

Borne the Battle

Episode # 209

Tony Temerario, 9/11 Responder, Green Beret, AT&T Client/Director Executive

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(Text Transcript Follows)

[00:00:00] Music

[00:00:02] Opening Monologue:

Tanner Iskra: Monday, September 7th, 2020. This is *Borne the Battle* brought to you by the Department of Veterans Affairs. The podcast that focuses on inspiring veteran stories and puts a highlight, on important resources, offices, and benefits for our veterans. I am your host, Marine Corps veteran Tanner Iskra. This is, barely because it's Friday, but this is the week of 9/11. Just like last year when we had very impactful stories for our 9/11 episode, and I encourage you to go back and listen to them. Most notably, we had John Baxter who is an Air Force veteran and has been the flight surgeon for multiple secretary of defenses. He was in uniform on September 11th, 2001 in the Pentagon. But, just like last year, just like John, this year, we have some very, very impactful stories. For my generation, this is a somber week because almost every one of us can remember events vividly from September 11th, 2001. Whether it was like myself. We were in high school and watching the television with, with our teachers. In college and ROTC, like some of our previous guests. Or already in the military and serving, or maybe you were a spouse, maybe you were the child of a service member, or maybe you're not and will never be in the military at all. Maybe you're a first responder. If you were alive to be aware of current events at that time, you remember that day. Like I've said before, it's our generation's Pearl Harbor, and that one event has had lasting effects and our nation's military and foreign policy all the way up till today. Many many lives beyond just the event have been altered and unfortunately, extinguished due to what happened on September 11th, 2001. Reason enough to never forget those events and the implications that it laid to bare. No

reviews, no ratings. We'll get to that next week. This week, just like we did last year, we're going to focus on the stories of September 11th, 2001. Our guests this week was at the Pentagon, on that faithful day. And for days after, establishing a communications mobility center as the director and client executive of DoD mobility for AT&T. He is also an Army Reserve and Green Beret veteran who deployed many times after September 11th. So without further ado, Here is Army veteran. Tony Temerario, enjoy.

[00:03:21] Music

[00:03:28] Interview:

Tanner Iskra (TI): So Tony, we're going to start this interview with the question that we ask every veteran that comes on Borne the Battle. Where and when did you decide to join the service?

Tony Temerario (TT): It was at a very young age. I knew what I wanted to do. I had the benefit of growing up a few miles outside of Washington D.C., but right on the Potomac river, literally my backyard had a 50-foot cliff on it. So, I spent most of my youth growing up with my friends, in the Potomac, on the Potomac, around the Potomac and the marshlands and wetlands around that area. I loved it. And growing up, the greatest job in the world to have, would be the United States military. I also had the benefit of having two World War II combat veterans as parents. They raised me. They were both in the Navy, and they raised me with great respect for the military and that's what I wanted to do.

(TI): Very good. Very good. So, what year did you join the service, Tony?

(TT): 1993. I was a former Green Beret.

(TI): Talk about some of the places you've been, some of the mission objectives that you did in the 90s to early 2000s.

(TT): I had the honor of serving our country in Afghanistan. And I really enjoyed that country as well. I got to see some of the great things that that country had to offer. I also saw some of the darker things, but it's a beautiful country. And the people, the culture there, is unique in this world.

