**Episode 22 – Your Competition is NOT Your Problem Outline**

**INFORMATION:** Discuss focusing on your own professional and personal growth through helping others.

http://usnhistory.navylive.dodlive.mil/2015/12/22/navy-legends-rear-adm-eugene-fluckey/

**History Segment:** RADM Eugene Fluckey and the USS Barb

To paraphrase a popular jam motto, with a name like Fluckey, you have to be good, and the Washington, D.C. native didn’t disappoint. He graduated high school at age 15, attended prep schools for two years until entering the U.S. Naval Academy in 1931. Following his graduation in 1935, Fluckey served on the battleship Nevada (BB 36) and destroyer McCormick (DD 223) before attending submarine school.

When Japan hit Pearl Harbor on Dec. 7, 1941, Lt. Fluckey was serving on the submarine Bonita (SS 165), completing five war patrols. He then attended the Naval Academy’s Postgraduate School and Prospective Commanding Officer’s School, becoming skipper of the Gato-class Barb (SS 220), in January 1944. The diesel-powered sub had already served six war patrols in the European Theater and its first while assigned to the Pacific submarine fleet.

Fluckey’s leadership as commanding officer of Barb gained him legendary status during the submarine’s final five war patrols between January 1944 and August 1945. However, it was the boat’s 11th war patrol that earned Lt. Cmdr. Fluckey the Medal of Honor, and his crew the Presidential Unit Citation.

Fluckey had tracked a concentration of more than 30 enemy ships to Mamkwan Harbor off the coast of China in January 1945. The skipper pondered his strategy that included screens of Japanese combatants; shallow water filled with mines, rocks and fishing junks, and deduced a probable Japanese response to an attack.

Blessed with a night of low visibility on Jan. 25, the sub’s captain decided to test his moniker “Lucky Fluckey” and ordered “Battle Stations – Torpedoes!” The sub weaved through the armed escort ships in mere 30-feet of water. Once the sub was within 3,000 yards of its targets, Barb fired its remaining four forward torpedoes. The sub then quickly brought its stern tubes to bear and let loose four more into the enemy ships. All eight torpedoes struck the six main targets, including a large ammunition ship that exploded, sending even more shrapnel into the enemy ships.

Penetrating deep into a harbor filled with enemy combatants to fire eight torpedoes was a breeze compared to what faced the skipper next: getting the Barb to safety. Running at a blistering speed of 23.5 knots with artillery shells bursting around them from enemy combatants, the Barb raced through the unchartered waters rift with rocks and mines.

Just as “Lucky Fluckey” predicted, the enemy ships mistook the fishing junks for the escaping submarine, and then hesitated upon reaching the rocky waters. Barb dived into deep water just as a Japanese airplane was spotted overhead.

Fluckey was to be rotated off Barb after his fourth war patrol, but he bargained a deal with Adm. Charles A. Lockwood, commanding officer of Submarine Force Pacific Fleet, that if that patrol was successful, he could remain on the sub for its 12th and final war patrol. Fluckey certainly held up his end of the bargain, so Lockwood permitted Fluckey’s fifth war patrol.

What the daring skipper and his crew did during that “graduation” patrol proved yet again Fluckey’s skill at maneuvering his boat and leading his crew.

Besides the Medal of Honor, “Lucky Fluckey” earned four Navy Crosses, the Distinguished Service Medal and the Legion of Merit, as well as an additional nickname of “Galloping Ghost of the China Coast.” Post- war, he served as an aide to Chief of Naval Operations Fleet Adm. Chester Nimitz, and headed several commands, including a two-year stint as director of naval intelligence between 1966 and 1968.

Fluckey retired as a rear admiral in 1972 with more than 40 years in the Navy. He wrote a book about his time on USS Barb called “Thunder Below!” the proceeds of which were used to help former crewmembers and their wives attend reunions. After his first wife of 42 years, Marjorie, died in 1979, Fluckey married Margaret, whom he met while they were running an orphanage in Portugal. They were married 27 years until his death, at age 93, in 2007. He is buried at the U.S. Naval Academy Cemetery.

“Serve your country well. Put more into life than you expect to get out of it,” Fluckey wrote to a new class of submariners in 1999. “Drive yourself and lead others. Make others feel good about themselves, they will outperform your expectations, and you will never lack for friends.”

