The 2020 Guide to Commanders Philosophies

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The Guide to Commanders Philosophies

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Articles

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- CAPT Mark Hardy’s blog – [A template for A command Philosophy](#)
- Tom Deirlein’s blog – [Why you should have a Written Leadership Philosophy](#)

Prospective Commanding Officers Courses

- [Naval Prospective Commanding Officers Course](#) – Taught by the Naval War College
- [Army Commanding Officers Course](#) – Taught by the Army’s Command and General Staff College
- [Marine Corps School of Advanced Warfighting](#) – Taught by the Marine Corps University
- [Squadron Officer School](#) – Taught by the Air Command and Staff College
What is Philosophy? and What is a Command Philosophy?

Whether you know it or not, you already have a philosophy. You already have a way to view the world, respond to the world and exercise power over your corner of the world. Furthermore, if you have gotten to the point in your career where a command philosophy is applicable you already have a set way of leading that works for you, the people under you, and has been validated by your superiors. However, as a future commanding officer your next step is to take that informal philosophy and formalize it into a product that your subordinates can use to guide their actions.

Philosophy. The word conjures up images of marble busts of Aristotle, professors in tweed coats, and dusty books on the meaning of meaning. While the simple definition of philosophy is “The love of wisdom” Unfortunately that definition is of little assistance as there are many types of wisdom, many types to pursue that wisdom and many ways to communicate that wisdom. Even philosophers can't agree on how this should be done.

A better working definition of philosophy would be “an activity people take when they seek to understand fundamental truths about themselves”. Thus a command philosophy would be a document that outlines fundamental truths about the commander and the way he or she wishes to relate to their command. Once we first understand ourselves, then we can use that understanding to prescribe a course of action for ourselves. And only once we have set that course of action for ourselves can we then prescribe that course of action for our sailors. Therefore, one must first “know thyself” before even attempting to write a command philosophy.

Know Thyself – What are your “Crucible events”? and What are your Values?

In order to properly “Know thy self” one must first understand the formative and developmental events in one's life, also known as crucible events. Crucible events are transformations that cause one to look at life differently, gain a new perspective on themselves, or change what they believe is meaningful. Examples could include combat, working for a great or poor leader, birth of your first child, death, loss of a job, or even something as mundane as learning the value of hard work while working with your grandfather over the summer.

Looking at your personal crucible events will help you bring your philosophy from the back reaches of your mind as you move to the next step of prioritizing your values.

Since no one can focus on all things at all times, decisions between value neutral priorities must be made. For example, both strength and endurance are both good, but depending on the situation which one do you prioritize? In addition we know that both generalists and specialists have strengths and weaknesses, but what type of team would you prefer? Thinking through these priorities and clearly stating them in your command philosophy will help your sailors understand you, understand how you think and, more importantly, understand how they should be thinking when you are not around.
Below are some examples:

- Present Benefits vs. Future Benefits: How do you balance sacrificing present benefits for the hope of future rewards?
- Excellence vs. Compliance: Do you prefer rule based compliance or more flexible, but less organized, excellence?
- Strive to Win vs Do not Loose: Playing to win holds much more risk; is that risk you are willing to accept for yourself and your crew?
- High Risk vs. low risk: Do you like to play high risk games with hail-mary passes, or keep it safe with base hits?
- Benefit the unit vs benefit the individual: Where do you fall out on Ship/Shipmate/self? Does the unit take priority above all else? Or are our individuals the bases of the unit?
- Black and white thinking vs shades of grey: Is there always one right answer for most problems? or is your most likely answer "it depends" Are you willing to operate in the grey, or does every problem need a book answer before you find it acceptable?
- Strong vs. Smart: Do you prefer being around smart workers or hard workers?
- Standard SOP vs Diverse SOP: How much latitude do you want to give your people when executing your instructions?
- Operational Focus vs. Administrative focus: Is it more important to have admin or operations at 100%. Is your hazardous safety program run so tightly that all work is stopped? or is it so loose that the crew is in danger?
- Good vs. fast vs. cheep: all three have upsides and downsides
- Minority vs. Majority: Similar to ship/shipmate/self. Will you benefit the majority even at the cost of the minority?
- Generalist vs specialist: Do you want a shallow bench of specialists or deep bench of generalists?
- New vs old: Do you tend to believe new is better, or do you like to stick with the old and proven?
- Do right vs do no wrong: Is avoiding error better than achieving success?
- Wide Focus vs. Narrow Focus: Do you want to give a little energy to a lot of things, or lots of energy to a small number of things?
- Quality or Quantity: Is more better or is better better?
- Decision making with 60% of available information vs. Decision making with 95% of available information: How much information do you need before making a decision and how does that affect the pace of operations?

The Hardest part – Brain to Paper
With crucible events, and prioritized values at the forefront of your mind it is now time to write these out in a way that your subordinates can read, understand and make decisions from. If your philosophy statements do not help others make decisions in your absence then rewrite them so they do. Here are a few examples:

- **We prioritize action over administration:** Do not wait until a product is 100% complete for my input. Even in Garrison I want you to have a wartime mindset of taking action, moving quickly and getting my feedback. A Good plan executed violently now is better than a perfect plan executed next week – Patton.

- **We will strive for Excellence even at the cost of compliance:** When presented with a dilemma of doing the right thing (excellence) over the book answer (compliance) I expect you to do the right thing immediately and then notify me of your intended action.

- **We will keep a narrow focus:** I want you to keep a narrow focus and always prioritize this command first. Keeping with the philosophy of “make your bed first” We are no good to the Navy or the Nation if we are not operating at 100% of our capability.

- **We prioritize self care:** The most basic unit of the United States Navy is the Sailor. Therefore if the sailor is not operating at 100% they will be unable to take care of their shipmate, ship or protect the United States

**Command philosophy Do's and Don'ts** – After reviewing a number of commanders philosophies there are a number of common errors and best practices that stick out:

**What a Command Philosophy must accomplish**

- It must be the one document that answers the one thousand other questions.
- It must be one page, easy to read, and easy to refer to
- It must be easy for you to memorize and speak to it at every chance you get.
- It must prioritize values
- It must help others make decisions in your absence

**What a command Philosophy should not try and accomplish**

- An everything is important document. The more things you prioritize, the harder it will be for your crew to adjudicate over conflicting priorities. Saying you prioritize everything really prioritizes nothing.
- That you prioritize leave, liberty, family or fun. (really? who doesn’t)
- Restate basic rules: Stating that “lying, cheating or assault is unacceptable at your command” tells sailors little. It may be better to say how you will respond if rules are broken. Maybe your plan is to remediate and correct or maybe you have a one strike and you are out policy.