- (TI): What was your most memorable moment in that country?
- (TT): That's a tough one to answer. There's a lot of things that I remember. I remember the beauty of the country, mostly. The mountains are incredible. I can remember watching the sunrise overlooking villages. We could see the village coming to life in the morning. Women gathering water. Just amazing images.
- (TI): Got you. While you were in, either give me a best friend or your greatest mentor.
- (TT): While I was in the service...best friend or greatest mentor I had...I was on a team and we were all very good friends and they were really my inspiration for a long time. Because once you're on a team, you're lucky if you can stay for a long time. And I was. I had memories that we shared as part of that brotherhood, that just remain firm with me now. So, I would answer your question with my team members. Definitely my team members.
- (TI): Got you. Any names you want to just share? You can just go with first names if you want.
- (TT): I had a team member that I will share with you. The reason that I went into the Carry the Load organization and who I carry the little report, Sergeant William Brian Wood. He was our thematic and he did anything for everybody. He was the medic. He always was there to help when he was in our Forward Operating Base in our camp. He ran around the FOB, making friends with everybody, getting to know everybody and doing trading, bartering for things that the team needed. Always bringing things back to us that we just had to have in his mind. He was a former Marine, in special forces, after his work in the Marine Corps, as a Marine Corps sniper.
- (TI): Oh, wow.
- (TT): So he trained us, as a Blackwater instructor, when Blackwater was known as Blackwater. He trained us on tactics, techniques, procedures, medical, "wait, are they behind the gun?" He's willing to try. I mean, anyone through weaponry and especially the long gun, he really was someone who squeezed the marrow out of life. The Brian Wood story is a great one.

- (TI): He doesn't sound like your typical medic or corps man.
- (TT): Yeah, that's right. I'm looking at my finger right now. I still have the scars. His spirit passed on the field of battle in my arms. So, I carry him with me in memory physically and then in my heart all the time.
- (TI): Wow. Outstanding. You mentioned Carry the Load. I walked about a year ago, you know, the year before we got COVID, so talk to me about Carry the Load, what it means to you.
- (TT): Sure. Yes. It was an honor to be asked to be an ambassador for Carry the Load. And we're going to hear it a little bit. I'm a member of AT&T veterans' organization as well. I'm proud of our partnership. With AT&T and the Carry the Load with the organization. One of the things that struck me most about Carry the Load was a logo of the soldier, buddy, carrying his fallen comrade and the heavy images. And as retired army or infantry and special forces, you and I both know, we spent a lot of time with a rep our back and having the honor to serve our country in Afghanistan. We carried our fallen on and off the field of battle. After the battle and with us every day, you know, some of the great things that area loaded, and they raised \$25.2 million since 2011 to raise awareness for those who sacrifice for us, and educate our nation's youth about service and sacrifice. And one of those programs that appealed to me the most was the Carry the Flag program.
- (TI): Yeah. Stephen Holley and Todd Boeding. They've both been guests here on Borne the Battle. And you know, because NCA is a partner with Carry the Load as well. And part of the walks that they do every May, usually it's national cemeteries. That's usually a main part of, that's where a lot of the rallies are. So yeah, if anybody wants to check that out, that's back in the archives, back in episode 143 and 161. Real quick, when did you get out?
- (TT): I retired in 2014.
- (TI): 2014. Gotcha. Now you're the AT&T Director, Client Executive for AT&T Mobile's IOT Operations Team, that supports the public sector. And you're also a member of the AT&T Veterans' Group. Just like government, Tony, that's a long title.

- (TT): I think the easiest way to remember it is I'm a director of client executive reaping, big government sales.
- (TI): What does that mean?
- (TT): I am a sales leader. I work in a sales organization and I had the benefit of starting my career in Washington, D.C. That was the second cellular market to open in the United States. And I was in a sales position. I was lucky enough to be able to contribute to the consumer corporate and government sales distribution models, but in the mid- to late-1990s for then Singular and now AT&T. But that's what I do now. I was in a sales role and then was deployed a lot and then went back into a sales role. And I'm in an operations role right now.
- (TI): Gotcha. So, are you in a reserve unit where you were active at some point?
- (TT): I've been in the reserves, my career, my entire career except for the times that I was at.
- (TI): Gotcha.
- (TT): And I was on active duty during deployments and turning.
- (TI): I was wondering because this is the 9/11 episode of Borne the Battle. And you have a story about 9/11, but you also talked about being in the service from 1993 to 2014. So I was just curious.
- (TT): It's kind of funny. You mentioned that because it doesn't really make sense, but if you can put it in perspective, I had two careers, same time. That's the way to look at it.
- (TI): Yeah, absolutely. No, I didn't. I was just trying to put two and two together. Now this is the 9/11. So on Borne the Battle, last year we had John Baxter, who is the flight surgeon for the Secretary of Defense, who was in uniform on 9/11 and told a very harrowing, terrible story of leading recovery and evacuation teams before any helicopters landed or any EMT showed up. But you were also at the Pentagon on that very same day, working with first responders as well. Tony, can you run through that entire day for me?