The President of the United States of America, in the name of Congress, takes pleasure in presenting the Medal of Honor to Commander Eugene Bennett Fluckey, United States Navy, for conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty as commanding officer of the U.S.S. BARB (SS-220) during her ELEVENTH War Patrol along the east coast of China from 19 December 1944 to 15 February 1945. After sinking a large enemy ammunition ship and damaging additional tonnage during a running two-hour night battle on 8 January, Commander Fluckey, in an exceptional feat of brilliant deduction and bold tracking on 25 January, located a concentration of more than 30 enemy ships in the lower reaches of Nankuan Chiang (Mamkwan Harbor). Fully aware that a safe retirement would necessitate an hour's run at full speed through the uncharted, mined, and rock-obstructed waters, he bravely ordered, "Battle station--torpedoes!" In a daring penetration of the heavy enemy screen, and riding in five fathoms of water, he launched the BARB's last forward torpedoes at 3,000-yard range. Quickly bringing the ship's stern tubes to bear, he turned loose four more torpedoes into the enemy, obtaining eight direct hits on six of the main targets to explode a large ammunition ship and cause inestimable damage by the resultant flying shells and other pyrotechnics. Clearing the treacherous area at high speed, he brought the BARB through to safety and four days later sank a large Japanese freighter to complete a record of heroic combat achievement, reflecting the highest credit upon Commander Fluckey, his gallant officers and men, and the United States Naval Service.

July, 1945 (Guam)

 Fleet Admiral Chester Nimitz looked across the desk at Admiral Lockwood as he finished the personal briefing on U.S. war ships in the vicinity of the northern coastal areas of Hokkaido, Japan. "Well, Chester, there's only the Barb there, and probably no word until the patrol is finished. You remember Gene Fluckey?"

 "Of course. I recommended him for the Medal of Honor," Admiral Nimitz replied. "You surely pulled him from command after he received it?"

July 18, 1945 (Patience Bay, Off the coast of Karafuto, Japan)

 It was after 4 A.M. and Commander Fluckey rubbed his eyes as he peered over the map spread before him. It was the twelfth war patrol of the Barb, the fifth under Commander Fluckey. He should have turned command over to another skipper after four patrols, but had managed to strike a deal with Admiral Lockwood to make one more trip with the men he cared for like a father, should his fourth patrol be successful. Of course, no one suspected when he had struck that deal prior to his fourth and what should have been his final war patrol on the Barb, that Commander Fluckey's success would be so great he would be awarded the Medal of Honor.

 Commander Fluckey smiled as he remembered that patrol. "Lucky" Fluckey they called him. On January 8th the Barb had emerged victorious from a running two-hour night battle after sinking a large enemy ammunition ship. Two weeks later in Mamkwan Harbor he found the "mother-lode"...more than 30 enemy ships. In only 5 fathoms (30 feet) of water his crew had unleashed the sub's forward torpedoes, then turned and fired four from the stern. As he pushed the Barb to the full limit of its speed through the dangerous waters in a daring withdrawal to the open sea, he recorded eight direct hits on six enemy ships. Then, on the return home he added yet another Japanese freighter to the tally for the Barb's eleventh patrol, a score that exceeded even the number of that patrol.

 What could possibly be left for the Commander to accomplish who, just three months earlier had been in Washington, DC to receive the Medal of Honor? He smiled to himself as he looked again at the map showing the rail line that ran along the enemy coast line. This final patrol had been promised as the Barb's "graduation patrol" and he and his crew had cooked up an unusual finale. Since the 8th of June they had harassed the enemy, destroying the enemy supplies and coastal fortifications with the first submarine launched rocket attacks. Now his crew was buzzing excitedly about bagging a train.

The rail line itself wouldn't be a problem. A shore patrol could go ashore under cover of darkness to plant the explosives...one of the sub's 55-pound scuttling charges. But this early morning Lucky Fluckey and his officers were puzzling over how they could blow not only the rails, but one of the frequent trains that shuttled supplies to equip the Japanese war machine. Such a daring feat could handicap the enemy's war effort for several days, a week, perhaps even longer. It was a crazy idea, just the kind of operation "Lucky" Fluckey had become famous...or infamous...for. But no matter how crazy the idea might have sounded, the Barb's skipper would not risk the lives of his men. Thus the problem... how to detonate the charge at the moment the train passed, without endangering the life of a shore party. PROBLEM? Not on Commander Fluckey's ship. His philosophy had always been "We don't have problems, only solutions".

