



## The Forge: Lives in Leadership Podcast - Australian Defence College

# SHOW NOTES

## Episode Summary, Highlights and Full Transcript

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### SEASON 01: EPISODE 05

**Guest: RADM Paul Halton**

**Host: Dr Lucas Marie**



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<https://theforge.defence.gov.au/lives-leadership/season-01-episode-05-radm-paul-halton-rn-ret'd>

*Lives in Leadership explores leadership in demanding environments, featuring insights from experienced practitioners drawn across Defence, government, industry, and academia. Through sharing compelling stories and perspectives, the podcast explores military leadership, ethics, culture, and service in the Profession of Arms. The podcast focuses on insights in joint and integrated appointments at the operational and strategic level. It complements existing single-service professional military development platforms.*



## S01E05 – RADM Halton – Episode Summary

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**Duration:** 28 minutes

**Key themes:** Cultural Leadership, Strategic Agility, Team Enablement, Long-term Discipline, Personal Responsibility

**Overview:** In this episode of Lives in Leadership, Dr Lucas Marie interviews Rear Admiral Paul Halton, a distinguished Royal Navy veteran who served as Commanding Officer of HMS Spartan and held senior positions including Commander Operations and Deputy Director of Operations in Afghanistan.

### **Key Discussion Points:**

**Personal Responsibility & Cultural Change:** Halton shares a formative story from his command of HMS Spartan, a submarine with a reputation for unreliability. He discovered the issue wasn't equipment failure but a cultural problem—the crew had lost confidence. By refusing to accept delays and inspiring the team to believe in their capability, the submarine never missed another sailing for two years. This experience taught him that leadership often addresses intangible cultural issues rather than obvious technical problems.

**Balancing Agility with Long-Term Discipline:** Drawing on current geopolitical tensions (Ukraine, Indo-Pacific), Halton emphasises the challenge modern defence leaders face: maintaining programmatic discipline for long-term strategic capabilities (such as Australia's AUKUS submarine program) while developing the agility to adapt quickly to rapidly evolving threats (such as drone warfare). He stresses the importance of "selection and maintenance of the aim"—staying focused on long-term objectives despite short-term pressures.

**Enabling Teams & Servant Leadership:** Halton advocates for leaders to enable their teams rather than control every detail. He describes his happiest moments as a commanding officer as sitting in his cabin listening to his crew work well together. He emphasises being consistent, trusting your people, and developing the instinct to know when to intervene.



**Communication & Clarity:** The conversation explores how clear communication becomes increasingly critical at senior levels, where people listen carefully and interpret every word. Halton contrasts military directness with academic exploration, noting both have their place—but decisions require clarity.

**Transition to Civilian Leadership:** Now working with Turner and Townsend in the defence nuclear enterprise, Halton reflects on how military leadership skills translate to industry: valuing people, respect, business planning, and discipline remain essential across contexts.

**Advice for Emerging Leaders:** His core advice - be yourself, be consistent, and trust the people around you. Enable your team to succeed through clear guidance and develop the instinct to identify when intervention is needed.

## Memorable Quotes

**On Cultural Leadership vs. Technical Problems:** *"I wasn't dealing with a submarine that had an equipment reliability issue. I was dealing with a cultural issue. And the cultural issue was that the ship's company had lost faith. They thought their submarine was unreliable. It was no more or less reliable than any other submarine."*

**On Modern Defence Leadership Challenges:** *"The really interesting challenge for people today is, you've got to hold both of those things true. You need the agility and the adaptability. And at the same time, you need the programmatic discipline, and investment discipline, to sustain the long-term programs, which are fundamental to strategic deterrent."*

**On Leadership Philosophy:** *"Be yourself, be consistent, and trust and value the people around you. What they need from you is consistent guidance and leadership. And you'll do that better if you're yourself, because we're all slightly different."*