(TT): Yes, I can. And it helps to have a little set up so that we understand what was happening prior to the attack on the Pentagon. So we had my team, my government team, had just had the good fortune to be awarded a large federal contract for all the DOD mobility and mobility devices. In Washington, D.C., well, the defense telecommunications services portion, that's what brought us to the Pentagon on 9/11 and the day started. I remember the way the day started. It was a beautiful, bright Tuesday morning in the Washington DC area, we just returned from Labor Day vacation. And we were heading into our senior staff meeting. I have to say that while we were a cellular carrier, we also were a distributor for a little Moby text device or Moby text devices alone, mostly just a little pager. They don't make them any don't make them anymore, but they played a critical role.

(TI): Back in the day, pagers were pretty. Yeah.

(TT): Yes, that's right. Everybody had one, as we went into the meeting, some of them proceed a message on their pager that a plane had struck the World Trade Center. This was a 9:00 AM meeting. So we weren't sure what was going on. We now know that that was the North Tower, American Airlines Flight 11. In about 10 minutes, the same gentleman interrupted us again, and announced that another plane struck the World Trade Center, what we know now is South Tower, with United Airlines Flight 75 and while we impatiently waited for our meeting to end, some gentleman announced that another plane had struck the Pentagon. American Airlines Flight 70. The energy in the room was 10 up at that time. And it just swirled into action after that.

(TI): So where were you at that time? Were you not in the Pentagon?

(TT): Oh, I was in, it was in our, we were in our corporate offices in Maryland.

(TI): Okay.

(TT): And that's where we had our operations and our leadership was. As we swirled into Ashton, everybody else and everyone at that moment in time in a pack, Washington, D.C. area, pressed the send button on their cell phone at the same time. And then our network blocked and communication around that area was

severely impacted. Our network was not like today's networks, mobility networks. It was not designed for the level of usage we saw on that day whatsoever. If I remember correctly, this was an office building, a five story office building. Our switch was either still in the basement of that building or had just moved out. Our programming room was in an office building and in Maryland.

(TI): Wow.

(TT): So, while we couldn't communicate with, we could communicate with each other, with our Moby text pagers, our customers couldn't, and our network team really struggled to try to, to get our network back into action. There's not much they can do when everyone is heading out of the city at the same time. So, it was a very difficult day for our network team, but our sales teams could get calls. They were fielding massive complaints. In a crisis like this, for me, my army training took over to get accountability of my people, make sure they had their equipment, and make sure everyone was available. And we had two employees that were supposed to be at the Pentagon that morning for a meeting, DTSW, and we confirmed later that their meeting has been canceled and thank goodness they were not there. There are a million stories like that. And that one is ours. That was something close to it. It was a close call that I think everyone was thankful.

(TI): Yeah, absolutely.

(TT): Shortly afterwards, my federal team started receiving a request from the agency who was maintaining the perimeter security around the Pentagon. This was later in the morning that they needed X number of hundred cell phones by 3:00 PM that day to help the rescue and recovery effort at the Pentagon. And what was happening is that those at the scene were having difficulty communicating live. The other agencies, Arlington fire, couldn't communicate with Pentagon protection forces. This agency needed to communicate with who was coming in and outside the perimeter so they could pull the access. So they were, they needed help and they couldn't talk.

(TI): You know, it's funny, John went during his evacuation, and talked about the difficulties in communication.

