

## Paleo Solution – Episode 139

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Robb Wolf: Hey folks Robb Wolf here. Greg Everett in the house and we have an awesome guest today, a long time huge supporter of everything Paleo, PaleoSolution-related Mark Divine, founder and CEO of US Tactical which is the parent organization of SEAL Fit. Mark how are you doing man?

Mark Divine: Doing fantastic Robb. Thank you very much and Greg also, nice to see you guys on air sort of.

Robb Wolf: We talk Mark out of doing an actual video feed because then he would see us in our under wears.

Mark Divine: Actually I've seen you when you were younger before remember?

Robb Wolf: Oh well. Our gym is a don't ask don't tell gym.

[Cross-talk]

Robb Wolf: Bare back admission district pod cast.

Mark Divine: No. It's great to be on your show. Thank you very much for having me Robb.

Robb Wolf: Very honored to have you on and I just realized a couple of days ago the odd confluence with today is actually the 8<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Operation Red Wings.

Mark Divine: No kidding. I wasn't aware of that. That's very good to know.

Robb Wolf: And so one of the largest loss of life in the United States military special operations community and remarkable heroism and loss - thoughts are going out to all the friends and family of the folks affected by that. We had Matt Axelson's widow was a trainer of ours for a good period of time.

Man heart felt grievance to all those folks, huge thank you to the sacrifice involved with that. So it's kind of ironic that we have you here today talking about qualification for special operations and SealFit and all that sort of stuff.

Mark could you give folks a little bit of your background, your dossier is longer than my arm and I've long monkey-like arms. So can you tell folks a little bit about your self.

Mark Divine:

Sure. I'll give you the clip note version. Well I guess I got my start first career as a CPA in Wallstreet and I bring that up only because that always raises people's eyebrows because going from CPA to Navy SEAL is a little unusual. I'm still pretty sure that I'm the only one to ever done that path. That's how unusual it is.

It was interesting because the seeds for Sealfit was actually formed way back then unbeknownst to me because it was my martial arts training that really was kicking away at me from the inside out that allowed me to have the courage to step up and take a different path from the traditional white collar Wallstreet path that I was sort of groomed for I guess by my family and the culture back there.

So I ended up at 25 basically pulling the head out of the rut I guess you should say and saying I'm definitely gonna go and be a Navy Seal. I'm not gonna maybe be in the Navy Seal. I'm not gonna go check it out. I am gonna be a Navy Seal and I started going to the recruiters and of course got laugh at out of a few offices and they thought I was crazy throwing an MBA and a CPA and what amount to about 150k in salary in today's dollars to earn like \$500 a month to run around at officer candidate school playing "Mr. Navy"

That's what I wanted to do. Being in the Seal is like a warrior siren call of our culture and I think you guys would agree especially some of the legendary exploits in the past years it's always been that way that it hasn't been as I noticed because the media attention was really shunned which seemed to have changed recently.

But the Seals were always kind of held up as the bell weather - if you really want to go test your self and you want to work with an extremely elite crew, known as the most elite in the world not necessarily can do everything that all the special ops can do but what they do they do extremely well.

So not to go too long in the tooth I decided to go that route and I went into Seal training in 1990 and BUD/S class 170. The

background that I had was just perfectly suited to just crush the training and I was a competitive swimmer and a competitive rower so I had that gut wrenching high intensity training under my belt as well as the endurance I need to go the long distance and the mental toughness through my martial arts training and as a tri athlete.

It all came together so when I went to BUD/S - I'm also admittedly a little bit more mature than some of the guys. I was 26 when I went through and BUD/S is all about attitude. It's really fun for me. Everyday I showed up and said this is awesome. I'm getting paid to run down the beach and there's lots of eye candy and this is an unbelievable experience.

I was contrasting it every moment to sitting with my little beanie on pecking numbers on the -

Robb Wolf: Stock exchange floor.

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Mark Divine: Yeah exactly wherever I was and talking to people everyday who really didn't give a rat's ass about because my pay check wasn't 6 and a half figures and is not bigger.

So I loved it and I think really the attitude that really carried my through BUD/S and I ended up graduating as honor man in my class which is number grad and then I went to Seal team 3, did 3 tours there, 3 platoon tours each one was about 18 months in duration - an incredible experience. I got to go to some 30 odd countries.

First through out in the far east and then in the middle east as we shifted focus over there. Those years we weren't in a combat war time footing and so most of my missions were really kind of intelligence oriented, training foreign nationals - those types of things.

Not to diminish those missions I wasn't slinging rounds down range like the guys have done in the last 10 years and then I got out when I got married in 1996 right as I have shifted over to Seal Delivery Vehicle Team One in Hawaii which is the team that runs little mini submersibles which is a cool job by the way.

It's a cold job and it's a very cool job driving around for 12 to 13 hours with a mini sub. It didn't get much better than that. Maybe if you could take a 6 pack of beer with you would be better.

Robb Wolf: Exactly.

Mark Divine: Anyways I was going for the first 6 months of my marriage and I should've known this was going to happen but that I was crossing my fingers but my wife had one of those come to Jesus meetings with me when I got home from one deployment one day and she said it's either the Navy or me. She didn't say it quite those terms.

But that's when I realized that the Navy if they really had wanted me to have a wife they would have issued me one. I better make a choice. So I chose to get out and stay in the reserves which is pretty cool. So the reserves - what was neat about that experience so now I've got total of eight years in the active when I got out into the Reserves it allowed me to get into the business world.