## About the Guest

Rear Admiral Paul Halton joined the Royal Navy in 1987 and built a distinguished career spanning over three decades in submarine operations and defence leadership. He commanded the nuclear submarine HMS Spartan, transforming its reputation from unreliable to exemplary through cultural leadership. In 2012, he became Flag Officer Sea Training Director and served as Deputy Director of Operations in Afghanistan. By 2017, he was appointed Commander Operations, with responsibility for the UK's entire submarine service and for directing maritime operations worldwide. Beyond operational command, Halton led significant transformation portfolios in the UK's nuclear defence sector, bringing together military personnel, industry partners, civil servants, and consultants. Since leaving the Royal Navy approximately 2.5 years ago, he has worked with Turner & Townsend as a project management consultant, leading their Defence Nuclear Enterprise offering. His career demonstrates a consistent ability to lead complex organisations through uncertainty, drive cultural change, and deliver results at the highest levels of defence—expertise he now shares with allied nations, including Australia, as it develops its own nuclear submarine capability under AUKUS.

## Resources & References

**NATO Defence College:** [www.ndc.nato.int](http://www.ndc.nato.int) (Senior leadership education and research)

**Royal Navy:** [www.royalnavy.mod.uk](http://www.royalnavy.mod.uk) (UK submarine service information)

### AUKUS Partnerships:

Australian Government: [www.defence.gov.au/about/taskforces/aukus](http://www.defence.gov.au/about/taskforces/aukus)

UK Government: [www.gov.uk/government/collections/aukus](http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/aukus)

UK Ministry of Defence [www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ministry-of-defence](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ministry-of-defence)



## S01E05 – RADM Halton – Time Stamped Highlights

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**2:36 - Early career lesson:** The importance of personal responsibility. HMS Spartan story: Transforming a submarine with a "terrible reputation"

**6:02 - Building team confidence:** "They wanted to be successful; they'd find ways to make it happen"

**6:56 - Leadership philosophy:** "I was never happier than when I sat back in my cabin listening to them working well"

**9:00 - Drone warfare example:** "Generally, the capability in a drone lasts about six weeks"

**9:29 - The leadership dichotomy:** "You need the agility and adaptability AND the programmatic discipline"

**11:35 - Selection and maintenance of the aim:** "It's so important, and it's so hard to do" "A consistent, disciplined programmatic approach is the route to success. It's not exciting, but it's really important"

**17:07 - Leadership skills that translate:** "Valuing people, respect, good business planning, and discipline"

**18:58 - On communication:** "If you're not confident at public speaking, get good at it". People listen very carefully to what you say in ways that you don't always understand at the time"

**22:01 - Core advice:** "Be yourself, be consistent, and trust and value the people around you"

**23:47 - Servant leadership:** "Your role as a leader is to enable your team"

**25:10 - Leadership instinct story:** Waking up at periscope depth to help the team. "The conversation you have in the passageway is much more insightful than the formal brief":



## S01E05 – RADM Paul Halton – Full Transcript

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[00:00:00] **Dr Lucas Marie:** Welcome to Lives in Leadership. This podcast is dedicated to promoting thoughtful and strategic conversations about military leadership, ethics, culture, and service in the profession of arms within the Australian Defence Force. My name is Dr. Lucas Marie, and in today's episode, I'm joined by R Admiral Paul Howton.

Paul joined the Royal Navy in 1987 and served as Commanding Officer of the nuclear submarine, HMS Spartan. In 2012, he became Flag Officer C training director and was deployed as Deputy Director of Operations in Afghanistan. In 2017, he was appointed Commander of Operations. Where he was responsible for all of the UK's submarine service and directed maritime operations worldwide. Beyond his military command roles, he has also held senior appointments at the Ministry of Defence and the significant transformation portfolios in the UK's nuclear defence sector.

In this work, he's brought together military personnel, industry partners, civil servants, and consultants, which reflects a consistent ability that he's developed throughout his career, to lead people and organisations through uncertainty, adapt to change, and deliver results at the highest levels of defence.