11:27 AM

 "Battle Stations!" No more time to seek solutions or to ponder blowing up a train. The approach of a Japanese freighter with a frigate escort demands traditional submarine warfare. By noon the frigate is laying on the ocean floor in pieces and the Barb is in danger of becoming the hunted.

6:07 PM

 Solutions! If you don't look for them, you'll never find them. And even then, sometimes they arrive in the most unusual fashion. Cruising slowly beneath the surface to evade the enemy plane now circling overhead, the monotony is broken with an exciting new idea. Instead of having a crewman on shore to trigger explosives to blow both rail and a passing train, why not let the train BLOW ITSELF up. Billy Hatfield was excitedly explaining how he had cracked nuts on the railroad tracks as a kid, placing the nuts between two ties so the sagging of the rail under the weight of a train would break them open. "Just like cracking walnuts," he explained. "To complete the circuit (detonating the 55-pound charge) we hook in a microswitch ...between two ties. We don't set it off, the TRAIN does." Not only did Hatfield have the plan, he wanted to be part of the volunteer shore party.

 The solution found, there was no shortage of volunteers, all that was needed was the proper weather...a little cloud cover to darken the moon for the mission ashore. Lucky Fluckey established his own criteria for the volunteer party:

 ...No married men would be included, except for Hatfield,

 ...The party would include members from each department,

 ...The opportunity would be split between regular Navy and Navy Reserve sailors,

 ...At least half of the men had to have been Boy Scouts, experienced in how to handle themselves in medical emergencies and in the woods.

 FINALLY, "Lucky" Fluckey would lead the saboteurs himself.

 When the names of the 8 selected sailors was announced it was greeted with a mixture of excitement and disappointment. Among the disappointed was Commander Fluckey who surrendered his opportunity at the insistence of his officers that "as commander he belonged with the Barb," coupled with the threat from one that "I swear I'll send a message to ComSubPac if you attempt this (joining the shore party himself)." Even a Japanese POW being held on the Barb wanted to go, promising not to try to escape.

 In the meantime, there would be no more harassment of Japanese shipping or shore operations by the Barb until the train mission had been accomplished. The crew would "lay low", prepare their equipment, train, and wait for the weather.

July 22, 1945 (Patience Bay, Off the coast of Karafuto, Japan)

 Patience Bay was wearing thin the patience of Commander Fluckey and his innovative crew. Everything was ready. In the four days the saboteurs had anxiously watched the skies for cloud cover, the inventive crew of the Barb had built their microswitch. When the need was posed for a pick and shovel to bury the explosive charge and batteries, the Barb's engineers had cut up steel plates in the lower flats of an engine room, then bent and welded them to create the needed tools. The only things beyond their control was the weather....and time. Only five days remained in the Barb's patrol.

 Anxiously watching the skies, Commander Fluckey noticed plumes of cirrus clouds, then white stratus capping the mountain peaks ashore. A cloud cover was building to hide the three-quarters moon. This would be the night.

MIDNIGHT, July 23, 1945

 The Barb had crept within 950 yards of the shoreline. If it was somehow seen from the shore it would probably be mistaken for a schooner or Japanese patrol boat. No one would suspect an American submarine so close to shore or in such shallow water. Slowly the small boats were lowered to the water and the 8 saboteurs began paddling toward the enemy beach. Twenty-five minutes later they pulled the boats ashore and walked on the surface of the Japanese homeland. Having lost their points of navigation, the saboteurs landed near the backyard of a house. Fortunately the residents had no dogs, though the sight of human AND dog's tracks in the sand along the beach alerted the brave sailors to the potential for unexpected danger.

Stumbling through noisy waist-high grasses, crossing a highway and then stumbling into a 4-foot drainage ditch, the saboteurs made their way to the railroad tracks. Three men were posted as guards, Markuson assigned to examine a nearby water tower. The Barb's auxiliary man climbed the ladder, then stopped in shock as he realized it was an enemy lookout tower....an OCCUPIED tower. Fortunately the Japanese sentry was peacefully sleeping and Markuson was able to quietly withdraw and warn his raiding party.

The news from Markuson caused the men digging the placement for the explosive charge to continue their work more slowly and quietly. Suddenly, from less than 80 yards away, an express train was bearing down on them. The appearance was a surprise, it hadn't occurred to the crew during the planning for the mission that there might be a night train. When at last it passed, the brave but nervous sailors extracted themselves from the brush into which they had leapt, to continue their task. Twenty minutes later the holes had been dug and the explosives and batteries hidden beneath fresh soil.

