’re on iTunes, Spotify, Stitcher, I Heart Radio, Google Podcast, pretty much any pod-catching app known to cell phone, computer, tablet, or man. And as always, for more stories on Veterans and Veteran benefits, check out our website at blogs.va.gov [link to the VA podcast webpage] and follow the VA on social media. Twitter [Link to the VA’s Twitter page: https://twitter.com/DeptVetAffairs?ref_src=twsrc%5Egoogle%7Ctwcamp%5Eser

[p%7Ctwgr%5Eauthor](#)], Instagram [Link to the VA's Instagram page: <https://www.instagram.com/deptvetaffairs/?hl=en>], Facebook [Link to the VA's Facebook page: [Facebook.com/VeteransAffairs](https://www.facebook.com/VeteransAffairs)], YouTube [Link to the VA's YouTube page: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCBvOzPLmbzjtpX-Htstp2vw>], RallyPoint [Link to RallyPoint: <https://www.rallypoint.com>], Dept Vet Affairs, US Department of Veterans Affairs, no matter the social media, you can always find us with that blue check mark. Have a great and safe Marine Corps Birthday and Veterans Day. We'll see you back here on November 13th. Take care.

[01:41:15] Music

[01:41:45] AFTER THE SHOW SHOW:

TI: If – if somebody has listened to the entire episode –

DD: Mhmm.

TI: I like to thank – I like to thank them sometimes with a – I call it the After the Show Show. After the music stops, after everything stops.

DD: Sure. Yeah.

TI: There might be one story that they'll get that maybe – that nobody else would have gotten. What would be that one story for Dale Dye? It could be in the Military; it could be out of the Military.

DD: I think – I think one of the funny stories – um, and it's become a bit apocryphal is – uh, we'll – we'll go back to *Platoon*, for instance. Um, when I brought the actors to the field – uh, you know I told them, you can't take anything – uh, no – no phones, no nothing but what I issue you that goes in your rucksack and that's all you're gonna have to live with and so on a so forth.

TI: [Laughter]

DD: And – and as we – uh, as we marched out to the training grounds, and this is in the Philippines and we’re going up a jungle mountain in – in Southcentral Luzon and – um, and I had arranged for this special effects guy, by the name of – man by the name of Yves De Bono –

TI: Mmm.

DD: um, to implant some charges along the trail site because I wanted them immediately – and this is the first day of training – I wanted them immediately to get the idea that ambushes – uh, and – and the – the nature of combat is so iffy – uh, and so as we walked up this trail, I saw him and I gave a little signal and he set off about six demolition charges on either side of the trail. And I screamed at the guys to get down, get down, get down! Return fire! Return fire! And of course, they were absolutely panicked.

TI: [Laughter]

DD: They had no idea.

TI: To be a fly on the wall for that.

DD: Absolutely. And they’re – and they’re down in these holes and nobody’s firing back. And I had issued them blank ammunition, ten rounds of blank ammunition with their M16 rifles. And I kept screaming for them to load that weapon and fire back! Load that weapon and fire back! And nobody’s doing it. So, I figured, look, this has got to be leadership by example, so I jumped over to the position where Charlie Sheen and an actor by the name of Ivan Kane and – uh, Johnny C. McGinley were grouped together.

TI: Yeah.

DD: And I grabbed Charlie Sheen’s M16 and it was unloaded. There was no magazine in it and everything else and I said, goddammit, give me a magazine – give me a magazine! And Ivan Kane reaches in his rucksack and pulls out a copy of *Time*.

TI: [Laughter]

DD: The magazine.

TI: You're kidding me! You're kidding me!

DD: No – uh, he didn't know what a magazine was.

TI: [Laughter]

DD: You know, ff I'd have said flip or something, he'd probably – so – so he [laughter] – he with – with his eyes, you know, as big as saucers, he hands me the *Time* magazine. And I said, no, you idiot, and, you know, and I finally got – uh, a magazine for the 16 in and locked and loaded and put some rounds out and then they finally learned the lesson. But – uh, maybe – maybe that's a little interesting story that hasn't been told much.

TI: That is some bearing right there, for you not to – not to just laugh at him.

DD: [Laughter] Well I did – I mean I was about to fall out, but I had to – I had to maintain, you know.

TI: [Laughter]

DD: And get the weapon.

TI: Absolutely. Absolutely.