Paul, thanks for joining us today.

[00:01:20] **RADM Paul Halton:** It's a complete pleasure. Pleasure to be with you today, Lucas. Thank you.

[00:01:24] **Dr Lucas Marie:** Paul, can I just ask out of the gate what brings you to Australia and the Defence College?

[00:01:28] **RADM Paul Halton:** So I left the Royal Navy about two and a half years ago. I now work for a project management company called Turner and Townsend, and I'm here seeing a bunch of clients, partners, colleagues and friends. I mean to, to keep it short, Australia is now part of the defence nuclear enterprise. Something I've spent a lot of my life in, and I'm still passionate about.



I look after Turner and Townsend's Defence Nuclear Enterprise offering, and I felt a responsibility to offer a conversation with the Staff Course students whilst I was here, and happily, they've accepted. Hopefully, they won't regret that decision.

[00:02:09] **Dr Lucas Marie:** Wonderful. And I, I think that's happening after this podcast, which is great. I might just take us back. I'd love to hear if there's a formative moment or maybe early in career when you were with defence, um, that perhaps shaped your understanding of what good leadership looks like. This is a bit of a leadership podcast where we dive down into leadership qualities, or values, or practices that you think exemplify good leadership. And is there perhaps something that resonates with you in that regard?

[00:02:36] **RADM Paul Halton:** Yeah, I mean, it's, it's a great question and I think there's, there's so much to draw on and, um, I think I'll respond with sort of two examples. One's quite generic, one's very specific. Um, so the more generic one is from very early in my career, as a young sub lieutenant and lieutenant on submarines, where I was lucky to have some really good leaders, and they helped me. It wasn't always a pleasant experience, but they helped me learn the importance of personal responsibility and that stayed with me throughout my career, and I think that's a trait that people recognise and respect. So personal responsibility is really important. Um, the second, more specific, uh, example is when I took over the command of HMS Spartan.

Now, the HMS Spartan, I joined had a terrible reputation for being unreliable. She was a relatively old submarine. Um, she had a great ship's company but she never sailed on time, always came back broken, um, and the ship's company had lost faith in her ability to sort of do the things the nation needed her to do, and I joined about three weeks before we were due to go to sea. And we were at the tail end of a maintenance period. And there was a particular weld on the steam range, which had been a problem throughout this maintenance period. And I recall the engineer coming to see me, about three days before we were due to sail, and he said to me, he said;



"Sir, I've got some bad news. The weld has failed its non-destructive examination again; we now can't sail on Wednesday."

And in a moment of stubbornness, I admit it was stubbornness. I said,

"That's not acceptable. Harry. I want you to come back and tell me what the Base are going to do to support us getting to sea on time and delivering our program."

Within an hour, the weld had its non-destructive examination conceded. i.e., it was fit to enable us to do what we needed to do. Um, we sailed on time. Um, we never missed another sailing, and we never came back, broken for two years. And I realised, and it took me a little while to realise this, um, but I wasn't dealing with a submarine that had an equipment reliability issue. I was dealing with a cultural issue. And the cultural issue was that the ship's company had lost faith. They thought their submarine was unreliable. It was no more or less reliable than any other submarine. And they relearnt their confidence in how to look after her, uh, and keep her fit for the things she needed to do.

Um, so leadership's not always about the obvious. Quite often it's about the sort of intangibles behind.

[00:05:27] **Dr Lucas Marie:** That's wonderful. And it's really interesting to think about how perhaps future leaders could understand those sort of cultural change problems and tackle them. Because they can be really complex sometimes.

How did you tackle that sort of issue yourself? Like was it sort of the questions you were asking or building up confidence in people to kind of take action? What, what do you think it was?

[00:05:48] **RADM Paul Halton:** Um, so I mean, I think it's a range of things. Um, we had a particularly important program to deliver. Um, and as ever, the program was very tight, and if certain things didn't happen on time, then the whole program fell apart.



