**Episode 28 – Quality of Service**

**INFORMATION:** Definde “Quality of Service” and its importance in building future Naval leadership.

**History Segment: Oliver Hazard Perry**

If a contest had been staged to offer a prize for the most frustrated man in North America in the summer of 1813, United States Navy Master Commandant Oliver Hazard Perry would have won it hands down. In February the twenty-seven-year-old Rhode Islander had been ordered to the Northwest frontier to take command of a fleet that would hopefully give the United States control of Lake Erie. After a harrowing journey through the winter wilderness, he arrived at the tiny Pennsylvania town of Erie, then also known as Presque Isle, to discover that the fleet was nonexistent and not likely to appear anytime soon.

A patriotic local ship captain, Daniel Dobbins, had a few semifinished vessels on the stocks at an improvised shipyard. But his armament consisted of a single cannon. The only guards to protect these nautical skeletons against a British raid from across the frozen lake were a haphazard company of sixty dispirited militiamen without guns or ammunition. There was no rope for rigging, no canvas for sails. Perry had been told that fifty carpenters, caulkers, ship-joiners, and sawyers were awaiting him at Presque Isle. Not one had arrived. The town of seventy-six houses was semideserted. Many of its four hundred inhabitants had fled, fearful that the royal raiders from Canada would be accompanied by their Indian allies, scalping knives in hand.

Worsening Perry’s woes was the haphazard command situation. His immediate superior was Commodore Isaac Chauncey, who was more than two hundred miles away in Sacketts Harbor, at the eastern end of Lake Ontario. A worrier rather than a fighter, Chauncey claimed to have his hands full trying to retain control of Ontario. He had commandeered 150 sailors that Perry had brought with him from Rhode Island — all personally trained and passionately loyal to him. Chauncey reacted to Perry’s pleas for men, guns, and equipment with maddening silence.

Also in this dirty game was a fat, sloppy, Maryland-born navy officer named Jesse Duncan Elliott. Also a master commandant (the equivalent of a present-day commander), Elliot had won a victory of sorts at Fort Erie the previous fall, when he led a company of soldiers in a surprise attack on two ships guarding the British bastion at the southwestern end of the Niagara River. He captured both craft, but one became grounded and was burned. Elliott took not-so-silent umbrage when Perry was named commander on Lake Erie. Operating out of the Black Rock navy yard near Buffalo, the Marylander intercepted the few men Chauncey forwarded and sent the dregs to Perry.

All this made the thin-skinned Perry wonder if his naval career were not fatally jinxed. His father, Christopher Perry, had been a successful merchant ship captain who joined the U.S. Navy to fight in the Quasi-War against Revolutionary France that raged in the sea lanes off the Atlantic coast and in the Caribbean from 1798 to 1800. He had taken thirteen-year-old Oliver along as a midshipman. But the father’s naval career had been aborted by Thomas Jefferson’s election in 1800. The pacific new president saw no need for a large navy; he considered it likely to embroil the United States in foreign wars. The number of warships was cut from forty-three to thirteen, and only nine captains and thirty-six lieutenants were retained on the rolls. Midshipmen shrank from 354 to 150. By sheer chance, it would seem, one of those retained was young Perry.

For the next decade, Perry’s naval career was routine. He advanced in rank during cruises to the Mediterranean, where he took part in the spasmodic wars with the piratical Barbary states that eventually forced the Muslim dynasties along the North African seaboard to stop preying on American merchantmen. In 1809 he was given command of the schooner-rigged dispatch boat *Revenge*. The following year, during a night of heavy fog, Revenge grounded on Watch Hill Reef offshore from his native Rhode Island and was soon demolished by the pounding surf. Although Perry was exonerated in a court-martial (the pilot took the blame), losing his ship left a cloud over his name.

Thereafter Perry found himself commanding flotillas of small gunboats, each armed with a single cannon. These warships *manqu* would supposedly defend American ports and rivers against enemy attack. The gunboats were Jefferson’s idea of a defensive navy. Every sailor knew the wallowing creatures were worthless, but the oblivious president had had 240 of them built. The British navy, meanwhile, continued to outrage the American public by searching and seizing U.S. merchant ships and impressing seamen as part of its worldwide blockade of Napoleonic France. Not even an unprovoked attack on the American frigate *Chesapeake*, killing three men and wounding eighteen, aroused the Sage of Monticello’s fighting blood.

Jefferson’s successor, James Madison, reversed the policy of nonresistance to British arrogance. A new generation of young politicians followed his lead, and soon congressional ‘war hawks’ such as Henry Clay and John C. Calhoun were calling for a declaration of hostilities and an invasion of Canada. But the new president had inherited a shrunken, demoralized Regular Army and minuscule navy and had done nothing to repair the damage. The War Department consisted of eight clerks; the army did not have either a quartermaster or an ordnance department. Only four American frigates were seaworthy. The British already had a ship of the line and seven frigates off the Atlantic coast. Worse, the populous commercial states of New England regarded the war with distaste and declined to call out their militia. Worst of all, the army was led by a bevy of aged generals left over from the American Revolution. The result was a series of military disasters.

