



U.S. Coast Guard History Program

Admiral Thomas H. Collins Commandant's Reading List

Purpose

This reading list is designed to offer Coast Guard people recommended books related to leadership. This list is not all-inclusive; the goal is to provide a starting point or expand existing knowledge and skills.

The reading list provides a tool for individual leadership growth, taking into account that responsibility for leadership development rests on each individual, his or her unit, and the organization.

Commandant's Choice

In 2001, the Commandant approved a recommendation by the Leadership Advisory Council to name one book a year the "Commandant's Choice" for professional reading.

2005 Selection

Built to Last: Successful Habits of Visionary Companies, by Jim Collins and Jerry Porras

Previous Selections

- 2003 – Character in Action: The U.S. Coast Guard on Leadership, by Donald Phillips and ADM James Loy, USCG (Ret.)
- 2002 – The Founding Fathers on Leadership: Classic Teamwork in Changing Times, by Donald Phillips

Commandant's Reading List

Categories below correspond to the Coast Guard's 28 Leadership Competencies.

Leading Self

- Alexander Hamilton, by Ron Chernow
- Blink: The Power of Thinking Without Thinking, by Malcolm Gladwell
- Bloodstained Sea: The U.S. Coast Guard in the Battle of the Atlantic, 1941-1944, by Michael Walling
- * Character in Action: The U.S. Coast Guard on Leadership, by Donald Phillips and ADM James Loy, USCG (Ret.) (*2003 Commandant's Choice*)
- Coast Guard Action in Vietnam: Stories of Those Who Served, by Paul Scotti
- Commodore Ellsworth P. Bertholf: First Commandant of the Coast Guard, by C. Douglas Kroll
- Developing the Leader Within You, by John Maxwell
- The First 90 Days: Critical Success Strategies for New Leaders at All Levels, by Michael Watkins
- Guardians of the Sea: History of the U.S. Coast Guard, 1915 to the Present, by Robert Johnson
- The Killer Angels, by Michael Shaara
- Lifeboat Sailors: The U.S. Coast Guard's Small Boat Stations, by Dennis Noble
- Life Matters: Creating a Dynamic Balance of Work, Family, Time, & Money, by A. Roger Merrill and Rebecca Merrill
- Lion Taming: Working Successfully with Leaders, Bosses, and Other Tough Customers, by Steven Katz
- Managing Yourself for the Career You Want, by Harvard Business School Press
- My American Journey, by Colin Powell
- Once an Eagle, by Anton Myrer
- The Perfect Storm: A True Story of Men Against the Sea, by Sebastian Junger
- * Please Don't Just Do What I Tell You! Do What Needs to Be Done: Every Employee's Guide to Making Work More Rewarding, by Bob Nelson
- The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People: Powerful Lessons in Personal Change, by Stephen Covey
- 1776, by David McCullough
- Success Runs in Our Race: The Complete Guide to Effective Networking in the Black Community, by George C. Fraser
- A Testament of Hope: The Essential Writings and Speeches of Martin Luther King, Jr., by Martin Luther King, Jr.
- The Tipping Point: How Little Things Can Make a Big Difference, by Malcolm Gladwell

- Two Years Before the Mast: A Personal Narrative of Life at Sea, by Richard Dana
- The World Is Flat: A Brief History of the Twenty-first Century, by Thomas Friedman