Um, and so, so what I needed to do was, um, inspire and build confidence in a team and form a team, um, so that they, they wanted to be successful. And as soon as they wanted to be successful, and they were all good people, but as soon as they wanted to be successful, they'd find ways to make it happen. Now, the cost of that sometimes was, I had to rein them back a little bit on occasions, um, because they'd be a little bit too enthusiastic, and that could have other problems.

Um, but as a team, um, we got there, and I think that's the really important point. People, um, often look at the commanding officer of a platform as being a, you know, sort of godlike figure. Um, and it's important there's someone in charge that's really, really important. Um, but at the same time, you are there enabling your team to do what they're really expert at doing. And I really enjoy that side of it. I was never happier than when I sat back in my cabin listening to them working well. Yeah, that was always a wonderful feeling.

[00:07:06] **Dr Lucas Marie:** Hmm. That's wonderful. Being able to inspire them to have a growth mindset. It seems like what you're saying, just because you know from the UK sort of context, I'd be interested to hear what you have to say about perhaps the Australian context and the future of leadership or the challenges of leadership that face Australia today.

Do you have any thoughts on maybe what are some of the biggest challenges? You know, we've, we had, um, Dr. Florence Gaub come, um, and speak with us recently, and she's from the NATO Defence College and talked about the sort of EU strategic geopolitical tensions, you know, with the Russian Ukraine war.

Yeah. You know, Australia's dealing with the Indo-Pacific and with China and the US. Um, what are your thoughts about kind of leading today in that sort of context, and are there any thoughts that, or parallels between the UK and Australia that you could share with some of the military members who listen to this podcast?

[00:07:54] **RADM Paul Halton:** Yeah, goodness me. Um, that's a fascinating topic and um, and I think, um, you know, rather than try to suggest that the UK's got the, all the answers here, I would actually say that the UK and Australia and many other nations are all in this together. So we've got to work through this together. Um, would be my first point.





I think the really interesting thing for me in sort of leadership terms is that for many decades, um, you know, arguably since the end of the second World War, um, we've had relative stability. Um, and so that's, that's sort of, um, generated, a sort of culture and a system of compliance and process and long-term sort of ever more complex programs to provide military capability.

And that's, you know, served us reasonably well. But if you look out to the east from someone sat in the uk, um, towards Ukraine and Russia, um, what we're seeing, um, is that capabilities don't survive very long. Um, so, you know, drones are in the news at the moment. Um, generally, the capability in a drone lasts about six weeks. It's defeated, and a new system is needed.

[00:09:06] **Mr Mike Richards:** Right.

[00:09:07] **RADM Paul Halton:** Um, so that agility in procurement and supply chains, the adaptability, um, is hugely important. Now, you don't want to throw the baby out with the bath water though. Um, so Australia's um, buying into AUKUS. Which is huge. You'll contact in a minute, I'm sure, a hugely complex cultural change program, not just a procurement program.

So I think the really interesting challenge for people today is, you've got to hold both of those things true. You need the agility and the adaptability. Um, and at the same time, you need the programmatic discipline, um, and investment discipline, um, to sustain the long-term programs, which are fundamental to strategic deterrence. We've not always had to do both of those things at the same time. So for me, that's quite a significant change.

[00:09:56] **Dr Lucas Marie:** Yeah, that's interesting. Um, I guess the critiques talk about the submarines being are they, are they a good, agile, long-term solution that we should invest in in Australia? You know, I, I what, what are your thoughts on sort of how those sorts of relationships or those sort of deals enable us to just sort of be agile

[00:10:12] **RADM Paul Halton:** Yeah. so I think they're a foundation to agility. so of course with a nuclear power submarine program, you are dealing, um, with, defence for, you know, across all levels really, aren't you? Right. From strategic geopolitical deterrence all the way through to tactical and operational use of the submarine, um, to, you know, deter and ultimately, of course, defeat an enemy.