(TT): Yes. Right. And we were on the other end trying to facilitate solutions. We pulled together an improvised assembly line in our basement with the remaining people who were in the building, our heroic volunteers, anyone who could program or activate a phone were hard at it in the basement, sign the numbers. We used phones to enter all the codes if you had to go in for it. I remember after we had the numbers, the devices program and I remember saying two words of encouragement to party. Thanks to Memphis. We're going to drive the devices down to the Pentagon and deliver them. And then later on, another manager and I would leave them and remain there overnight. Those that were in the room, I think wanted to and felt like doing something that day. I think everybody in D.C. and then across the country, we just wanted to do something to help, and I'm so proud of that team. When we looked around and we could say on 9/11, we did do something to directly support our most valued DOD customers when they needed help.

(TI): Yeah. Did you have a point of contact at the Pentagon or were you guys just running down to?

(TT): I'll tell you the second comment to that. Yeah, it's a great, great question. A great question. So, the first reports we're getting back, we're not hopeful. As my manager and I broke down a little later, we could still see the smoke burning from the Pentagon. We linked up with our POC down there, the agent in charge, and we said we were set up on a small card table about 200 feet directly in front of the crash site.

(TI): Wow.

(TT): And we watched the events unfold around us. The first thing I remember, going down there when I arrived was the smell of burnt jet fuel. I wasn't ready for it; I'll be honest with you. I don't know what I thought to myself at the time. "What did you expect? What did you expect?" And then we somberly started our task of recording first responders who approached our table and said they needed a device, and we recorded their name and phone number so that others could know if they needed to get ahold of them. They could reach them, and we remained on site overnight, as we grimly learned that the rescue effort had turned into a recovery effort. And that was a really sad moment. And, it

was a sad moment for us as well, a former executive at another company that I had worked with, one of the finest gentlemen I knew at the time, and now, was on Flight 77. We watched the events unfold directly in front of us at the crash site. Arlington Fire. So it's dark. Now it's nighttime, it's Arlington Fire, stacking wood planks, crisscrossing up to shore, up the concrete and steel that had collapsed from the building. When the plane attacked the Pentagon, it scooted across the ground at ground level and it just wiped out. To support underneath the building and the higher floors were at risk of collapsing them. So they sent people inside while we were there, but they had to shore up the building. There were no further injured, or harmed, and those that went inside, it was a horrific, horrific site. Soon after that, mortuary services began their grim task. I remember seeing the flashing first responder lights, everywhere vehicles moved back and forth into different positions. There were not a lot of people in the area at that point. People were talking silently. No shouting. It was somber. And when we spoke to him, it was in subdued tones and I asked the agent in charge who sponsored us our point of contact. I asked him, "Who's in charge here," as I'm seeing all this hustle and bustle. Right now he seemed a former army ranger. And he said, "Right now, no one is." Everyone is just doing what they're supposed to do. Fire rescue, police, Pentagon security forces, military police. And then, of course, sadly mortuary services. But they couldn't communicate when we saw that. That was our role for that night. And for the next three weeks, we handed out devices to first responders, incident commanders, so they could communicate. And at this point in the night, I think it was around 2:00 AM, someone lowered an American flag from the top of the Pentagon. It just appeared. I got the impression that this is my impression that someone who worked at the Pentagon knew where the closest flag was. Ordered it to be retrieved, and ordered it lowered over what was now sacred ground. I presume that they worked with Arlington Fire. This is just happening later in the morning, then later on the small flag was replaced with a much larger flag than you see now in the very famous picture of the firefighters, hanging it off the side of the Pentagon. Not many people know there were actually two.

(TI):

And I had no idea.

(TT): I felt like at the time it was a sign of respect for our fallen and an emblem for our resolve to carry on as a country together. And at the end of the day, that's what our flag stands for. And that's why I volunteered for Carry the Load. That's why the Carry the Flag program is so special because it teaches our young people about the symbolism of the flag that it stands for and what it represents. And I hope maybe a call to others that want to be part of the Carry the Flag program. It's a chance for our youth to meet their local heroes. And I'm not a hero, but—

(TI): I think folks, some folks would beg to differ, whether you're a hero or not.

