**Episode 12 – Professionalism Outline**

**INFORMATION:** How your message is presented can be more important than the message itself.

**History Segment:** MCPON Thomas Crow

Thomas Sherman Crow grew up in McArthur, Ohio, looking forward to the day that he could join the Navy. Raised by his grandmother after his mother died in childbirth, he believed that the Navy was his only opportunity to break out of the poverty he knew as a child.

An uncle who served in the Navy with the Seabees during WW II was Crow's role model. In January, 1953, after graduating from high school, Crow joined the Navy. After boot camp, he began training as an aviation structural mechanic. For the next 21 years, he lived in the world of an aircraft mechanic, switching periodically between types of aircraft, platforms, and environments.

Though advancement to E‑6 had come relatively quickly, he hit a stone wall at the E‑7 level.

"I was probably one of the Navy's most senior first classes," he said. "Chief just never seemed to open up. It became a real test of will to keep going back to take the test." The wall finally crumbled in 1971 and by 1974, as a senior chief, Crow was looking for a new challenge. He found it in the new world of race relations.

'We were beginning to have some very serious problems with race relation in the Navy," he said. "Equal opportunity was an issue. We were having problems dealing with the different races and cultures. I prided myself in being a person who takes people as they are. A good person is a good person and I really don't care what race or culture they come from. I felt the impact of what I thought were some very racist, sexist kinds of things going on during that time. The Navy was looking for people to work in the area of Human Resources so I volunteered."

He started training for duty as a race relation education specialist and was chosen to attend the Defense Race Relations Institute, Patrick AFB, Florida. He was assigned to COMNAVAIRPAC where he served as a trainer for race relations and a member of the quality control inspection team for overseas VVESTPAC units and carriers. After completion of the equal opportunity program specialist training at Cheltenham, Maryland, he became a program manager for AIRPAC, implementing Phase II of the equal opportunity/race relations program aboard carriers in the Pacific.

Meanwhile, Crow was enhancing his own opportunities, as well, by attending National University in San Diego, California, where he graduated in 1976 with an associate's degree in business administration.

In 1977, he launched into a somewhat different area of counseling attending the Navy Drug/Alcohol Counselor School at NAS Miramar, California. Upon completion, he moved over to the AIRPAC Human Resource Management Support Office as an assistant and as manager of the EO/RR, Drug and Alcohol Program. After advancing to master chief, he was selected as AIRPAC force master chief in December 1977. He continued his off‑duty education, receiving a bachelor's degree in business administration.

As MCPON…

In his first message to the fleet and force master chiefs via Direct Line, Crow addressed the subject of leadership apathy.

"A question I'm continuously asked by fellow Master Chiefs is, 'What can we do about the apathy within our CPO, SCPO, and MCPO ranks?' My answer must always be the same ‑ I cannot do a thing. The attitude is brought about by different things for different people. Frustration, fear, and anger brought about by what we see and hear around us contribute to the emotions, and many times the reaction manifests itself in apathy for some, and enthusiasm for others."

The negative results of leadership apathy, according to Crow, were translating into poor job satisfaction, poor retention, excess attrition and very weak leadership on the deckplates.

"A very subtle change has overtaken us in the Navy over a period of seven or eight years," he said. "The situation I speak of is the role of the work center supervisor, CPO versus the division officer, Junior Officer. Everywhere I go I see a young division officer with a desk right in the middle of a work center or shop. Very busy taking over and doing the tasks that once belonged to the CPO.

"This taking over has virtually stripped the CPO of authority and responsibility. Apparently, someone told our junior officers to get more involved, and obviously this has been interpreted as taking over the chiefs role."

Crow placed the responsibility for correcting the situation squarely on the shoulders of the senior enlisted leadership.

"If any change is to occur," he pointed out, "it must originate within the group of senior petty officers and chiefs, for it is the senior enlisted personnel who are the backbone of the Navy."

The CNO supported the MCPON in this campaign. Crow said that in their discussions about the CPO/JO issue, the admiral agreed that "any junior officer who tried to exercise control when a more experienced CPO is running the shop was exercising poor judgment."

"Most officers who have done well in the Navy have learned from a good chief," Crow said. "Leadership is founded on mutual respect. Both the junior officer and the chief have to know their place in the chain of command."

Crow immediately began working to implement the newly defined roles for Senior and Master Chiefs.