Leading Others

- The Articulate Executive: Learn to Look, Act, and Sound Like a Leader, by Granville N. Toogood
- Built to Last: Successful Habits of Visionary Companies, by Jim Collins and Jerry Porras (*2005 Commandant's Choice*)
- Command at Sea, by James Stavridis, CAPT, USN, and William Mack, VADM, USN (Ret.)
- The Difference "Difference" Makes: Women and Leadership, edited by Deborah Rhode
- Face-to-Face Communications for Clarity and Impact, by Harvard Business School Press
- First, Break All the Rules: What the World's Greatest Managers Do Differently, by Marcus Buckingham and Curt Coffman
- * Fish! A Remarkable Way to Boost Morale and Improve Results, by Stephen Lundin, Harry Paul, and John Christensen
- * Fish! Sticks: A Remarkable Way to Adapt to Changing Times and Keep Your Work Fresh, by John Christensen, Harry Paul, and Stephen Lundin
- The Five Dysfunctions of a Team: A Leadership Fable, by Patrick Lencioni
- The Founding Fathers on Leadership: Classic Teamwork in Changing Times, by Donald Phillips (*2002 Commandant's Choice*)
- * It's Your Ship: Management Techniques from the Best Damn Ship in the Navy, by Michael Abrashoff
- The Journey of Man: A Genetic Odyssey, by Spencer Wells
- The Leader of the Future: New Visions, Strategies, and Practices for the Next Era, edited by Frances Hesselbein, Marshall Goldsmith and Richard Beckhard
- * Leading at the Edge: Leadership Lessons from the Extraordinary Saga of Shackleton's Antarctic Expedition, by Dennis Perkins
- Now, Discover Your Strengths, by Marcus Buckingham and Donald Clifton
- Resonant Leadership: Renewing Yourself and Connecting with Others Through Mindfulness, Hope, and Compassion, by Richard Boyatzis and Annie McKee
- * Shackleton's Way: Leadership Lessons from the Great Antarctic Explorer, by Margot Morrell and Stephanie Capparell
- Tell It to the CEO: How to Write Compelling Executive Summaries and Briefings, by Angela Maniak
- * The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership: Follow Them and People Will Follow You, by John Maxwell

Leading Performance and Change

- Crucial Confrontations: Tools for Resolving Broken Promises, Violated Expectations, and Bad Behavior, by Kerry Patterson, et al
- Culture Shift: The Employee Handbook for Changing Corporate Culture, by Price Pritchett
- In Good Company: How Social Capital Makes Organizations Work, by Don Cohen and Laurence Prusak
- The Leadership Challenge, 3rd Edition, by James Kouzes and Barry Posner
- Leading Change, by John Kotter
- On Becoming a Leader, by Warren Bennis
- On Leadership, by John Gardner
- Robert E. Lee on Leadership: Executive Lessons in Character, Courage, and Vision, by H. W. Crocker III
- Winning, by Jack Welch

Leading the Coast Guard

- The Essential Drucker: The Best of Sixty Years of Peter Drucker's Essential Writings on Management, by Peter Drucker
- Execution: The Discipline of Getting Things Done, by Larry Bossidy and Ram Charan
- The Fifth Discipline Fieldbook: Strategies and Tools for Building a Learning Organization, by Peter Senge, et al
- Flight of the Buffalo: Soaring to Excellence, Learning To Let Employees Lead, by James Belasco and Ralph Stayer
- Global Leadership: The Next Generation, by Marshall Goldsmith, et al
- Good to Great: Why Some Companies Make the Leap... and Others Don't, by Jim Collins
- Hope Is Not a Method: What Business Leaders Can Learn from America's Army, by Gordon Sullivan, GEN, USA (Ret.) and Michael Harper
- Leading Corporate Transformation: A Blueprint for Business Renewal, by Robert Miles
- The Leadership Pipeline: How to Build the Leadership-Powered Company, by Ram Charan, Stephen Drotter, and James Noel
- Nexus: Small Worlds and the Groundbreaking Theory of Networks, by Mark Buchanan
- * The Power of Alignment: How Great Companies Stay Centered and Accomplish Extraordinary Things, by George Labovitz and Victor Rosansky
- Power, Terror, Peace, and War: America's Grand Strategy in a World at Risk, by Walter Mead
- Principle-Centered Leadership, by Stephen Covey

- Shielding Achilles' Heel: Challenges Facing Northern Command in the Maritime Domain, by Carlos Urbizu

