

Veteran: **BROWN, Ira Allen**
Service Branch: **MARINES**
Interviewer: McBride, Angelo
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Terry Moore
Highlights of Service: **Served in Iraq following 911 (Dates not provided); Intelligence Analyst**

Interviewer: What first got you interested in joining the military?

Veteran: I didn't want to go to college, and I didn't want to be a bum, so I went to the military?

Interviewer: What made you decide on what branch?

Veteran: Well my grandfather was in the Army, and he didn't want me to go in the Army, so when I went to look at all the services he was with me, and we went to the Marines 'cause he said it was the hardest, and I'm always up for a challenge.

Interviewer: How was your basic training?

Veteran: The best time that I had in the military.

Interviewer: Describe it.

Veteran: For me, since I always had people yelling at me my whole life, it wasn't any change. For some people, it was hilarious because they had never had anybody yell at 'em, and you'd see just some of the craziest things, and the hard part about it is you can't laugh. You can't express yourself, so you've gotta hold it all in. Have you ever tried not to laugh when you wanted to? It was just funny to me. I had fun. Plus I had my best friend there with me to share it.

Interviewer: Who was that?

Veteran: Mr. McBride—Corporal McBride.

Interviewer: That's me. How long was the basic training?

Veteran: Three months.

Interviewer: What was your most memorable moment of basic training?

Veteran: Well, our recruiters told us that we was gonna have steak and eggs every Sunday, so me and Recruit McBride was excited that we were gonna get steak and eggs on the first Sunday, since it had been a long first week. We got to the cafeteria, and it was the same old stuff they had every morning, and we were slapping ourselves because we believed it. {Laughter} Oh, yeah, and all the times everybody pissed on themselves for some odd reasons.

Interviewer: What was your least memorable moment of basic training?

Veteran: People urinating on themselves every day.

Interviewer: What was your job?

Veteran: I was an intelligence analyst. Basic rifleman—intelligence analyst.

Interviewer: What does that mean?

Veteran: Basically, what you do is sit at a computer all day. You read incoming intelligence reports, you analyze them, and then you put together briefs for high ranking officers in your command and higher echelon commanders.

Interviewer: You just analyze the situation and give it to higher-ups.

Veteran: It depends on what kind of situation you're in. In a wartime situation, you're gonna be analyzing troop movements, unit capabilities, military bios of enemy military leaders. Based on all of that stuff, you analyze all of that and then you come up with a prediction of what you think's gonna happen next.

Interviewer: How long did it take you to move up in the rank structure?

Veteran: Not very long, because they do a composite score, and one of the composite scores that nobody does very well on, I could do better at, and that was shooting a rifle.

Interviewer: So how long did it take you to get from private to...

Veteran: I got to E-5 in two years and nine months, but I got out after four years and four months, so I was a sergeant E-5 for two years.

Interviewer: How long did it take you to get from lance corporal to corporal and corporal to sergeant?

Veteran: I don't know, but the day I was eligible to get promoted each time I got promoted.

Interviewer: So where were you stationed at?

Veteran: Stationed two years on The Rock—Okinawa, Japan, and then two years in Cherrypoint, North Carolina.

Interviewer: What was your most memorable moment in your military career?

Veteran: Probably graduating boot camp and just knowing you're a Marine.

Interviewer: And your least memorable moment?

Veteran: Gettin' out.

Interviewer: Did you have any war time?

Veteran: Six months in the Big Sandbox—Iraq in the Middle East.

Interviewer: How were you treated when you went overseas? How were Americans perceived, and how did they treat you guys?

Veteran: It would depend on if somebody was messing up or not. If nobody was messing up and acting stupid and hurting civilians, getting drunk, getting DUIs, gettin' in car wrecks and killing people, everything was good, but if they're doing all those things, it was peaks and valleys.

Interviewer: How did 911 change your military career?

Veteran: It didn't change anything at all. Before 911 you knew there was a chance you would go to war, and then after 911 you knew there was a chance to go to war. You signed a contract, and you knew you were gonna go regardless, so it didn't change anything for me.

Interviewer: But you went to Iraq after that?

Veteran: Yeah, but there was always a possibility of that. Before 911 we thought we might be going to Korea.

Interviewer: So it was just more reality after 911.

Veteran: Not even that, because if you were in tune with what you were doing, which was your career, you knew that was a possibility even in the beginning.

Interviewer: Yeah, but you knew that because you were more intel right?

Veteran: When you sign a contract, you know you might be going to war. If you had been in for eight years, four years, one year, the day you sign that contract, you probably thought about your life, and you probably thought you might have to go to war if you signed that paper.

Interviewer: Would you do it all over again?

Veteran: Yes, sir.

Interviewer: Could you sum up your whole five years in the service?

Veteran: No matter what you do your whole life, nobody can take it away from you. You did it, and nobody can say you didn't, and a lot of people haven't done it. If you think about it, you might be on a higher echelon. Even when you're in, you talk about civilians as lower than you, because of what you're doing and what they can't do. Nobody can take it away from you.

Interviewer: What were your thoughts on the other branches while you were in the military?

Veteran: Like they were your brothers. You beat up on 'em and mess with em', but if somebody else tries to mess with 'em... You feel a brotherhood with all the other services, but when it's just you and them, ya'll fight and you mess around, but when it's you and them against somebody else—hey, it's time to link up and be one.

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