



**ENDURANCE
LEADER**

Chronicles

By enduring, we conquer.

Jarie: This is the Endurance Chronicles. I'm here with Jon and Troy and we're going to talk about Kokoro Camp 32, which is what John and I went through. It's going to be a little bit different today. I'm not going to do the interview, Troy is going to do the interview.

Troy....

Troy: All right. Welcome back. Congratulations, you're both not even limping so that's pretty cool. Congrats, because there is a standing policy that no GRT has ever not finished Kokoro. I talked to you about this, Jarie.

Jarie: You did. That was the negative motivation.

Troy: I'm sure people who listen to you know what GRT is, GORUCK folks. John Templin, a previous Kokoro grad said, "When you go, just remember, no GRT has ever not gone." Of course, I'm in behind you guys, so I'm super excited that you guys got through it. Thanks for not wrecking the record.

Why don't we start with Jonathon? I don't know the story, so I'm just winging these questions a little bit. How did you first hear about Kokoro?

Jon: I had looked into SEALFIT and had started doing some of their – well, first I got Mark Divine's *8 Weeks to SEALFIT* book as a way to jumpstart my training when I decided to get a little more into endurance training.

Troy: When was that?

Jon: I did my first GORUCK Challenge in January 2013, so about a year and a half ago. To prep for that I ran on a treadmill with a 60 pound ruck for a week. That training was horrible for my body, so I knew nothing about endurance training before that basically.

Troy: That is so cool.

Jon: Then after I did one challenge for a week, I said "I'm not doing any of that ever again." After a week it sunk in and I got a little bit addicted to it.

Troy: That's when you also picked up the SEALFIT?

Jon: Shortly after that I decided I wanted to do another challenge but actually thrive and not just survive. So I decided to get in better shape.

Troy: So you decided to run two weeks on the treadmill with a 120 pound ruck.

Jarie: Such a rookie mistake.

Troy: So when you heard about the SEALFIT book and read it, did you automatically start to find out about Kokoro Camp at that point?

Jon: No. Before that I had been doing Crossfit WODs just at my own gym and I had heard about SEALFIT from a friend who said, "If you want to do Crossfit bit also get some endurance in there, you should do SEALFIT because they incorporate both." This was also a person who wasn't that into SEALFIT, they had just started it.

So I started doing that. Then little bit little, because I had signed up on the website I had started getting videos from Mark Divine and started learning more about all the big four of mental toughness and getting more intrigued by that.

The other motivation was after doing a challenge I heard about GORUCK Selection, I had decided to give that a shot and try training for it. I didn't end up doing it, due to injury. That was half of the impetus for doing Kokoro, the intrigue of something like Selection.

The other half of it was I had read books like *Lone Survivor* that a friend had given me and I learned more about these special operations schools where 10-30% make it through and everyone says it's all mental. To me they just sounded crazy. The advice everyone says is "just don't quit," and I'm thinking, "That doesn't sound that hard. That sounds pretty easy. Right?"

I was so intrigued that if that's the secret, how could people quit when they just have to make that decision. That's how naïve I was. I started getting into it and learning more about the mental toughness thing and thought I'd give Selection a shot.

I ended up signing up for Kokoro because I thought Kokoro is like Selection except they're teaching you how to survive instead of trying to get you to quit. The thought of it was more a learning process.

Troy: Right. That's something they talk about a lot. I talked to Commander Divine about that and he said, "We could absolutely make 5% of the class succeed,

we just turn the dial up, but that's not our goal" – and that's not his goal, certainly.

Jon: I just realized that was more of what I wanted. I wanted to learn, not just be test. Because it's both – Kokoro is a learning process, but you're not in a classroom, you're being tested the entire time as well. It's both.

If you're looking to prove to yourself that you can do something like that, that's pretty good.

Troy: When did you hear about Kokoro?

Jarie: You told me about it.

Troy: I told you about it? So you can blame me.

Jarie: I'm blaming you. You had been really into the SEALFIT stuff and we were doing GORUCK stuff and you said, "Hey, you should check this SEALFIT stuff out." So I took a look at some of the WODs, I took a look SEAL Grinder PT, which Coach Brad who is your coach is my coach too now. I thought, "Wow."

I'm with Jon. GORUCK Selection is one of these things where should I train for that or should I do something else that is going to push me more in a learning and collaborative environment where it's more of a team thing. I know you had mentioned you were really into the team stuff. I want the teamwork, I want to win as a team.

I started thinking about that because I needed the next challenge I wanted to do. I looked at Kokoro Camp as this is something that is a team environment, they're pushing you to your limit, but it's more of a learning process instead of "we're going to make you quit." They still try to make you quit, they're going to push every damn button you have and they know what your weaknesses are in a nanosecond.

"Bolander – he can't broadjump, we're going to make him broadjump the whole length of the beach, 10,000, go." They know. "Bolander – he's not so good at pull-ups, we're going to make him do more pull-ups."

It was funny, because everyone when you look at these (I wouldn't call them extreme, but for lack of a better word) extreme endurance events where you're pushing your limit to figure out what you're made of, it just me struck me as I would rather be in a team environment than on my own.

There were times – and Jon will probably say this as well – where you need the team to say, “Dude, don’t quit. You can do it. Just take a breath, get back in the game, you can do it. Don’t quit.”

Troy: And that happened, right?

Jarie: Oh, yeah. That happened to every single person on our team. Every single one.

Jon: Maybe not everyone wanted to quit, but everyone needed help at some point.

Troy: In this event you get that because it is a team event and you’re not banned from talking to each other and helping each other out.

I can’t remember if you were with me and we were volunteering for Selection. On the backside of that we wouldn’t see a lot of the events themselves, we were pulling people off the beach at 2:00 in the morning. We could see the people were treated was very much that you’re isolated, you’re not allowed to talk to each other, look at each other, support each other. It’s total different.

Jarie: That’s more of an individual event.

Troy: The pattern is more Army as opposed to the SEAL, different branches and different treatments.

Leading up to this, I’m assuming that you must have put at least 80 pounds in your pack and run on the treadmill for at least two weeks. What did you do for training, nutrition, recovery? What it was like to get ready for it?

Jon: Over the course of the last year and a half I think I did get a lot smarter. For GORUCK events I rucked a lot. For this, I did a lot more running.

Troy: What does rucking mean? Everyone who listens to Jarie probably knows, but how much are you talking about this?

Jon: If I had just my ruck, which would range from 40 to 60 pounds, I would try to go 8 to 16 miles, somewhere in that range. Anything less than that and I felt like I either needed to up the weight or up the distance. If I was short on time and wanted to get a ruck in, I would go heavier and add a sandbag on top, so it would 80 to 100 pounds and then I’d just go a few miles or do hills.

Troy: So lots of rucking?

Jon: Lots of rucking. Kokoro, the rucking – if you’ve done GORUCK events, it won’t be that bad for you. The rucks are light. They’re really uncomfortable.

Troy: Aren’t those things terrible? They’re purposefully designed to be awful.

Jon: It’s basically like having a string backpack.

Troy: It’s like a Hello Kitty pack except it’s filled with sand and it’s wet.

Jon: And everything breaks.

Jarie: We broke all our straps, all the time.

Troy: That’s awful. They’re designed to be awful. They know and they laugh because you show up and you’re carrying it on your head or something.

Jon: I had chaffing all over my back, it was horrible. They’re really uncomfortable, but they’re not very heavy. It was maybe 30 pounds. So if you’ve been rucking, you’ve probably been rucking with that much weight or more, so it’s not so bad.

The long ruck that we did was long and it’s a serious climb.

Jarie: That’s no joke.

Troy: So cut your toenails.

Jarie: Jon and I both have no toenails.

Jon: Or don’t cut your toenails and then lose them anyway.

Jarie: You will lose them.

Troy: What about you, with nutrition and recovery stuff?

Jarie: I got smart and I got a coach. Brad McLeod is my coach. He put me on a modified SEAL Grinder PT type workout regime where he would just send me workouts and I would do them. They were a cross between Crossfit, rucking, running, some swimming, but a lot of variety and a lot of functional fitness.