And, um, the agility in messaging at the strategic level is likely to be, um, less present because you want consistency there, um, consistency of message. Um, but um, but this is my sort of point really about, um, um, agility and adaptability. We need to develop the systems that enable us to, um, modernise and update and refresh the capability within those submarines quite quickly.

[00:11:07] **Dr Lucas Marie:** Right.

[00:11:08] **RADM Paul Halton:** Um, we haven't necessarily always done that as well, um, as we could do 'cause we haven't needed to. Um, we now need to.

[00:11:16] **Dr Lucas Marie:** Yep. Yeah. You've led across joint, multinational and whole-of-government environments. From your perspective, you know, what leadership insights might be most relevant for Australian Defence leaders today, particularly in this moment of strategic change in which you just talked about.

[00:11:32] **RADM Paul Halton:** I think it's, it's the long term focus. So there's a military or principle of war isn't there? Selection and maintenance of the aim. Um, it's so important, um, and it's so hard to do. Um, and it's easy to get sort of slightly knocked off course because there's a particular financial issue there or a, uh, or an industrial issue over there, or a social issue over here.

Um, and where these long-term defence programs can go wrong is if there's not a really clear-eyed view about, um, what needs to happen, um, to make them a success. Um, and I'm not in Australia talking to people about how the UK's got this right over the last few decades. It hasn't.

[00:12:17] **Dr Lucas Marie:** Right.

[00:12:18] **RADM Paul Halton:** Um, and indeed we've, you know, learned to or relearnt a lot of lessons that we're now applying.

Um, and as part of my work with Turnham Townsend, one of the things I'm really keen to do is to make sure that, you know, I, help other people sort of see some of those lessons, and not make the same mistakes. That's really important.



[00:12:37] **Dr Lucas Marie:** And I imagine particularly with, um, military leadership changing every, I don't know what it's like in the UK if it's similar.

I I know in the UK as well, isn't there a certain amount of time that you spend in within service and, and then you have to sort of depart service. Is that still,

[00:12:53] **RADM Paul Halton:** is that still present? Yeah, to a degree. Yeah. And it to a degree. And how much you spend in each job depends upon what the job is and the rank you are.

[00:12:58] **Dr Lucas Marie:** Yep. But does that make it hard for long-term change to occur in which people are trying to make their mark within a sort of short-term service career and then. And then move on or what, is that one of the challenges? Or are there others?

[00:13:09] **RADM Paul Halton:** It can be an unhelpful dynamic, but, um, what we try to do now is make sure that the senior leaders in those organisations are there for quite some time, you know, certainly five years and potentially longer. Um, so you get, um, stability of commitment and stability of vision.

[00:13:26] **Dr Lucas Marie:** Yeah.

[00:13:27] **RADM Paul Halton:** Um, you know, which is, which is really important. Um, so that would be my main message, that it's very boring in a way. A consistent, disciplined programmatic approach is the route to success. It's not exciting, but it's really important

[00:13:41] **Dr Lucas Marie:** And it's hard to build those practices for that, you know, people get quite excited. You talked about drones earlier. I mean, people get excited about AI and the future of technological change, and it's hard to not see a future in that or, um,

[00:13:55] **RADM Paul Halton:** and it has a role to play.

[00:13:56] **Dr Lucas Marie:** It does, yeah.



[00:13:57] **RADM Paul Halton:** Um, but there's also, um, another saying isn't there, which is, um, we far too often, um, prepare to fight today's war,

[00:14:07] **Dr Lucas Marie:** right? Can you unpack that a little bit?

[00:14:09] **RADM Paul Halton:** So we're all looking at drones with interest in Ukraine at the moment. And I'm not saying they don't have a future, um, but possibly not quite in the form we're looking at today.

Now, I don't know what the answer will be, um, but that's why adaptability and agility is really important. Um, and that's that dichotomy in leadership that we were talking about a moment ago, isn't it?