And so I became an entrepreneur like you guys and kind of wanted to cut my teeth and I couldn't imagine going to work and working for the man again and so I started up a micro brewery up in Coronado called the Coronado Brewing Company. It's still going today. I didn't see eye to eye with my partner so I sold my interest about 2000 and started US Tactical to what became US Tactical.

Anyways I guess I'm getting all long here but the rest is kind of history. We got into what I've done with US Tactical and Training Special Ops and then that's how it all came up about what getting out of the Navy and focusing on my family and getting into the business community was the right move and it really helped me align the post seal Mark Divine with the pre Seal and kind of bring those experiences together into really what I think has become fulfilling my life purpose which is through SealFit.

Robb Wolf: That's awesome. I just had one more question for you related to how the whole seal thing got on your radar but also a quick comment. I've been very very fortunate in being able to work with a lot of folks in and around the naval special warfare community and the Seal community in the last three years and everybody who has gone through Seal qualification but they were active-duty typically in non war time period to a person they are always very very quick to throw that caveat in.

It's just very intriguing to me. There are different strata obviously even within the Seal community but there's an enormous amount of respect from the guys that were in the teams pre-9/11 and then after that event and the difference in the world, the difference in the demands of the work and whatnot. So it's just an enormous amount of respect for what the guys are doing today during the last ten years.

Mark Divine:

Most people think a Navy Seal is a Navy Seal even if you go out on a training mission they think you're lying and that you're actually going out and going across the beach with a knife and a K bar on your mouth and you're gonna be slitting some guy's throat somewhere and it's just not true.

We do an enormous amount of training and we do an enormous amount of other things. We're kind of like warrior statesmen. I know guys are out posted at embassies in different embassies. There's only 2000 total Seals in the entire world and we're in 45 different countries this moment as I speak.

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And so it's a tiny force that packs a mean punch and so we do all sorts of things but combat is not necessarily one that unless it's a full on war like Vietnam or Iraq that guys see a whole lot of traditionally. They're doing much of a sneaky peak type of training or type of operation where if you get caught then bullets start flying then you're kind of screwed up.

And so we do have an enormous amount of respect for guys who've done hundreds of back-to-back combat missions and honed their warrior skills to that highest degree and I didn't really get to experience that in its fullest. I did mobilize to Iraq in 2004 as a reserved officer and it was to a special project to help the Navy decide whether the Marine Corp should be part of special ops cuz they weren't and they have become since then.

And in that role I got to go out with both Seal Team One and the Marines on combat missions. So that was fun but it wasn't quite the same as being a young gun and leading the missions myself.

Robb Wolf:

How did becoming a Seal get on your radar at all because the first time I heard about it was Richard Marcinko, you know, 'Rogue

Warrior'. I read that one when I was wrapping up high school. It perked my interest. Had I thought about that a little bit more I might have gone to down that road. You're a CPA, you're sitting in Wall Street. How the heck did this get in your reader?

Mark Divine:

Yeah it's interesting. I can't remember the exact first moment that I thought about being a Seal. I think what happened is my brother was working for this really intense guy. His name was Jeff and I can't remember his last name right now and he owns his own business.

He was selling office equipment like printers and fax and stuff like that and I remember that Brad telling me this story about this guy. The story was about a sales meeting and they call it the Jeff - his last name is Shafer yeah - Jeff Shafer neck tie close referring to closing a sale and then it was - this story relates believe me - back to the my impression.

And so Brad told me first that pre-emp the story that Jeff was a former Navy seal and I guess made an impression on me because I had heard of the Seals but I didn't really know too much about them.

Anyways he said that he had been calling on this one guy for like a year and every time he went out the guy would set appointments for him and he would go show up at the appointment and then the guy would blow him off. He just wouldn't take the appointment.

And so finally in the last straw that Jeff went off and did this and Jeff must have been having one of his moments, maybe having a flashback of Vietnam or something when the guy's secretary said sorry is not available. He just got off his chair, stormed into his office, walk up to his desk the guy's eyes were the size of saucers.

He grabbed him by the neck tie and slammed his head down the desk and said you will take this appointment with me now. Broke the guys nose and Brad was telling me this story I'm like holy cow that is intense. What kind of guy would do that?

About a month later I met this guy Jeff and he was exactly what you would expect from a Seal. He had this steely stare that just pierced you and he was unbelievably confident and he did not

open his mouth unless the word that was coming out of it was gonna be powerful and meaningful.

I was just so impressed with this guy and so I started asking him questions about his background and about the training and about the Seals and I got really inspired but what he was telling me. Basically what he said Mark if you want a life changing experience, if you want to be the best it can be, if you want to be someone special then go for it.

And I said well I'm a little concerned about what it would mean with my career and how far it will set me back and he goes listen Mark. He goes in six years I think I was 24 at the time cuz in six years how old are you gonna be a stay on Wall Street. I said I'll be 30.

He goes great. Well in 6 years how old will you be if you become a Navy Seal? And I said 30. He goes right. He goes so wouldn't you rather be 30 and have been a Navy seal than be 30 and just doing the same thing every day for the last six years? And it was so simple but it really struck me that he was right. You've got to go after your dream and not worry about your age or the consequences or who's gonna pass you up on the gate because all that stuff is completely irrelevant.

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That's someone else's life. So it helped me clarify that I needed to leave my life for myself and take dramatic action if I wanted to operate at that level and so that's when I really shifted and said you know what I'm going to do this. It took me a few weeks to really orient myself to what it was, what it really meant to be a Seal and the more I learn the more passionate I became.