If you look at his website at SealGrinderPT.com, you’ll see his daily WOD. It was basically what his daily WODs are, although he catered it to me because I was going through Kokoro Camp. He said, “You need to ruck, you need to do some swimming, you need to do some recovery.”

Basically, every day I knew what I had to do. It was a really great experience, because I'm not a Crossfit guy, I'm a triathlete, so for me doing a pull-up is almost stupid, I don't want to do that. It's like, "You want me to run 50 miles or you want me to do 10 pull-ups? I'll run 50 miles, thank you."

Troy: You'll run 50 miles in sandals.

Jarie: I will run 50 miles in sandals before I do 10 pull-ups. For me as a triathlete, I just needed someone to guide me through, "You need to be able to do more different kinds of fitness and have that max weight, then run, then do burpees," just all of this.

Troy: The variety was different and also the type of exercises was different than what you normally would have done.

Jarie: Right. A lot of bodyweight, some cardio, but not as much cardio as I'm used to. I've done an Ironman, so for me cardio is like "let's do a six hour bike ride." For me it's more of an eating competition more than anything. For this I actually put weight on.

Troy: As in muscle or fat?

Jarie: Muscle and fat, both because I figured we were going to be cold, wet, and sandy, it was important that I had the body mass.

Troy: How much did you go up on both? Do you know, roughly?

Jarie: When I was at my Ironman weight I was 175 and 8% body fat, roughly.

Troy: That's typical Ironman triathlete.

Jarie: Right. I couldn't go two hours without eating, literally. For Kokoro, I went up to between 185 and 190, I probably was at north of 12-13% body fat.

Troy: Wow.

Jarie: More muscle, but I was never that hungry. The thing is even during the event I would eat, but nutrition was not my number one thing. A lot of other guys were really skinny or doing Paleo or whatever, and they were suffering, "I have to eat," and I was fine.

Troy: Jon, you seemed to put on more muscle.

Jon: I fluctuated a lot. For Kokoro I lost weight, I went from 195 to 185.

Jarie: You're 185, you're kidding me?

Jon: No.

Troy: Did you think about body fat, or you don't care?

Jon: I don't really care. I've measured my body fat maybe twice in my life.

Troy: I measure it every morning.

Jarie: You need to go up.

Jon: I dropped 10 pounds because I did more running. I decreased my rucking, I did more running, I did less Crossfit and less strength training.

Jarie: Really? Interesting.

Jon: When I was 195 I was pretty bulky and I was struggling with calf injuries and achilles injuries, so I wanted to decrease the load that I'd be carrying around.

My other thing I did for training was I also did a lot of variety. If I would get my workouts for the week it would be two runs, two rucks, two Crossfits, one long bike ride, yoga several times. Definitely tons of variety.

I tried to do as much event specific as possible. I bought a 20 pound weight vest and I used it almost every day. I started with 5 pounds, then 10 pounds, then 15 pounds, and then 20, and I started doing murph once a week.

Troy: Which is great; call, walk, run. It's a basic principle of don't dive in and do murph with a vest, you do murph with the 5 pound vest first.

Jon: I would suggest not kipping with a vest.

Jarie: Don't kip. They say, "You can kip," but don't kip.

Troy: Even Coach Cummings hates that. He says, "I only suck it up and deal with it because we have to for the purpose of this, but other than that I refuse."

Jarie: You'll hurt yourself.

Troy: I don't even know how to kip.

Jon: Towards the end, maybe on the 100 pull-ups I would kick a little bit to get up.

I also did a lot of running on the beach, I spent a lot of time in sand. Your lower legs get stressed so differently in the sand, there's so much balance and you're always landing in a different orientation.

Troy: And I know both you guys were running in the sand in your boots.

Jarie: Yes.

Jon: Boots or running shoes. I also made one of those rifles out of PVC just to get used to that. I didn't use it a lot, but I wanted to make sure.

Troy: Locals were probably wondering why you're running with it.

Jarie: "Who is that idiot with the ruck, the boots, and the PVC pipe?"

Jon: Oh, it's just San Francisco, just a different kind of weird. Not what we're used to.

Troy: This is a typical AAR, after action review, sort of structure. What did you expect going in and then what actually happened? What was the difference between those two?

And then what worked and what didn't? So kind of a four question sequence. Did you have expectations going in that were different than what actually happened?

Jarie: For me, the thing that I was the most worried about was the PT test. The specific thing was the pull-ups, because I'm not a pull-up guy. For me, when we did the welcome party and I've done GORUCKs –

Troy: What's the welcome party?

Jarie: Oh, sorry. The welcome party is when they yell in your face, get you wet and sandy, and do PT until they shake you up, keeps you off balance. Typical welcome party type stuff, we're going to wash you down, spray you with water, we're going to go to the beach, we're going to get all sandy and wet. I can handle that, that's typical GORUCK type stuff and I've trained for that, so I'm comfortable in the sand, wet, and nasty.

But we hadn't done the PT test. We were already started and it's like, "What's going to happen?" That was the expectation that freaked me out a little bit.

Troy: Because you thought it would happen at the beginning?

Jarie: I thought it would happen at the beginning and I was really freaked out about the pull-ups. I just didn't want to get dropped because of the stupid pull-ups. I had trained really hard, Coach Brad was saying in every email, "It looks like you have to work on pull-ups." Yes, Coach, I have to work on pull-ups. He would say, "Do this, do this."

Troy: He could write a book on it.

Jarie: He did write a book on it and I read the book and still he said, “You still need to work on pull-ups.” For me, the expectation was other than the PT tests and other than maybe murph, it kind of aligned with what I thought would happen. It was a longer type GORUCK Challenge.

Troy: A GORUCK Challenge is 12 hours, this is 55.

Jarie: 50 – 55, yes. But, the things that we were doing were standard GORUCK kind of stuff. Team building. They would go back and forth between “we’re going to beat you up” and then teach you. It was this beat down, teach, beat down, teach thing.

I felt like I’m getting pushed, there are things that I need to work on, I really need to be in the moment, stay focused. I never felt like I was unsafe. If something went wrong, I knew everything would be handled properly. It was all about what was going on in my head.

It met my expectations, other than the PT test.

Troy: You didn’t have one picture in your head and then show up and say, “Holy shit, what happened? This is not the event I signed up for.”

Jarie: No. I talked to you about how 20X was and I’ve seen the videos.

Troy: They’re pretty transparent.

Jarie: I’m a pretty anal-retentive guy when it comes to what I should expect. I read every blog post, and there’s a podcast about a bunch of guys that went through Crossfit and went through it, I listened to that religiously.

Troy: That was actually pretty funny, it was a good podcast.

Jarie: It was pretty good. I did my research.

Troy: What about you – the same?

Jon: No. Physically it was what I expected. What I thought was different or what I didn’t expect was going into it I knew it was very team based, but there’s still a lot that is very individual. In a GORUCK it’s team based and if you have a bunch of people who are putting their knees down or their slacking, then the whole team gets punished.

In this event you can get singled out as an individual, if you’re not putting out sometimes they punish the whole team, but sometimes they just punish you,

they pick on you and they target you. That's something that mentally I hadn't really thought through.

Troy: What's one example? Just pick anything.

Jon: I think a generic example would be if you can't do the push-ups. Everybody else is doing the push-ups and your knees are down, they're going to call you out on it.

Troy: Then what happens?

Jon: Some things would be like we're all supposed to be in a push-up position, say in the welcome party. Another thing about the welcome party that was different than a GORUCK welcome party is that in a GORUCK you have one cadre and he's just blurting out things that everybody has to do. In this case, say for example we're in the plank position holding our rifle (or whatever weapon) on the ground, and a coach could come over and if he sees that you're not holding it tightly he'll kick it out of your hands.

Jarie: I hated that.

Jon: You have to be mentally sharp. In a welcome party, the best thing in my mind is just to shut your mind off and do the exercise.

Troy: Awake and alert.

Jon: Right. This, you have to be looking out, also sometimes you have one coach on the megaphone who is giving the directions that you're supposed to be listening to, then you have a bunch of other guys barking other orders.