(TT): Um—

(TI): You know, you stepped up in a time of need. Tony, you speak about a very important time in American history and I think it's especially poignant for the times that we're living in today. You know, everyone talks about anybody who lived through that time. They talk about how tragic September 11th was, but how unifying September 12th was in the same sense.

(TT): Okay. I agree. Yeah. I agree. Wholeheartedly.

(TI): Everything was thrown out the window at that time, you know, nothing else mattered except for each other and taking care of one another. And I think it's important to never forget that feeling when we're going through more trying times.

(TT): Yeah. And I agree with you. You know, that day and that night, we knew our lives would be changed forever. Nothing would be the same. We would never fly going to war. Nothing would be the same way. And the way we got through it was by sticking together, working together, communicating and being proud of who we are as a country. And I think again, that's emblematic of what our flag represents. Absolutely.

(TI): The flag means something to you because of the context that you saw it in, you know, and I think a lot of people don't see that today.

(TT): Well, I'll tell you this. It's a good point. And it's a really, really good point about contact is your brain tells you something, you

feel something, and that generates those kinds of reactions. I think wasn't supposed to do it is a freedom at all thought so that people in expressive speech for that flag. We fought in our country that defends that privilege. That's an image that some people may or may not recognize when they see it on the flag, but there's truth in it. And it bears the symbolic reference to the colors of the flag. And I'll also say one of the greatest schools I went to, they taught us about the flag. I wear my flag over my heart. And no one can touch that.

(TI): It's supposed to be a unifier. It's supposed to be the thing that says, 'No matter what, we're all this,' and we all need to recognize that.

(TT): That's right. And this is what we represent. After 9/11, our network team was faced with another challenge, which is providing coverage inside the crash site. So, we had to deploy a cell site on wheels on top of bringing the network back up. We had to deploy a cell site on wheels at the Pentagon. After 9/11. And I don't remember exactly how they managed to do this, but they did it by getting a crane or a cherry picker or something and hung an antenna off it. And then that's how it covers. Into the Pentagon. Right at the Pentagon from this crane. It was the craziest thing I've ever seen. Again, it was just a sign of that emblematic spirit on that day that we're not going to let anything hold us back. As a result of the problems that we had after 9/11 and its challenges, the 9/11 commission, determined that the country needed interoperability, not lack of interoperability. The country needed a first responder network and that's when FirstNet was created. It was headquartered in Reston, Virginia. The authority, the FirstNet authority was created with a public private partnership with AT&T, March 20th, 2017. We built the first net network.

(TI): Okay. So basically after 9/11, there was no need to have a first responder network. If everything else goes down, at least everybody else can talk within it. Different agencies.

(TT): Yeah. Or our nation's first responders have priority and preemption. For voice and data calling they'll be able to transmit and receive their emergency data on a low band frequency. That's dedicated to our first responders, their calls will have the

best ability to go through and they won't be blocked. They'll be put ahead of our normal traffic.

(TI): That's outstanding and that's nationwide, the country.

(TT): It's a nationwide network, global support for our territories.

(TI): Say a local fire department and a local small hometown is there, they're all part of this network. How does, and if not, how do they become part of it?

(TT): There's different ways your agency can apply, and then it's all about an application. So that review board. Your agency can apply if they're paying for the service. If it's a subscriber that wants to pay for the service, they can apply to, for example, a volunteer fireman they can apply. And it goes all the way down to who you would find responding to an incident in a small city. You know, maybe a traffic accident where a telephone pole is knocked down or live power lines. In the middle of the night, the local power company needs to bond. They can be part of this if they qualify, they are considered a first responder. It's always a matter of identifying the user and the need to determine their priority on the personnel network. And then again, they have to go through an application process.

(TI): Very good. Very good. Okay. Send me the link when we're done with this conversation so I can put it out when we put it on the blog, be it @gov like the application, you know how to submit it.

(TT): Thank you for that. I appreciate you. I'm very fortunate to be able to get it out.