During planning for the mission the saboteurs had been told that, with the explosives in place, all would retreat a safe distance while Hatfield made the final connection. If the sailor who had once cracked walnuts on the railroad tracks slipped during this final, dangerous procedure, his would be the only life lost. On this night it was the only order the saboteurs refused to obey, all of them peering anxiously over Hatfield's shoulder to make sure he did it right. The men had come too far to be disappointed by a switch failure.

1:32 A.M.

 Watching from the deck of the Barb, Commander Fluckey allowed himself a sigh of relief as he noticed the flashlight signal from the beach announcing the departure of the shore party. He had skillfully, and daringly, guided the Barb within 600 yards of the enemy beach. There was less than 6 feet of water beneath the sub's keel, but Fluckey wanted to be close in case trouble arose and a daring rescue of his saboteurs became necessary.

1:45 A.M.

 The two boats carrying his saboteurs were only halfway back to the Barb when the sub's machine gunner yelled, "CAPTAIN! Another train coming up the tracks!" The Commander grabbed a megaphone and yelled through the night, "Paddle like the devil!", knowing full well that they wouldn't reach the Barb before the train hit the micro switch.

1:47 A.M.

 The darkness was shattered by brilliant light and the roar of the explosion. The boilers of the locomotive blew, shattered pieces of the engine blowing 200 feet into the air. Behind it the cars began to accordion into each other, bursting into flame and adding to the magnificent fireworks display. Five minutes later the saboteurs we lifted to the deck by their exuberant comrades as the Barb turned to slip back to safer waters. Moving at only two knots, it would be a while before the Barb was into waters deep enough to allow it to submerge. It was a moment to savor, the culmination of teamwork, ingenuity and daring by the Commander and all his crew. "Lucky" Fluckey's voice came over the intercom. "All hands below deck not absolutely needed to maneuver the ship have permission to come topside." He didn't have to repeat the invitation. Hatches sprang open as the proud sailors of the Barb gathered on her decks to proudly watch the distant fireworks display. The Barb had "sunk" a Japanese TRAIN!

**I. Introduction**

 A. Attention (Competition breeds success. That is how competitive rankings should be impacting you. If you’re caught up in what you need to do to get ahead as an individual and will step on or over your competition to get there – YOU’RE DOING IT WRONG.)

 B. Motivation (Junior Sailors need to fully understand the intent of competitive rankings and the ways you should be functioning in it in order to succeed in a team focused Navy.)

 C. Overview (I was speaking to a good friend of mine recently about some of his peers on board his ship. My friend is a board eligible First Class Petty Officer, which means he’s eligible for promotion to Chief. It’s eval time, and after reviewing his eval for him and providing input he told me about a peer of his in his division. The story is all too common and many of you have probably seen another version of the same thing in your units. The all show, no go Sailor. The one that is all smoke and mirrors, trying to convince everyone they are stellar Sailors through deception, coercion and taking advantage of other Sailors – superior, subordinate or peer. They would literally step over your limp, cold body for an Early Promote. That Sailor is an issue. That Sailor is too often GETTING that EP. And that Sailor is doing it WRONG.

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

**II. Body**

 A. Main Point 1 (Competitive Rankings) –

 1. Sub-point (What’s the point?) – Competitive rankings are a good thing. They help the board figure out exactly where you fell in your competitive group. They help the Chief’s Mess accurately rank Sailors to frame a peer group and construct accurate evaluations of a Sailor’s performance. But Sailor’s don’t fully understand or always care about this, they get fixated on “needing” to rank high and get an EP to promote. We get all wrapped around the axle about something that is not nearly as big of a deal as you think it is.

 2. Sub-point (How they work.) – Competitive rankings happen during a ranking board, generally done either by First Class Petty Officers (E5 and below) and/or the Chiefs Mess (E6 and above). There’s no one way of doing it, but you’re evaluated on very similar criteria regardless of the method. Some example criteria are:

- Primary Duties/Leadership: this would be whatever primary duty you have, leadership positions you hold (which can also be your primary duty) and your DEPTH of responsibility. This would also consider, to some degree, how well you’re doing it in this category as well, but that is primarily covered next.

- Job Performance/Sailorization: Always remember, YOUR PERFORMANCE OF YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES IS FAR MORE IMPORTANT THAN JUST HAVING THEM. What does this mean? It means accumulating “eval bullets” just to make yourself appear hard charging on some piece of paper won’t cut it. Every Chief I know is far more concerned with your performance of those duties. I’m much more impressed by an LPO with one collateral duty that is fiercely committed to doing both of those things to the best of their abilities than I am by an LPO with 20 collaterals that demonstrates subpar leadership performance.