Troy: So who do you listen to?

Jon: You listen to the most dominant voice.

Troy: Who are you supposed to be listening to?

Jon: We don't know who that is. It's one person.

Troy: So there's an alpha and then a whole bunch of other ones who are there to distract.

Jarie: And then single out when you're the leader. Remember, we put on the "visor of leadership."

Kordell brings a visor. Everyone else looks the same except Kordell with the visor on, so the visor of leadership when you got put up to be in charge, they focused on you and they would beat on you pretty hard.

Jon: I didn't learn from that lesson, because she had a visor and I thought, "Visor wasn't on the list, that's out of the norm." I had a floppy hat and I took that out of my ruck and put it on once because the sun was beating on my face, I thought it was cool because it was on the list, and immediately they were screaming, "What the fuck are you doing with a floppy hat on?"

Jarie: We all need to look the same as much as we can.

Troy: So there was this the team has to do the same thing, act the same, look the same.

Jon: Shirts had to be tucked in.

Jarie: We all had to check to make sure our shirts were tucked in, the belt was proper. When we were in any kind of downtime, which downtime was kind of a subjective thing, we would always be saying, "Are you okay? Tuck your shirt in." We would check each other, make sure you put your belt on, are you okay, tie your shoes.

It was really important, because if someone had their shirt out of they weren't squared away, we would get handled.

Jon: Life gets worse.

Troy: Can we just make that the quote for this, "Life gets worse."

Jon: There is no mental downtime. You have to be mentally sharp the whole time. I think that's what I didn't expect. Physically, everything was like Jarie said, it's running, rucking, PT, surf.

Troy: You've done GORUCK, right? You've done a bunch of challenges, a few.

Jon: Yes.

Troy: You've done Heavy, which is 24 hours. Did we do that one together?

Jon: Yes, last summer. I hadn't done an event since that, outside of a GORUCK Challenge 1,000, which was a month before Kokoro.

Troy: How was that, was that a good idea or a bad idea to do them that close?

Jon: It was good because I hadn't done an event in awhile.

Jarie: You did Navigator with me, too.

Jon: I didn't consider that very strenuous.

Troy: No beat down, just four days out in the woods.

Jon: Right, you're sleeping and nobody is pushing you to go very hard.

Jarie: Although, it was a good way to look at the equipment. Breaking my boots in. You definitely need to break your boots in. Never come with new boots.

Troy: I thought the best thing to do was to buy brand new boots or take sandals because then you wouldn't wreck your toenails.

Jon: Bad idea.

Jarie: I would have been singled out.

Jon: It's a good point. I think because we've done these types of events, Jarie and I, there's a communal tent where everybody keeps their gear. In between you might have to change from BDUs to gym clothes. Jarie and I would go in and it was priorities: take care of your feet, change your socks, put cream on your feet, take care of business, feet first, then water, then food.

I was surprised that eight hours in I kept hearing guys say, "You guys have any extra socks?" People brought two pairs of socks. I brought like 12 pairs of socks, which was overkill.

Jarie: Three days, I brought eight pairs of socks, your brought 12.

Jon: I had 12, I knew I wouldn't need 12 but why not.

Jarie: Even though we're anal about fixing feet, we still lost toenails. That's why you really need to pay attention to your boots, pay attention to feet, and make sure that you really understand how your boot or your shoes are interacting.

Up until the camp, I had done Navigator, which we hiked all over Sierra, Nevada in the same boots, I rucked with the boots, I went in sand with the boots, and everything was fine, my toenails didn't hurt or anything. The thing I didn't do, which is what I regret, was go straight up a hill and straight down a hill with weight and adjust my shoes. That was the major flaw.

Troy: So you put a lot of miles on them, not exactly like you were going to do.

Jarie: I did hills, but I didn't do massive hills. It's just really important, your feet are the thing that's going to get beat up the most.

Troy: Like you said, people who show up with two pairs of socks, at Heavy we had eight guys show up who had never done a GORUCK Challenge. I was super impressed.

Jon: Did they finish?

Troy: No, they all finished, every single one of them. But their feet were destroyed. They wore cotton socks and running shoes. They were just everything wrong, so they were just shredding the bottoms of their feet with unnecessary amounts of pain. I bet they'll never forget that.

Jon: For me, the only thing I did wrong was I didn't trim my toenails right before. I trimmed them like a week before and I just plain forgot to do it right before.

Jarie: Me too.

Troy: Seriously? Months of training and you forget to trim your toenails.

Jon: Everything else was fine, I didn't blister at all, I didn't have foot pain.

Troy: That's awesome.

Jarie: Feet are awesome, other than the toenails.

Troy: No hot spots?

Jon: No hot spots.

Troy: What about the rest of the team?

Jon: Their feet were worse. I saw a lot of maceration.

Jarie: A lot of the guys didn't take care of their feet very well.

Troy: What did you see – did you see people doing single socks, no lubrication system, and whatever?

Jarie: Oh, yes.

Jon: From what I've seen, there's not a best system, it's just whatever you have found. Try a lot of different things. For me, I wear Injinjis and then wool over that, thin on both of them.

Troy: Injinji are the five finger toe socks. They're like nylon compression or something else?

Jarie: They have a nylon plain and a nylon super compression one that is almost impossible to put on your foot because it's so much.

Jon: The compression ones are \$40 each, so I don't have those. I just have the normal ones.

Troy: It keeps your toes from rolling under each other and pinching.

Jon: I find them really comfortable. I do that with wool over them.

Troy: Do you do any Body Glide or any of that stuff?

Jon: This was new, but I used Trail Toes. That was unproven for me, I hadn't used that before.

Troy: Did it work?

Jon: I didn't blister.

Troy: So maybe.

Jarie: That's the stuff that Webb was pushing.

Jon: Webb was pushing it on his posts.

Troy: That's Mark Webb from GORUCK things, he's done like four billion GORUCKs and he just finishing Death Race.

Jarie: What I did was I had Body Glide, thin inner sock, wool sock – no toe sock – and I didn't get any blisters.

Jon: No toe sock, what?

Jarie: The problem is I have a hard time getting them on, so there is a time issue. You want to make sure that when you're in a transition and you're resting that you get your stuff done quick.

Troy: You don't want to spend seven minutes getting a toe in your sock.

Jarie: You may or may not have 10 minutes, so just always be "I'm done, I have to get done."

I didn't get any blisters, but the problem is when you do the little slick sock and then the wool sock, you can move so things move so there is no friction, but you bang your toe into your boot. You need to mitigate that somehow – and I didn't do that right, so that's why I lost toenails.

Troy: Is that just because you had too much space in your boot? A lot of people when they're doing these events their feet swell. Your feet swell, that's going to happen.

Jarie: My feet aren't very thick on the top, so what I should have done –

Troy: You should eat more.

Jarie: Well, there's that. I should have been constantly tying my shoes, and I didn't do that. So I paid for it.

Troy: You should just eat more fatty foods.

Jarie: Believe me, I have enough fat.

Jon: The one thing with the Injinjis, you're right, when you first get them they do take awhile. If you're going to go that route, don't try them right before an event. You have to figure out your strategy for getting them on very quickly. At first it's slow, but you kind of get used to it. For me now, the transition is fast.

Troy: I've run into that with ultra running. I had some really horrible experiences with pinky toes going underneath, which is pretty common. There are just amazing amounts of nerve pain from the pinky toe. You're thinking, "What's going on? It feels like someone is stabbing me in the pinky." It was just because that toe was rolling under the second toe, which it could do in a regular sock. As soon as I switched to the five fingers, for me that was the absolute changing moment.

Jarie: It really depends on your foot.

Troy: It sounds like you had a little bit of change, Jonathon, in terms of what you expected, it was more the mental side than the physical side. Maybe just walk us through a little bit of what happened, give us a brief view of the timeline.

Jon: It was 55 hours and it's a blur. You're wondering, "Was that Friday or was that Sunday?"

Troy: Which is part of sleep deprivation, because you're not just up for 55 hours, you're actually up for something like 80 hours when all is said and done, it's crazy.