And then there was this moment in terms of not a single moment like a second but it happened over a period of a few weeks, that moment that time frame where I just knew that I was going to happen. I got the sense. I've been visualizing myself being a Seal at that point for about six months, seeing it in every aspect like seeing myself literally patrolling in jungles of Vietnam or whatever I thought being a Seal was gonna be like at that time.

I would visualize myself parachuting and diving and running and gunning and all that kind of stuff and there was a point in time like

I said this moment where all of a sudden I started waking up knowing that I was gonna be a Seal it wasn't thinking it was knowing.

Robb Wolf: Right. That's awesome.

Greg Everett: That's pretty cool but wait did the guy get the sale or what?

Mark Divine: I think he got charged.

Greg Everett: He got an assault and battery charge?

Mark Divine: That's a great story yep.

Robb Wolf: I would feel hire him for my firm for my HR department. That would just be amazing.

Greg Everett: Everyone's gonna be real squared away.

Mark Divine: This stuff just doesn't happen anymore.

Robb Wolf: No. That's awesome though. Mark could you layout for folks what the process is? We're going to talk about qualification, BUD/S and different stuff like that but in so what is the process of becoming a seal.

So typically this gets on somebody's radar like the story again is kind of similar like usually somebody has a life altering event. They usually meet somebody who's been in special operations and it just seems to click for that person then it's not just like you would sign up. You arrive at the store and you're like hey become a Seal today \$29.95, 6 easy installments.

What is the process then when somebody has made the decision to do that and this is reasonably similar with most of the special operations scenes, but we'll focus on this yeah?

It's interesting the Seals and all SOF have a recruiting effort and this is kind of a joke. They really don't need to recruit anybody because the organization attracts like moths a flame the right kind of guys and it also attracts a lot of the wrong kind of guys and it's a process that weeds those guys out.



So that's really what it's all about. The recruiting I think is more for the Big Nave I call the sizzle on the steak. They like to recruit for Seals so that they can get the 99.9% who aren't qualified into the regular Navy so they can scrub an X and make food and stuff like that.

Greg Everett: Someone's got to do it

Mark Divine: Exactly.

Robb Wolf: That would've been me.

Mark Divine: You're right. Today you could see a movie like Act of Valor but for most of us we met somebody that inspired us and we started a conversation, we started to do our research and it just grew on us like mold and we just couldn't shake it. So the smart guys are the ones who then seek out mentors and seek out help.

Like Marcus Luttrell and his book 'Lone Survivor'. He was the Red Wing survivor actually. He talks about a former Seal down in Texas who took him under his wing and had him literally on a training program that pretty much assured Luttrell's success because he had that backing of a guy who'd been there and done that working with him side-by-side and challenging him and getting under skin and basically giving him the full package, full physical and mental and extremely helpful.

So I guess that's kind of the first point is that you poke your hand up in the recesses of your own mind and say I'm gonna do this and then again I'm talking about the successful guys here and then you start preparing. You start preparing yourself physically and mentally and just through knowledge for. So you research and you come across maybe navyseals.com or SealFit or NorCal CrossFit.

And you start talking to people and you start training then you realize that you've got to meet the screening test requirement to even have a chance and so the screening test is fairly simple on its surface and it is as many push-ups you can do in two minutes, as many situps you can do in two minutes, as many pull-ups and then hanging pull ups you can do period without falling off the bar.

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It's a mile and a half run and a 500 m swim and the Navy publishes for these times in numbers that are fairly ridiculous actually. I'm sure you guys have seen them. I think you've got to do more than 6 pull ups and 44 sit ups and push-ups. You've got the 12 minutes in the run and 12 minutes in the swim or something like that.

Don't quote me on those but it's somewhere around there and those are minimum standards and of course you don't stand a chance if you just get those minimum standards. I'm not even sure why they publish them.

But once you start training for that you'd get into the pipeline and you are connected to people like me you then start to realize okay you actually have to meet pretty significant elevated standards on that screening test and so people will start training for that screening test and what they're shooting for is to exceed 100 push-ups in two minutes, 100 situps in two minutes, exceed 20 pull ups dead hang, break a nine minute in a mile and a half run and try to break eight minutes in the 500 m swim and those are really competitive scores.

Then the rest of the package that you would submit would really be about the ASVAB if you're enlisted, or if you're an officer your grades and your degrees and the interview and they look at the whole picture. They want to make sure that you are both a leader as well as a fitness stud. They look for well-rounded candidates not just those with this singularly focused on maybe wanting all their lives but at the same time they try to ferret out who's got that grit and who doesn't and that's extremely difficult.

So because it's so difficult they really over shoot the moon. They say we'll take 1300 people roughly into training. We expect roughly to get 200 out and of those 1300 there all gonna be at elevated standards in the screening test, they're all gonna be able to pass the ASVAB and the other wicked set of high-level and they're all gonna have good recommendations.

They're gonna look alike good candidates on paper but that one element that cannot be possibly tested for in a psych eval or an interview is mental toughness. It's grit. It's what we call Kokoro here in Sealfit, that non quitting spirit. So that's the part that really defines who's gonna make it and who's not.

So let me just summarize the process. You decide you want to do it. The guy puts a hand up there and hopefully start to search out a mentor. The Navy put together a mentor program to help with this process but you can't access this mentors until you're actually on contract to go to boot camp so it's kind of late in the game and I'm thinking from what I've seen most successful candidates train for several years before they ever even show up at boot camp.

They're either in a college sports program or a martial artist or a tri athlete and they do all sorts of things. If you put your hand up say I want to be a Seal go to a recruiter and they sign you up on a contract. It's almost too late to do the right kind of training.

