

Coast Guard Reading List

“Professional service is a fundamental expectation of all Coast Guard men and women. It requires a thorough understanding of contemporary issues facing our service, demonstration of effective leadership in our duties, and a strong appreciation of our heritage. The Coast Guard Reading List helps us maintain these desired attributes by providing a common learning experience built on relevant topics, some selected by our Service’s senior leaders, others recommended by our Shipmates.” – ADM Bob Papp

About the List

The reading list provides recommended books related to leadership, Coast Guard history and culture, and contemporary issues. The list is not all-inclusive; the goal is to provide a starting point or expand existing knowledge and skills. This list has been transformed into a living reading list that will be updated as soon as new additions are approved.

The reading list is not limited to non-fiction books. It can also include fictional books and book series that are crafted with a good portrayal of maritime service and heritage in the characters and settings. Additionally, we may consider other forms of media, and specifically movies, where the authenticity, decorum and plot lend themselves to further our common professional knowledge.

The reading list provides a tool for individual professional growth, taking into account that responsibility for professional development rests simultaneously on each individual, his or her unit, and our service.

Commandant's Choice

2010 Selection

Rescue Warriors: The U.S. Coast Guard, America’s Forgotten Heroes, by David Helvarg (ISBN: 978-0312363727). In *Rescue Warriors*, award winning journalist David Helvarg brings us into the daily lives of Coast Guard personnel. Helvarg’s accounts are filled with a salty maritime mix of altruism and adrenaline, as well as dozens of death-defying rescues at sea and on hurricane-ravaged shores.

Previous Selections

- **2007 – The Contrarian’s Guide to Leadership**, by Steven Sample (ISBN: 0787967076)
- **2006 – Alexander Hamilton**, by Ron Chernow (ISBN: 0143034758)
- **2005 – Built to Last: Successful Habits of Visionary Companies**, by Jim Collins and Jerry Porras (ISBN: 0060516402)
- **2003 – Character in Action: The U.S. Coast Guard on Leadership**, by Donald Phillips and ADM James Loy, USCG (Ret.) (ISBN: 1591146720)
- **2002 – The Founding Fathers on Leadership: Classic Teamwork in Changing Times**, by Donald Phillips (ISBN: 0446674257)

Note: Commandant’s Choice selections were not promulgated in 2008 and 2009.

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Leader of Leaders Section (Recommendations from Senior Coast Guard Leaders)

- **Until the Sea Shall Free Them**, by Robert Frump (ISBN: 978-1591142843). Frump captures both the cruel sea and the determination of a group of dedicated individuals who worked together trying to fix a converted World War II vessel riddled with problems that had not been addressed by its owner. *Until the Sea Shall Free Them* recounts in compelling detail the wreck of the *Marine Electric* and the legal drama that unfolded in its wake—a lawsuit that led to vital reforms in the laws regarding the safety of ships. (VADM Brice-O'Hara's choice)
- **Bloodstained Sea**, by Michael G. Walling (ISBN: 978-0578012902). The story of the Secretary Class cutters at the dawn of WWII and the Battle of the Atlantic against the U-Boat threat. (VADM Currier's choice)
- **Heroic Leadership: Best Practices from a 450-Year-Old Company That Changed the World**, by Chris Lowney (ISBN: 978-0829421156). Author Chris Lowney offers leadership lessons from the Jesuits, the renowned religious order whose originality and expertise have stirred admiration for nearly five centuries. (RADM Salerno's choice)
- **Social Intelligence: The New Science of Human Relationships**, by Daniel Goleman (ISBN: 978-0553384499). A critique of society's creeping disconnection in the age of the iPod, constant digital connectivity, and multitasking. Goleman discusses the "toxicity" of insult and unpleasant social experience as he warns of the dangers of self-absorption and poor attention. Drawing on numerous studies, Goleman illuminates new theories about attachment, bonding, and the making and remaking of memory as he examines how our brains are wired for altruism, compassion, concern, and rapport. (VADM Brown's choice)
- **The Warmth of Other Suns: The Epic Story of America's Great Migration**, by Isabel Wilkerson (ISBN: 978-0679444329). Stories of migration in America that will enrich the context of any immigration debate. (VADM Parker's choice)
- **Successful Leadership Today**, by Douglas L. Drewry (ISBN: 978-1879123076). A collection of time-tested common sense leadership skills for today's successful leader. Personal traits and habits, like the manner and style in which you talk and listen, are as important to leadership as the way you direct and lead others. Leadership principles and concepts are interwoven with management and personal practices in this book. (MCPO-CG Leavitt's choice)
- **Ask the Chief: Backbone of the Navy**, by J. F. Leahy (ISBN: 978-1591144601). A compilation of leadership experiences by Navy Chiefs from the aviation, surface, submarine, and special warfare communities, this book provides words of wisdom to guide the Coast Guard and Navy Chief alike. A Chief can enjoy just one story about another Chief's daily life, or she/he can consume the entire book based on interviews of nearly 100 Chiefs. (MCPO-CGRF Allen's choice)
- **Strengthening the Soul of Your Leadership**, by Ruth Haley Barton (ISBN: 978-0830835133). This is a book that gets to the heart of the difficulties and struggles that leaders face. Ruth's insights will, at the very least, strengthen the soul of your leadership. (CAPT Weeden's Chaplain of the Coast Guard choice)