- Brilliant on the Basics: If you don’t know what Brilliant on the Basics is, you should! The easiest way to remember it is the acronym associated with it: SAILOR. It stands for:

S: Sponsorship (Command Sponsor Program)

A: Assign a Mentor (Mentorship Program)

I: Indoctrination (Command Indoctrination Program)

L: Leadership (Career Development Program)

O: Ombudsman Program

R: Recognizing (Sailor Recognition/Awards Program)

- Collateral Duties: These are usually graded on the depth of responsibility (command, departmental, divisional) and how well you do the job!

- Meritorious Achievements: Awards/Recognition (SOY/SOQ, FLOCs, other awards/recognition)

- Education: Not just college courses! This includes things like Non-resident Training Courses, Primary and Joint Professional Military Education, professional certifications, USMAP certificates, etc.

- Peer Group/Community Involvement: Peer group involvement includes things like Petty Officer/Chief Petty Officer Associations and CPO 365 involvement. They differ in significance as there can be just involvement in what those groups do and there is leading those groups by being elected to positions or chosen to lead/coordinate a program, training, etc.

- Physical Fitness/Military Bearing: PFA scores can figure in. If you’re barely passing or have a PRT/BCA failure, that will figure in. If you’re far exceeding standards and serving in a program leadership position (ACFL/CFL) or leading PT sessions (CPO 365), that will figure in positively. Military bearing is also a bit of a catch all in the evaluation of daily interactions with peers, subordinates and seniors, uniform appearance and grooming standards and just how you generally conduct yourself.

 3. Sub-point (How the board uses them.) – So after that exhaustive explanation of how you’re competitively ranked, how is it used? Well, when you study an eval (go back to Episode 10 for a deeper dive into Enlisted Evaluations) you will see that there is not an area that definitively say that you are number X of however many in your competitive group. If I had my way, it would say exactly that. However, the system as it exists now allows for each command to competitively rank their peer groups and use those to provide a “hard breakout”. That’s the use you will see when you sign your evaluation. There are different ways of doing this, but a common example is in block 43 on an E1-E6 Evaluation is it reading something like “PETTY OFFICER SMITH IS #1 OF 27 OUTSTANDING FCPOS!!!”. This tells the board EXACTLY where Petty Officer Smith stands in that competitive group and sends a strong message to the board. There are other way to utilize block 43 to communicate this as well, so that the top EP Sailors are not the only ones broken out in this manner – sometimes called “soft breakouts”. The other way this is used, that you will NOT see is to rack and stack you at the command. We literally rank you top to bottom. Based on where you fall in that stack, your individual train average will generally reflect that when compared to the Commander’s Summary Group Average. In that way, a selection board will compare your average to the summary group average to get a better of idea of where you fell in the group (in the absence of a hard or soft breakout).

 B. Main Point 2 (How do you “breakout”?): Okay, I want the board to know I’m awesome, right? So how do I breakout? Well, it’s really simple. Create value. Make yourself valuable to your leadership. To the command team. To mission accomplishment. The “all show, no go” Sailors I referenced earlier believe they’re doing that. They’re not. They’re trying to create the illusion they’re doing that without putting in the work. The Sailor’s that breakout are the ones that make themselves extremely valuable team members, team leaders and contributors to mission accomplishment in WHATEVER WAY IS NEEDED. You don’t get to pick and choose. FILL THE GAP. Go where you are needed and help in any way you can.

 1. Sub-point (Ignore your competition.) – In doing this, ignore your competition. Yeah, I said it. IGNORE THEM. WHO CARES WHAT EVERYONE ELSE IS DOING? What difference does it really make? Unless you are at the world’s greatest command, people are not raising their hands to do the toughest, most thankless jobs. They aren’t taking on the project Chief is constantly complaining about but doesn’t have time to get to. They aren’t getting down in the weeds with their division when things get hairy. THOSE PLACES, WHERE YOU DON’T SEE A LEADER LEADING – THOSE ARE **YOUR** PLACES. Those are your gaps, so fill them and you will be recognized for your valuable contributions. You will STAND OUT IN A CROWD. Trust me, there is PLENTY of room for multiple versions of that leader in any command just as there are PLENTY of breakouts to go around if I had that “problem”.

