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- 1) What branch and unit were you in? *Marines from 12/3/2000 to 12/4/2004 as a member of MWSS 373 Crash-Fire/Rescue at MCAS Miramar. Also deployed a lot to places on CAX (Combined Arms Exercises) like Camp Wilson, Twentynine Palms, a few sea exercises at Camp Pendleton, and also deployed to Iraq and Kuwait.*
- 2) What was your highest rank? *Lance Corporal.*
- 3) Are you still enlisted as a reservist or National Guard? *Inactive Reserves.*
- 4) Why did you join the service? *There was a captain at Fire Station 30 who I asked how to become a fireman when I was in high school. He said if I was really serious about joining LA County Fire, join the service and try to become a firefighter in the service to get some experience and hope for a war (to get Veteran's Points), fight in that war, then apply to LA County Fire when I got out. The Marine recruiter couldn't guarantee I would be a firefighter, so I had to play hardball with him for a while until he finally agreed that I could be a firefighter in the Marine Corps. Everything fell into place and I count my blessings for getting into LA County Fire.*
- 5) What did you like the most about being in? *Camaraderie, met a lot of outstanding people and they also taught me that I could do anything I put my mind to. I made a lot of friends out there and still keep in touch with them. I attribute all my success in the fire department to what I learned in the Marine Corps. We used to get some aircraft with hot brakes. A plane like an AV-8B Harrier would land and, if the warning light about hot brakes came on in the cockpit, we'd get a call to come out and cool them down. Most of the time we would just use fans to cool them down. If they light up (catch fire) you can't use water to extinguish the flames because it can put them into thermal shock, so we would use PKP (dry chemical Potassium Bicarbonate) extinguishers instead. One incident I remember involved rolling up to a plane that was loaded with ordinance with four P-19s. The tires were freely on fire (Airport Rescue Fire Fighting Vehicle) and none of our pumps would work! We had just gotten these P-19s from off of Navy ships and the Navy driver/operator had evidently shut off the tanks on each one, so I finally just grabbed a dry chemical extinguisher and put the fire out. Another rig went in there with water to cool off the ordinance so it wouldn't go off. One Air Force airbase in Kuwait really showed the huge difference between Air Force firefighting and how we did it in the Marines. The Air Force would watch hot brakes on an aircraft for about 18 minutes to make sure they didn't catch fire, then have the aircraft taxi back to the line. We were much more aggressive. We would jump out, chock and pin the aircraft, and use fans to cool the brakes off for five minutes or so, then let it taxi back to the line. That was our SOP (Standard Operating Procedure). They looked at it from a safety aspect, that they wouldn't move around under a running aircraft, to chock it and pin it. After that, they stepped aside and we took over the airfield for all the emergencies.*
- 6) What did you like the least? *Working all the holidays. The most time off we had in Crash Fire Rescue was only 48 hours. Getting leave was a privileged thing because of manning issues, not having enough personnel for airplane rescue. There were a lot of times we were denied leave. That was really just specific to that MOS (Military Occupational Specialty).*
- 7) What moment most defined your military experience? *We had an aircraft go down on Miramar Base one night. Dispatch called us out and said it was a 'possible crash', which we thought was odd. We suited up and I looked over on a mountainside across the I-15 where there was a fire. It took a long time to get there, when we were almost there Dispatch told us that an F-18 had gone down. When we got there, though, we found out it was really our airfield commanding officer's jet with him flying. There were four Marines on the aircraft when it went down and it was a difficult situation especially because we all knew who had died and it took us a long time to get the aircraft and the remains out. Pretty much all the crashes I've been on were significant. There was one where a Huey helicopter went down, along*

with some others. Every time a Marine dies in one of these crashes it's like losing a firefighter, like losing a brother.

- 8) *What made you choose firefighting as a career? I'm not the kind of person who can sit behind a desk, I like to have variety and to help people, so I wondered where I could do those sorts of things. I really look forward to going to work. I'd even do it for free.*
- 9) *What do you like the most about firefighting? Fires are the calls that I really have the most fun with. Safety is always paramount, of course. Medical calls are good, too. It's all great.*
- 10) *What do you like least about firefighting? Working all the holidays (but it's easier now because we get more holidays off), but nothing really.*