Contemporary Issues Section

- **Employee's Survival Guide to Change**, by Jeffrey Hiatt (ISBN: 978-1930885202). A complete guide to surviving and thriving during organizational change.
- **Disappearing Through the Skylight: Culture and Technology in the Twentieth Century**, by O.B. Hardison, Jr. (ISBN: 978-0140115826). The key take away from this book is the recognition that when an entire culture understands something it becomes "invisible." Rather than going away, it becomes intuitive and it becomes culture.
- **Epic Change: How to Lead Change in the Global Age**, by Timothy Clark (ISBN: 978-0470182550). *Epic Change* presents a strategic-level road map, along with tactical level tools, for the every-day needs of leaders who must respond to all types of adaptive challenge to remain competitive.
- **Kiss, Bow, or Shake Hands: The Bestselling Guide to Doing Business in More than 60 Countries**, by Terri Morrison and Wayne Conaway (ISBN: 978-1593373689). This is an invaluable book for "doing well while doing good" in your intercultural relations, covering the protocols of appointments, business entertaining, greetings, forms of address, gestures, dress, and gifts in 60 of the nations you're most likely to be doing business.
- **Linked: How Everything is Connected to Everything Else and What it Means**, by Albert-Laszlo Barabási (ISBN: 978-0452284395). The results of Barabási's research into the behavior of networks are deeply compelling. Not all networks are created equal, he says, and he shows how even fairly robust systems like the Internet could be crippled by taking out a few super-connected nodes, or hubs. His mathematical descriptions of this behavior are helping doctors, programmers, and security professionals design systems better suited to their needs.
- **The Mindful Way through Depression: Freeing Yourself from Chronic Unhappiness**, by Williams, Teasdale, Segal, and Kabat-Zinn (ISBN: 978-1593851286). This authoritative, easy-to-use self-help program is based on methods clinically proven to reduce the recurrence of chronic unhappiness.
- **Lone Survivor: The Eyewitness Account of Operation Redwing and the Lost Heroes of SEAL Team 10**, by Marcus Luttrell (ISBN: 978-0316067607). If you're looking for a true story that showcases both American heroism and Afghani humanity, Marcus Luttrell's Lone Survivor may be the book for you.
- **Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria?: A Psychologist Explains the Development of Racial Identity**, by Beverly Daniel Tatum (ISBN: 978-0465083619). An insightful exploration of the varieties of Americans' experience with race and racism in everyday life.

Leadership Section

- **The Armed Forces Officer**, by the National Defense University (ISBN: 978-1597971676). Educates officers of all services, as well as civilians, about the fundamental moral-ethical requirements of being a commissioned officer in the armed forces of the United States.
- **Lying: Moral Choice in Public and Private Life**, by Sissela Bok (ISBN: 978-0375705281). It is rare to read a book, where the author is critical of society because of their choice to allow and accept little white lies as normal behavior. After finishing this book, the reader can take this information and begin to think of ethical and moral problems in our society and why many accept certain actions.

