

# What I Learned One Night Over Baghdad

*VADM Lou Crenshaw USN (Ret.)*

These notes form the basis for my presentation on leadership and management based on my experiences as the Commanding Officer of Attack Squadron Eighty-Five during Operation Desert Storm. If you are interested in having me speak to your organization please contact me at [lou@CrenshawConsultingAssociates.com](mailto:lou@CrenshawConsultingAssociates.com)

## **Train like you fight**

- Learn from every flight
- Don't let up because it's a practice mission
- Build up habit patterns so you react from instinct
- Break bad habits

## **Hope is a poor strategy**

- No substitute for preparation
- Identify every weakness and fix them

## **Plan, plan, plan.....and then execute**

- Leave nothing to chance
- Have contingencies (and practice them)
- Trust your plan
- Execute with confidence (and passion)

## **The only thing worse than being late is being early**

- Perfection demands exactness
- Professionalism demands exactness
- 1500 miles in 3 hours : +/- 10 secs was our standard
- Constantly evaluate your position/status

## **Have a backup plan**

- Nothing ever goes according to the plan
- Russians were masters at dealing with the unexpected
- Change the odds in your favor
- Assume nothing

## **Trust your wingman**

- You know them
- Your success depends on their success

## **Your wingman trusts you**

- They know you
- Their success depends on your success

## **Focus on your job and be good at it**

- Lord Nelson practiced every day
- No one knows your job like you do
- Be accountable to yourself

## **Don't depend on luck, but use all you can**

- Every success has some element of luck

You control the controllable....don't sweat the other stuff  
Luck/Outcome diagram (attached)

**Turn into trouble**

If you see a missile, turn towards it  
If someone is in trouble, head towards them  
If not you, then who?

**Have confidence.....not arrogance**

Confidence comes from practice and competency  
Arrogance comes from satisfaction and complacency

**Everyone watches a leader.....all the time, everywhere**

Never let your guard down  
What do you do when no one is looking?  
Leaders can be grown, but the ground must be fertile. Everyone has the potential to be a leader.

**Be brave, but not foolish (live to fight another day)**

Discretion is the better part of valor  
Know your limitations  
Don't drag down others with you  
Choose your battles

**The ramp (stern of an aircraft carrier) can kill you just as dead as any missile**

100% required from beginning to end  
No margin for error....even in the end  
It's the little things that can bite you

**Appreciate, recognize and thank your crew**

No one does it alone  
They may be your boss one day  
Leading is all about following and serving