[00:14:30] **Dr Lucas Marie:** Yeah.

[00:14:31] **RADM Paul Halton:** Maintaining the consistency of long-term, good programmatic discipline, um, but also making sure you've got the awareness and agility, um, to change when you need to.

[00:14:43] **Dr Lucas Marie:** Do you think those ideas about, um, being adaptable or maybe seeing different perspectives and, you know. Looking at that sort of change of being prepared to deal with it. Are they leadership qualities that can be learned or are they, were they part of your education in military leadership? I mean, we're at the Defence College here in which we teach military leadership ethics, culture. Uh, what are some of the thoughts you have about training and education in this sort of space?

[00:15:10] **RADM Paul Halton:** Uh, it's a great question. Um, because, um, I think we have a tendency to train people to fit a particular model.

Um, and, and that's not unimportant. Um, because, you know, we want to know that people are going to behave and operate in an ethical way, in conflict. That that's really, really important that we maintain our values and standards, um, in that sense. Um, and alongside that though, um. And it's sort of almost a, sort of needs/musts element to this.



Um, so, you know, I think as we're, we're seeing a much more adaptable, agile, assertive, um, opposition from different parts of the world, um, there's a necessity to respond to that, um, in a similarly agile way. And I think that's a little bit harder because of our more constrained processes and systems. Um, it's very different if you're sitting in government responding as compared to, a platoon commander and a trench but the agility is still important.

[00:16:18] **Dr Lucas Marie:** Yeah. And it, it must look quite different.

[00:16:21] **RADM Paul Halton:** Yes. Completely.

[00:16:22] **Dr Lucas Marie:** And, you know, and working for Turner and Townend as you do now and, and, and working for the UK Department of Defence, like moving from sort of a military context into a different sort of context. Do you have any, um, insights or thoughts of how other military. Perhaps personnel who've developed certain ways of leading within a military organisation can sort of shift, like you have, or have any thoughts on that?

[00:16:47] **RADM Paul Halton:** Do you mean make the shift, um, from the military to, um, civilian industry?

[00:16:51] **Dr Lucas Marie:** Yeah. Or are there any, are there any things that work well within, like that, that are sort of, um, within a sort of leadership or ethics or cultural kind of space? Translated well or not?

[00:17:04] **RADM Paul Halton:** No, I think there's a, there's a huge amount of translation. Um, so, um, so I was quite lucky that, um. My, certainly my last job in the military, um, was in an, the submarine delivery agency. So an organisation that was, um, um, that had, you know, part military people, part civil servants and part industry.

[00:17:23] **Dr Lucas Marie:** Right.

[00:17:24] **RADM Paul Halton:** And we, we worked a lot with industry. Um, and so, so my context for the sort of three years before I left the military, um, was an environment not dissimilar to, um, civilian life or civilian industry.



Um, and so perhaps that helped me, with the transition. Um, you know, I think if you were leaving the military from an operational headquarters, um, then the difference is somewhat more stark. Um, but, nevertheless, I would also say that, um, the sort of good leadership skills and practices, that people need to employ in the military environment in a slightly different language and a slightly different context, are also relevant in industry.

So, um, valuing people. Respect for people. Um, um, good business planning, um, and discipline are really, really important in the business sector. Um, and those are important things to us in the military as well.

[00:18:22] **Dr Lucas Marie:** And something, and I notice about yourself even in this conversation is that you're a very good communicator, you know, of your ideas. And I think surely that's a good leadership sort of skill that works well across those sorts of environment and contexts.

[00:18:35] **RADM Paul Halton:** Well, that's very nice of you to say. Thank you. Um, but, um. I, I think it's something, um, something you develop as you get further into your career. I remember someone, um, saying to a group of us when I was, um, much more junior, he was very senior, general, and he said,

"If you're not confident in public speaking or talking to a group, get good at it".

I didn't quite know what he meant at first. Um, but I've now worked out, you know, particularly as I was fortunate enough to progress through headquarters and formation command, um, that people listen very carefully to what you say in ways that you don't always understand at the time.