(TI): It's important, you know, it prioritizes first responders in a national crisis. And to have that network there, it's incredibly important. I think more first responders, from all walks all over the country should know. So absolutely, no problem.

(TT): It's been amazing solution for our first responders and to DOD, military, and civilian agencies as well.

(TI): Interesting. Very interesting. Okay. Now, shortly after you started deploying, how was your role similar to what you were doing with Singular, or did you start getting into? Or did you have a different role on your team?

(TT): No, my job on it is specified every ODA has. They have a team leader. I have a Weapons Sergeant, Senior Weapons Sergeant, No Weapons Sergeant, Communications, Senior Communication, Junior Communication. That was my job. Engineer, Sergeant, then Medical. There is a junior and a senior, and it's a four-man team and their primary mission. And really the reason that it attracted me to special forces, unconventional warfare, again, kind of going around the swamps and the rivers. That's what I wanted to do. I wanted to live in the forest and help people, and if we needed to fight, then we would fight. It was kind of like the Peace Corps with guns. And it's a great mission and you're very independent. It takes a certain breed of person to be able to operate. You're deployed with little to no assistance, support, and sustainable for a very long time. That takes a certain breed of person to be able to operate in an environment like that. And I liked that type of person. I liked being around those types of soldiers, people that are just one-of-a-kind, super achievers in many aspects of their lives and what they're passionate about. And these soldiers were passionate about serving our country and about serving it the best way they knew how.

(TI): It sounds like you miss it, Tony. A little bit.

(TT): I do. I miss some of it. I think, though, there is a time when we all know that you can get to hang up your spurs. And I think I had that time. And you know, you just kind of know.

(TI): Absolutely. Absolutely. I always tell people you'll always know, but whether you do four years while they do 30 years, you'll always know, but you also need to know what the next step is going to be. You also need to continuously prepare for that. How were you, how were you able to prepare for your exit?

(TT): That's a good segue too. It's a really good question. And I would say, well, two things. One, I came off deployment back into civilian life a lot. The transition out of the military to civilian was all that.

(TI): I feel like reservists already had that down compared to attack duty.

- (TT): I do too to a degree, and they bring a lot to the battle too. They bring our civilian jobs out. So, a lot of us brought the security backgrounds, contracting background, but the medical backgrounds. Not uncommon for one of our medics to be a trauma PA.
- (TI): Yeah. And you had an extensive communications background. Right?
- (TT): Right! The power of AT&T with me, wherever I went. I wanted to say though, that part of that is also the duty and the honor of what our VA, and partners in the VA, do for veterans. And that's also a recovery step, or a transition step, but that's also part of multiple tours for our soldiers. Sometimes when you can, you should take advantage of the VA programs. My experiences with the VA have been fantastic. VA health, VA telehealth—
- (TI): —it's good to hear.
- (TT): I've had very good experiences and I think part of that process of coming out of the military after so many deployments, many more than I've ever done.
- (TI): Multiple deployments for yourself plus 9/11, in what ways has the VA helped you?
- (TT): It's good to be able to talk to a medical professional who knows how to speak to soldiers. And I'm saying soldiers because I'm a soldier, but sort of Sailors, Airman. Marines. Thank you. All of the Marines. You asked me who my best friends were. Every single one of them is a Marine. I'm including some of the members of my team, but I think having that communication level, being able to understand if I talk about how I'm talking to another veteran, or to heal, we can relate, we can talk. We know what that is. And there's certain things that it's not, not that it's not proper, but it's just certain things that some veterans don't want to talk about. And the VA has that down. They know what to say and what not to say. And I think it's a great organization because we need to offer professional services, and they do it in a way that is familiar to veterans, in my opinion.
- (TI): Gotcha. If you were to suggest one service at the VA that you've taken advantage what would it be?

(TT): Their behavioral. Some of the services that are associated to some of the common. I felt like they were on the cutting edge of mental health at that time. And I don't believe anything has changed.

(TI): Very good. So Tony, you know, it's 2020, what is one thing that you learned in service that you carry with you today?