Without giving away any crazy stuff that should stay secret – and there’s a lot of stuff that will stay secret, what’s the general flow? Just stuff that people have published already, but give us a sense of what you went through.

Jon: There’s the welcome party, so that sort of gets you awake, “Okay, this isn’t going to be easy. We’re going to push you to your limit.” Then it tends to go we’re going to push you, then teach you, and push you, and teach you, and everything you do is for a reason if you think it’s not for a reason.

“I don’t understand why we’re in the surf.” Well, there’s a reason you’re in the surf.

If I’m in the surf, I need to be in the right mental state – and it sounds odd – to enjoy it, because I’m resting. You start to think, “I really want to go in the surf.”

Troy: I’m not burning muscle.

Jon: I’m not getting yelled at, I don’t have to do duck walks with sandbags over my head.

Troy: That’s your favorite thing.

Jon: Gosh, I hate that. I hate it.

Jarie: That was the worst thing ever.

Jon: What tends to happen is you have this extreme amount of physical activity that’s going to push you and then you throttle back to the learning, “What are we doing to learn from this?” So the whole entire 50+ hours basically is these cycles, these evolutions of trying to push you to the limit and then teach you what you’re feeling and what you’re going through.

It’s a lot of physical activity, it’s a lot of “When is this ever going to end?” but then when you think it’s not going to end, it ends. They break into these evolutions for a reason because either they sense that you guys need a break or it’s now time to teach you something about what you’ve gone through.

It’s kind of an interesting philosophy, because what happens is you end up being so involved in the moment and what you’re doing. Literally there were times that were like, “I don’t care what happens in the next minute, I’m just if Coach Dan tells me to do another fucking burpee and I’m going to – Coach Divine is talking about the five mountains or the four philosophies, I’m going

to listen to Coach Divine – Coach James says run up this hill, I’m going to run up this hill.” You start to break down this expectation of what’s next.

Troy: Which is healthy.

Jon: Yes, because now you’re thinking, “I’m in the moment. What am I going to do? Nothing else, I’m focused on the task at hand, let’s just do it.”

Jarie: Which is one of the core lessons.

Jon: For sure.

Troy: Forget about the past, live here, don’t think.

So you had the welcome party and some surf time, and secret stuff.

Jon: Just one thing I thought of right now is a different approach I had in preparation. I actually don’t like reading the blogs and watching all the videos and stuff, because if it’s more of a mystery to me then I have nothing to look forward. I don’t know what’s coming next, so it’s easier for me to think about the future is a huge question mark, so I’m just going to think about what’s going on right now.

Troy: Cool. So you read every blog and watched every video, and you watched nothing.

Jarie: Pretty much.

Jon: Nothing.

Troy: That’s actually really awesome, totally different approaches to going into this. You didn’t want to know.

Jon: I don’t want to know, because if you know it can be overwhelming and you start to think, “I am so tired right now and I still have to do this huge ruck and this beach thing.”

Jarie: I didn’t think of that at all. I just said, “This is what I need to expect, be in the moment.” I expect this, that’s my mentality.

Jon: I think one of the great things about the event is for me, I watched a lot of Coach Divine’s videos, I read *The Way of the SEAL*, I felt like I had learned a lot of the theory behind mental toughness beforehand, but I hadn’t really had a chance to apply it. This was for me less learning. During the lectures I was thinking, “I already know this, I read this.” It’s coming from the person I already heard it from, but it was a good way to practice.

One of the events – I don't need to go into the details – was so hectic and there was so much going on, and the task at hand the coach kept saying, "You guys probably don't believe me when I say I'm going to make you do all 450 of these burpees." That wasn't scary at all, because I wasn't thinking about 450, I was so focused on trying to listen to his voice and trying to drown out the other eight coaches and the three hoses and all the other crap going on. I had so much trouble hearing over everything, I had to focus on just what is the next command because if I miss it I'm going to screw over my team.

Jarie: I remember that. I thought, "There is no way Coach Dan is going to make us do 450 burpees." Then I'm going, "Damn, we're at 200, he's going to make us do them all."

Troy: Pause there. Most people would say, "First of all, what's a burpee?" and if they know what a burpee is they're thinking, "What do you mean 450 burpees in the middle of 55 hours?"

Jarie: It's not a normal burpee at that.

Jon: This is towards the end, and it's not a normal burpee.

Jarie: There's special burpees, there's team burpees and then there's individual burpees.

The thing that you start to realize is that they're breaking you down to the point where you're thinking, "I am just not going to even think about this ending. My reality is I'm going to go down, I'm going to go up."

Whatever they say, this is what I'm going to do.

Jon: He's out loud keeping track and reminding us of how many more we have to do. For me, I couldn't keep track because mentally I didn't have the capacity to count. Counting was out of the question, it was just more you tell me to go up and I go up, you tell me on my face and I go on my face.

Jarie: On your stomachs, on your feet, on your stomachs, on your feet.

Jon: Okay, Coach Dan, we'll do whatever you want.

Troy: I love it. I love how you keep picking on him, too.

Jarie: He's great. He taught us a lot.

Troy: Okay, I'm going to switch gears. Standard drill, what worked and what didn't. Let's talk about what worked.

Jon: Training wise?

Troy: Anything in any dimension; mental or physical. Standard five mountains – what are they? Mental, physical, emotional, intuitional, non-quitting spirit Kokoro. What worked and what didn't for you in terms of everything?

Jon: In terms of before the event, I think learning the principles that Coach Divine teaches is helpful in just knowing ahead of time what is visualization, what is setting micro goals. I didn't have a lot of practice doing that, but I think knowing what they were and visualizing, being mentally prepared to implement those tools helped me.

Troy: Did you use them?

Jon: Yes, definitely. I can think of moments where I used all four.

Troy: What are the four?

Jon: Visualization. Visualization is just thinking about – for example, at night thinking about the sun is going to come up at some point, it's going to be glorious, I could viscerally feel the heat of the sun coming up.

Troy: You know the phrase, "Never quit at night," I think Brad talks about that one a lot.

Jarie: So does Coach Divine, "Never quit at night."

Jon: When the coaches were yelling and thinking about how awesome it was going to be to shake their hands and give them a hug and be smiling for the first time.

Troy: When they go from shark mode to congratulatory mode.

Jon: Visualizing, setting small goals.

Jarie: Micro goals.

Jon: Micro goals, never thinking too far ahead, just thinking, "I have to get to the next bend, or the next set."

Troy: Did you use it, do you remember specifically?

Jarie: I remember when we were on the mountain and [inaudible 0:44:01] named, didn't happen. I remember as a team someone got injured, so we need to carry them down the mountain. It's a little chaotic, because it's dark, we're all tired, and we're trying to figure out how to do this effectively.

Troy: Why are you tired?

Jarie: Yeah, we're only 45 hours into this thing. Jon is saying, "Look guys, what we need to do is we need to rotate through this thing and we need to really be a team. That team mentality, "This is the task we have, we just have to carry this thing until you can't and then someone will rotate through." We got into this really good rhythm of rotating through carrying the stretcher.

Troy: Was that two seconds or was that 10 seconds?

Jarie: It was typically 20 to 30 seconds.

Troy: Carry him until we can't, so there's a micro goal.

Jarie: Right. It depends on the person. What would happen was we would have a guy on the left, a guy on the right, so front left and front right, rear left and rear right. There was over a dozen of us, so we could rotate through pretty quickly. We got into the rhythm. Jon is saying, "Look, we can do this if we just rotate through, keep everyone fresh."

Jon: Never put him down.

Jarie: If you think you're going to drop this thing, you'd say "I need relief, I need someone," and people were there. We got into a rhythm.

Troy: So that was a couple things, a rhythm, a constant sense of movement, a sense of micro goals, "I can work here until I can't work here and then I can call somebody."

Jarie: We were doing this and we got really good at it, we got to the point where we were going pretty quick. Then it was like we needed to focus on how we were going down the next bend, the next rotation. As a team, that's when we gelled. We were focused on getting this guy down, they were injured, we were going to rotate through, make sure that we're safe because that was really important, it was night and going down was really kind of dangerous. Each and every one of us was feeling like, "We're not going to let the team down."

