

50. Transforming A Crew At War With Itself (1:56)

I knew when I did this, at that age, what the goal was - what I had to do. I knew what a good ship was because I had come from one. BLACKHAW was a very good ship and my CO was a very good CO.

And I knew what an organization on a buoy tender was - that had been organized to the point where it wouldn't work. And I had trimmed it back to where it would work and it did work. So I knew where I had to be. And this is what Les was talking about. When I broke in and said, "What I'm hearing you say is that you have to know your goal and you have to be able to communicate your goal." Well, I knew that and that's what I did.

Knowing where I was - I'm out there in the middle of nowhere in the Far East - part of what I had to do was bring a crew that was at war with itself and bring them together. I mean I had engineers that wouldn't go into deck spaces. I had a deck force that wouldn't go into engineering spaces. Nobody would talk to the ship's Yeoman and storekeeper. And then the Quarter Masters and the bridge crew, they were a world on their own. And the buoy tender, the buoy tender seamen were a street gang. And I had to bring all these guys together.

And I did it playing baseball, the one thing I figured everybody knew about. And I found that I had a first class quartermaster who was a windmill pitcher and I saw him out on the dock. This is when I got the idea; he's out on the dock with his striker, winding up and throwing it at 120 miles an hour across the dock.

And I said if I could build a team around that, maybe we will be us against them. We will be a crew. We'll be a unit. And I did and everybody out there we would play ball with - LORAN stations. We played ball against the Navy. We played ball against the other units and the loser bought the beer. And I would show up with a trolley with four cases of beer on it and they would say, "Are you giving up already?" And I'd say, "No, that's for my crew for the first six innings."

And it worked. It worked. It took time. It took time but it worked.

And you had these ideas as a LTJG. Yeah.

You've got to do the job. Yeah, that's the prime mission - get it done.

Related Primary Leadership Principles

Attitude	Effective Use of Resources	Capacity to Care
Mission	Connectivity	Team-Building
Creativity	Stress	Drive to Achieve
Authority of Position	Military Core Values	Followership
Active Listening	Field Presence	Example
Inspiration	Money	