(TT): The best lesson I learned, I learned at school, I failed the lesson. The lesson I learned was it's just at a time in my leadership where I felt like I might've been the manager, your feet felt like maybe soldiers felt, like I was kind of in their world a little bit too much. But having come out of John Masters school, I realized that my job is to make sure that this person flipped that parachute on. And when they go out of that airplane, it's going to work. And that was my job. And to me, that was pretty much the role that I look at for any leader to convey, and to take care of you so that you can do your mission and best. That's basic NCO Academy. Take care of your personnel. Accomplish our mission. Team first, mission always. I take that with me everywhere since I learned it, I take it literally every day and that's my leadership style in whatever I do.

(TI): Very good. Very good. Yeah, I know we've already talked about one. Is there a veteran, nonprofit, or an individual whom you've worked with or had experience with whom you'd like to mention?

(TT): You know, I was just want to mention AT&T veterans. And you don't need to work for AT&T, o be at member. The goal of the organization is to raise awareness—

(TI): It helps cross that military civilian divide within your organization.

(TT): Yes. Yeah.

(TI): Very good. Tony, we've covered a lot of ground, man. Is there anything else that I might have missed that you think is important to share with our listeners?

(TT): I would say surround yourself with the most positive, healthy lifestyle, people, environments that you possibly can and healthy means physical, mental, and spiritual.

[00:42:16] Music

[00:42:20] Closing Monologue:

(TI):

I want to thank Tony for taking the time to sit down and talk with us. And I apologize for some of the audio issues we had, but it was a story that I think needed to be told. For more information on Tony, you can find his bio at carrytheload.org and go to their investors page. Our Borne the Battle veteran the week was selected from our veteran of the day program. Every day, our team honors a veteran on blogs.va.gov, and on all of our social media platforms, you can nominate a veteran yourself by sending an email to newmedia@va.gov. Rick Rescorla, and I hope I'm saying that right, was born in Hayle, Cornwall, United Kingdom on May 27th, 1939. In 1957, he joined the British Army where he trained as a paratrooper before serving with an intelligence unit in Cyprus from 1957 to 1960. From 1960 to 1963, he served with the Northern Rhodesia police as a paramilitary police inspector. Shortly after, Rick moved to Brooklyn, New York, and in 1963, he joined the US Army and attended basic training at Fort Dix, then officer candidate school, and then airborne training at Fort Benning. He was assigned to the 2nd Battalion, 7th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Cavalry Division. Rick was then deployed to Vietnam where he fought in the 1965 battle of Ia Drang. Rick collaborated with Hal Moore, a fellow soldier, to write a book about the Vietnam War titled, *We Were Soldiers Once and Young*, which was published in 1992. The book inspired the 2002 film, *We Were Soldiers*, and starred Mel Gibson in the role of Hal Moore. Rescorla would later say that he wouldn't see it. All the heroes are dead, he said. After Vietnam, Rick went to college at the University of Oklahoma and Oklahoma City University, School of Law. He received degrees in Creative Writing, English, and Law. He went on to teach Criminal Justice at the University of South Carolina. Rick left teaching for a job in corporate security at the World Trade Center in New York city in 1985. That company later became Morgan Stanley. Rick's office was on the 44th floor of the South tower. And after the 1993 World Trade Center bombing, Rick ran surprise fire drills for Morgan Stanley to empower employees to respond safely in the event of an emergency. Tragically, Rick died on September 11th, 2001. When the Port Authority made an announcement over the PA system, instructing employees to stay at their desks, right after American Airlines Flight 11 struck