**Talk about your philosophy at every chance you get**
This is where your command philosophy really adds value. Every time you walk around, talk to the troops, send an e-mail, or make a speech you need to incorporate that philosophy. Remember the beginning of our article and the definition of philosophy? If you love truth and understand yourself then the command philosophy is simply an extension of your beliefs. Rather than simply a piece of paper which is framed and hung up around the command the philosophy becomes your well thought out talking points.

**Command Philosophy Criteria for Success**

When hard decisions need to be made and you need to decide between an ethical right vs right you can refer back to your philosophy. When discipline and correction are required you can refer back to your philosophy. When training your Junior Officers you can refer back to your philosophy. You know that success has been achieved and your command philosophy has taken hold when you start hearing troops using your philosophy in their day to day conversation, or even better repeat it back to you during briefings.

As your command philosophy is an actionable document it should aid your subordinates in making decisions. Look it over and ask yourself “How does this document help my subordinates make decisions when faced with the following scenarios?”

- It is 2:00pm on Friday and all work has been done. Do your Department heads cut out the crew or keep them around “Just in case”?
- Your XO gets an offer to take four untrained seamen on board for the upcoming month long exercise.
- Do your Chiefs call 10 people or 30 people for the working party?
- Does the XO hold cleaning stations on the ship for 10 minutes or 30 minutes?
- How does the chain of command respond to the accidental damage of high value equipment?
- The Combat Systems Officer has the opportunity to upgrade a system, but the upgrade also comes with some bugs.
- The XO has the opportunity to move up an inspection. If you pass it will free up additional time in your ship's schedule; if you fail the crew will be working weekends for the re-inspection.

**My Philosophy on a Command Philosophy**

It may be ironic but the guy writing this article does not have a formalized 1-page commander's philosophy. Rather than developing a traditional commanders philosophy I’ve developed three individual products that offer much more utility for myself and for my command. Those products are CO’s Business Rules, CO’s Priorities, and my individual goals.

**The CO’s business rules:** A simple one-page document outlining how I like to administratively operate. It contains guidance on how I like to receive products, how I like to disagree, and the best way to present information. It is essentially 8 years of what I’ve learned about myself written down for others to follow. I give this product out to new check-ins and periodically refresh people on my expectations if I feel we are getting off track.
The CO's priorities: A one-page PPT which I outline my major administrative and operational priorities for the week. While my operational priorities are more static, based on our training cycle my administrative priorities change frequently. I brief this product weekly at my Commanders Update Brief.

The CO's goals: My personal goals which I write down in the back of my green book and share with no one. Those goals are my encouragement to myself to live out my values and lead by example. They are to daily remind me of the leader I want to become with the intent of others seeing and emulating my leadership example.

Feel free to reach out and I'll happily share my business rules, priorities and goals.

Below are a compilation of additional command philosophies

Reach out to me directly at john -at- DODReads.com and I would be happy to include your command philosophy
Every Commanding Officer must prepare their ship, their crew and themselves for combat at anytime and anywhere. We must always look to the future; a time when we will be called upon to employ every combat system, engineering system and fellow shipmate to fight, win and return home. We will achieve success in the Surface Force by focusing on the following guiding principles of Good Stewardship, Professional Development and Safety. Once we are operating at the highest level of these guiding principles, we will Own The Fight!

**GOOD STEWARDSHIP**

Many of our first term Sailors are under five year orders. *Their relief is in the eighth grade.* Many of their brothers and sisters or our sons and daughters may be of this age and may also join the United States Navy. If we do not take care of your ship and her systems, we will do a disservice to these young Americans who may also be asked to steam her into harm's way in the future, as well as those Sailors currently serving. We will ensure the highest level of care, cleanliness, and material condition onboard our ships as possible. Our good stewardship of our ships that the American people have entrusted to our care is a priority.

**PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

The professional development of our shipmates is a leadership priority. *A crew that is well trained, educated and qualified is a crew that knows their ship and her capabilities.* Additionally, it is hard to go to sea in ships – we ask much of our Sailors. Therefore, we must ensure that every shipmate has the greatest opportunity to advance through the ranks to earn greater responsibility and pay. We owe this to each other and to our families. A professionally developed crew will take care of the ship's missions.

**SAFETY**

There is nothing short of actual combat operations that allow us to put any of our shipmates in danger. Going to sea in ships is inherently dangerous – we must not increase that danger by making poor decisions or failing to identify to the chain of command possible safety issues. *Do not assume that someone above you has thought about possible consequences of an action!* You may save a shipmate from serious injury or death by simply asking the question “Should we be doing this?” In all phases of a ship’s life cycle, we must continue to mature in our ability to identify hazards, apply risk management and correct discrepancies.

**OWN THE FIGHT**

The success of the Surface Force is measured by properly manned, tactically trained and effectively equipped ships ready to provide Fleet Commanders with combat naval power at sea and to project that power ashore. To achieve that success, we will continue to build upon our enduring maritime traditions, optimize current naval warfighting capabilities and work with our Surface Warfare Enterprise partners to shape the Surface Force's future. We will OWN THE FIGHT and, in short, be the best, the fastest, the toughest and the smartest Naval Surface Force.

