

Coast Guard Reading List–2007-8

“Lifelong learning is about challenging yourself through exposure to differing perspectives, new experiences, and education. As a leader, I cannot overstate the value of reading in terms of lifelong learning, personal growth, and intellectual development.” – ADM Thad Allen

About the List

The reading list provides recommended books related to leadership. The list is not all-inclusive; the goal is to provide a starting point or expand existing knowledge and skills. The list is updated annually and released in August to coincide with Coast Guard Day.

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

Since 2002, the Commandant selects one book annually as the “Commandant’s Choice” for professional reading.

2007 Selection

The Contrarian’s Guide to Leadership, by Steven Sample (ISBN: 0787967076).

Previous Selections

- 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)

Coast Guard Reading List

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

- **Churchill on Leadership: Executive Success in the Face of Adversity**, by Steven Hayward (ISBN 0517223260). As one of the greatest leaders of the twentieth century, Churchill has something to teach us all. This book presents his techniques for dealing with the most common and frustrating issues a leader faces: managing personnel, communication, learning from mistakes, and many others. (*MCPORF Jeffrey Smith’s Choice*)

- **The Contrarian’s Guide to Leadership**, by Steven Sample (ISBN 0787967076). A straightforward book about how leaders can free themselves from the shackles of conventional wisdom. (*ADM Thad Allen’s Choice*)
- **Getting Them to Give a Damn: How to Get Your Front Line to Care about Your Bottom Line**, by Eric Chester (ISBN 1419504584). Understanding the generation Y “kidplovees” and what motivates them. (*National Commodore Steven Budar’s Choice*)
- **My American Journey**, by Colin Powell and Joseph Persico (ISBN 0345466411). A recounting of General Powell’s army career and support offered by family and friends are the primary focus of this work. Challenges, lessons learned, and opportunities opened by each posting are shared. His life is an American success story. (*SES Curtis Odom’s Choice*)
- **Presidential Courage: Brave Leaders and How They Changed America 1789-1989**, by Michael Beschloss (ISBN 0684857057). Profiles specific choice points during the presidencies of Washington, Andrew Jackson, Truman, Reagan and others when they had to deal with significant issues without a clear way ahead, and adversarial inputs from staff and the public. (*VADM Vivien Crea’s Choice*)
- **So Others May Live: Coast Guard Rescue Swimmers: Saving Lives, Defying Death**, by Martha LaGuardia-Kotite (ISBN 1592289312). Beyond Coast Guard history and the leadership displayed by the individual ASTs involved in the documented rescues, the background story involving the leadership, creativity, and commitment of the Coast Guardsmen involved in the creation of the AST rating was highly significant. The personnel involved persevered and created what is now a critical component of our mission capability even when our own organization did not fully support them. (*MCPOCG Skip Bowen’s Choice*)

Contemporary Issues Section

- **Blink: The Power of Thinking Without Thinking**, by Malcolm Gladwell (ISBN: 0316010669). How do we make decisions – good and bad – and why are some people so much better at it than others? That’s the question Gladwell asks and answers in “Blink.”
- **Blue Ocean Strategy: How to Create Uncontested Market Space and Make Competition Irrelevant**, by W. Chan Kim and Renée Mauborgne (ISBN 1591396190). Despite its name, the case studies used in the book include municipalities, as well as private companies, and are relevant to the Coast Guard. This book discusses how to come up with revolutionary, never been done before strategies, and how to implement them. The tools provided to help craft the strategies are straightforward and useful.
- **The Elephant and the Dragon: The Economic Rise of India and China, and What It Means for the Rest of Us**, by Robyn Meredith (ISBN: 0393062368). A compelling look at the major changes in store as America faces increasing competition from two emerging Asian giants.
- **The Kite Runner**, by Khaled Hosseini (ISBN: 1594480001). Published in the aftermath of America’s invasion of Afghanistan, Hosseini’s haunting writing brought a part of the world to vivid life that was previously unknown.

- **The Looming Tower: Al-Qaeda and the Road to 9/11**, by Lawrence Wright (ISBN: 1400030846). A sweeping narrative history of the events leading to 9/11, a groundbreaking look at the people and ideas, the terrorist plans and the Western intelligence failures that culminated in the assault on America.
- **Social Intelligence: The New Science of Human Relationships**, by Daniel Goleman (ISBN 055338449X). Goleman amazes by telling us just how much we didn't know. Then he tells us how we can apply that knowledge to our lives and society. Anyone who interacts with anyone else can gain exceptional insight from this book.
- **The World is Flat: A Brief History of the Twenty-first Century**, by Thomas Friedman (ISBN: 0312425074). An essential update on globalization, its opportunities for individual empowerment, its achievements at lifting millions out of poverty, and its drawbacks – environmental, social, and political.

