

## Commitment, Courage, Character

To my D14 Shipmates,

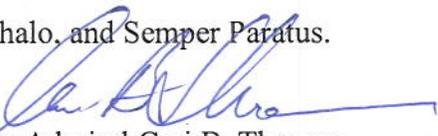
I wanted to take this moment to clearly spell out my guiding philosophy as your District Commander. My watch words for some time have been: Commitment, Courage, Character. These words remind me and guide me each day I serve you, our community, our Coast Guard, and our Nation. I offer them to each of you as we continually evolve and improve our operations in the Coast Guard, among the interagency and internationally.

**Commitment:** As members of the 14<sup>th</sup> District, part of my expectation for each of you is to commit yourself to continual improvement. Proficiency in your specialty is a key element of this commitment. Specifically, it can take the form of improving the condition of your unit as you strive to leave it better than you found it. Perhaps you choose to make improvements to how you conduct your mission; refresh risk management procedures, tighten up on scene coordination, analyze communications gaps and mitigation procedures. It might mean improving yourself as a person through additional education. You could consider taking up a new hobby, or networking with friends and mentors on a more routine basis. We must be committed to our Coast Guard, each other and our assigned roles and responsibilities. I believe in operating through a decisive and collaborative approach within the Coast Guard and our interagency partners, however we must always abide by the seven principles of operations found in Publication 1; clear objective, effective presence, unity of effort, on-scene and disciplined initiative, flexibility, managed risk and restraint.

**Courage:** We must exhibit courage in everything we do as we protect the public and the environment. Our work requires us to operate in difficult and uncertain environments. Sometimes this demands both physical and mental courage. As employees of the federal government, we are expected to follow rules and regulations and hold each other accountable to those standards. Although these conversations are not always easy, they are necessary and they build courage. As the Commandant stated in his Shipmates 19: Respect Our Shipmates – Duty Demands Courage; “there are no bystanders in the Coast Guard”. You must demonstrate the courage to speak up and prevent personal or professional mishaps, whether these are for yourself or for another. Given resource constraints and proper prioritization, you must learn that sometimes saying no to a request for assistance is an acceptable answer. Finally, our coworkers’ and families’ welfare are key to keeping us functioning as a high-performing team. Showing courage to have some balance in your life makes each of you a better member of our workforce.

**Character:** A person’s character is the combination of our core values; honor, respect, and devotion to duty. Simply put, I expect each of you to display the highest standards of character both on and off duty. As a very visible agency in the public’s eye and military component of DHS, we must exhibit exemplary character in everything we do. There are great costs to an organization’s reputation and effectiveness when a few demonstrate poor character. Embrace integrity in your mission duties. The Commandant has bestowed significant responsibility to us. I expect each and every one of you to act with the utmost professional character in all you do! Trust within and outside the Coast Guard often hinges on how others perceive your character. Good trust leads to strong relationships, which leads to great results. Treat others as you would want them to treat you and your shipmates.

Mahalo, and Semper Paratus.

  
Rear Admiral Cari B. Thomas