Jon: I think something one of us said was, "Don't think about how you have six more miles down the mountain, think of it as I just have to try hard until I

fatigue. Then my next goal is where am I going to jump in next.” That’s how far ahead you got.

Troy: Back to the micro goals of “I’m going to do this until my grip is letting go, then I’m going to call somebody and I have 45-50-80 second reprieve from it.” So there’s visualization, micro goals or goal setting, what are the other two?

Jon: Arousal control and breathing.

Troy: What’s that about?

Jon: It’s basically breathing. Coach Divine talks about how you breathe. They have a very strong prejudice against mouth breathers, you’ll learn that, they’re very vocal about it.

Jarie: Don’t be a mouth breather.

Jon: Coach Divine talks about how when you breathe through your nose it stimulates your sympathetic nervous system and releases cortisone and literally calms you down. But it’s not just breathing for arousal control, it’s breathing for performance.

They find ways to force that. Hose in your mouth – try breathing through your mouth. You can’t do it, it won’t work, you have to breathe through your nose.

There’s one other task where we had water in our mouths, we had to perform the task, and then display that we retained the water in our mouth. There was no way you could do that task while holding your breath, you had to breathe because it was very strenuous, so you had to breathe through your nose. That was a good way to force it, you couldn’t get away with mouth breathing in that particular task.

Troy: I heard a great Apache Indian tale the other day, which is a right of manhood was to get the Apache Indian boy to get a mouthful of water and run 20 miles, and then spit the water out again. He had to breathe through his nose for 20 miles and not drink the water.

Jarie: Very similar.

Jon: It’s harder than it sounds. At least, that was tough for me.

Jarie: Me too, because at that point we were pretty tired.

Troy: Breathing management and breath control.

Jarie: It makes sense, because physiology says that you should be breathing through your nose all the time. When you're in a hyper-arousal state you tend to want to get more oxygen so you're breathing through your mouth.

Troy: Which triggers panic symptoms.

Jarie: Right, and you don't want to panic. Coach Lance was always saying, "Look, stuff is going wrong, life sucks, take a breath – through your nose – compose yourself and get it done." Constantly, "If you need to take a break, take a break to compose yourself. Don't think you can't."

Troy: Well, let's be clear. That's not go sit off to the side.

Jarie: That's literally a second to breathe and then go. That's so critical, if you can do that consistently.

Jon: You also get rewarded, the better you perform. Two things remind of that. One is if they're spraying you in the face and you start breathing through your nose and you can handle it, they're not going to spray you for very long. If you're reacting and you keep trying to dodge them to breathe through your mouth, they're going to just harp on you more and more.

Troy: Totally. But you can take that principle into anything. Like you said in the beginning, they'll look for the weakness and then go for the jugular. Wherever you're weak, they'll go for that. If you react to water, then you get water.

Jon: The other example, just going back a little bit, with the stretcher we did such a good job, and mentally I was prepared thinking "we're going to have to do this the whole way down." At some point, in less time than I expected, they said, "Hey, you guys did a really good job, you worked as a team, let's pack up the stretcher, no more stretcher." They relieved us of that task.

But, I guarantee you if we had set that person down every hundred yards, we would have done it the whole way.

Troy: Absolutely. They've done studies in the Army – I think it was the Army where they did this – where they basically said, "You're playing this trick with yourself," so they ran psychological studies where if they said, "Hey everybody, we're going to go three miles," but then they went six, the moral plummeted. But if they said, "Hey, we're going six miles," and then they let them go at three, basically everybody was happy all the time. So it was just this contrast between what your expectation was and what was happening in reality, and it completely fundamentally changed everything.

You were thinking, “Worst case, we’re going to be doing this for four more days.”

Jon: The thing about the burpee task, I was thinking, “It’s probably going to be 800.”

Troy: It’s not going to be 450, it’s going to be way worse than that.

So we have three – arousal control, goal setting, visualization. What’s the fourth one? We should know this. We’re going to get busted when people listen to this.

Jon: Breathing and arousal control are two different ones.

Jarie: Are they? I don’t think so. Would you Google this?

Troy: I’m not going to Google. Let’s move on.

Darkest hour.

Jon: Positive self-talk.

Troy: Absolutely. Actually, we’re not moving on, this is huge. What was your experience with this? What’s your history with this whole idea? This is really foreign to a lot of people.

Jarie: What’s interesting is during this whole event there were times where I’m thinking, “I want to quit. I can’t handle it anymore, I need a friend.” Literally, I would say, “Guys, I need a friend,” and the team would come up and say, “What’s wrong? What are you thinking?” I’m sore, I’m tired.

Troy: Dude, you’re an Ironman.

Jarie: I know, but Ironman is different, this is different than the Ironman. Ironman is nothing compared to Kokoro. I swear to God, it’s the toughest thing I’ve ever done.

Troy: I was going to ask you that.

Jarie: There were times when I said, “Look, I need a friend.” Guys would step up and say, “What’s going on?” And I would tell them, “I’m feeling tired, my feet hurt, I’m hallucinating, I don’t know what the hell is going on.” They would say, “Okay. Tell me why you’re here. Tell me what’s going on. Tell me about your family,” so they would take my mind off of things.

Troy: They would get you out of your head.

Jarie: They would get me out of my head and get me back in the game. That's really important. The thing that I really like about the structure is it's a team event. Every person is going to have that point where they're feeling like, "I'm done," and you need your team to pull you through that.

There were times I said, "I just don't think I can do this anymore," and there were people that would be like, "Hey Bolander, everything is okay. Just walk one foot in front of the other, everything is cool. You've helped me, you're doing great, just keep it up, you're going to do good." It took five minutes, but after awhile you get your second wind and you're saying, "You're right, I'm good, thanks."

Troy: You go through these biorhythms, these cycles. That's an external stimulus. What about your own internal stimulus? "I'm in a deep dark hole, I am hating life, this sucks." Did you ever find yourself in that cycle and pulling yourself out?

Jarie: Yes. There were a couple times where I wasn't performing. What would happen was I'd be the last person to do something and I'd look over and my team is holding their sandbags over their head. "Bolander, they are not going to move those sandbags down until you finish." So I feel like I'm letting them down.

Troy: So you punished your team.

Jarie: And then I'm telling myself, "Get your shit together, you have to get this done."

Every single one of us had that moment where we're letting the team down, because they figured out what our limit was. For some people it was running, for some people it was pull-ups, for some people it was holding the sandbags. It was different for everyone, but everyone had that limit and we all had to suffer as a team because someone was last – and that was fine.

Troy: That's still an external peer pressure, you're punishing team, therefore you need to get your shit together. Did you have moments that you remember where you felt like, "I'm in a deep dark hole, oh my God my witness sees that I'm in a deep dark hole and I'm going to pull myself out by saying this is fucking awesome and I'm on holiday." Did you have any moments that were just purely about you in your own head?

Jarie: There were a couple of times. I think it was when we were in the surf and I'm thinking, "Can we not do the surf thing anymore?" This was after the hike

down and we had our swim buddy – you always have to have a swim buddy to go the surf because that’s important for safety. “Jon, you and I are going to go in the surf, you’re my swim buddy.” And I’m thinking, “God, I wish this would just stop.”

Troy: But did you get to the point where you saw that you were having that thought?

Jarie: Yes. There were times when I felt like, “Okay, they’re making us do this drill and this is stupid.” I understand why they’re making us do it and it’s a dumb drill and I’m thinking, “This is crazy, but okay, let’s just do it, this is the way it is. I’m close to the end, I’m just going to suck it up.”

Troy: What about you – mentally did you play that game, did you ever step back and say, “Part of me thinks this sucks and the witness part of me can say that’s not me, that’s just a part of me that thinks this sucks.”

Jon: I can think of several examples. I have five pages of quotes that I like that I down-swiped to a few mantras that I used for the event.

Troy: Can you share some?

Jon: Sure. For surf I used the mantra “it’s play time.”

Troy: That’s awesome.