 2. Sub-point (Find a mentor.) – Now, I said ignore your competition, right? And you got nervous, because “OMG, if I don’t know what they’re doing how can I keep up with them and then I’m behind and then I rank low and I’ll never promote and ahhhhh!”. CALM DOWN. AND FIND A MENTOR. Look around. Doesn’t have to be a Chief, and I’ll get to what I mean by this further in a minute. But find someone that is the leader you want to be. Generally I would recommend a Chief to a First Class trying to make Chief, but to a Second or Third, find a strong First or Second Class that is the leader you want to be. And have THEM worry about what everyone else is doing. Have them worry about what YOU SHOULD BE DOING. What you SHOULD be doing probably has ABSOLUTELY NOTHING to do with what your peers are doing. Many of them are chasing their damn tails. DON’T DO THAT. Trust your mentor. Trust your ability. Work really, REALLY HARD. And you will get where you want to be.

 3. Sub-point (Study the system.) – Study the system. Study the system that advances you. Study the system that recognizes you. Study the system that ranks you. Understand them. While a silently hard working monster is a thing to be respected, there is a point at which you need to ensure the people responsible for evaluating, recognizing and promoting you are aware of what you’re doing in the dark. Studying the system allows this. It allows you to ensure your hard work is accounted for without being a shameless self-promoter like our “all show, no go” counterpart.

 C. Main Point 3 (Help your competition.)

 1. Sub-point (I’m looking for LEADERS.) – This is the part that I don’t see nearly enough of. And when WE DO, you hear us saying that “they are ready to be a Chief” or they are “already performing as a First Class” or whatever the next step up in rank or responsibility is. I’m looking for LEADERS. I want someone that is a LEADER in their peer group. That doesn’t necessarily mean ALPHA. You don’t have to be king of the hill. I’m looking for someone leading the way in physical fitness. Leading the way by gaining advanced qualifications. Leading the way by chairing boards and managing programs well. And ALL OF THOSE THINGS should be advancing your PEERS AND SUBORDINATES. You should be HELPING those you are “competing” against. That’s what LEADERS DO.

 2. Sub-point (I’m looking for TEAM BUILDERS.) – I’m also looking for TEAM BUILDERS. I want my leaders to be noted for the ability to bring together ANY GROUP of Sailors to accomplish a common goal. If you do that with your division, why would you NOT do it with your competitive group? You all have the COMMON GOAL of advancing, of getting another chevron or Anchors. You should be seeking that responsibility increase so you that you can be in the position to further impact, develop and HELP build your Sailors – your TEAMS. That peer group, that competitive peer group is your team. ACT LIKE IT.

**III. Conclusion**

 A. Summary (We talked about…)

 1. What competitive rankings are and how they work…

 2. How you can “breakout” in our competitive group…

 3. And why you should not be worried about your competition…

 B. Re-motivation (Junior Sailors understanding competitive rankings and the way they should approach them is critical to their success in a team focused Navy.)

 C. Closing – You don’t need to be a #1 EP Sailor of the Year to promote. You don’t even need an EP at all! You need to lead effectively. You need to follow humbly. You need to be proactively building teams. If you are doing these things in all phases – ESPECIALLY IN THE MIDST OF YOUR COMPETITION; WITH! YOUR COMPETITION…YOU WILL STAND OUT FROM THE CROWD AS SOMEONE THAT MERITS RECOGNITION. You will stand out as someone that merits increased responsibility. Tougher leadership challenges. You will convince those charged with evaluating that group that YOU ARE READY. And you will have done ALL OF THAT without sinking into a self-serving, immature, back-stabbing competitive nature with people who are part of YOUR TEAM. That WILL reflect in your evaluations. That WILL reflect in your recognition. And it WILL be communicated to the board. Wherever you’re ranked. Whatever your promotion rating is. I can tell the board that an above average MP is ready to be a Chief and be extremely convincing in doing so. So don’t stress about that. That stuff takes care of itself if you are living up to your leadership responsibilities when you’re in the thick of it. On a daily basis in the midst of the grind, we’re watching. I promise you we see you. If you’re the strong silent doer or the “all show, no go” skater. WE SEE YOU.

So don’t worry about your imaginary competition. Because they are just that. A figment of your imagination. Competitive rankings are a tool for the Mess and the board. Don’t concern yourself with that. Just concern yourself with being the best Sailor you can possibly be in whatever capacity in which you are called to serve. The rest is a result of those efforts.

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