"This project must proceed slowly and carefully to ensure that the final decisions, especially those changes that impact upon our chain of command," he wrote in Direct Line, "are ones that provide job satisfaction for the personnel it affects and strengthens the organization in such a way as to improve the credibility of both the senior and master chiefs and the junior officers in the Navy."

Training for senior and master chiefs in those new roles would revolve around the creation of a Senior Enlisted Academy, Crow said.

"I want to caution all of you that the reality of an academy in this plan is just one method being explored and may be the direction settled upon," he wrote. "I fully comprehend the feelings from our peers in the fleet and our strong inputs from the fleet/force master chiefs at the last two CNO MCPO Advisory Panels have made it clear that we want and need an Academy for training our senior and master chiefs. I will continue to monitor and participate in this project."

Master Chief Jon H. Keeney, Commander, Naval Education and Training Force Master Chief, was involved in the research and design phase for the Academy. In his newsletter, he pointed out that the SEA "will not be a boot camp for senior personnel. The atmosphere of this prestigious training is to be one of pride, self‑achievement, and a means by which to upgrade managerial skills for further career development.

"We, the senior enlisted personnel, have continually asked to be given the responsibilities commensurate with paygrade and experience and to be held accountable for our actions," the force master chief wrote. "Future expansion of responsibility for SCPO and MCPO will be determined by how we react and perform to this new challenge."

On September 14, 1981, Crow attended opening ceremonies for the Senior Enlisted Academy. A pilot class of 16 students would receive nine weeks of education in communication skills, national security affairs, Navy programs, and physical readiness training. Classes were conducted in facilities at the Center for War Gaming, Naval War College in Newport, Rhode Island.

Throughout his tenure, Crow stayed in close contact with the fleet and force master chiefs, using them as a reliable system of communication. In 1980, he added a fleet master chief billet for Assistant VCNO/Director Naval Administration. The new billet was called Naval Shore (NAVSHORE) and was filled by Master Chief Bob White. Under NAVSHORE were the force master chiefs for CNET, Naval Reserve, Security Group, Recruiting Command, and Bureau of Medicine. With the addition of two new force master chief billets, the organizational chart in 1980 had five fleet master chiefs: CINCPACFLT, CINCLANTFLT, Chief of Naval Material (CHNAVMAT), Commander in Chief, U.S. Naval Forces Europe (CINCUSNAVEUR) and NAVSHORE; 16 force master chiefs and seven CNO‑directed command master chiefs.

Crow initiated a Spring Fleet Master Chief Conference to provide fleet master chiefs with an update on the status of personnel issues and to get current information to take back to their sailors. He also pushed for closer coordination between the fleet and force master chiefs and between the fleet and type commanders and their master chiefs.

"I didn't believe that the fleet and forces needed to flock around the MCPON too much," he said. "They needed to be out with their commanders and their senior enlisted leadership, gathering information and recommendations that they could consolidate as input for the advisory panels."

He also placed increase focus on the role of the command master chief (CMC), guiding the creation of a new charter that expanded the responsibilities associated with the title. OPNAVINST 5400.3713 reflected additional authorized CMC billets for ships, squadrons, and stations with more than 250 personnel assigned and described the newly authorized rating badge for C M/Cs. The revision resulted in the assignment of a command master chief detailer.

By the middle of his second year, Crow was seeing encouraging signs that "Pride and Professionalism" was taking root. During a trip to the West Coast, he visited ten ships, among them the Alamo, St. Louis, William H. Standley, and Merrill.

"These ships stand out in my memory as squared away, clean, and sharp, with crews of sailors led by COs who have instilled pride in their ships and self esteem in their people," he wrote proudly in The Direct Line. "'Pride and Professionalism' standards of quality that are enforced and supported do promote good morale and positive attitudes. The most rewarding element of the whole process is that it doesn't require harassment or chicken s‑‑t actions to make it happen."

Crow was optimistic for other reasons midway through his tenure. A new administration and new faces in Congress heralded positive changes in pay and compensation.

"The other shoe is about to drop," he wrote, "and within the next two months, we will see either a July pay raise or a substantial catch‑up pay increase in October along with the cost of living allowance and several other benefits."

Crow began using "bi‑words" in his travels around the fleet. Along with "Pride and Professionalism," he encouraged people to follow their conscience because it was "The Right Thing To Do." To make the drug abuse policy clear and concise, he used, "Not on my watch, not on my ship, not in my Navy," and "Just say no to drugs."