Jon: I would channel my inner eight-year-old and say, “If we go to the beach I can play in the surf all the time.” I would just think about how this used to be really fun, so I’d say “it’s play time” and I’d put a big smile on my face and run into the water.

Troy: That’s awesome.

Jon: I think if you walk in with your head down, it’s cold, but if you run in and dunk yourself with a smile on your face it’s not that cold. That was one.

Troy: That was a conscious choice, you were preplanning how you were going to handle it.

Jon: It was preplanned to the point where they would give the order and I’d say, “It’s play time, let’s go.” So I handled the water fine, the water was pretty easy.

My other mantra for when shit gets really heavy is I say “ain’t nothing but a peanut.”

Troy: These are awesome.

Jon: If something was feeling particularly heavy, I'd just say, "Ain't nothing but a peanut."

Troy: What else? I want to hear more mantras, you have good mantras.

Jon: This moment came out of nowhere, but as Jarie alluded to earlier, we did a lot of "it pays to be a winner." There was one particular event that really sucked, that I hated.

Troy: Which we're not going to talk about.

Jon: It doesn't matter. We had to do one thing, there was a certain distance to go and then come back, and on the way back we had to do a duck walk holding our sandbags overhead. I don't like duck walks. He's terrible, I'm worse.

Jarie: You finally fixed yours and it was still terrible.

Jon: Since the last time we did those I worked a lot on hip mobility, I did a lot of yoga and my hips are much more flexible now, so that wasn't the issue. Myself and one other guy were in the front of the pack and we looked at each other, "We're both struggling, we're almost done, we're ahead of everybody, let's just finish together."

At some point my quads just froze, they just didn't want to go. I thought, "The good thing is I'm not in the back. The bad thing is I'm not going anywhere." I was out of mantras for that, that kind of caught me by surprise. My buddy who was with me was being a good team player and telling me, "Let's finish this together," he was trying to encourage me.

At some point the coach came over and said, "What's all this encouragement? You should be trying to win this thing. It pays to be a winner." So he finished. I didn't have that much farther to go, I had 15 yards, which is a lot less than the total distance.

Jarie: Like where I was, I was way behind.

Jon: I'm there, holding the bag over my head, and I'm a mess. Now my shoulders are fatiguing because I'm literally sitting in a squat because I can't move. One of the coaches is in my face and all of a sudden, I don't know where this came from, but first I floundered a little bit and fell on my butt once, and the coaches said, "If you stand up, we're going to make you start over."

I wanted nothing more than to stand up and let my quads recover. So I just sat there holding the bag, I breathed through a few cycles. All of a sudden, my eyes got real wide and I got all this energy out of nowhere. I looked at the coach and said, "Fuck this," and I just went. It hurt like crazy, but I finished.

Then my quads completely cramped up and I couldn't move. Thankfully, coming in second gave me a break.

Jarie: As opposed to coming in last.

Jon: There was no mantra that time. I just said, "I need to find energy somewhere," and it came and I finished. I didn't make the conscious decision, "This isn't working, but I know I can finish this somehow."

The mantra that should have come to my mind is that mantra I wanted to use throughout, "find a way," which was the mantra of Diana Nyad, the lady that swam from Cuba to Key West.

Troy: How many tries did she do that?

Jon: It took her four or five tries over the course of 40 years, she was the first person to do it and it took her 50-some odd hours.

Troy: Find a way.

Jon: I remember thinking I should have thought of that mantra, but that's what happened was I just found a way, I just told myself "there's a way to do this," and really the way was just go.

Jarie: That was what I think I learned, too. I was behind him, like way behind him, I was last and I was struggling. Everything was cramping and life sucked, I thought, "I don't want to do this anymore."

What had happened was the coaches look at you and you're struggling, you're putting out, we're still going to beat you up but what's going on.

Troy: We're not going to totally beat because we see you're already down.

Jarie: It was pretty awful. I'm last, literally last. I'm so last I can't even keep up. My quads are done.

Jon: Didn't they give you a different exercise at some point?

Jarie: There was a point where they said, "Okay, you can do this...." and then that didn't work either. I was just messed up.

Jon: I remember looking over and thinking, “He’s not doing the same thing I’m doing.”

Jarie: They tried to give me a break, but it didn’t work.

What you feel is you’re at that breaking point, literally “I’m done, this is not going to happen.” Then, I don’t know what it is, but you feel like, “Take a breath, settle yourself, it’s not that bad.” Then what happens is you get this second wind and you think, “I can do it.”

After that I felt much better. I struggled, things broke, not cool, but hey I got through it.

Troy: What do you mean things broke?

Jarie: I mean literally, there was a point where my quads were so tight I had to stand up. I’m sorry, they would have killed me if they would have saw it, but I had to stand up and stretch them. I’m last, what are you going to do to me? Throw me in the surf? Please, throw me in the surf. I’m begging you to throw me in the surf so I can get the swelling down because it’s so bad.

I remember one of the coaches came over to me and said, “You’re struggling with this.” I’m sweating and just to the point of breaking down and he says, “Look, settle in, take a breath, take a moment. You’ve got it, just relax.” I said, “I can’t, I’m fucking behind, I’m the last one.” He said, “Don’t worry about that, just get it done.”

Troy: That’s a great lesson right there. Who cares? So what, you’re last. You still have to solve the fact that you’re there and you have to go back and center yourself.

Jarie: My team had to suffer holding their sandbags over their heads, but there were plenty of times where I had to do that too, when someone else was last. That’s part of the team.

Jon: One thing I would add to that is there were a lot of moments, and Coach Divine talked about this at the beginning, where you have to not one of the big four but multiple. I think Jarie just touched on that.

For me, my breakthrough was that positive self-talk where I said, “Fuck it, I can do this.” But I also had to do micro goals. I didn’t just do those 15 yards in one go, I took two steps, then sat back in my squat, and then it didn’t feel any better so I took two more steps. I tried to rest.

But I went two steps at a time and I did have that fleeting thought, “I’m not going to make it, this is going to take forever going two steps at a time.” Then I decided, “No, it’s not going to take forever. I will get there eventually. It’s okay, just two at a time.”

Troy: I’ve been through similar things with mantras. I never liked Coach Divine’s “looking good, feeling good, ought to be in Hollywood,” I never liked it until the day it clicked. We were down on the beach and we were doing sandbag throws and broad jumps or something, I was literally singing this mantra out loud on the sand by myself. Nobody was near me, they were all ahead of me or behind me, and I’m like a four-year-old singing this song on the beach to myself and having so much fun even though my quads are burning.

Jarie: It’s all attitude, right?

Troy: Did you have any mantras?

Jarie: We talked about this, part of the camp is they take you through what are your mantras, yoga, and the mental part of it. That’s the nice thing is there’s the physical that breaks you down to the point where you’re raw and then they build you back up and this is what you feel, “we’re trying to guide you in the way where you can do it.”

The mantra I had was “focus on the task at hand, just don’t pound sand.”

Troy: I remember you told me that before you went in.

Jarie: That’s a two-fold thing. One, don’t think about everything else. Then also, the pounding sand thing is, hey, you have to put out, you have to not just go through the motions, you have to be in the moment and be part of the team.

When we were talking about that during the camp it was a pretty big revelation to me, because it’s important to be in the moment and focus on what you have to do, but also put out because the team is depending on you. Everyone has strengths and weaknesses. Some guys are going to run faster, some guys are going to lift more, and you all have to figure out how to get there together.

Jon: There was a moment I can think of for each person where they stepped up and they were the strongest person on the team.

Jarie: Yes, totally.

Troy: You’re not just making that up?

Jarie: No, absolutely.

Troy: That's like a storyline you hear.

Jarie: Everyone stepped up. There were times when we were all really despondent and there was one person on the team that would say, "Guys, snap out of it, we're going to do it." That was really important.

Jon: That's not just saying that.

Troy: You had a big variety. You said to me from 18 to 53. What were the height ranges again?

Jarie: 5'2" to 6'3". Crossfit to skinny to huge. Men and women.

Troy: Huge variety of ages. What was the male/female split on this one?