[00:19:19] **Dr Lucas Marie:** Mm-hmm.

[00:19:19] **RADM Paul Halton:** And so it's really important to be clear about what you're saying and, um, what you mean. I, I'm certain I have not got that right throughout my career. Um, but I try to.

[00:19:30] **Dr Lucas Marie:** Yeah. And I, I like what you're saying there 'cause it also brings into what do, what do, what are the audience, what are they trying to gather from what you're saying ;Especially if it's a direction or a command.



[00:19:40] **RADM Paul Halton:** Yeah.

[00:19:40] **Dr Lucas Marie:** And they want that to be very clear so that they know their role.

[00:19:43] **RADM Paul Halton:** Yeah, absolutely.

[00:19:43] **Dr Lucas Marie:** Whereas in academic context, and maybe that's just the context I come from, people talk a lot about journey and process and they're good at telling stories.

But sometimes you're not sure where it's leading or what they're trying to say to you. And sometimes that's a bit coded, and that's in my field of, of a normal sort of way to present data or evidence or even, even something that you should, uh, think about as a, I'm, I'm speaking about the relationship I had with my PhD supervisor.

You know, he wasn't clear on this is what you should do and how you should do it. He's telling me a story about the University of Manchester and the anthropology department and you know, it's sort of, what is he trying to say to me? And there's a different way what I'm like. Guess I'm suggesting here is that there's different ways that that sort of communication works in different contexts, and I'm sure that's somewhat a challenge for some military people going into parts of government.

[00:20:33] **RADM Paul Halton:** I, I, no, I think you're right though. And, um, and what you've just described, that sort of academic approach, um, is it definitely has a place in the military. Um, and so as an example, um, when you are, um, privileged to sort of lead a large headquarters staff, there are moments when you want a very academic approach, um, like you've just described, um, Lucas, um, and you know, that might be when you are starting to form, um, an understanding about a situation that's going to enable you to act, um, in the future. Um, and you want to give people freedoms to go away and understand.

[00:21:13] **Dr Lucas Marie:** Mm-hmm.



[00:21:13] **RADM Paul Halton:** Um, so I, I really like what you've described there, but there comes a moment where someone needs to make a decision. And that's where you need to be really clear.

[00:21:20] **Dr Lucas Marie:** Definitely.

[00:21:21] **RADM Paul Halton:** Mm-hmm.

[00:21:22] **Dr Lucas Marie:** I'd love to hear about what thoughts or advice you have to give current leaders in the ADF, particularly as that's sort of the audience to become better leaders in the future. We've talked a lot, a little bit about that, I guess, about communication or about adaptability, but are there any, is there any advice that you'd give to. Just for your context, the audience we're, um, pitching this podcast too is similar to the ACSC or DSCC audience, so, uh, you know, they're transitioning in some ways to becoming leaders of the organisation in the ADF, for that sort of leader, like making that sort of jump, is there any, uh, what advice would you give individuals across the services?

[00:22:01] **RADM Paul Halton:** Yeah. Um, there's a lot out there, isn't there? There's, there is a lot of advice. Um, good point. I I would boil it down to, be yourself, be consistent and trust and value the people around you. So the people around you, will be doing their level best to be successful. Um, and to make the operational whatever it is you are involved in, um, a success.

Um, what they need from you, um, is, um, consistent, guidance and leadership. Um, and you'll do that better if you're yourself, 'cause we're all slightly different. We'll all do it slightly differently. Um, so I wouldn't try to suggest my way of leading is the only way. It's a way.

[00:22:49] **Dr Lucas Marie:** And trusting people around you is lovely because it's also about you giving up some control of your leadership and how it might seen, and valued. Leaning on others in that sort of way can be really hard for some people who think of leadership as a way of controlling the message, the ideas. Have you wrestled that with that yourself or is there maybe there's a difference of culture between Australia and the UK in that way, but there is a, an understanding of leadership here of kind of having your hands in every part, you know, being sort of aware of the team and sort of trusting others can be really hard sometimes.