Commander, Naval Surface Forces
The “ONE” Team: We value our people and their families.
- We treat each other with dignity & respect
- We take care of each other even when it’s tough to do
- Be the best teammate you can be today, then do it again tomorrow

The “ONE” Mission: Anything, Anytime, Anywhere
- We go where the Teams go, always be ready to go
- Your individual role is key to our success, add value everyday, 1% better
- Be creative, lean to “Yes”, but always do it “The ONE Way”

- Do it well, do it right, do it honorably… honesty & integrity are never sacrificed
- Talent alone is useless without effort, work hard and take pride in it
- Good teammates make work fun, we should enjoy being here
Command Philosophy

We are a global, deployed, warfighting force tasked with the strategic defense of our nation. The Chief of Naval Operations states in his Sailing Directions that “Ready Sailors and Civilians will remain the source of the Navy’s warfighting capability.” And here, at Navy Recruiting Command, is where it all begins.

We are called upon to seek out, source and recruit the best and brightest young men and women to sustain and maintain the cadre of ready personnel. I am confident that we are committed to our mission and we will “Be Ready”.

We will be ready through:

**Strong integrity-based leadership** by:
- Being courteous, polite and treating all people with dignity and respect.
- Providing all prospects, applicants, and Future Sailors with premier customer service.
- Representing our family, our service, and our nation in a dignified and honorable manner.

**Spirited teamwork** by:
- Communicating, collaborating, coordinating, and cooperating throughout the chain of command.
- Understanding that everyone, military and civilian, is a highly-valued member of our team.
- Fostering an environment where everyone knows their value and role is vital to mission achievement.

Our **commitment to excellence** by:
- Accepting personal responsibility and being accountable for actions.
- Rejecting personal temptations that challenge our Navy Core Values.
- Upholding a covenant with our Sailors and Civilians to equip, train, motivate and lead them to success.

We shall be ready to responsibly employ our assets to provide our recruiting field all of the necessary resources to deliver the highest quality Sailors to our fleet. We have a professional and moral obligation to uphold our covenant with our recruiting force—military and civilian—and our Future Sailors.

Recruit Quality Today, Build for Tomorrow!

**Building tomorrow’s future today.**
Embodiment of our core values.

- **R**ecruit America’s finest!
- **E**arn it and keep it.
- **A**lways maintain your integrity.
- **D**edicated to command, mission and family.
- **Y**ou matter!

It is truly an honor to serve as your Commander. With great respect,

Annie B. Andrews
Rear Admiral, United States Navy
Commander, Navy Recruiting Command
Norfolk Naval Shipyard Command Philosophy

Our values are honor, courage, and commitment. Our mission is to safely repair U.S. naval warships to technical standards, on time, and at cost.

Throughout history and into the future, our mission remains an honorable one that directly supports our nation’s security and the CNO’s three tenets: Warfighting First, Operate Forward, Be Ready. Successful execution of our mission is entirely dependent on the well-being, personal development, and personal accountability of all our people.

Guiding Principles

Well-being
Your Safety, Security, Health, and Well-being are the top priority. We will personally support each other to achieve the top priority. We will invest time, effort, and money for the foundation of this priority.

Brilliant on the Basics
We will invest to brilliantly execute the fundamental people programs of our business: sponsorship, indoctrination, mentoring, individual development planning, qualification, training, education, personal support, and recognition.

Service
We serve our nation, Navy, shipyard, fellow employees, communities, and families. We are personally accountable to those we serve by our actions and daily service to repair U.S. Navy warships.

WE ARE AMERICA’S SHIPYARD!
Riverine Squadron ONE

Command Philosophy

**Mission:** To provide an adaptive and scalable Riverine Force that is combat ready and prepared to execute the full range of Riverine and security operations, worldwide, in support of our Nation’s Wars.

**Vision:** To be the Nation’s premiere Riverine Combat force effectively prepared to win in a wide range of operations from Theatre Security Cooperation to Combat Missions. We will be an organization that exemplifies the highest standards of service, conduct and performance, founded on a culture of professionalism, pride, respect and dignity.

**Guiding Principles:**

**Professionalism** – Know your job, do what is expected of you and continually strive to expand your knowledge and qualifications. Be competent in your position and let your performance do your talking.

**Excellence** – In everything you do, in everything we accomplish as a team, strive for excellence and exceed expectations. People will notice. Set a personal example of integrity, readiness and accomplishment. Never compromise your core values.

**Communication** – Effective two-way communication is essential to our success. To consistently accomplish the mission, our subordinates must know what is expected of them and they must feel empowered to provide feedback while accomplishing what we ask of them.

**Warfighters and Maintainers** – We must be ready to go to war and our equipment must be ready to support our operations. Abuse/neglect of equipment directly impacts the efficiency, effectiveness, and readiness of our squadron. Maintenance, property accountability and resource management must be integrated into combat operations. Well trained operators and supervisors who know how to conduct operations checks and services on equipment, are the foundation to any effective maintenance program.

**Delegation and Accountability** – Delegate authority to the appropriate level. Reward those who deserve credit for their actions and discipline by holding accountable those responsible for inappropriate actions. We are accountable for our own actions and those of the people we supervise. If corrective actions are necessary, have the moral courage to take charge and fix what needs to be fixed.

**Procedural Compliance** – The Navy and the Riverine Force have instructions and SOPs to guide us in our execution the Mission. Know these instructions and adhere to them. Only an appropriate level of leadership may authorize deviation from written guidance and normally that level is myself.

**Safety** – Combat is inherently dangerous but safety should always be on our minds. Do not become obsessed about it, but do not take unnecessary chances especially in a training environment.

**Dignity and Respect** - Whatever your ancestry or your lot in life, here you are an equal. We will not tolerate disrespect or harassment! We are all on the same team. Negativity is not welcome. Care for the safety and welfare of our Sailors.

As Riverines, we are a team - disciplined, fearless and lethal who achieve and succeed at any task, at any time, in any condition.
Command Philosophy - Steel City Naval ROTC

**Academic Excellence**   **Ethical Leadership**

**Mentoring Future Leaders**

Our Mission is to develop Midshipmen **mentally, morally and physically** and to imbue them with the highest ideals of duty, and loyalty, and with the core values of honor, courage and commitment in order to commission college graduates as Naval Officers. Our Midshipmen must have a potential for future development in mind and character so as to assume the highest responsibilities of command, citizenship and government.

**Training and Educational Excellence** must be a common goal. Getting the most out of our precious time together as a Unit, and while attending broader Service and University events, will be the basis for future **professional growth**. Take advantage of the privilege you have to attend a top notch University.