Jon: We finished with 13 and two of them were girls.

This isn't the only example for the girls, but a great example for the girls was there was a moment where we were all really tested to stay awake and the guys were all sleeping and the two girls were, "Wake up!" and they just had so much energy.

Jarie: We're in the van and Kordell is in the front seat and she said, "Look, you all are going to fall asleep and we're going to get punished." I'm not going to tell you how you get punished, but you get punished. She crawls over three seats to make sure we're all awake.

Troy: Everybody is playing a role.

Jarie: Every single teammate at one point stepped up and got us through it. There was not one person that didn't inspire us to feel like, "Wow, I can't let you down. You're the one that's going to get us through this."

That's really important and I think that's the critical piece of a team that's different than an individual. There are times when you just feel like you want to quit, you need a friend.

Troy: I'm still stuck back on your mantra. You realize your mantra has 11 notes? It's odd, it doesn't make any sense.

Jarie: That doesn't matter to me in my head.

Troy: They should be eights, tens, twelves, and this is 11 notes.

Jarie: To me it matters.

Troy: That's awesome. I had one when I used to do Ultras, which was "slowly the acorn seed becomes the mighty oak," or something like that. It was this little thing that served for "eventually I'll get there," even if it's five hours, 10 hours, 20 hours, or whatever.

Okay, awesome, let's keep moving on.

What was the funniest thing that happened? It sounds like you guys don't remember most of it because it's just one big blur, but is there anything that sticks out as hilarious?

Jon: I think it was the hallucination.

Troy: What was the best hallucination? The forest was whispering to you or something. I don't believe there was anything there, I think that was completely in your head.

Jarie: I had two pretty big hallucinations. The first one was people laughing at me. The second one was bouncy houses and snowmen.

Troy: When did this happen?

Jarie: This happened as we were going down the hill.

Jon: I think the best one was Israelite.

Jarie: Israelite was starting to really trip out, his eyes were glazed over and he was saying, "The colors look so cool, I think I'm on acid." I said, "You haven't had acid." I don't know what acid is like, but he was tripping hard.

Troy: Sleep deprivation does things.

Jon: That was my low. For me, it was the second night. Some people were very lucid and then they would hallucinate. I didn't have any weird hallucinations, I just had really blurry vision and I felt really unsafe. It was the moment where I needed help.

Israelite and I were leading that movement, so we were in the back leading from behind. I told him, "I need your help. I'm going to hold onto your backpack because I can't see. I'm having trouble seeing where I'm stepping, everything looks really blurry."

Then I realized later he was not in a position to be guiding me, he was tripping hard. So he and I were both struggling in the back.

Jarie: There was a point where I was in the front. The challenge was we were going too fast so people were separating, and we wanted to stay together. I got in the front and I had the pace, so I was setting a reasonable pace. All of a sudden, Israelite comes up and he says, "Hey man, how's it going?" I said, "What are you doing? You're supposed to be in the back." We're leading a single file line going down this road. He said, "The colors are so vivid." I asked him, "Are you high?" Weird stuff, so we had to bring him back down.

Then we got to a rest stop and we got our act together. Deitrick was the one that said, "Look guys, we have to step the pace up. We're going to make it. Come on, let's just push through." He was the one that pushed us a lot harder.

Jon: That's another example of someone who hadn't necessarily done that up until that point.

Jarie: Right.

Troy: So it was his turn at that point.

Jarie: Deitrick really stepped it up, because we were kind of lethargic at that point.

Troy: That's pretty cool.

Jarie: When I was leading the column we were going slow.

Troy: Night hiking and navigation sucks, because you crawl.

Jon: We were trying to stay in a single file line, but from the back it was my job with Deitrick to make sure we were keeping our eyes on the road. At this point, when he stepped up that's kind of when I had gathered myself a little bit and I had gotten beyond the blurry vision, so I was trying to help him. People were walking out of the single file line, not because they were being lazy or careless, they were literally wandering and almost walking down a slope.

Jarie: Because they were falling asleep.

Jon: It was really dangerous. We would have to walk over and grab them, put them back in the line and say, "Hold onto the person in front of you."

Troy: We did this for Heavy, remember we said, "Everybody has to grab everybody's pack," and we made the big camel train. Everybody had to be literally holding onto the pack ahead of them. You guys didn't do something like that?

Jon: We did as necessary. In that case it was just kind of an annoying thing in Heavy, and this was out of necessity.

Jarie: We were at the point where I have to believe there were times when I was asleep walking down this hill. I said, "I have to have confidence in the guy in front of me, because I have no idea where the fuck I am."

Troy: So it sounds like your funny moment was hallucinations. Were there any moments through the whole thing where you just thought, "This is ludicrous," or "This is hilarious," or were you just managing the whole thing?

Jon: I laughed a lot at the ridiculous requests from the coaches. There's not one single moment where I die laughing, but I tended to smile a lot when they would give us ridiculous tasks.

I even got Mark Divine at one point. Someone sprayed me in the face with water and I smiled, he said "What, do you like water?" That doesn't sound that funny, but in the moment I just cracked up and he cracked up.

Jarie: The one that was really good, you probably don't remember this. Remember when you had the snot?

Jon: No.

Jarie: You shot a snot wad.

Jon: Oh, I do remember this. I was in an ice bath and at some point I realized I had inhaled a little bit of water, so I had this phlegm and I thought, "I have to get rid of this." I was about to spit into the ice bath and I thought, "Wait, I'm going to get in a lot of trouble if I do that." So I spat out of the ice bath onto the grinder and immediately realized, "That was probably worse."

Immediately he yelled, "Get out of the ice bath." I thought, "Oh shit, I really screwed up." He said, "You put your nose on that. Sniff it up."

Troy: And you sniffed it up?

Jon: I sniffed up once and I was so worried, "I didn't get all of it, I'm going to get in trouble." And he told me his expectation was not that I would do it.

Jarie: He was like, "Holy shit, I can't believe he did."

Troy: That's awesome.

Jon: I feel like at that point I was on top of their game, I knew what I was going to get in trouble for, so every decision was, "Is this going to get me in trouble?"

Jarie: It was awesome. He even said when we were done, “I can’t believe he did that.” It was super funny.

Troy: I think the big thing is we do this stuff, all this idiocy, we don’t do it for the event, we do it to take into life. What are you walking out of this thing with? What’s the takeaway?

Jarie: Good question. For me it’s more you want to push yourself to the point where you think you’re going to fail and then you want to push a little more. Being an entrepreneur, people saying “this won’t work,” when you have the experience that we went through, everything is an easy day. After that there’s nothing you can throw at me that’s not going to be like “no big deal.” Issue with this, that, or the other thing.

Troy: It really does reset your bar.

Jarie: Oh, yeah. The bullshit bar is up, it will take a lot to get me aroused to the point where I think, “Oh yeah, this is screwed up.”

Troy: You’re in the same boat, you have a startup going. Probably your funders are not going to say, “Hey Jonathon, get down on the grinder and sniff your snot back into your nose.” That’s not going to happen.

Jarie: I’m impressed that you did that. Coach was saying, “I can’t believe he did that. I didn’t think he would do it.”

Jon: I think for me I completely agree with what you just said. It’s not just overcoming the obstacles that you expect to see in your day to day life, but for me in particular (I don’t want to go into too much detail) I’m also thinking about a little bit of a career shift and I have a few irons in the fire. I’m talking to a lot of my other friends who are my age who are contemplating career changes or trying something new, they’re very hesitant and very scared, and I feel sort of this invincibility. I know if I try something new I’m going to suck at it at first, but I’m going to beat it to death until I’m good at it.

Jarie: No doubt.

Jon: I’m not scared of taking on challenges like that, whether it’s in what I’m doing now or if it’s a new challenge.

Troy: I hear getting on a treadmill with a 60 pound pack is a good way to start.

Jon: Brute force until someone tells me better.

Troy: I was curious about this, I really wanted to hear this from you guys. That's certainly SEALFIT HQ, that's the party line coming from them, "This is about training for life," but it sounds like for you guys it really was useful.

Jarie: What else could we experience that's going to be worse, honestly?