So then let's say you do the foundational training. You're really locked and loaded. You go to the recruiter. Assuming you pass all the wickets they put you into a delayed entry candidate pool which means there's a lot of guys ahead of you so maybe four months or six months down the road you'll end up at boot cam and then this is the enlisted path. The officer path would be to go to officer candidate school or you're coming out of the Naval Academy go straight to BUD/S but then you go to boot camp.

Boot camp is easy day. I think it's 12 weeks. That's just basically holding your breath and getting through it. Then there's a program now called BUD/S Preparatory School, happens after boot camp and so as kind of a cadre, all the guys heading towards BUD/S or now the SWCC I think they go there as well - the Special Warfare Combatant Crewman who are the boat drivers and you go - it's roughly 4 months but it's one of the schools that you test out of it as soon as you're ready and if you're not ready you'll stay there.

And so they're really working on your combat sidestroke and you're running skills and PTing you once or twice a day. So that's another period where they try to prepare people for the rigors of BUD/S.

And then the next step of course is the famous BUD/S training. BUD/S stands for Basic Underwater and Demolition Seal School broken down into three phases with a follow on school it's called Seal Qualification Training and the first phase is all physical conditioning and mental conditioning I would say.

And that's the phase they try to get the class down from let's say 200 guys to maybe 50 and they do that through pretty intense period of physical wickets. So you've got to jump through timed runs, timed swims, timed obstacle courses and if you fail a single one of them I think you might get two shots at some of them but if you fail them you're out.

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They're very very strict with the standards because they know they need to get this class down from 200 to 50 and then let's say by the time hell week goes around which is a typically a fourth or the 5<sup>th</sup> week the class might have been whittled down to like 125, hell week comes around and of course you know that training piece is the piece resistance of the first phase.

And that's really see who's got the capacity to just go the distance and really not quit and who's gonna be a good teammate in a firefight or in a combat situation. It's 6 days long but 5 days of no sleep, 5 nights round-the-clock training really intense and that also flushes out another probably 75 people to 80 people. So now you're down to 50 or 60 at the end of hell week.

And that's when the class really kind of gels as a team and starts doing some serious skills-based training and that takes them into the second phase which is land warfare or actually it's diving. It was land warfare when I went through it and so you do opening close circuit diving.

And that tends to be a pretty challenging phase because you're PTing, you're doing all the other stuff that you needed to do, all the runs, O courses, PTs but you're also doing two dives a day and that gets pretty challenging when you're spending a few hours underwater and all that prep and post dive work plus doing all the other wickets.

Robb Wolf:

So a lot of this stuff is just trying to get people very both physically and mentally fatigued and then stick them in this super detail oriented situations and see what the heck happens and see if they start losing the detail orientation, start getting cranky and this is a lot of the stuff that they're looking at.

Mark Divine:

That's a really good point. You're right. You're gonna learn how to dive in BUD/S but it's just really basic basic. It's basically how to

survive underwater and basically navigate. The whole point like you said is not the skills during BUD/S cuz it is basic underwater skill training.

It is to get you at all levels - metabolic pathways and all different scenarios. So one of the hardest things for a lot of people is just the long grind of BUD/S. It tends to be when all is said and done it's about nine months of the just day-to-day complete grind and they're just grinding you down and so some people have difficulty with the long haul.

Others have difficulty with a short intense stuff where everything is on the line like pool comp where you get attacked underwater. Your bottles are ripped off of you and you've got to stay under while you reconstitute your entire dive rig and get oxygen and own the situation.

You don't come to the surface until you're in control and a lot of people will fail because they just can't maintain that mental control and under that intensity.

Robb Wolf:

What percentage and I guess that this will vary depending on where people are in the selection process but by the end of this thing you have about 80% wash out rate - what percentage of that is orthopedic medical stuff and usually people can roll back a class and take another run up at that.

But what percentage of that is like legit orthopedic problems like they get really gnarly shin splints, first stress fracture stuff like that? What percentage of folks get a physical ailment that will roll them back and what are typical issues that people are developing?

Mark Divine:

That's a great question. I don't have the exact stats on that but I my experience and what I've observed would be that about half of the guys who roll out either permanently or back to another class are from injuries and the other half are quitters or performance fails.

The difference is the guys who get injured, a lot of times what they'll do is if they like the guy, he's a performer and the injury is something that will heal then they'll roll them back to a subsequent class and let them come back at it again.

But if they don't like the guy, if it's a shit bird or he's not a good leader and was just kind of hanging on and gets injured what they'll do is just roll him out of the whole program and so there's some subjectivity to that.

The types of injuries that you see a lot of stress factors. People come in to the program without having prepared their bones and their bodies for the load they're gonna take.

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From a training stand point, this is something, that I think, is important, to get across to your listeners if you're a special ops candidate, if training for the screen test is one aspect of training for the program. But that's just the entry exam and so you really gotta have the whole package when you train for a soft program and that includes building strength and durability.

And durability comes by putting yourself under load and moving with load and moving your joints in odd angles and carrying odd objects, you know what I mean? Nothing odder than a body, right, to carry? So in sealift, curl camps; we're always doing like body carries for not just a hundred yards but like 800 yards or a mile and just a lot of sandbag drills, a lot of strong men type of things that are gonna get your joints strong and get you confident moving at weird angles and carrying weird stuff cause it budge, you're gonna be running around with a boat in your head.

And I know people who've broken their neck because their neck's weren't strong enough to handle that load. And you're running around in second phase or third phase with 60 or 75 lbs in your back which is nothing compared when you're in a real combat mission but still, if you're not used to that, you're gonna break.