The most unnerving of these reversals took place at Fort Detroit in August 1812, when Battle of Saratoga veteran Brig. Gen. William Hull surrendered sixteen hundred men to a besieging British-Indian force of roughly equal numbers. With Detroit went the vast Michigan Territory — the current states of Illinois, Michigan, and Wisconsin — of which Hull was the governor. The British immediately began formulating plans for a client state in the heart of the American continent, led by the most gifted Indian warrior-statesman of the era, the Shawnee Chief Tecumseh. The whining Hull’s chief excuse was British control of Lake Erie, which had enabled the enemy to transport cannons and an army to waylay him.

Only at sea did the Americans find anything to cheer about. Frigates such as *United States* and *Constitution* won ship-to-ship slugfests against British counterparts, while dozens of privateers took to the deep to wreak havoc on English merchantmen. But the British, with more than one thousand ships in their battle fleet, were confident that their overwhelming numbers would soon correct this spate of saltwater impudence.

The Northwest remained a crucial theater. As thousands of Indians joined their side, the British saw a chance to disable the entire American westward enterprise. Seeing what was at stake, hundreds of fighting men in Kentucky rushed to enlist. Major General William Henry Harrison, governor of Indiana Territory, who had defeated Tecumseh and his Indians at the Battle of Tippecanoe shortly before the war began, was given command of this new militia army. He soon found he was unable to advance because his long supply line was tenuous to the point of nonexistence. With the British in Detroit and in two other former American forts, King George III’s men and Tecumseh’s braves could strike at this lifeline at will.

When a thousand Kentuckians took it into their heads to lunge forward and capture the British fort near Frenchtown (present-day Monroe, Michigan) on the River Raisin, they were wiped out to a man by a British-Indian counterattack from the allies’ Lake Erie main base, Fort Malden. A similar attack on Fort Meigs on the Maumee River was beaten off only after desperate fighting. A chastened Harrison obeyed orders from Secretary of War John Armstrong to go on the defensive until Perry gained control of the lakes.

Perry was hard at work, exhorting, organizing, cajoling. He journeyed to Pittsburgh and befriended the naval agent there, who was soon shipping rope, canvas, lead (for keels), and cannons up the Allegheny River and French Creek. Perry found his fifty lost carpenters on this trip, cursing the government for shipping their tools separately over a route that took three times as long. He also persuaded the commander of the Pennsylvania militia to give him five hundred men to guard the Presque Isle shipyard.

Perry did everything in his power to cooperate with Commodore Chauncey when that timid leader asked for his assistance to attack Fort George, at the northwest end of the Niagara River. Sword in hand, Perry led marines in a crucial charge that carried the day. A grateful Chauncey wrote, ‘He was present at every point where he could be useful, under showers of musketry, but fortunately escaped unhurt.’

The victory prompted the British to abandon Fort Erie at the opposite end of the river, enabling Perry to reinforce his fleet with five small former merchant ships from the Black Rock navy yard. Perry, 250 sailors and soldiers, and teams of oxen had to drag the ships into Lake Erie against the Niagara River’s formidable current. It took six days of what Perry called ‘one of the hardest tasks I ever faced … the fatigue is almost incredible.’ Ill with fever and exhaustion, Perry led the virtually unarmed ships (they had only seven cannons between them) down the lake toward Presque Isle against a demoralizing headwind with three ships of the British Lake Erie fleet in close pursuit. At one point, a fog miraculously descended when the two fleets were only a half-mile apart. As Perry tacked into Presque Isle’s sheltered bay the sails of the British men-of-war appeared on the horizon.

These heroics did not persuade Commodore Chauncey to send Perry any sailors. As May dissolved into June and it into July, Perry’s shipbuilding program was almost complete. He had constructed two 110-foot, five-hundred-ton brigs with twenty guns each, three gunboats, and a pilot boat. With extra cannons added to his five Black Rock ships, Perry had a fleet that outgunned the British. But he needed 740 sailors to man it — and he had only 120. Not a few of these were down with ‘lake fever,’ a first cousin to typhus.

Letters arrived from the secretary of the navy and from General Harrison urging Perry to attack the enemy. Harrison reported that scouts had predicted another British foray against Fort Meigs. The mortified Perry could only report: ‘I regret that the force under my command is not yet ready for service….As soon as the government forwards men, I shall sail.’

In mid-July came news from the east that did nothing to raise Perry’s morale. One of his closest navy friends, Captain James Lawrence, commanding the star-crossed *Chesapeake*, had been defeated and killed in a ship-to-ship action with HMS *Shannon* off Boston. Perry was deeply moved by Lawrence’s dying words, ‘Don’t give up the ship.’ He asked a sailmaker to embroider them on a strip of blue cloth, which he planned to use as a personal battle flag. He also named the brig he intended to make his flagship *Lawrence*. Its sister ship was christened *Niagara*.