- **Predictable Surprises: The Disasters You Should Have Seen Coming, and How to Prevent Them**, by Max H. Bazerman and Michael D. Watkins (ISBN: 978-1422122877). Insisting theirs is not 20/20 hindsight, the authors explain how many disasters are preceded by clear warning signals that leaders miss or ignore. Characteristics of predictable surprises include when leaders know a problem exists and that problem does not solve itself and gets worse, the human tendency to maintain the status quo, and the reality of a small vocal minority (special interests) that benefit from inaction.
- **The Five Dysfunctions of a Team: A Leadership Fable**, by Patrick Lencioni (ISBN: 978-0787960759). Once again using an astutely written fictional tale to unambiguously but painlessly deliver some hard truths about critical business procedures, Patrick Lencioni targets group behavior in the final entry of his trilogy of corporate fables. And like those preceding it, *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team* is an entertaining, quick read filled with useful information that will prove easy to digest and implement.
- **From Boomers to Bloggers: Success Strategies Across Generations**, by Misti Burmeister (ISBN: 978-0980220902). Boomers to Bloggers offers tips to help boomers, Xers, and Yers get what they want from their careers while helping their employers and peers achieve their goals.
- **How Life Imitates Chess: Making the Right Moves, from the Board to the Boardroom**, by Garry Kasparov (ISBN: 978-1596913875). Kasparov has put his powerful strategic thinking to work in business and politics, showing that a simple reliance on instincts can guide you through even the most complex challenges. With no shortage of wit or eloquence, he's answered our hardest questions about what factors can make or break a decision-making moment.
- **Primal Leadership: Learning to Lead with Emotional Intelligence**, by Daniel Goleman, Richard Boyatzis, and Annie McKee (ISBN: 978-1578514861). Since the actions of the leader apparently account for up to 70 percent of employees' perception of the climate of their organization, Goleman and his team emphasize the importance of developing what they term "resonant leadership." Focusing on the four domains of emotional intelligence--self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management--they explore what contributes to and detracts from resonant leadership, and how the development of these four EI competencies spawns different leadership styles.
- **Quiet Leadership: Six Steps to Transforming Performance at Work**, by David Rock (ISBN: 978-0060835903). Transforming performance involves listening and communicating. The ultimate goal of quiet leadership is to empower employees.
- **Leading at the Edge: Leadership Lessons from the Extraordinary Saga of Shackleton's Antarctic Adventure**, by Dennis N.T. Perkins, Margaret P. Holtman, Paul R. Kessler, and Catherine McCarthy. (ISBN: 978-0814405437). A former Marine lieutenant, Perkins introduces 10 key concepts he believes are essential to productive leadership with lively anecdotes from the adverse but ultimately successful expedition to the South Pole led by Ernest Shackleton in 1914 (his entire crew survived on the ice with almost no supplies or hope for rescue after their ship drifted off course and was crushed), which he contrasts with a disastrous Canadian expedition launched at almost the same time.

Coast Guard History and Culture Section

- **Lucky Thirteen: D-Days in the Pacific with the U. S. Coast Guard in World War II**, by Ken Wiley (ISBN: 978-1932033533). In this book, Ken Wiley, a Coast Guardsman on an Attack Transport in the Pacific, relates the intricate, often nerve wracking story of how the United States projected its power across 6,000 miles in the teeth of fanatical Japanese resistance.
- **The Metal Life Car: The Inventor, the Imposter, and the Business of Lifesaving**, by George Buker (ISBN: 978-0817316082). This book presents a fascinating story of American ingenuity and struggle against bureaucracy and chicanery. Buker details the conflicting claims of Joseph Francis, a prominent Boston inventor and businessman, and Captain Douglass Ottinger, U.S. Revenue-Marine, who battled for decades for the rights to this keystone invention.
- **Mind the Light, Katie: The History of Thirty-Three Female Lighthouse Keepers**, by Mary Louise Clifford and J. Candace Clifford (ISBN:978-0963641274). A collection of stories on the lives of thirty-three female lighthouse keepers between the years 1830 and 1947.
- **A Perfect Lady: A Pictorial History of the U.S. Coast Guard Barque Eagle**, by Tido Holtkamp (ISBN: 978-0979594922). A pictorial history of the U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Barque *Eagle* with over 280 photographs. Since 1946, the U.S. Coast Guard has used the Barque *Eagle* for training cadets and officer candidates.
- **Two Tankers Down: The Greatest Small-Boat Rescue in U.S. Coast Guard History**, by Robert Frump (ISBN: 978-1599213378). Off the coast of Cape Cod in 1950, a February blizzard tore not one but two oil tankers in half. This is the suspenseful true story of a U.S. Coast Guard Captain and his small crew who were called out to rescue the tanker crews without a cutter or chopper or a sea plane. Captain Bernie Weber knew well the infamous Coast Guard motto: "You have to go out. You don't have to come back." He took a small boat and crew out in 60-foot waves and rescued 30 men. Weber's subsequent gold medal for valor is still revered within the U.S. Coast Guard and this thrilling first-ever narrative is a gripping adventure story for fans of *The Perfect Storm* and *The Hungry Ocean*.
- **Lifeboat Sailors: The U.S. Coast Guard's Small Boat Stations**, by Dr. Dennis L. Noble (ISBN: 978-1574883367). This the first book on the distinguished past, hazardous present, and uncertain future of an organization whose roots extend back nearly 200 years. Despite the fact that small boat stations are the very symbol of rescue upon the water, the public knows little about what takes place in them and about the professionals who put their own lives at risk in this way every day.