the North tower, Rick began evacuating his coworkers. They were in the stairwell when United Flight Airlines 175 hit their tower. Rick began singing Cornish songs from his youth, which he had done in Vietnam with his fellow soldiers, to calm the crowd. After a successful evacuation of more than 2,500 employees. Rick reentered the building. He was last seen on the 10th floor heading upward just before the tower collapsed. His remains have never been found. There's a statue of Rick at Fort Benning, Georgia, and a Memorial in Cornwall. He's memorialized at the National 9/11 Memorial, South Pool, panel Sierra - 46. An award was also created in his memory, the Rick Rescorla National Award by the Department of Homeland Security. In addition, he was posthumously inducted into the Oklahoma Military Hall of Fame. Rick's personal awards include the Silver Star, The Purple Heart and just last year for his actions on September 11th, President Trump, posthumously awarded Rick the Presidential Citizens Medal for his sacrifice. Army veteran, Rick Rescorla. We 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 send an email to podcast@va.gov include a short writeup and let us know what you'd like to see him or her as the *Borne the Battle* veteran of the week. And if you like this podcast episode hit the subscribe button. We're on iTunes, Spotify, Google Podcast, iHeartRadio. Pretty much any podcasting app known to phone, computer, tablet, or man. For more stories on veterans and veteran benefits, check out our website, blogs.va.gov and follow the VA on social media, Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, RallyPoint. Deptvetaffairs, US Department of Veterans Affairs. No matter the social media, you can always find us with a blue checkmark. And as always, the Department of Veterans Affairs does not endorse or officially sanction any entities that may be discussed in this podcast, nor any media products or services they may provide. And we'll see you right here next week. Thanks for listening.

[00:47:58] Music

[00.48.33] Bonus Section

(TI):

If someone has listened through the entire podcast, and they go to the final music, you know we kind of like to reward them

sometimes with a little extra bonus story. You know, almost like the bonus section of a DVD or a Blu-Ray. Um, do you have any story that you'd like to add to the after-the-show show? Um, that would be on your episode. It could be in military, it could be out of military, could be funny.

(TT): I got something for you, I don't know how much of this you can use but it's-it's an SF story. Um,

(TI): Okay

(TT): So, we were um something- a unit, um, a NATO unit lost soldier close to where our fire base was. Close meaning was within 100 miles, and um no one wanted to do it-it just, it was too complex too many moving parts too far away no clear objectives. It just didn't look like it was going to work.

(TI): Sure

(TT): So, somehow it landed-it was given to us and we were just told to do it.

(TI): Volun-told.

(TT): Yes, and um so we did it and we just kind of thought "Okay fine it just going to be a camping trip because nothing's going to work but that's just fine." It was probably one of the most successful coordinated uh results venerating missions that we'd done at that time and it sent a message to the people in that valley, a good message. And um, and for a number of days we were there we went one place- the mission was very simple, everywhere and nowhere. Where we were one day, we were someplace different that night, and then, stay there the next day and do something different that night. When we finally got to the end, we got to this valley the, Taliban elders, we bought a goat, we were going to celebrate, we had probably, at this point, probably had around, maybe uh, well, a lot of people um, were Afghan Gerry forces. We bought a goat, we were going to have a big, we were going to have a big goat stew pulled. We had a big fire they um, they butchered the goat and made the best stew I've ever had in my entire life, the naan in the country the bread that they used

(TI): Mm

(TT): Big fire, feeling good, and um the people that prepared the goat for us are now sitting across the fire from us eating it, eating dinner with us, and this is fine. And we're looking at them and we're like "These are the Taliban elders of this village" they're looking across the fire at us, we're looking at them, hatred in our eyes, and the message was, "We dine tonight, tomorrow we fight." And I thought that was the coolest culture I've ever seen, that was a practical experience of what that culture is like, um and how they respect, um how they respect what uh what we were doing over there at that point.

(TI): Interesting. So they just-they just came to the-to the-to the, so you-

(TT): They sat down.

(TI): You completed your mission and they sat- they were like "Alright cool, congrats."

(TT): Exactly. We- I don't know how they got in. Well we had in-in, well you know we coordinated with the the people to-- we paid for it and that's how we got the goat and they had to prepare it the eyes? because it's not easy to do that in these villages.

(TI): Wow, that's-that's quite a story.

(TT): It was freaking incredible; I will tell you.