The news of James Lawrence’s heroic though losing fight only intensified Perry’s frustration at his immobility. Even more galling was the way the British fleet, now commanded by Captain Robert Heriot Barclay, a one-armed veteran of Trafalgar, sailed back and forth a few miles outside of Presque Isle Bay, taunting him. Perry’s letters to Chauncey began to acquire a cutting edge. On July 20, he wrote: ‘The enemy’s fleet of six sail are now off the bar of this harbor. What a golden opportunity should we have men.’

On July 23, Perry grew even more vehement. ‘For God’s sake and yours and mine,’ he wrote to Chauncey,’send me men and officers … send on the commander, my dear sir, for the *Niagara*. She is a noble vessel … send me officers and men and honour is within our grasp.’ In his desperation, he urged the commodore to come to Lake Erie with men from his squadron and take charge. Perry said he would ‘rejoice, whoever commands, to see this force on the lake.’

A few days later, seventy men arrived from Black Rock in a ship commanded by Perry’s cousin, Sailing Master Stephen Champlin. Many were African Americans, others militiamen. Few had ever been on a ship before. Perry told Chauncey they were a ‘motley set’ but he had reached the point where he was pleased with anything ‘in the shape of a man.’ At the end of July, another sixty men arrived. Most were too sick to stand. Others still trembled with the residue of lake fever. In desperation, Perry tried recruiting men from the militia in Presque Isle, but only a handful responded.

An ongoing worry was the possibility that during the darkness of night the British would send armed men in boats to destroy Perry’s fleet. Perry pleaded with the Pennsylvania militiamen to stand guard aboard the unmanned ships. They refused. In a quotation that summed up why Regular Army and navy men despised the militia, the captain of one company told Perry, ‘I told the boys to go … but the boys won’t go.’

Shortly before midnight on July 31, Perry was awakened by an aide with startling news: The British squadron had disappeared. Their porthole lights were no longer visible offshore. Perry hurried to the lakefront to see for himself. The British had vanished. What had happened? Perry suddenly recalled a rumor that Captain Barclay had been invited to a dinner honoring him and his officers at Port Dover, on the Canadian shore. He had apparently accepted, confident that Perry was never going to get his five- hundred-ton brigs across the shallow bar at the mouth of Presque Isle’s harbor.

We now know this was the case. At the dinner, the British veteran told his audience he expected to find ‘the Yankee brigs hard and fast on the bar when I return, in which predicament it will be but a small job to destroy them.’ Barclay had a few veteran lake sailors in his fleet who knew the depth of the Presque Isle bar, and his experienced eye had no difficulty computing how much water a five-hundred-ton brig drew.

What Barclay did not compute was Perry’s seafaring know-how and the technical skills of the shipbuilders he had accumulated at Presque Isle. By 4 a.m. on Sunday, August 1, Perry had his fleet in line at the mouth of the harbor and was soon at work on getting the brigs *Lawrence* and *Niagara* across the bar. At first it appeared impossible. Daniel Dobbins carefully sounded the bar and found that with an east wind blowing, in some places there was only 4 1/2 feet of water; at no place was there more than a fathom (six feet). The brigs drew nine feet.

Perry, however, had devices that Captain Barclay apparently thought were too sophisticated for the Americans to construct: camels. In the shipyard, appropriately named shipwright Sidney Wright had constructed four of these gadgets. Invented by the Dutch, they were essentially rectangular watertight pontoons. When water was pumped into them, they sank. They were lashed to the ship, water was pumped out, and they rose, theoretically lifting the ship with them.

*Lawrence* was the first to be ‘cameled.’ The process turned out to be much more complicated in fact than the theorists expected. The first try lifted the brig only about three feet. Perry offloaded the cannons and stores. Men in small boats and some on foot in shallow water tugged heroically on cables, but *Lawrence* remained stuck in the muddy sand. A second try, with more camels, was made the following day. There was more desperate tugging from the sailors in the boats. The do-nothing Pennsylvania militiamen, inspired by the herculean challenge, volunteered their muscle power as well. On the morning of August 4, *Lawrence* slid into deep water, and the cannons were hastily returned on board.

Now it was *Niagara*‘s turn. By this time, Perry and the rest of his men were in their third day of continuous frantic effort, during which they got no more than snatches of sleep. On August 5, with *Niagara* stuck on the bar, about to be fitted with camels, the exhausted Americans were rattled by a cry: ‘Sail ho!’ It was Barclay, back from his testimonial dinner. There was scarcely a man aboard *Lawrence*. The rest of Perry’s fleet had crossed the bar, but they were pipsqueaks, from a firepower point of view.

If Barclay had attacked, it would have been a slaughter. But as the British fleet drew closer, the wind shifted to the west. *Lawrence*‘s nose swung in their direction, and *Niagara*‘s followed suit, giving Captain Barclay the impression that Perry was coming out to fight him. To confirm the bluff, Perry ordered the 110-ton cutter *Ariel* and the even smaller schooner *Scorpion* to attack the enemy fleet. They headed toward the British and unleashed bold blasts from their long-range guns. Aboard *Lawrence*, the crew had hastily boarded and Perry ordered his drummer to beat to quarters. The shaken Barclay signaled his captains to put their helms over and headed for open water again.