**Teamwork.** Our unit is a Team! To balance the challenges faced by today’s university environment while developing the skills necessary to lead tomorrow’s Navy, we must work hard both as individuals and as a Team. Set your shipmates up for success, carrying your share of the load and providing forceful back-up up, down and across the chain of command.

**Integrity.** Be 100% forthright and honest – the unit depends on your Integrity. Work hard to make good decisions as you develop your character while openly admitting mistakes when they are recognized.

**People.** Without our Midshipmen and Staff, The Steel City Unit could not function. We are the will, thoughts and soul of the Navy’s presence in Western Pennsylvania. Never forget that each **Naval Professional** is also someone’s, son, daughter, grandchild, brother and/or sister. Everyone deserves to be treated with respect and given the opportunity to reach their full potential.

**Control Your Environment.** Be proactive to control your environment both in and outside of the unit. Avoid "no-win" situations through planning, looking towards the future and simply **doing the right thing early**. Protect and back-up your shipmates in this endeavor – within and outside the unit. **Strictly, yet thoughtfully,** adhere to operating guidelines and continuously revisit the risk vs. gain of evolutions.

As Steel City NROTC Midshipmen, you will go on to be our countries future Navy and Marine Corps leaders. Humbly serve as a loyal guardian to our fellow Americans as they bestow upon you their trust to act as the stewards of our nuclear arsenal, our ships, planes and bases and most importantly our junior Marines and Sailors. Remember your oath to the Constitution of the United States – know that you are one of the fortunate few that have the honor and privilege to serve in the United States Military.

W. J. BRAYFIELD

August 17, 2016
ADMIRAL PAUL F. ZUKUNFT
PERSONAL LEADERSHIP PHILOSOPHY

Know your purpose.

To lead, you must know who you are. What gives you purpose, energy and passion? My purpose is Service to Nation. It is the common thread that binds me to the country I serve and the communities in which I have lived. Purpose is the force that aligns your personal honor and integrity to the vision and Core Values of your organization. Take time every day to refocus your energy. Consider how you are contributing to something greater than yourself. Become the kind of authentic leader who inspires others to find their calling – to become great leaders in their own right.

Standards matter.

There is a distinction between honor and loyalty that we must all recognize. They can be complimentary; however honor must come first. When faced with a dilemma, ask yourself if your decision is consistent with your values and the values of your organization. If it isn’t – don’t go there. Upholding standards is a hallmark of military service – they transcend rank or position. The standards you walk past are the standards you accept, on or off duty. As a leader, my greatest concern is being surrounded by a team of “yes” people who lack the courage to act.

Most mistakes are recoverable and leaders have a responsibility to use teachable moments to develop their people. However, departures from core values cannot be tolerated; this is an important distinction leaders at all levels must understand. The interwoven and enduring strands of Honor, Respect and Devotion to Duty remain paramount for service in the Coast Guard; that is my “bright line” that shall not be crossed. Your decisions and behavior create the culture in which those you lead will live and work. You are the critical link.

Trust and empower your people.

You may find yourself in a situation where you don’t have all the answers or the right information. As a leader, you can’t place all decisions squarely on your shoulders; this weight will drag you to your knees. Good ideas, the right solution and the way forward come from all levels of the organization; actively seek out these ideas and empower people to come forward. Enable diverse teams to connect and challenge them to exceed your expectations. Communicate your vision clearly and promote accountability that teaches and inspires. Open, honest communication is central to empowerment which in turn helps teams reach their potential. I am continuously humbled by the talent of the people around me. It is imperative you know what drives and motivates your people; integrate their natural skills and hidden talents to drive mission success.

Take decisive action.

A bias for action is one of the foundational attributes I learned at the most junior level of command. In taking action, embrace the three knows: know your mission, know your people and know when to say “no.” Knowing your mission won’t happen over night; it requires a bit of homework and dedication to the task at hand. Knowing your people takes time and personal commitment. Knowing when to say “no” can be the hardest of all. Situations evolve and we must adapt swiftly; as a leader your decision-making will be tested. Be bold and take appropriate risks; there is room for honest mistakes. You may have a great plan, but it’s okay if your plan doesn’t survive the day. Learn, adapt and execute your mission.
Command Philosophy

USCGC SEQUOIA is an ocean going buoy tender whose primary mission is aids to navigation. As a multi-mission platform we are also responsible for conducting law enforcement, marine resource and environmental protection, and search and rescue. We are entrusted to sail this wonderful ship to remote places, represent our nation, and execute the Coast Guard’s missions. To do so safely and successfully requires teamwork and dedication.

My focus will be to ensure the safety and well-being of SEQUOIA and her crew during the conduct of our missions, and that we are always ready to respond to whatever is demanded of us. Our service embraces leadership at every level and has a bias towards action. I expect that all of us will be willing to lead, ready to act, and guided in our actions by the Coast Guard Core Values of Honor, Respect, and Devotion to Duty as well as the following principles:

**Never let a shipmate stand into danger, on or off duty.** Short cuts at the expense of safety are never acceptable. Tunnel vision can affect us all. We all share the responsibility for safety.

**Never walk by a problem.** We do amazing things with limited resources, but that does not mean we should accept situations we know to be wrong or hazardous when we have opportunity to correct them. Present solutions along with identifying problems.

**Every job is important.** Embrace this with selflessness and service.

**Strive for Excellence.** Not for the glorification of self, but for the betterment of the Coast Guard and the benefit of your shipmates, family, and nation.

**Teamwork will always bear more success.** Work together with your shipmates, American, and international partners.

**This ship is our home.** She takes us to remote places and keeps us safe. Take care of her as such for yourself, for your shipmates, and for future sailors fortunate enough to sail her.

LCDR W. Christian Adams
Commanding Officer
USCGC SEQUOIA (WLB-215)
Philosophies of command or leadership vary from individual to individual. They are developed over time, and, like fingerprints identify our individual traits and tell a little bit about who we are and where we have been. This short document is my effort to articulate some of those things that are personally and professionally important to me as I assume command of Marine Corps Force Command. It is specifically applicable to the Marine Corps Forces Command headquarters (MARFORCOM); II Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF); Headquarters and Service Battalion, Norfolk; and the Marine Corps Security Cooperation Group.