Operations Specialist Third Class Boyd S. Tveit, attached to Samuel Eliot Morison designed a poster to give the Navy's drug program an image. It was a stem of marijuana encircled and crossed by the symbol universally used for "no." By June 1982, Crow could report "tremendous progress and improvement across the board" in military appearance, attitudes, morale, and a feeling of well‑being around the fleet.

Uniforms replaced pay as the most frequently heard complaints.

"It would take a book to list or recount all the gripes and complaints I have heard in my travels during the past two years," he wrote in The Direct Line. "We have attained a point now that is vitally important for you to participate in putting the problems behind us and concentrate on educating your sailors on the requirements they must function with now."

He asked for support in working with the Navy Resale and Support System, Navy Supply System and the Navy Uniform Shop managers in reaching a point of stability and common sense in uniform matters.

"Unfortunately, a great deal of the griping and complaining has come from our more senior people and much of it from chiefs," he wrote. "Some examples are the new service dress whites (choker), the white hat, and the decision to allow the command ball caps in working areas only, the introduction of summer khaki, and the phasing‑in of the bell bottom and jumper uniforms for E‑6 and below. These decisions are made and are here to stay."

A sampling from the 1981 Uniform Regulations shows the following changes: jumper uniform package prescribed (required) for all E‑1 to E‑5 men who entered the Navy on or after May 1, 1980, optional to all other E‑1 to E‑5 men until May 1, 1983, at which time jumper style uniforms will be required. Jumper style uniforms also optional for E‑6 men; dungarees/utility uniforms are interchangeable at the option of the individual. Men's dungarees become mandatory July 1, 1982; only flame retardant clothing will be worn when engaged in hot work such as welding or brazing, when exposed to open flame, such as during boiler light‑off operations or spark producing work such as grinding; summer khaki uniform reintroduced for officers and CPOs; safety shoes required for enlisted men, E‑6 and below; maternity dungaree uniform authorized for E‑6 and below.

In June 1982, Admiral Hayward was relieved by Admiral James D. Watkins as the CNO.

In the November 1982 issue of The Direct Line, Crow said goodbye. He expressed satisfaction that "our good chiefs are taking the aggressive role of bringing the others on board with us so that our chief s community can once again be respected for its vital role in the chain of command and for our inherited ability and ingenuity of taking care of problems at the lowest level," he wrote.

Much of the "fear, frustration and anger" that he found in the Navy was gone by the time he turned over the office. Junior officers had become more sensitive and aware of the role of chiefs in the command and a mutual respect was beginning to take hold.

Navy families were receiving support through individual commands and family service centers; ombudsmen were considered essential links in a well‑functioning command; and for the first time, the Navy had an official policy on child care operations. Navy paychecks were based on a "fairer" wage scale, relieving the financial burden for many of the families.

Drug abuse in the Navy was decreasing and sailors were taking more pride in their jobs, their uniforms and their physical appearance.

"As I leave the Navy to enter into a new career, I look back with a positive feeling about our Navy today," he wrote. "It is not now and probably never will be without problems. I have enjoyed the unique opportunity of participating in a revitalization of many traditional things that had served us well in the past, had been pushed away for a period of years and then brought back alive to serve us well again."

After retirement, Crow returned to National University in San Diego as the associate director for career development. Within a year, he had completed his master's degree and accepted a position with General Dynamics Convair in Human Resources in management education and training. Today, he is the chief of management development and motivational training for General Dynamics Convair.

**I. Introduction**

A. Attention (Professionalism is something that needs to be understood and is commonly misunderstood.)

B. Motivation (Junior Sailors should grasp what professionalism actually is so they can leverage this tool to equip them for success now and in the future.)

C. Overview (This is something that came up recently for me and based on the implications it almost had for my Sailors I felt compelled to speak about the real importance of Professionalism that is commonly missed.)

**II. Body**

A. Main Point 1 (What is professionalism?)

1. Sub-point (Definition) – professional character, spirit, or methods.

2. Sub-point (Why is it important?) – Professionalism is more than just acting the way the Navy wants you to. It’s the way in which you handle yourself in every way while representing the Navy. It’s the literal term for what I talked about in Episode 3 (Learning to Adjust to the Navy). The way in which you learn to function inside the Navy by doing things the “Navy way” while still accomplishing your ends.