Ironically, the British commander was as shorthanded as Perry. He had only fifty trained sailors in his fleet; the rest were Canadian militia and British army soldiers. Both he and the British army commander, General Henry Proctor, had pleaded with the high command to give them enough men to attack Erie. But the higher ranks stonewalled them, not unlike the way Chauncey had frustrated Perry. Men and supplies were shipped from east to west, and the intervening commanders clung to as many as they dared so they could maintain superiority on their own fronts.

On August 5, Barclay had an even better reason for retreating from Perry’s pretended assault. Another large ship was about to be added to his fleet, a nineteen-gun brig that had been built at Malden. That was where the British commander headed — and was so impressed with the sturdy newcomer that he named it Detroit, in honor of the victory over Hull, and made it his flagship. On August 6, Perry, still shaky from exhaustion, led his fleet out on the lake but found no trace of the British. Back off Presque Isle, he provisioned his ships and discharged some militiamen who had volunteered for the brief voyage. While he was having dinner, Perry got unexpected good news from the east. Jesse Duncan Elliott was on his way with eighty-nine seamen, two acting lieutenants, eight midshipmen, and a master’s mate. These reinforcements were soon in Presque Isle, and the delighted Perry gave Elliott command of *Niagara*.

The new arrival’s demeanor toward Perry was noticeably cool; Elliott all but scoffed in his face when Perry spoke about his love of country and military glory. Without so much as a by-your-leave, Elliott took all the best men from the new draft for *Niagara*. Sailing Master William Taylor, who had served with Perry on *Revenge*, considered this a breach of courtesy and warned the captain that Elliott was not his friend. But Perry, delighted by the reinforcements, ignored him.

Perry was soon heading down the lake for a conference with General Harrison. The two men liked each other on sight. Perry had already characterized Harrison as the only American general in the war with any ability. Harrison suggested South Bass Island’s sheltered harbor of Put-in-Bay, located about thirty miles from Malden, as an anchorage for Perry’s ships while he waited for the British to emerge for a fight to the finish. The general also recruited 150 Kentucky riflemen to serve as marines aboard the fleet.

These reinforcements were diluted by an outbreak of lake fever that had half of Perry’s men groaning in their hammocks. Perry, his younger brother Alexander, and the fleet’s three doctors were soon on the sick list. A decision to boil all drinking water helped slow the outbreak, and the application of mustard plasters got Perry back on his feet. But for the better part of a week, the Americans were in no shape to fight. Once more, Perry’s luck held; Barclay was busy arming and rigging *Detroit* and made no attempt to challenge him.

On the evening of September 9, both fleets were ready for action. Perry summoned his officers to *Lawrence* for a final conference. He stressed that the Americans could only win if they closed with the enemy. Most of the cannons aboard *Lawrence* and *Niagara* were thirty-two-pounder carronades, which flung a tremendous weight of metal. But these’smashers’ had a range of only 250 yards. Barclay had thirty-five long guns that could hit home at a mile. Perry also assigned specific ships in the enemy fleet to each of his captains. But he warned them that they might have to improvise. Again and again he stressed Admiral Horatio Nelson’s advice: ‘If you bring the enemy close alongside, you cannot be out of your plan.’

At 5 a.m. the next day, Perry was still asleep in his cabin when a fist pounded on the door and someone shouted, ‘Sail ho!’ He was soon on the quarterdeck, peering into the distance at the sails of the British fleet approaching Put-in-Bay. At 7 a.m. he ordered his fleet to get underway. The southwest breeze was distressingly light. Perry ordered out boats to tow *Lawrence* around the two islands that sheltered the bay. As the men strained at the oars, Perry glanced up at the blue sky. Above them hovered an eagle. He pointed out the national bird to nearby sailors as a good omen.

As they neared the open lake, Perry’s prophecy about the eagle seemed to come true. The breeze abruptly shifted to the southeast, giving the American fleet the ‘weather gauge’ — the ability to attack with the wind in their favor. On all nine ships the grim preparations for battle were in progress. The decks were sprinkled with sand, then sprayed with water to guarantee a footing when they became slippery with blood. Cutlasses for boarding parties were stacked in opportune places. Round shot, canister, and grapeshot were piled beside the guns.

The breeze remained light, in fact too light for Perry’s battle plan. With the lake as calm as the proverbial millpond and Perry’s ships moving at a bare two knots, the advantage lay with the British long guns. To counter this threat, Perry ordered the schooners *Ariel* and *Scorpion*, which had long guns, to take positions on *Lawrence*‘s weather bow. But they were a weak response at best, with only five guns between them. Even more worrisome was the way the four U.S. gunboats — *Somers*, *Tigress*, *Porcupine*, and *Trippe* — had fallen a good two miles behind, a dolorous tribute to their former careers as plodding merchantmen.