People and the Mission. Our mission at MARFORCOM is unique within our Corps: to command “Service Retained” operating forces, both generate and manage the deployment of Marine forces worldwide, and coordinate the Marine Corps-Navy integration of operational initiatives. That said, regardless of our mission and daily tasks, nothing will be accomplished without people who are ready, willing and able to accomplish the mission. In order for the mission to truly come first, our Marines, Sailors, civilians, and families need to be properly taken care of in a way that allows them the confidence and freedom of action needed to accomplish the tasks they tackle every day. This requires that they be placed in positions commensurate with their skill and experience and trained to the highest degree possible. The desired end state is a Marine Corps able to rapidly deploy anywhere in the world, operate successfully across the spectrum of conflict, and return home to tell about it. To facilitate this end state, all Marines, Sailors, and civilians within MARFORCOM must be respected, mentored, encouraged and provided the proper example to follow by their leaders. Every member of the command has value as a human being and has the potential to be a contributing member of the command. All leaders will do everything they can to allow everyone to make the maximum contribution to the accomplishment of the mission. Any racial/gender-based behavior, hazing, “special” initiations, or any sort of illegal, immoral or mean-spirited behavior which is inconsistent with this end state will not be tolerated.

Teamwork. “We” is a much better word than “I.” The Marine Corps is built on the foundation of teamwork and cooperation. It is the essence of our warfighting capability. From the day we first don our uniform we are taught to subordinate our personal ambitions and desires to the needs of our unit. This applies from the fire team to the most senior headquarters level. We are all in the Marine Forces Command. This is “OUR” unit, and whatever successes WE achieve will be OURS together. Responsibility for any lack of success will be mine alone. There is no ME in TEAM. Membership in gangs, militias, special clubs or any other type of illegal organization is not part of our team building focus.

Plan Your Work. Everything we do must start with proper planning. We must rapidly analyze the mission, develop courses of actions, and implement them. Time and money will always be in short supply; therefore, we cannot afford to go anywhere or do anything without adequately considering the options. If we want to “WIN,” we cannot “just show up.”

Personal and Professional Development of Marines, Sailors, and Civilians. All leaders have an obligation to the Marines, Sailors, and civilians in their organization to develop their
individual potential to the maximum extent possible. This is not limited to just their professional military education (PME) and military occupational specialty (MOS) training, but also includes their personal development as citizens of the United States. We join Marines and Sailors into our ranks who are still in their adult formative years. We have an obligation to shape and influence all aspects of their life to include: ethical, spiritual, financial, marital, and character development. We will strive to develop all Marines and Sailors under our charge into combat-ready warriors, who, when their service to the Nation is complete, will return to the civilian community as loyal and patriotic American citizens prepared to take their place as productive members of society.

**Inspections and Standards.** It has been said, “To get what you expect, inspect.” Truer words may have never been spoken. When one considers unsuccessful evolutions that we may have been party to, in most cases, the failure was due to a lack of supervision during the preparatory phase. In these instances, for whatever the reason, we did not adequately supervise and check on things ourselves, and in the end, existing standards and our expectations were not met. All units need to have established standards of performance. Higher headquarters has already established many of these. These standards are verified and validated through inspections, formal or informal. If you do not inspect on a regular basis, whatever standards you set, either for yourself or your unit, are meaningless. The implementation of “trust tactics” does not mean leaders will abrogate their responsibility to “check on things.” Leaders always have to “show up” and be seen.

**Train and Maintain.** We need properly functioning equipment to train and fight. Without proper maintenance this will not happen. All too often, the maintaining and training functions are separated, both in our minds and in our training schedules. These two things are interrelated and cannot be separated. We cannot train or fight if our equipment is “down.” Maintenance of equipment just doesn’t take place in garrison. Actions addressing maintenance must be integrated into every field operation. Proper maintenance includes pre-, mid- and post-operational checks. Maintenance, like camouflage, is continuous. Monitoring and managing the maintenance of all our equipment will be a priority of Marine Corps Forces Command.

**Ethical Behavior.** We, as Marines, and the Sailors/Civilians who serve with us, strive and profess to hold ourselves to a higher standard of performance and behavior than the rest of the services and certainly the rest of society. This is the expectation we have of ourselves and the nation has of its Marine Corps. It will continue to be the expectation as long as this nation desires to have a “Corps of Marines.” It is also one of the primary reasons people wish to join our ranks—to be better than the rest—a cut above. Nevertheless, people still make mistakes. The distinction that must be drawn is between honest errors and deceitful, immoral, and illegal behavior. We need to teach our Marines the difference between short-cutting processes and procedures out of operational necessity and the circumvention of established standards of professional conduct and morality. The former is, on occasion, forgivable, and the latter is not—never. Whether or not we, as Marines, “do the right thing” should never be questioned. Our institutional credibility demands this. It is the role of all leaders to demonstrate what right looks like each and every day through their conduct and by the standards they set and hold all accountable to.
Accountability. The Marine Corps prides itself on its accountability. We are all accountable—to ourselves, to our family and to our unit. Accountability includes having the moral courage to stand up when things are not going right and accept responsibility. A better way to accept accountability for one’s actions is to consider the consequences of an act before committing it. All members of Marine Corps Forces Command will be held accountable for their actions, personal and professional, regardless of rank or seniority. Reward and punishment will be administered accordingly and in a timely manner.

Fitness. From day one, Marines and Sailors are taught to be concerned with their physical health. We have very good reasons to be fanatical about physical fitness, since the battlefield is no place for the physically weak. Every Marine and Sailor has an obligation to be physically fit in order to function effectively on the battlefield. Physical training is something we should plan to do every day. Our immunizations and dental care are also a critical aspect of our fitness. We must be organizationally and individually focused on maintaining our medical and dental readiness. Excessive use of alcohol and tobacco are counterproductive to our health and should be avoided. Use of illegal drugs is an unhealthy act, is contrary to being a Marine, and will not be tolerated. Civilians are encouraged to participate in command-sponsored health and fitness awareness programs.