[00:23:25] **RADM Paul Halton:** Oh, I think that's a really fair point. Um, and, and it is hard. Um, and, um, you know, there's sort of two responses I'd give to your supplementary question there. The first is, the solution to the problem you've posed as the leader is to make sure that your understanding of the team and the direction you give them is really clear.

Um, and that'll enable them. Your role as a leader, I think is to enable your team. It's the sort of, um, you know, the servant leader, um, approach as some people describe it, right?

[00:23:55] **Dr Lucas Marie:** Yes.

[00:23:56] **RADM Paul Halton:** I, I think that's really important. Um, so the first thing is, as the leader, make sure you've enabled your team to be successful, and then they're gonna be successful generally.

The second, uh, point I would make in response is that you need to develop an instinct as to when to get involved. Because there'll always be something.

[00:24:14] **Dr Lucas Marie:** Mm.

[00:24:14] **RADM Paul Halton:** There'll always be something that isn't quite going right. And part of your job as the leader is to just work out what that is and make sure you intervene.

[00:24:23] **Dr Lucas Marie:** That's wonderful, 'cause being curious about how things are going and being a bit more aware and perhaps reflexive of the team can be really hard with some, particularly in a military leadership context, in which things can be moving very quickly. Yeah. And you don't always have the time to just sit and think and look and see what the team is doing. You're trying to perhaps get advice quickly in meetings rather than kind of looking for those problems. There are some, um, of those models of leadership, like you said, there's lots of advice of, I, I can't remember what the quote is, but it's something like, leaders don't stumble on problems. They find them or something. Something of that nature. And I think, I think that can be really hard to do in a, in a context in which I just don't have the time to, you know, patrol.



[00:25:10] **RADM Paul Halton:** And a quick example. I know we're running out of time, but you know, I recall from, uh, when I was in command of HMS Spartan, um, there was an occasion where it was at night, and we were at Periscope Depth, so just below the surface, um, relatively close in shore and the team were doing a great job. Um, but I remember waking up, um, sort of in the middle of the night and I wasn't quite sure why I'd woken up. Um, but I realised I could just hear the sort of chatter on the comms net starting to increase. It was getting a little bit more noisy in the control room, which was near to my cabin where I was sleeping.

And my instinct was, I don't know exactly what's going on. Um, but I just wanted to go and have a look. Um, and I went and had a look and they were just getting themselves into a bit of a difficult spot and they just needed a little bit of help to get things moving in the right direction and everything was fine again.

Um, now lots of people will have lots of versions of that story, right? Yeah. But, um, you know, as a leader, um, I think that's part of what you do.

[00:26:15] **Dr Lucas Marie:** Yeah. And I, I've heard of, uh, we had another Rear Admiral on, saying, doing rounds was really great for that as well, just to walk through the submarine or the ship.

[00:26:26] **RADM Paul Halton:** Exactly. Yeah. I completely agree with that

[00:26:28] **Dr Lucas Marie:** Then you can help out in those sorts of ways. Expected way

[00:26:31] **RADM Paul Halton:** The conversation you have in, in, in the passageway is much more insightful than the formal brief you're given.

[00:26:37] **Dr Lucas Marie:** Definitely

[00:26:38] **RADM Paul Halton:** Because you find out something you just didn't know.



[00:26:40] **Dr Lucas Marie:** Anthropologically. That's interesting. 'cause I think both are insightful, but in different ways. And I think if you're just getting one rather than the other, it's not as balanced and there's always a different perspective. You get from happenstance finding those sorts of issues. Yeah. Well anyway, Paul, thank you so much for joining us today and thanks taking the time to record the podcast with us.

[00:26:58] **RADM Paul Halton:** I've really enjoyed chatting with you. Thank you.

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