*Detroit*‘s long guns opened a murderous fire on the all-but-drifting Americans, with *Lawrence* its main target. The green wood and hasty construction of the Presque Isle shipyard soon became apparent. A musket ball could penetrate *Lawrence*‘s sides, which were only two inches thick. Twelve- and twenty-four-pound shot ripped through the hull, tearing off arms and legs and flinging deadly splinters into men’s bodies.

It was an agonizing ordeal to which Perry’s carronades, still out of range, could make no reply. When he finally drew within seven hundred yards, Perry fired a broadside and was dismayed to see it made little impression on *Detroit*, whose planking was a foot thick and was reinforced by far more frames than Perry’s ships.

While Perry piled on every yard of sail aboard his flagship to get closer to *Detroit*, Jesse Elliott in *Niagara* seemed content to keep his distance and bombard his assigned antagonist, *Queen Charlotte*, with his two long-range twelve-pounders. Since *Charlotte* was armed with twenty-four-pounder carronades, it could not return the fire. Its captain bore away and joined *Detroit* in the attack on *Lawrence*.

That was bad news for Perry. By the time he closed to three hundred yards and began blasting *Detroit* with his carronades, the devastatingly accurate fire of Barclay’s long guns had left many of his men dead or wounded. Two smaller British ships, *Hunter* and *Chippeway*, took on *Ariel* and *Scorpion*, depriving *Lawrence* of their support.

‘Why doesn’t *Niagara* come to help us?’ more than one sailor asked Perry as he strode the deck, encouraging his men and directing their fire. It was a question very much on Perry’s mind, as broadsides from *Queen Charlotte*began to wreak havoc on his ship. All Perry and his men could do was fight for their lives in a losing battle. For more than two hours *Lawrence* took fearful punishment from both ships, while Elliott made no attempt to join the fight.

Sailing Master William Taylor, who had warned Perry about Elliott, later wrote, ‘The *Lawrence* alone received the fire of the whole British squadron … we were not supported as we ought to have been.’ By 2:30, Taylor reported, ’22 men and officers lay dead on decks and 66 wounded, every gun dismounted, carriages knocked to pieces, every strand of rigging cut off, mast and Belowdecks, Surgeon’s Mate Usher Parsons struggled to help the wounded in the nine-by-ten-foot wardroom, which had become an improvised sickbay. Many were beyond hope. Lieutenant John Brooks, the commander of the marines, was struck in the thigh by a cannonball and horribly mangled. He was carried below, screaming in agony, begging Perry to kill him. The wardroom was no safer than the deck. ‘During the action five cannonballs passed through the room,’ Parsons told his parents in a letter shortly after the battle. Seconds after he finished putting a tourniquet on a midshipman’s arm, the young man was struck in the chest by a cannonball and instantly killed. A seaman with both arms fractured had both legs shattered by another hurtling twenty-four-pound projectile. He died within an hour.

The final shot from *Lawrence* was fired by Perry himself, manning the last intact gun. When that gun too was knocked out, defeat seemed inevitable. Only eighteen men were still on their feet. The British ships stopped firing, expecting Perry to strike his colors. No other choice seemed possible.

But Perry’s eyes were on Niagara. The brig was performing a maneuver as strange as its previous actions. Pulling past *Caledonia*, Elliott came almost abeam *Lawrence* but he made no attempt to interpose his ship between the British and the stricken flagship. *Caledonia* was permitted to make this heroic gesture on its own.

One of Perry’s wounded lieutenants, following the captain’s eyes, snarled through teeth gritted with pain: ‘That brig will not help us. See how he keeps off and will not come to close action.’ ‘I’ll fetch him up,’ Perry said.

Gazing down the deck littered with dead and dying, Perry saw that his gig was still intact — another example of his incredible luck. He summoned two lieutenants and Sailing Master Taylor, all of them wounded, and left them in charge of *Lawrence*, with the authority to do whatever they judged necessary to save the lives of the wounded and the handful still unscathed. He ordered his personal battle flag, ‘Don’t Give Up The Ship,’ lowered from the mainmast. Many of the wounded on the deck wept and cried out in protest. They thought he was surrendering. So did the British.

Perry boarded the gig with four oarsmen and ordered them to pull for *Niagara*. Captain Barclay, with all his own small boats smashed, may have thought that Perry was coming to *Detroit* to surrender his sword. It took about five minutes for Perry to emerge from the shroud of battle smoke lying on the water and become visible to the British gunners. They opened up on him with every cannon still capable of firing. Round shot, canister, and grapeshot hissed around the boat. But Perry’s luck made him and his boat crew inviolable. The oarsmen and the captain were drenched with spray, and one version has it that the oars were splintered and the boat was holed. But in fifteen minutes, Perry was within hailing distance of *Niagara*.

Grimy with powder, haggard with exhaustion, Perry came aboard to be greeted by Elliott with the most inane imaginable question: ‘How is the day going?’