Professional Fulfillment. Being a Marine and Sailor is a challenging profession. It is demanding and tiring to go to the field and train hard or to put in the hours in the office needed to do what needs to be done. Is this fun? Sometimes. Is it rewarding and satisfying? Almost always. I will do all in my power to make you look forward to coming to work every day. To facilitate that I will provide feedback on the tasks you undertake—good, bad or otherwise. I ask you to share your ideas and problems with me—maybe I can help implement your proposals or provide some insight into possible solutions. I cannot do this if I do not know what is on your mind. I will ask you to work as long and as hard as it takes to accomplish the mission—no longer and no harder. By doing all this it may be possible to raise the fun meter a few notches. Civilians, professional fulfillment certainly applies to you also, and I strongly encourage you to be proactive in making Marine Corps Forces Command a model for all to emulate.

The above are some thoughts to let you know something about what my perspective is. This is not a stand-alone document. Additional letters addressing other areas of importance, such as commander’s intent, training and expectations of performance and behavior, awards, equal opportunity and sexual harassment, safety and force preservation, sexual assault, and exceptional family member program will be published in due time. Eventually, this Headquarters will republish an updated campaign plan that will provide guidance and direction on the way ahead as we collectively undertake the task of fulfilling the demanding missions assigned to this command.

Robert B. Neller
Lieutenant General, USMC
1. The most important and sacred responsibility entrusted to an officer or noncommissioned officer is the privilege of leading American soldiers. Leading soldiers and being charged with the responsibility of their professional development, and possibly their lives, is an awesome trust. Your subordinates must understand what is important to you because, ultimately, this will become important to them. No organization can progress without this framework and, more importantly, it must be understood and practiced by all leaders within the organization. The command philosophy is this framework – a framework which will guide how I operate in all environments, in the field or in garrison.

2. For any command philosophy to work, it must be lived daily. It must stand on its own merits, easily understood by all. It must be the basic leadership standards which guide the organization. The commander must always keep in mind the importance of establishing high yet realistic standards which are met. High standards lead to professionalism, and professionalism should always be the hallmark of this Battalion.

3. I will focus my thoughts on the traditional four ‘glass balls’ of leading, training, maintaining, and caring.

**LEADING**

The old axiom, ‘lead by example’, will always serve you well. Soldiers and particularly leaders, are ‘on parade’ 24 hours a day. We are constantly being scrutinized by others, especially our subordinates. We cannot enforce selective standards. By that I mean we cannot have one standard for the troops, another for the NCOs, and another for the officers. Basic soldier standards whether in the field
or garrison, should apply to everyone. We as leaders should always set the example we would like others to emulate.

Effective two-way communication is essential to any organizations’ success. In order for us to consistently accomplish the mission, our subordinates must know what it is we expect of them. They must also be able to transmit to us any constraints they have that keep them from accomplishing what we ask of them. Without efficient, two-way communications, our efforts will be wasted.

Treat your soldiers with the utmost respect and dignity; never humiliate them or publicly dress them down. Soldiers, if treated properly, will normally not let you down. They will fail periodically, but never intentionally. They will always give the leader who respects them that extra effort, which so often makes the difference.

Make your subordinates feel part of the team by keeping them informed and involved. Allow them to use their initiative. Capitalize on their unique skills and backgrounds.

Leaders who identify with their troops and the unit will have a better appreciation for the strengths and weaknesses of the unit. Be genuine in your interest; soldiers can immediately detect when you are not sincere. Be approachable, but never cross that thin line that separates you as leaders. Knowing the capabilities and limitations of the unit leads to mission accomplishment and lower casualty rates.

Your soldiers will make mistakes; be prepared to underwrite these mistakes as professional development. Realize that an effective leader can help them to grow from a mistake and become a better unit after learning how not to do something. Accept responsibility for their mistakes; don’t hang the fault on your subordinates. Stick up for your soldiers; they will repay you with loyalty and dedication.

Develop a sound counseling program. Do not reserve these sessions for only those who have faltered. Counseling sessions should be positive events bent on highlighting strengths and finding solutions to shortcomings. Remember, they will
emulate those who they perceive to be successful (by virtue of your position you fall into that category); ensure they take away good habits and practices.

Leaders must develop professional character. Some of this character can be acquired through the military school system. Whenever possible, allow your subordinates to attend these (keeping mind that the mission always comes first). Realize it is normally extremely difficult for us as leaders to attend schools. Most professional character, however, is learned through experience and studying your profession. Unit professional development programs stressing map and terrain exercises, reviews of field manuals, studies on operations planning, and after-action reviews are excellent ways to ensure subordinate leaders possess the necessary experience and/or insights to accomplish the myriad of tasks we assign them.

**TRAINING**

We must take an innovative approach to our training while still concentrating on the basic soldiers skills and battle drills at all levels. Never lose sight of the fact that our most important ‘system’ is the soldier. Train him wisely – use his brains, talents and dedication.

Training is meticulously planned, innovative and challenging in its approach. Training is centrally planned and de-centrally executed to well-defined, enforced standards. Training should be oriented to accomplish mission essential tasks. ‘High visibility’ training which has nothing to do with the unit’s mission is a waste of time. I expect a detailed training plan with stated objectives and measurable standards. All training will be performance-oriented and always have an evaluation plan.

In developing training, ask WHO, WHAT, WHEN, WHERE, HOW AND WHAT RESOURCES are required and available. The training should be performance-oriented and progressive. It should be tough, challenging, multi-echelon combined-arms training designed to stress the soldier and promote individual initiative at the leader and troop levels. Concentrate on ensuring we can accomplish the mission.
If training is truly progressive (and it should be), then time must be allotted to correct deficiencies. It is counter-productive to move on to the next training event if the unit cannot successfully execute the previous one. Conduct detailed after-action reviews, analyze what went wrong, explain it to the troops, and then do it until it is accomplished to standard. Soldiers know when they have not done something right and will view the training as unprofessional if left uncorrected. Bad habits/techniques are easy to learn, but hard to correct. Troops will react instinctively in combat as they were trained in peacetime. Train right and train to standard the first time. Save their lives – do it right!!