And so stress factors and joint injuries and torn ligaments are very, very common. And then to a lesser extent you'll see the flesh eating infections because you're always, always wet and dirty and sandy and stuff like that.

Robb Wolf: So people start and get immune compromised and just kind of folding up sharp from that.

Mark Divine: Right.

Robb Wolf:

I think you know Dave Warner. He founded CrossFit North up in Seattle. He did a research going in to BUD/S. He was of the opinion that he just needed to eat his way through the thing and so he literally gone forgetting 10 or 11 thousand calories a day during BUD/S. He went in a skinny teenager, skinny 18 year old, but he gained 40 lbs during BUD/S and I've never heard of anybody else doing that.

But he was doing a lot of winter warfare stuff up around the Arctic Circle and do tour. Usually they add a pretty short cycle on the missions before guys started getting stress fractures and having problem. And Dave would pack like 40 kilos of butter and he would just eat sticks of butter throughout the day.

And the dude just basically ate his way through his NAVY SEAL career. It's pretty incredible. But when you think about when the wheels start to fall off; you've got the stress of deprivation, you've got the stress of training, but then if you start throwing on the stress of malnutrition, you're just done.

So we'll talk about chow a little bit further down the road but that's interesting on the training injury side. I think you would agree that the CrossFit influence on the special operations has mainly been good but there's been some challenges in that.

I see people who will make a statement that they want to do a special operations program whether it's the SEALS or RANGERS or whatever and then start sniffing around CrossFit and Olympic lifting and different stuff like that but they really quickly lose sight of training for their sport, being a Warrior Athlete versus also trying to be an Olympic lifting stud and a CrossFit games qualified. Could you talk about it a little bit?

Mark Divine:

Absolutely. I think CrossFit and the CrossFit training are fantastic and I really enjoy aspects of it myself but if you're training for special ops career then you need to train for combat, you need to train for the demands of that career. And, let's just say, you've got to look at it differently and you've got to plan for the different demands on your body.

So one of the things you're not gonna be doing a lot of in the SEALS unless you're GARRISON or OLYMPIC LIFT but learning how to move your body in those passes with this handbag is pretty helpful, right? And so we spend less time on the fancy stuff on the

fundamental foundational strength and stamina that an operator will need to go the distance.

Now we do use CrossFit's style, high intensity interval training to train guys so that they can perform more work during something like a fire fight, right? Let me just back-up. You think about the demands on the SEAL, right? Aside from that being long and hard where you're gonna require metal toughness.

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Let's just assume that mental toughness comes first. So we train for mental toughness and we use a variety of tactics for that. But then when it comes to the physical training, you might wanna walk 26 miles with a rucksack on you back and get to your objective.

I know the last 10 years the guys have been driving quite a bit but certainly in my demand, when I went through, we were walking everywhere and I'm sure in the future in our many special ops missions, we're gonna walk or swim a lot. You gotta have that endurance like locked and loaded and it's gotta be functional endurance that demands you're gonna be operating on sea, on land, and on trails.

You're not gonna be walking on roads, you gotta have great joint strength, you gonna walk in boots, you gonna know how to do foot care, all that stuff, walk and reload and that's different than just being a running athlete. And then, once you get to your objective, or along the way, you might have a fire fight, you might have to do 15 minutes high of intensity training, or high intensity work with bullets and bodies flying over the place and it's just jet, right?

You might have a 5 minute interval and then it happens again and then again unless you fight your way through the situation and say you need to do that high intensity interval training which is where CrossFit becomes really helpful because it's time you treat it like a sporting event and just going balls to the wall in this cooperative competition with your teammates when we train.

We we're not trying to win; where trying to basically just kick ass and take names in that particular workout so that we can develop work capacity. And of course when your buddy goes down, you



might have to carry him long distance so you gotta have real relative strength.

Nobody cares if someone's got a 450 lbs dead lift and the other person's got 300 lbs dead lift. All we really want, do you have relative strength and can you carry your load? Can you carry load for the team so that you're useful as an operator? And SEALS come in all shapes and sizes contrary to what you see in the movies, there are guys who are 5'6" and you're in the smurf group bus and they kicked ass and there are guys who are 6'4".

You know what I mean? And sometimes the 5'6" is more useful in a situation than the 6'4" guy and it just depends on you relative strength and relative contribution to the team and so you tend to really look at it as a team like what the team needs and how can I be valuable?

So there's 5 main fitness capacities that one would need in training and that is foundational strength, relative strength, you see, you gotta do strength work but it should be more strong man and just stick to the basic power lifts, dead lift, bench press, back squat, and press and so you don't need a lot of fancy skills to do those lifts but you just need to do those lifts and then move those into an outdoor environment where you're doing it with tires and logs, and stuff like that.

And then you need stamina. Stamina is basically the repetitive ability of your muscles to fire efficiently repetitively over time under load. You've gotta basically take the percentage of the strength that you're working and work with that over time then it have to be a high intensity cause we're not talking about just doing work here.

And I already mention you need to have a high level work capacity—that's your horsepower, that's the engine that's gonna keep you really, really focused and win that fire fighter time. And you gotta have strong durability and endurance and we already addressed those. So those are really the things that I feel that operator needs to train.

They don't really nearly need to train their accuracy, agility, coordination, balance, your power, and speed because those are really the main sport and being a SEAL is not a sport by any stretch of imagination.

Robb Wolf:

Right. When do you see the distinction or where do you folks need to understand the difference between qualifications versus day-to-day fitness. This is something that I've seen in the work that I've done with some of these community is that, obviously you always need to be in shape, you need to be warrior fit, but sometimes the volume of what you folks are doing is not doing many favors.