‘Bad enough,’ Perry snarled. ‘We have been cut all to pieces.’ He paused momentarily, and glanced toward *Lawrence*, drifting helplessly, then peered at the distant gunboats. ‘Why are the gunboats so far astern?’

‘I’ll bring them up,’ Elliott said.

‘Do so, sir,’ was Perry’s curt retort.

The unspoken part of this supposed conversation is far more significant. Elliott, obviously mortified to find Perry still alive, was anxious to get as far away from him as possible. Perry, still determined to win the battle, was even more inclined to give him no share in the victory. There was no reason to order Elliott, the second ranking American officer in the fleet, to bring the gunboats into the fray. A junior officer or a midshipman could have relayed the command. Their handful of cannons could not have much impact on the struggle. The mere fact that Elliott surrendered command of his ship is virtually de facto proof that he was ashamed of his treacherous performance and incapable of facing Perry, much less fighting beside him.

As Perry took charge of *Niagara*, his officers ordered *Lawrence*‘s battle flag lowered. They were unable to mount further resistance. Aboard the British ships a cheer broke the silence. They thought they had won the battle.

Perry had other ideas. *Niagara* was virtually untouched. Only a handful of men had been wounded by long-range shots. Up the mainmast went Perry’s motto flag and his captain’s pennant. At that moment, the breeze quickened. Perry laid on all available sail and bore down on the startled British. Captain Barclay attempted to bring the shot-up *Detroit* about so he could confront Perry with his starboard battery, which was relatively undamaged. At the same moment, Queen Charlotte, its captain dead, tried to maneuver into position for a broadside of its own. A shot from one of *Niagara*‘s long guns tore through its topsails, and Charlotte veered into *Detroit*, entangling its bowsprit in the flagship’s rigging.

Perry took deadly advantage of the accident. Shortening sail to check *Niagara*‘s speed, he waited until he was at right angles to both ships and hurled a blast from his thirty-two-pounders — round shot mixed with canister — across their decks, wreaking awful destruction. Simultaneously, the Kentucky sharpshooters in *Niagara*‘s rigging blazed away with their deadly rifles.

Perry had not forgotten the rest of the British fleet. Plowing past the stunned *Detroit* and *Queen Charlotte*, he ordered his port gunners to fire a broadside into the smaller *Lady Prevost*, *Chippeway*, and *Little Belt*.

Deftly backing his topsails to reduce his headway, Perry again blasted *Queen Charlotte* with his starboard guns, adding a new target, the ten-gun sloop *Hunter*, which had been lurking astern of *Detroit*, putting an occasional shot into *Lawrence*. His port guns again blasted *Lady Prevost*, leaving only one man alive on the deck, its dazed captain, shot in the face by a musket ball. spars shot and tottering overhead in just an unimaginable wreck.’

Coming about, Perry once again raked *Detroit* and *Queen Charlotte* with his murderous thirty-two-pounder carronades at pistol-shot range. By this time, Elliott had brought the gunboats into the fight, adding a few cannons that compounded the British sense of being overwhelmed. All resistance collapsed. An officer on *Queen Charlotte*frantically waved a white handkerchief stuck on a boarding pike.

On *Detroit* Captain Barclay had been wounded twice by grapeshot, first in the thigh, then in the shoulder. He was carried to the deck after being treated for the second wound. An officer told him the battle was lost, and Barclay, surveying his wrecked ship, agreed. He ordered the flag he had nailed to the mainmast hauled down. Since this would take time, a lieutenant ran to the rail and screamed ‘We surrender!’ while a seaman hastily shimmied up the mast to tear loose the flag.

*Hunter* and *Lady Prevost* also surrendered. Small-fry *Chippeway* and *Little Belt* tried to flee but were soon overtaken by the schooner *Scorpion* and the gunboat *Trippe*.

It was over. In fifteen minutes, Perry had snatched victory from what looked like certain defeat. He turned to a midshipman and ordered him to row ashore with a message to General Harrison. Pulling an envelope from his coat, Perry ripped off the back and wrote: ‘Dear Gen’l: — We have met the enemy and they are ours; two ships, two brigs, one schooner and one sloop. Yours with great respect and esteem, O.H. Perry.’

**I. Introduction**

A. Attention (What if it COULD be better. What if all the things that Sailors yearn for could be theirs. And what IF that’s what would foster dramatically increased mission accomplishment.)

B. Motivation (Leaders at all levels NEED to understand and embrace the concept of Quality of Service in order to retain the best and fully qualified while motivating them to crush the mission.)

C. Overview (It all starts with accepting a fundamental truth: Sailors WANT TO WORK HARD. They want to crush the mission. They want to be the best possible version of themselves. They want to be valuable contributors to a cause; a greater good. And in doing this, THEY CRAVE LEADERSHIP. They don’t always know exactly when, where or how it will appear; but regardless of their complaints in the moment – they will recognize and respond when they see it. In order to do that for them, we need to create and protect their QUALITY OF SERVICE.)