Troy: BUDS.

Jarie: I'm too old for BUDS. In my life as an entrepreneur, in my life as a corporate world, there's nothing that could compare. You could throw anything at me and I'm going to think it's an easy day, let's just get it done.

Troy: I'm not going to duck walk through this meeting, so it's good.

Jarie: That's nothing compared to everyone else freaking out, everyone else figuring out we're all not cool with whatever. For me, I've been through way worse than this, this is an easy day, focus on the task at hand, let's just make sure we're doing the right thing. There's nothing that can phase me now.

Entrepreneurship is a struggle and it's not easy, but compared to what I've been through with Kokoro Camp it's nothing. Someone doesn't want to give you money? Okay, fine, next guy. I'm focused on what I have to do, that's just the way it is.

Jon: I think for me the other thing is it's not just the event, for me it's all the training and the hours I put in before the event. Those are making me a better person and making me more confident. All the things I took out of the event, I also took out of the training that went into the event.

Jarie: I agree.

Troy: You mean all two weeks you trained?

Jarie: I trained five months.

Troy: You trained hard for five months for this. You talked to me about it.

Jarie: You have to train. So did Jon.

Troy: How long do you need to train for this?

Jon: It seriously depends on your baseline.

Troy: What's the range?

Jarie: For me, I'm a triathlete, baseline was five to six months.

Troy: And that's coming from an Ironman.

Jarie: Finishing an Ironman.

Troy: I've always said Ironman triathlete men and women are basically weird specialized creatures that are incredibly unable to squat, like you.

Jarie: I couldn't squat to save my life. I think it just depends on your level of fitness.

Troy: They're a pretty elite level of fitness, but highly specialized, not very generalized.

Jarie: I think a lot of it is your attitude, you have to have a good attitude. You have to have the attitude of "Whatever they come at me with, I'm just going to do it." Don't worry about failure. You're going to fail.

Troy: That's the whole point.

Jarie: The camp is all about pushing you to the limit, so you will fail. It's how you deal with failure that is really important. You just have to fail and keep on moving on. Don't get in your head, "I'm some elite guy," just focus on the task at hand. If you fail, you fail, move on.

Jon: My physical training, I started training for this specific type of event about a year ago, but before doing all of this I played rugby for 12 years. I think rugby is a great background, it's an 80 minute game but it's endurance, it's strength, it's speed, it's stamina, it's toughness. There's no path, so you're always hurt, you're always playing through discomfort. Your effort directly effects the comfort and safety of your teammates. So it's a wonderful background to come from.

I'm not a triathlete, I'm not an Ironman, so endurance was what I had to add. It's an 80 minute game with no subs, so I had some baseline of endurance.

Troy: You had super high intensity, short burst – not short burst, but stamina. That's a different kind of endurance than 60 hours.

Jon: Not since high school have I had to run more than a mile at a time until a year ago.

Troy: You went all the way up to... what's your max?

Jarie: 50 miles.

Troy: That's totally different.

What was the background of folks coming in?

Jarie: They were all over the map. There was Crossfit, gym owners,...

Troy: How did they do? Crossfit specific folks I find tend to struggle.

Jarie: There was one person who was a Crossfit gym owner who only did Crossfit, he ended up washing out.

Troy: That's happened a number of times. I think strength athletes generally.

Jarie: I think that he didn't have the durability to go the distance.

Troy: I think you just nailed it, it's durability, it's a timed domain, it's movement of weight across huge amounts of time, and strength endurance.

Jarie: There were certain things that he did awesome, like murph. He crushed murph.

Jon: He crushed the middle portion of murph, then he had to walk.

Troy: You run into people like that, we've seen this with GORUCKs. We have people who come in who are big into this sport or that sport, they come in and they're really specialized. They get into something like this that's six, 12, 24, 48 hours, 60 hours, and it's a totally different animal.

Jon: That being said, on the website for Kokoro on that page it says you should have done either a marathon or a half-Ironman, as far as endurance goes. I've never run more than 12 miles, I've never run a half marathon.

Troy: I think the reason they put that there is that's convenient proxy, "Hey, if you've done this you've suffered and you've learned how to train for something." They're not going to say "or you should have played rugby," that's just a weird comparison.

Jon: You need to add endurance, but you doesn't necessarily need to be an ultra athlete to do it.

Jarie: No.

Troy: In fact, in some ways I think it's actually a negative because you become so weirdly specialized in that.

Jon: Typically ultra runners don't have the strength.

Troy: I lost all my strength when I started doing ultra, I lost all my body mass.

Jarie: Ironman triathletes don't have pull-up strength, they don't have push-up strength.

Troy: They can't squat.

Jarie: They can't squat worth shit. You need to have that balance.

Troy: You did more than five squats, I heard.

Jarie: I did a ton of squats.

Jon: Earlier when we talked about training, I think that having variety in training is really important.

Jarie: That's critical.

Jon: You have to every week run, ruck, lift, yoga, Crossfit, all of it.

Troy: Absolutely.

Jon: In SEALFIT they break the workouts into those different sections. Whether you do all of that in one workout or you do it spread out through the week, you at least need to be proficient in all of those things.

Durability is super important. Mobility – ducks walks, if you don't have mobility, you're screwed. A lot of guys didn't have good shoulder mobility, so carrying the logs, locking out overhead is really hard if you don't have shoulder mobility. Using your biceps to hold it is not sustainable.

Jarie: You can't do that for a minute, there's no way.

Troy: So variety.

Jarie: You definitely need to have that variety.

Troy: What's next? One of the things that I heard from Commander Divine, I think from Coach Cummings as well, is this idea that you pick a big target and you say, "I'm going to do Kokoro." You guys just both got through Kokoro 32. I've talked to a couple friends who went through Kokoro and they're always saying, "I'm feeling kind of anchored, rudderless, I don't know what my next thing is." They go through the event and they've got this huge high and then they go off the cliff, and I call it post-event depression. I've had it every time I go through an event. Commander Divine really helped me out when he said, "Because you need to pick the next target as you're getting close to completing this one. Figure out what your next one is and start thinking about that."

If you want to share it, great. If you don't want to share it, or just say "I have it" or "I don't have it." I'm curious if either of you have thought about what a next thing is. Can you see past this?

Jarie: For me, the one thing, the PT test, was something that I thought I could do better at. My next goal is just double my PT test.

Troy: That's serious.

Jarie: I know, I agree. I want to double it. My next training goal is I want to double the Kokoro PT test, so that's what I'm working on.

That's not as big a beat down.

Troy: You're not going to do a 120 hour event.

Jarie: No. I've done 50 miles before, maybe I'd do another 50 mile. That's easy, that's an easy day. For me, really the big challenge for me is I want to double the standard, I want to double the minimums.

Troy: Which takes you up close to the officer standards.

Jarie: Still, I feel like I should be able to double it. There's no reason why I can't. Even though I'm older, I should be able to double it. So I'm going to focus on doubling it. That's mine.

Troy: Cool. Do you have something you want to talk about? If you don't want to share whatever it is, just whether you have something or not.

Jon: Sure. I have a few events I'm signed up for. None are harder than Kokoro right now. It's been a lot of work and I've really enjoyed it, but I also want to do some events that are fun. I'm signed up for Endeavor Team Challenge with a friend of mine.

Troy: That's in September, right? That's the two day nav?

Jon: There's a ruck and there's night navigation, it's a series of things.

Troy: That's supposed to be an awesome event.

Jon: It's just fun. It's 30 – 36 hours.

Jarie: That's nothing, easy day.

Jon: I think it will be nice to take a little bit of a break and do something fun. I'm by no means going to take my foot off the pedal as far as getting in better shape, but as far as events go I'm still up in the air.

Troy: Cool. Good.

Jarie: Thanks, Troy. I appreciate you interviewing us, it was awesome.

Troy: Turn the tables for a change.

Jarie: Thanks everyone for listening. We had such an awesome time. Hopefully everyone gets inspired by what we talked about and you all go off and do whatever challenge you feel is good for you. Hopefully one day you'll be at Kokoro.

Take care.