They're not circling back around and looking at some things like, "Okay, do I really need more cardio? Do I really need more strength or would I really benefit from a bunch of foam rolling and keeping my hamstrings long so I don't get an L4 L5 disc rupture from the demands of rocking and stuff like that. When do you see that transition and how can people navigate that transition from getting through qualification but then how does that change in day-to-day fitness 0- you're an operator, you're deployed, or you're home; how are you managing your day-to-day fitness relative to qualification?

**[0:40:14]**

Mark Divine:

It's great, great question and great topic. I'll to answer as best I can and maybe the dialogue will ferret out some other things. First let's talk about qualifications. There're 2 things to focus on in qualification. And a lot of the guys missed the 2<sup>nd</sup>. They understand that they need to do the screening task, but they don't understand that in order to dominate in the training, they've gotta go beyond push and pull ups, sit ups, swim and run.

So what I talked people who are starting out is first, you show me that you can read elevated scores on the screening test. So you gotta be doing a lot of repetitive push and pull ups, and sit ups, the grease and the groove, and trying to enhance your scores in that, and a lot of running and swimming into your skills are solid and all those athletic activities and then, or maybe halfway through that, we'll start putting them under load and we'll start developing their strength and stamina and work capacity by moving external load not just body weight.

So then we have parallel path going on. We've got them training for the regulars of the training program which is also gonna train them for combat on the road and we've got them maintaining and enhancing their ability to perform on the screening test.

And hopefully we've got enough time to work with them; of course everyone comes in a different place. I've got a Olympic javelin thrower, who's coming in to train with me and this guy doesn't need a whole lot of fundamental underline athletic conditioning.

What he needs to do is work on his endurance some of the more esoteric things that he's gonna experience in BUD/S but a guy comes out of Kansas and he's never lifted a weight before, I need a couple of years to work with this guy. Fortunately some of the trainees today have that mindset—the ones we don't fail.

So let's take this to operating. So now you've gone to BUD/S and you've learned everything you need to learn and you're in a SEAL platoon. Here's where it gets really interesting for an operator because it's not like Olympic sports where you've got groomers and handlers and coaches every aspect of your job. You're basically on your own. There is a gym down there.

Josh Everett is actually is the strength and conditioning coach on the west coast of the SEALs. So they've got some incredible resources that we never had when I was in the team and they now have a new thing called a Naval Special Warfare Human Performance program. And they're looking at durability, rest recovery, those types of things.

But you got to take advantage of those when you're home and guess what the irony is? The SEALs are gone 90% of the time. So what does that mean? It means that when you're on the road, you do what you can do, with what's available where you're at. And that includes both physical training as well as fuelling your body, right?

So if you're in the middle of East bum fuck and there's no gym, no nothing, and then what are you gonna do? Are you gonna do body weight CrossFit stuff and you're gonna try to maintain and you're gonna fill yourself with whatever is available from the local market or the local whatever available, or you're gonna be eating MREs.

And so it becomes very interesting challenge for the special operator to maintain anywhere near the level of fitness and conditioning ahead when you're at BUD/S. Now back to your

point, that's probably a good thing because the volume of training at BUD/S and the volume of training in a SealFit program where you're trying to develop the fundamental attributes of being able to operate like that is enormous. And it's not sustainable over 20 year career.

So those programs, my program and BUD/S is designed to collect "take you, break you down, and then build you back up" and then you need to go on a maintenance program that keeps you at a high level of operating but keeps you safe, keeps you from breaking.

And that's the holy ground because you'll operate on a deployment cycle usually than they will and when they're in GARRISON, they'll train really hard and then when they deploy, the training backs off and they'll do go on more of a maintenance program as time allows and oftentimes they won't be able to do any structured physical training at all especially in a combat environment but they're still spending enormous amount of energy, right?

And so running and doing their job. So I think it will be very difficult, Rob, to structure a perfect training program for a special operator when you're in a platoon in that kind of work mode whether deploying and doing missions because it's just so random and just so many unknowns.

**[0:45:23]**

Robb Wolf: These guys are doing the night offs where they're gone all night, come back, try to get some food, get some rack time, and then you're right back at it and you've got 6 months of that.

Mark Divine: Correct.

Robb Wolf: Yeah.

Mark Divine: Grinding is brutal on the body and the guys who really get it, what they'll do is, when they wake up, they'll go to the gym, a lot of times will make shift to gym even if it's all field expedient gear and they'll grind through a moderate workout just to keep the joints and wake themselves up and then feel good about themselves and then you'll go start planning for your mission.

And those guys tend to operate better, be more focused, they maintain better. So good platoon leaders will insist on this. I don't think it's a necessary requirement, right? The best teams are gonna naturally do this and their leaders are gonna do it, lead by example.

Some of the worst performing team are not gonna do it or guys who maybe get a little lazy in their career or somewhere in the mid point, they'll stop doing that. So you gotta maintain a high, high level of internal motivation to keep the training going while you're deployed in a combat environment because the fatigue is just overwhelming.

Robb Wolf:

Mark, you've always been a really kind and very vocal supporter of the Paleo and the stuff I've been up to other folks in the community. When I've tried to share nutrition information with folks in the special operations community, usually the basic nuts and bolts are to the degree you've got control over your chow, eat the best quality of food that you can when you're facing a deployment scenario, you probably don't wanna be super pristine because we've had people totally gluten free Paleo, 16 blocks, 5 blocks of fat, and then the first MRE that they ate, they had "the trots" for 5 days.