D. Plug “Ask DGUTS!” segment. dontgiveuptheshippodcast@gmail.com

**II. Body**

A. Main Point 1 (What is Quality of Service?) – Quality of Service is many different things that add up to a concept. I’ll dive into each of them, but in general it’s a long-term sum of daily experiences in which leadership ensures that Sailors are set up for success and ready to work; so they can understand the mission, show up to work prepared to execute the mission with all required tools and materials, spend the assigned (reasonable) time crushing it and then get on liberty. It includes valuing their time, recognizing their hard work, building trust and rapport and stockpiling credit so that when the mission demands rise, they rise to meet them.

B. Main Point 2 (What makes up Quality of Service) – I’m going to break it down into major areas but I’ll inevitably miss something. At the end I’ll summarize and that’s when you will see those things I missed. That’s when YOU add to it. Continue building on it. When you embrace this concept it’s a living thing. It grows with you and your experience, allowing for constant improvement.

1. Sub-point (The Setup) – "By failing to prepare, you are preparing to fail." – Benjamin Franklin.

How many times have you come to work and had no idea what you were doing that day? Then, after an hour of waiting around, having quarters and then being given the worklist, you have to spend another hour or more preparing to do the work. Preparing tags, doing paperwork, finding the right technical documents, gathering tools/materials, setting up the work area, hanging tags, etc. Most, if not ALL of these things could have been done YESTERDAY. So you maybe get one hour of work done prior to lunch; if you can even start – or worse, you work THROUGH lunch and continue on hungry. Then, the 1500 work list comes out. A recipe for building a bitter, jaded Sailor that puts on roller skates and separates at their EAOS.

But what if a command builds a culture of planning and preparation? It’s not a fantasy. They exist. I know this, because I’ve seen it with my own eyes. I was lucky enough to make Chief at a command that championed this kind of preparation. My mentor, a now retired Command Master Chief, created the concept of “Quality of Service” and programmed it into his Chiefs. You ensured your Sailors were set up for success. Tags written. Material staged. Whatever was needed so they could walk onboard, hit a quick Quarters and COMMENCE WORK. The duty section could spend the evening setting up for the next day. Where day after duty Sailors were off the ship by 1300, NO EXCEPTIONS. These things were made important, and to all the naysaying supervisors surprise, productivity skyrocketed.

2. Sub-point (Time is Money) – If you ask a junior Sailor what they value most, 99% of the time they will quickly answer with “LIBERTY”. But what they’re really saying is TIME. Their time is valuable. Say it. THEIR TIME IS VALUABLE. Seriously, on both ends. At work, they’re time is incredibly valuable to YOU. To the MISSION. Why waste that? I want them to spend every second possible being PRODUCTIVE. That word is important, because I don’t want them working for TIME, I want them working for PRODUCTION. So, how do I make them the most effective? I VALUE THEIR TIME. I treat it like it’s valuable to me because I damn well know it’s valuable to them. I ensure they are prepared and ready to work. By doing that, they become more productive. And I ensure that I hand them a list of things to accomplish before leaving, then FOLLOW UP with cutting them out on liberty WHEN IT’S ACCOMPLISHED. Also important wording. The work gets done TO MY STANDARDS. I train on what those standards are, how they look and feel, so it’s not a surprise when I hit the deckplates to inspect what I expect. Their time on LIBERTY is incredibly valuable to THEM. But if they KNOW, they will DO, because they understand the results – both if they low ball their efforts (RE-WORK) or if they do it right the first time. Low ball me, and certain as death and taxes you’re re-doing that job. Do it right consistently, I put you on liberty consistently. And the trust in me as a leader, that I value their time, is firmly established.

3. Sub-point (Growth) – I overheard a conversation between a Sailor and his Chief recently. He was pulled in the Mess to be disciplined for insubordination, essentially. His Chief was spun up, extremely angry because he felt he’d been disrespected – and he probably had been. But he was so angry he wasn’t listening anymore. This conversation probably shouldn’t have happened at this point, but it did. Had his Chief stopped it, allowed himself to calm down, he probably would have heard what I heard. Which was a Sailor frustrated with his underutilization. He felt he had more to offer. He was continually being put in the same role, standing the same watch. He wanted increased responsibility. He wanted a chance to show his ability. He wanted to grow.

Sailors need to be put in positions to succeed. Some will ask for it, like this young man. Some won’t. It’s our job as leaders to ensure they are trained, that they are qualified, and they become experienced. They learn the lessons along the way. This is growth. And they WANT THIS. Sailors want to experience job satisfaction. They want to know they are contributing. They need to be put in these positions, even if they fight it, to grow in their careers. They need to be told no. They need to be corrected, disciplined, trained, educated, and praised. They need to experience professional growth and we need to make it priority. I’ve trained Sailors that never experienced it and they fought me tooth and nail every step of the way. But I never backed off it, even when I thought that maybe I was pushing too hard. These are the Sailors that reached back to me, wearing Anchors, and thanked me for pushing so hard. I’ve literally received messages from Sailors that said had I not done those things, there is no way they would have had the successes that they did. That’s what it’s all about.