3. Sub-point (How you present your message) – What is your message? It’s EVERYTHING. You transmit much, much more than what comes out of your mouth. There are the things you say, but there is how you say it, tone of your voice, body language, words used, manner of dress, medium used to communicate the message, etc. There are SO MANY VARIABLES to getting your message across. And one of the ones that can become a landmine for so many junior Sailors is PROESSIONALISM.

B. Main Point 2 (Professionalism in practice)

1. Sub-point (Physical Message) – This is everything I see. It’s your uniform, like we spoke on last week. Down to the minutia, like wearing your cell phone on our belt in the wrong place. Like having the wrong belt on. That sends a MESSAGE to the people who watch you without saying a word. It’s your body language and facial expressions. When we get upset we will say one thing at times and communicate a completely different message through these methods. Because we’re upset! But we say we’re fine! But you are saying a LOT with your facial expressions and body language. Many of these can be completely unconscious, so you can be sabotaging your message’s intent without even being aware you’re doing it.

2. Sub-point (Verbal Message) – Much more than words. Think about it. Outside of simply the words you select to for m your message, which are extremely important, there’s the volume and tone of your voice! It can be as important as what you’re saying! If you use that piece incorrectly or ignore it’s importance, your message can and will be lost entirely. This is also where you communicate that you are, in fact, a Subject Matter Expert. There are many times, especially at your junior levels, where it’s critical to be an expert in your field and be able to demonstrate that with words and with your example! Being a technical expert changes into being a SME on Navy and leadership/management topics as you progress, but it never goes away. Take the time, as we have always spoken about, to be informed in the area that matters for where you are in your career.

3. Sub-point (Example) – So as I mentioned, this topic kind of fell in my lap based on a recent experience of mine. Someone that works for me, a First Class Petty Officer, recently came into a meeting that had just concluded, an awards board for students, and began unprofessionally expressing his displeasure with what he had interpreted as his students not being taken care of. He entered the room, which had myself and two other Chief Petty Officers in it, and essentially began yelling at us about feedback he received from his students. From the second he entered the room his message was never heard. Not that he wasn’t communicating it with his words, but the message we all got – the unprofessional tone – was louder. Any time you lose control of your emotions or simply chose the wrong way of communicating your message to someone, it’s lost! Especially to superiors, regardless of what happened. If you go off on someone that outranks you, you’re wrong. Period. It’s in the UCMJ. You don’t have to like it, I don’t. There are PLENTY of times I’ve wanted to stand on my bosses desk and breath fire on him. But I can’t. For SO MANY REASONS. It makes me feel better for five seconds, then I get crushed. My message was never heard, I didn’t help anyone including myself, and will probably be removed from the position I am in to help others. However, if I understand all of these things, if I understand how important every aspect of how I convey my message is, I will position myself to better take care of my charges, to potentially help develop that leader, to be a PROFESSIONAL example to all of them.

**III. Conclusion**

A. Summary – So we talked about…

1) What Professionalism is (the definition, why it’s important and how to present your message)

2) Professionalism in practice (Physical message, Verbal message)

3) And talked about what happens when this goes wrong

B. Re-motivation (Junior Sailors should grasp what professionalism actually is so they can leverage this tool to equip them for success now and in the future.)

C. Closing (Being a Professional, understanding that YOU ARE A PROFESSIONAL Sailor every time you pull your uniform on, is so important to your successful navigation of your journey in the Navy. And that is important for you. It’s important for your progression. Whether you’re a career Sailor or not, you’re building a foundation for the future. You WILL be in some kind of a leadership position in life and professionalism is the key to your success in inspiring your charges to follow you. In inspiring YOU to get everything you can from your journey. SO MUCH of this happens behind the scenes. I have so many conversations about all the things we as leaders don’t do and I smile. Because you don’t know. And you won’t know, until you step through that looking glass. It’s a conversation I have with my Selectees every year during the Chief’s season. You will carry a burden of constant criticism and scrutiny from people not equipped with the perspective to criticize you. They have no idea what they’re saying and it’s okay. Let them. I sit there and smile because I know. I know what happens after I put them on liberty and then spend two to three hours preparing for the next day, writing their evals and awards, preparing training…I know. I know what happens in ranking boards. I know what happens when I spend time fighting tooth and nail to get them whatever they NEED to succeed.)