The execution of any training plan presupposes that the leaders are prepared to conduct training, that the task, conditions and standards are properly articulated, and that proper planning was conducted. If this does not occur, then the training day is wasted. Good training starts at the top. Officer and NCO professional development classes are a start. Our leaders must be tactically and technically proficient; they must be skilled in weapons systems and know how to employ them. We are in the business of preparing for war – that responsibility cannot be delegated.

It goes without saying that physical fitness is paramount to a successful training program. Physical training will be routinely done and everyone will participate unless on a medical profile. Commanders will find out what type of physical activity profile personnel can do and develop a program for them. Physical fitness is one of the greatest combat multipliers on the battlefield. Physical fitness promotes mental fitness which promotes emotional fitness. Physically tough soldiers, trained to a tough standard will be the earmark of our Battalion – I will take the lead!

Training generates confidence and trust up and down the chain of command. Soldiers gain confidence in themselves and their leaders while learning to be more resourceful. Leaders develop trust in their subordinates while becoming more proficient in their tactical skills. Good, challenging, realistic training promotes harmony and teamwork. Live-fire exercises and night training bring a unique dimension to training, and instill in the soldiers their ability to close with and destroy the enemy under any conditions. A unit which possesses the confidence to execute their mission under any conditions, has competent leadership, and have stressed itself in training, will survive on the battlefield.

MAINTENANCE
We will never have enough equipment or money, so what we do possess must be utilized wisely. Limited resources and a zero growth defense budget are constraints, but abuse/neglect of equipment impacts directly on the efficiency, effectiveness, and readiness of a unit. We have been allocated adequate funds and supplies to accomplish our mission, but there is no margin of error for waste. Ensure we use our resources wisely. Maintenance, property accountability, and resource management must be integrated into combat operations. We must train in these arenas just as we do in the tactical arena. We will not always have the luxury to ‘stand down’ to repair and refit. We must routinely maintain and account for our equipment.

We must be ready to go to war now. Develop a solid program and system to answer our maintenance demands. Zero-in on the user and the first-line supervisor. Well trained operators and supervisors who know how to conduct before, during, and after operations checks and services on equipment, are the foundation to any effective maintenance program. A sound maintenance program is a direct result of properly trained operators and direct leader interest and supervision.

Learn to properly maintain in the field under battlefield conditions. We routinely care for our individual equipment and weapons, but what about the special equipment we periodically employ? We must know how to maintain it, inspect it, account for it, and repair it to ensure mission accomplishment. Vehicles must have assigned, trained drivers who routinely conduct maintenance. Just as you cross-train your soldiers on weapons systems, develop programs to cross-train them on equipment maintenance and operation. It will pay big dividends.

We can have the best trained and best led unit in the Army, but if our equipment cannot support us in war, we will lose. The challenge and incentive is there – attack it with a vengeance.

CARING

Caring for soldiers is ensuring that they know and perform their duties, possess discipline and high standards, and are trained well enough to accomplish the
mission while ensuring their survivability on the battlefield. Caring for soldiers is ensuring they are provided the best leadership possible and that they are recognized for their efforts and rewarded. Caring is also seeing that quality soldiers reenlist. Always insist on the proper use of your troops – never abuse them.

**One of our challenges is to maintain that fighting edge.** We must remain at peak readiness. We can only do that by training wisely and ensuring adequate time is given to the soldier and his family. Strive hard to develop a dynamic, challenging, progressive training program which allows for weekends and holidays off. We know the soldier will do whatever he is told, whenever he is told to do it. Do not abuse his dedication; he will respond in kind.

Readiness is directly linked to soldier morale. A soldier with family or personal problems is not an effective soldier. It is the chain of command’s responsibility to assist in the resolution of problems. Family support groups help as do the numerous social service programs that exist within the Army today.

It is imperative that our Battalion has an active family support group. For a family group to be successful, it must have the support of the commanders at all levels. Do not pay this lip service; a proactive family support group is an invaluable asset, but don’t forget about our single soldiers. Caring for soldiers also means developing a commitment to them and their families. Be sensitive to their needs.

Caring for soldiers begins the day they join your unit or you receive notifications of their assignment. Develop a sponsorship and welcoming program. Assign an experienced soldier of equal grade as the new man’s ‘buddy.’ The quicker we can integrate our new soldiers into the unit and make them feel welcome, the sooner they can begin contributing to the improvement of the organization.

**FINAL THOUGHTS**

Some final thoughts on which I will continually elaborate during my command, but that I will highlight now for your reflection.
Integrity is a non-negotiable attribute. I will not tolerate breaches of it. I will accept an honest mistake and take the heat rather than have you violate your high principles.

Loyalty must be both horizontal and vertical in any organization. I expect all leaders to positively support the chain-of-command. I will support my commander to the hilt. Given the opportunity, I will strongly represent the Battalion’s position but when the decision is made, I will enthusiastically support it despite my personal feelings.

Discipline must be the hallmark of a Soldier. Remember who you are and what you represent. In the absence of guidance, do what you know is right.

Delineate NCO and Officer responsibilities. Respect the other’s turf. No leader can be effective unless he understands what his responsibilities are and has the opportunity to execute them. The chain of command makes things happen and supervises the effort. Commanders, NCOs, and staff officers must work in concert for the good of the Battalion. The NCO support chain must work in concert with the formal chain-of-command. The Battalion cannot effectively function if the two operate separately.

Safety should always be in the forefront of our minds. Do not become paranoid about it, but do not take unnecessary chances. Be prudent.

Conduct your operations in a quiet, professional manner. Our accomplishments will gain us all the recognition we need. We want our soldiers to be aggressive, but this needs to be controlled aggressiveness.

Be enthusiastic, it is infectious!
Always be yourself and do your best; no one can expect more, and I will not accept less.

**Remember**, we are all accountable continually for not only our own actions but those of the people we supervise. If corrective actions are necessary, have the moral courage to take charge and fix what needs to be fixed. Your personal concern for your fellow soldiers and the Battalion will make this a better unit.

Be flexible and resourceful; two essential attributes to be an effective, efficient leader.