4. Sub-point (Validation) – So we create this environment for our Sailors. They trust us, they crush the mission and work REALLY hard doing it. So now what? Validation. We re-enforce the behavior by rewarding them for their efforts. This takes many shapes: awards, evaluations, attaboys (coins), liberty, advancements (MAP), advanced qualifications (put them in a senior positions), etc. That old crusty mentor of mine instituted a “Heavy Hitter” award where, no kidding, he would have a wooden Louisville Slugger made with someone’s name burned into it and award it at Quarters. He funded this out of his own pocket. Try and tell me that wouldn’t make your month. These things, DEMONSTRATING TO THEM THAT YOU GENUINELY CARE, you can’t put a price on that. That’s leadership. That inspires followership. Your charges understanding that you deeply care about them and their experience in this thing we call being a Sailor, is the most important ingredient there is to effective leadership.

5. Sub-point (Protect what you built) – At some point, we’re all at the mercy of someone or something. But that doesn’t mean we roll over. Whether it’s scheduling, work controls, planning, or last minute tasking – PROTECT THEM. I’ll never forget the hard and fast line that my CMC put down for the shipyard – NO NEW WORK AFTER 1500. If they couldn’t find the time to bring a new job down to ship’s force prior to 1500, then it waited until the next day. That was to protect Sailors liberty and ability to prepare for work the following day. Well, as we all know, shipyards can march to the beat of their own drum at times and were consistently violating this rule. My CMC continually told them no, to leave the ship and one day marched up to the daily planning meeting and, in his words to my Commanding Officer: “broke some dishes”. He chastised them for not considering the effect of this practice on our Sailors quality of work and life. And it worked. They stopped (with very few exceptions that were turned right around, to the surprise of no one). Sailors appreciated that. They absolutely loved the fact that someone had their back. That it was unacceptable for someone to trample on them. Imagine that feeling as a junior Sailor? Knowing that your CMC was protecting you from that kind of abuse of your time? And imagine how you would respond. With work. Hard work. Quality work.

C. Main Point 3 (Why should I do it?) – Quality of Service is worth the pain. The pain of getting people to buy in to the concept. It’s tough, because it needs to be driven from the top (Command Triad) for it to catch on as a culture at your command. But there’s nothing saying you can’t institute it at your division or department level. It’s worth the growing pains. You will experience them as you create this culture. But you won’t panic. Because you know that it’s worth the wait. On the other end of this, you will have happy, productive Sailors that are deeply satisfied with their experience. It won’t become less difficult for you and them. But it will become so much more rewarding. You WILL make an impact. It WILL be noticed within your division, department and command. And it will be noticed in your retention, in your mission accomplishment and most importantly, it will be noticed BY YOUR SAILORS.

D. Main Point 4 (Is this even possible?): YES. And I’m not saying this with some pie in the sky view point of something I think sounds pretty. I HAVE SEEN IT. And I wasn’t imagining things. I’m not the only one. There are commands out there getting this right. Are they rare? Yes. But they exist. That is IMPORTANT because the concept is battle tested. It worked on the most challenging platform my community has – and I’d argue the Navy has. It inspired unimaginable productivity and mission accomplishment. We did amazing things. Things I still derive pride and a sense of accomplishment from – 5 years removed. All it takes is the commitment to your Sailors. We can’t treat them like consumables. And that happens far too often…and I don’t think it’s malicious. I think we sometimes look back at “how we had it” and essentially think they should suck it up. That this generation is somehow weaker and are handling it poorly. But that’s on us. Because they want to work hard. All of them. Even those “millennials”. They long for the sense of belonging – to something greater than themselves. And we can give them that, with Quality of Service.

**III. Conclusion**

A. Summary (We talked about…)

1. What Quality of Service is…

2. The principles and how to apply them…

3. And how and why it is both important and possible…

B. Re-motivation (Leaders at all levels NEED to understand and embrace the concept of Quality of Service in order to retain the best and fully qualified while motivating them to crush the mission.)

C. Closing – It all comes back around to taking care of your Sailors. We all want this just as junior Sailors want to work hard and accomplish the mission. No one, at the senior or junior levels comes into this pursuit wanting to fail. No one shows up angry and bitter. We become this way by failing at the pursuit of Quality Service. We get lost in blindly pursuing mission accomplishment by just throwing bodies at the problem without considering the effect. Without pre-planning. Without ensuring our Sailors are prepared to tackle the challenges and re-charged and re-loaded to re-attack tomorrows challenges. Our job as leaders is to take care of Sailors. A Sailors job is to take care of the mission. If we genuinely take CARE, real CARE of our charges they will shock you with their passion, dedication, work capacity and ingenuity in absolutely demolishing the mission. They have done this for hundreds of years and I have ABSOLUTE FAITH they will continue to do so. So long as we continue to be good stewards of their service.

D. Plug “Ask DGUTS!” segment. dontgiveuptheshippodcast@gmail.com