Leadership Section

- **The Caine Mutiny**, by Herman Wouk (ISBN 0316955108). Despite its title, one of the best pieces of fiction about the importance of the chain of command.
- **Certain Trumpets: The Nature of Leadership**, by Garry Wills (ISBN 0684801388). Offers portraits of a wide range of leaders, each shown in the act of leading his or her followers. Shows how leaders are shaped by the very circumstances in which they must shape others' actions.
- **Crucial Confrontations: Tools for Resolving Broken Promises, Violated Expectations, and Bad Behavior**, by Kerry Patterson (ISBN 0071446524). "Hey, if you read only one 'management' book this decade ... I'd insist that it be *Crucial Confrontations*." – from the foreword by Tom Peters.
- **It's Your Ship: Management Techniques from the Best Damn Ship in the Navy**, by CAPT D. Michael Abrashoff (ISBN 0446529117). The most important thing a captain can do is to see the ship from the eyes of the crew. Abrashoff has revolutionized how to handle such challenging problems as excessive costs, low morale, sexual harassment, and constant turn-over.
- **The Next Level: What Insiders Know About Executive Success**, by Scott Eblin (ISBN 0891061932). Shows new, current, and future executives what differentiates success and failure at the executive level. Moving successfully to the executive level requires knowing which behaviors and beliefs to drop, as well as which new ones to pick up.
- **On Becoming a Leader: The Leadership Classic**, by Warren Bennis (ISBN: 0738208175). For many years, Bennis has persuasively argued that leaders are not born – they are made. This book delves into the qualities that define leadership, the people who exemplify it, and the strategies that anyone can apply to achieve it.
- **Power Mentoring: How Successful Mentors and Protégés Get the Most Out of Their Relationships**, by Ellen Ensher and Susan Murphy (ISBN 078797952X). "A wonderfully useful and readable book about the under acknowledged significance of mentoring." – Warren Bennis, author
- **Small Unit Leadership: A Commonsense Approach**, by Dandridge Malone (ISBN 0891411739). "Tackles the elusive topic of leadership with a real-world, pragmatic approach. This is not a book of intellectual theorization, but of specific techniques for leading soldiers on and off the battlefield." – U.S.N.I. "Proceedings"

Coast Guard History and Culture Section

- **The Coast Guard at War: Vietnam, 1965-1975**, by Alex Larzelere (ISBN 1557505292). This landmark history fills an important hole in the literature of both the Coast Guard and the Vietnam War and establishes a blueprint for future joint military cooperation.
- **The Coast Guard in World War I: An Untold Story**, by Alex Larzelere (ISBN 1557504768). The U.S. Coast Guard suffered the highest percentage of losses of any American armed force in World War I, yet the extent of the Coast Guard's involvement in that war remains little known to the public.
- **Commodore Ellsworth P. Bertholf: First Commandant of the Coast Guard**, by C. Douglas Kroll (ISBN 1557504741). Chronicles Bertholf's colorful early career with the service when he patrolled the vast reaches of the Pacific, enforced maritime laws, and participated in daring rescues. Offers a revealing portrait not only of Bertholf but also of the last years of the Revenue Cutter and Life-Saving Services and the early formative years of the Coast Guard.
- **The Pendleton Disaster off Cape Cod: The Greatest Small Boat Rescue in Coast Guard History**, by Theresa Barbo, John Galluzo, and W. Russell Webster (ISBN 1596292482). On February 18, 1952, four Coast Guardsmen set out from Cape Cod during a fierce storm in a seemingly impossible quest to locate and rescue the crew of the damaged tanker Pendleton. They returned as heroes. This book chronicles the miraculous true story of Bernie Webber and the Coast Guard 36500.
- **They Had to Go Out: True Stories of America's Coastal Life-Savers From the Pages of "Wreck & Rescue Journal."** (ISBN 1892384396) Represents an unprecedented gathering of talented historians working in the field of Coast Guard history. The stories within cover but a small part of the true-to-life stories of bravado and selflessness of the men of the U.S. Life-Saving Service, shedding light on perhaps the most exciting aspects of America's maritime history.