Greg Everett:

We've learned really early on for certain situation, say like you know you've got a deployment scenario looming, you should probably have a cookie, some beer, or some gluten containing item and because you're going to have an MRE at some point you can't be out there and just start.

3How do you balance that? Do you agree with that approach or do you generally try to push the Paleo-esque thing more often than not? And then just understand that there are certain limitations to that whole fuelling process when you're down range. How do you counsel people on the chow?

Mark Divine:

Well, we counsel people basically to try to eat Paleo-esque in a 80/20 format meaning 80% of the time, do it if conditions allow 20% of the time don't worry about it so much. As long as you train yourself to eat high quality and you're getting the right quantities then your metabolic engine is gonna be firing pretty efficiently under the work load we're doing.

And then when the conditions don't allow you to eat that way, just be smart about your choices. If you're eating in the local, most of the time actually, believe it or not, if you're not in the United States, the local food is gonna be more Paleo than it would be if you're in Kansas City. You know what I mean?

You're not gonna be eating stuff with a bar code on it; you're eating stuff with hair on it. You're actually not bad but what gets weird is when you're in a, let's say an On and Up, like the red wing guys and you're sitting in a hide site and the smart guys would bring their MRE but also load up some stuff like a meal bar that has high quality as you can get in there. There are some are good ones.

I've actually got one on my desk from a company called Core and I know this wasn't available until pretty recently. 100% natural like **four ingredients** in it. Oats are probably the only thing you wouldn't agree with, but whole oats, almonds, raisins. Some protein source, this is whey protein...stuff like that.

[Cross talk]

Mark Divine: And supplement like a mother if MRE is your main thing, then you need something to get back the nutrients.

Robb Wolf: Mark, I know you've got a dental appointment looming here so I just wanna shake it down for a couple of more questions.

**[0:50:03]**

Robb Wolf: What do you see, maybe the top 5, what are the mistakes that people as consistently making when they are approaching the qualification scenario like where are they shitting the bed on the stuff? What do you see people do again and again that could be avoided and it would make them successful in this qualification scheme?

Mark Divine: Preparation for training event requires an honest assessment of your fundamental capabilities. And I would say that that's the first mistake as we have a lot of people who really have not been exposed to the level of training that you, and I, and Gregg know from across the community or the special ops we're all in. There'll living in a ignorance and ignorance is bliss.

They show up at Kokoro Camp and they get their ass handed to them in the first 45 minutes and they quit. I've had SEAL candidates, no kidding, who had been on contract with the navy who quit in the first 45 minutes of our Kokoro Camp which is the 50 yard training camp based on Hell Week. They clearly have a very, very unrealistic appreciation for their physical attributes, right?

So that the first: to be very, very clear about what your skills are. Bench mark yourself against the PST, bench mark yourself against some of the CrossFit standards, and then find out where your weaknesses are. And then the 2<sup>nd</sup> limitation a lot of people have is they don't have a plan. They don't have a detailed working plan and I take them from where they are right now to where they're gonna be tried it.

And so you need a plan. And then 3<sup>rd</sup> you need a truth detector by your side and that's where a mentor will come in. So the guys who succeed all have a mentor. That mentor can come in the form of Sealfit, and the SEAL coaches that you plug into once you come here, part of the community or can be you guys or any former SEAL or your really good wrestling coach.

You need someone who's gonna hold you accountable, who's gonna tell you when you're bullshitting yourself, who's gonna challenge you, and who's gonna keep you motivated those moments when you're like, "You know what, maybe this is a fantasy. This isn't really for me cause I'm not sure if I have what it takes."

Then they keep you on track and keep you motivated. So I think having a mentor is really important and if you don't have one, then that's a big problem, a big challenge cause the guys who are making it, they all have those mentors. If you wanna be one of those 200 guys, you gotta follow the formula. I think the 4<sup>th</sup> reason, and this might be if I were to go back and rank this, cause

I'm just speaking off the top of my head, this might be the first requirement or reason people fail if you'll look at it conversely, is your purpose, your W-H-Y that you're doing this must be really, really clear and extremely powerful. If you're coming into the SEAL program, because you wanna be the baddest motherfucker on the planet, you're not gonna make it. And if you're coming

because your girl friend wants to be with a Navy SEAL, you're not gonna make it.

Robb Wolf: Depending on how hot she is.

[Cross talk]

Mark Divine: That's true. Anyway, so

Robb Wolf: But you've gotta have that reason. Exactly.

Mark Divine: Cause you're gonna tap into that when the going gets tough. And the going is gonna get tough really quickly. When I went to BUD/S, I knew beyond a shadow of a doubt that I was gonna be a SEAL, I wanted to be a leader, it was going to be a big part of my life. I knew it. I felt it. I had visualized it for long hours and I had to sing that they would have to kill me to get me to quit.

And when I went to BUD/S all the shit rained down on me. I was like, "I can't take it with a smile. You know what, they can't kill me cause this is the navy. They will get in trouble; pretty sure that they will get loser jobs if they kill me. So I don't have to worry about that.

So therefore I'm not gonna quit." Just show up everyday and when the going gets tough, you tap into that purpose why you're being there and use that to get you through. And I think the last thing I wanna say is in chapter 5, cause unless otherwise I'd keep going. Folks take too long of a time frame. They focus too far out.

And from any challenging situation, you really have to collapse your goals and collapse you presents do it in a narrow range of time so for BUD/S it's getting to each evolution and doing the best that you can because if you have a long view, if you say, "Okay. This is 8 months so I'm gonna start out slow and taper from there.

