I Had a Choice, Too

Description

Itâ€™s getting downright depressing when your â€œleadershipâ€• bails, then puts on suits and ties and whines like spamked little boys. On the other hand, it puts a smile on my face to see the all of a sudden (left wing) supporters (who used to think anyone in the military couldnâ€™t get a job in â€œreal lifeâ€•) somehow believe the complaints of 6 former generals will cause the President to move aside the SecDef. Thatâ€™s hilarious.

I canâ€™t say every day in my 20 years was the way I would have done it. On top of that, I thank God it wasnâ€™t sometimes. I worked for some excellent officers who had plenty of practical experience at the profession to help guide me along. I enjoyed my time, overall, but a few days Iâ€™d like not to remember.

default watermark

My first real choice came in 1980. I was coming to the end of my obligated time based on the acceptance of an ROTC scholarship. By then, I had served aboard two ships and had made one forward deployment and what seemed like on, due to the time spent out of homeport on a newly commissioned vessel (and most of it wasnâ€™t in some exotic overseas ports, but in beautiful Pascagoula, MS, in the shipyard). I thought several things could be done better and I made a choice. I could get out and complain, and have no real power to effect change, or I could stay in and work towards what was better than the existing conditions. I stayed.

I was sent ashore to a training command, where I had the chance to improve on the training I had received, for the new crews coming through my office. With the tutoring of many fine men in my shop, we, together, produced some outstanding results, which were widely complimented and recognized to the top levels of a major training facility.

I spent a tour as a Department Head. I had great role models from when I had been a Division Officer, but there was room to improve. Once more, with a fine crew supporting me, and two great captains, we did some spectacular things.

On a sea going staff, with a commodore who never saw a tasking, for us or anyone else, he wasnâ€™t willing to say to â€œmy staff can do that!â€• Iâ€™ll say this: The positive part was we got our fingers into all sorts of exciting things. The negative part was there wasnâ€™t many minutes (I chose that word carefully) left in the days to sleep. The personal management at this period of my career left somethings to be desired, but we all lived, even if the wives had separate plans to reduce our workload. I see a microcosm of the desrciptions of Secretary Rumsfield being a hard man to work with in that time of my life, under one commodore. We had to have done our homework and you better be on top of what was going on, or we got asked where we got our SWO pins from (you guessed it, the answer was provided many times: A cracker Jack box). Was it pleasant? Nope. Did it make a point? When it was over, was it recognized as a â€œteaching methodâ€• that worked? Yep. Would I use it? Nope (well, one time in a particular situation I did). I blended the message with other teaching/mentoring styles I had been taught, and I think I was effective.

As I worked my way up the â€œincreasing responsibilityâ€• ladder, I had several occassions to either complain, or work to fix â€œit.â€• In 1988, I did just that, and ended up actively working a side project for 5 years. Along the way, I had the opportunity to look some of my seniors in the eye and tell them they were making it essentially impossible on the fleet sailors and officer to comply, while I had to fail ships at inspections. My option was to roll up my sleeves and do something, while telling the big bossâ€™ staff to extricate body parts and rewrite directives. One four striper in particular, didnâ€™t like what I was trying to say at all. One weekend, I spent about 20 hours making an Excel sheet to graphically depict what I had been talking about. When he looked at that, he agreed and became the biggest proponent in getting it all changed. I didnâ€™t care he was presenting it to the Admiral as his plan, the fact of the matter was he understood and then was able to fix things. There are days I realize it sure didnâ€™t help me make the last few career steps, but in the end, the fleet did get relief and sensibilty applied.

There were times in the downsizing of the shore based training and inspection teams I was tasked to plan how to do it. I had plans submitted that were â€œmodifiedâ€• to the point of not being effective, but I said my peace, then saluted and gave a cherry â€œaye, aye!â€• and made it happen with what I had left.

default watermark

I never made flag, but all I can say to the generals is Iâ€™m pretty disgusted and I expect more. Thankfully, no one I worked for has ever shown such bad manners. Sirs, if you didnâ€™t like what was happening, I say it was your duty to stay in and constructively argue your point, but to know when it was acceptable to try someone elseâ€™s way to get it done. If it ever got so bad as to be intolerable, then it was your duty to submit your resignation, citing the issues clearly, but not to keep your mouthâ€™s shut until you can cut a book deal.

Category

1. Military
2. Political

Date Created
April 13, 2006
Author
admin