**[0:55:16]**

So I'm burning up." No. You gotta show up and have to put up 100% every evolution. You gotta try to win every evolution as well as be a good teammate and a leader and stay present and have a clear head on your shoulders. So you really need to really collapse your goals to get through this evolution.



And then when it comes to Hell week, it might be get to the next 5 minutes or get to the next meal. So you really have to take a really short term view and just put out 100% every moment of that short term and then reset, log the victory, put a little notch in your belt, and look forward the next short term time block. And that tends to work really well.

Robb Wolf: Did you ever see the “i-caveman” gig that I was in?

Mark Divine: No. Sounds great though.

Robb Wolf: Check that out. It was great. It was discovery channel reality show. Basically they gave us basic survival skill, stuck us up at 8500 ft in the mountains of Colorado, and were like survive. For 8 days we have no food cause there was nothing up there and then on day 8 I killed an elk with an atlatl.

[Laughter]

Robb Wolf: You gotta check it out. It’s actually, the team guys actually ship it around a lot, it’s reasonably been popular. It was just so interesting. The only way that I got through the thing as all throughout the day, I would just say, “I’ll go collect the firewood and then I’ll quit.” And then I bring the firewood back and then I’ll go, “Well, I need do go do axe or wires here, whatever, and then I’ll quit.”

And then I just kept doing that and so it was really that chunking of my experience. And the first 8 days, literally, we have no food available. I ended up losing 18 lbs in 8 days. You’d get about 2 hours of sleep at night. And there was actually a retired SEAL that was on the camera crew. And he was like, “This was probably worse than BUD/S.”

And he was like, “I don’t know. Cause you weren’t rolling around in the water.” And I was like, “Bugs, cold, no food, all the rest of it.” But it was interesting. The 2 things that I had going on at the games that I would play, I would say, “Okay. I’m gonna do this next thing then I’ll quit or I would just think about my wife and her dad.” And I was like, “I really do not want them to watch this show and see me fail.”

Mark Divine: That's it right there. Your purpose was very strong. I asked guys to come at Kokoro Camp so I weren't sure why. And the guys would say, "You know what, I want my son to know that his dad is strong and and is always gonna be there for him." I'm like, "Check, I'll see you on Sunday." And if someone says, "I'm gonna be a Navy SEAL, cause I wanna be a bad ass warrior." I'm like, "Maybe I'll see you.."

Robb Wolf: It's interesting. Mark, how can people find out more information about your services and just tell folks where to find you ad what you offer.

Mark Divine: Oh, thank you. My main website for training special ops as well as civilians in this town of mine I have this model Sealfit.com. And we have training program in Encinitas, California; a one week and a three week academy. These are immersion experiences where people live on site.

They train with me from 5AM until about 8 or 9 at night. And they're doing a 4 range of warrior development. So it's not just the physical training but get really into mental toughness and awareness and intuition development. And we use techniques like Yoga and concentration practices and meditation and breath control and visualization and all those things.

And the other way I recognized a year ago, and I think you and I talked about this, Rob, that I know there's a not a ton of people in the world that are gonna pay \$6000 to come to Encinitas and get their ass kicked by me.

[Laughter]

Mark Divine: I wanted to have a brother reach and try to help more people out, especially the mental toughness thing. And so I launched an online training, too, called "Unbeatable Mind" and that is it: [unbeatablemind.com](http://unbeatablemind.com). And that provides a lot of the training and techniques and concepts that I train in an online format delivered at a monthly academy style.

So those are the 2 websites I will recommend if anyone's interested and they can contact us directly by e-mailing me, Mark, [mark@sealfit.com](mailto:mark@sealfit.com) or calling us at 7606341833.

Robb Wolf: Awesome. Again, just to remind folks, Mark and his program have been huge supporters of everything that I've been up to, everything I do Paleo Solution, Paleo Related in every term whenever Mark said an opportunity to put in a good word for me, he's done it.

So if you folks have any interest in this kind of warrior mindset, this Mark's flavour of this functional training, I highly, highly recommend it. I'm really stoked that you finally came on the show. It's one of those things where Greg and I are like, "Who should we have on the show?" And then we're like the obvious. It's just riding there. I've got 800 e-mails that we've exchanged back and forth so I'm stoked that we finally did this.

Mark Divine: Yeah. Me, too. I really appreciate having me on this. I love your work and I look forward to more of this stuff.

Robb Wolf: Awesome, man. Well, thanks for being on. We will get all your contact information in the show notes and if you folks have questions, maybe we'll get you back on 6 months, 8 months down the road and if not, just go directly to Mark and ping him directly if you want more expedient answers to your questions.

[Laughter]

Robb Wolf: So, Greg, can you think of anything else? Are we good?

Greg Everett: I think we're good.

Robb Wolf: Okay. Alright, folks. Oh! Just a quick little bit PSAD. We are probably gonna start having some very tease-ful ads on the Paleo Solution. And I think we're gonna have you as warm as meat. It's coming on here pretty soon. So we're gonna try and do a little bit of advertising on the show and I also have a politics piece podcast called "The Controversial Truth" which should be popping up in the radar on July 5<sup>th</sup> and that's gonna be on the web site [icanfixamerica.com](http://icanfixamerica.com). And so I'm trying to scratch some of my political libertarian itch over there. So I don't piss off the Nutrition rabble too badly by doing that.

Greg Everett: You are picking the worst possible topics to continue to discuss here. Constitution, politics. What's next? Are you gonna for religion, abortion?

Robb Wolf: I figured it of probably the end of scuttling the whole operation with this stuff but I just can't leave well enough alone.

[Laughter]

[Crosstalk]

**[01:02:35]**

**[End of Audio]**