The Army has an **overweight policy/standard** which all – regardless of rank – must meet. The demands of our profession require that we meet the standard, and everyone will at all times.

Maintain a sense of humor and have fun in what you do.

In summary, let me say how honored and proud I am to be serving with this Battalion. This Battalion has an outstanding reputation, which is directly attributable to the superb leadership of each of you. Our nation depends on us and our missions demand confident leaders, tactically and technically proficient soldiers, and an aggressive, determined spirit. You have proven time and again that you exceed every expectation. I look forward to serving with you and meeting the challenges ahead.

Danny R. McKnight

LTC, IN

Commanding
"MAKE A DIFFERENCE!" The **SIZE** of that difference is not important. What IS important is that you did something everyday to accomplish our mission and to make life better for this country, this command, your family, your co-workers, and yourself.

**Make a difference in yourself.**
- Recognize your strengths and weaknesses; seek self-improvement to improve those weaknesses and capitalizing on your strengths. Have moral courage to do what is right. Set goals, have a personal vision of where you want to go, and what you want to accomplish in life. Incorporate that vision in how you do your job, your relationships with family, and others in your life. Remember that if you have no vision, then you are just following someone else’s.

**Make a difference in your family.**
- Support them, because they support you; nurture them, or that relationship will wither; cherish them, for there is no greater reward in life. Never forget that family is forever! Weigh family carefully in all that you do; the example you set, the decisions you make, the success and failures you realize, and the rewards you attain. Take time to relish that special relationship. It is the foundation of who you are, and provides the bedrock on which to build your vision.

**Make a difference in your co-workers.**
- Mentor them; challenge them; give them the opportunity to excel; care for and about them. These are the tenants of covenant leadership. Treat them with respect just as you would want to be treated. Form a bond that transcends the pettiness of our outward biases, for those bonds are the strongest and cannot be broken.

**Make a difference in your country.**
- As a member of Naval Dental Center, Parris Island, you have become a part of a team; the Navy-Marine Corps team. You have the opportunity to make a difference every day; to take part in the “making of Marines.” What greater calling to our nation, the Naval Service, or our Command? Always remember that special honor entrusted to us in all you do everyday.

We will be challenged. As your Commanding Officer, it is my responsibility to give you the tools to meet these challenges; to effect and respond to change, to take risks, to turn failures into successes. At the end of the day, ask yourself two questions: Did you accomplish our mission and did you make a difference? If the answers are yes, I can ask no more.
Navy Recruiting District Ohio
Command Philosophy

We will accomplish the mission of providing our Navy with the next generation of Sailors by focusing on:

UNTIED

Untiring Effort in the adventure of Navy Recruiting. Stay focused and disciplined.
Navy Family – Sailors, civil service, contractors and our families
Integrity – This belongs to you, don’t let anyone take it away from you.
Teamwork – let’s encourage each other everyday to be successful.
Excellence – let this be a touchstone in all aspects of our lives.
Dedication – Country, Navy, District, Family, Shipmates

STATES

Shipmates – first, last and always!
Treat others with dignity and value.
Atmosphere of Professionalism – We are the Navy. Look and act like it.
Training yields success! We never quit learning.
Ethical behavior in all we say and do.
Spirit. Don’t forget the spirit of adventure – have fun and enjoy!

NAVY

Never give up the ship! Honor, Courage, Commitment – our core values.
Attitude – a little thing that makes a big difference!
Victory equals satisfaction in a job well done and a bright future.
YOU – without you and the individual talents and personality that you bring
To the NRD Ohio team, the Navy will be unable to accomplish its mission.

“Greatness is not in where we stand, but in what direction we are moving. We must sail sometimes with the wind and sometimes against it – but sail we must, and not drift, nor lie at anchor.”

– Oliver Wendell Holmes
From: Commanding Officer, NRD San Francisco  
To: All Hands  

Subj: COMMAND PHILOSOPHY  

VISION: The Nation’s Finest Recruiting District Serving America’s Finest Recruits.  

MISSION MADE POSSIBLE. We are the world’s greatest and most powerful Navy. We will keep our nation strong and our military might through the recruitment of the best qualified men and women destined to uphold democracy and freedom while serving in the United States Navy.  

PEOPLE FIRST- ALWAYS. We are a people’s first-always organization. Our Sailors are the Navy’s most valuable asset. Therefore, let us all take care of those in our stead, first and foremost. As a leader, be faithful and caring to those who work for you. Encourage them, instruct them, set them up for success, but also hold them accountable to high standards – this is a must. Always let your expectations be known.  

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT. Don’t be content and satisfied with mediocrity. I encourage and expect everyone to set personal and professional goals (ie NCO, advancement, college education, etc), display initiative, seek responsibility, and develop leadership qualities through education, study, and practice. Invest in your self for the future. Motivate-Educate-Congratulate.  

PERSONAL CHARACTER. The following attributes must be taught and practiced on a daily basis in everything we do. If we live them, we will go far both as a team and as individual members of that team – I guarantee you!  

(1) Our Values of Honor, Courage, Commitment must guide our every action. Self-discipline and integrity are paramount. Display and demonstrate ethical behavior and lead by example. Foster a positive working environment. Never tolerate any forms of inequality or injustice/discrimination or harassment.  

(2) Integrity: I expect you to be honest and forthright all the time. Tell me what I need to know not what you think I want to hear. I accept your word as your bond, and you should expect the same from me. In this business optimism is great and necessary, but the truth must reign...always. Live by the spirit and letter of our guidelines and instructions. Always do the right thing, and you will generally know what it is. If you truly don’t know, ask.  

(3) Perseverance: We will all make mistakes; admit them, learn from them, pick yourself up, and try again. Don’t ever give up on what is right – endure to the end. We can all learn from mistakes...but keep in mind, mistakes are not the preferred method of learning.
(4) **Initiative:** Don’t be afraid to think. Keep in mind process-improvement and mission accomplishment. If there is a better way to do it, then please speak up. Be proactive, and stay ahead of the job. Vision is a great thing – seek to have one, both personally and professionally.

(5) **Accountability/Responsibility:** Be responsible for and assume accountability for your actions. Do your duty and take pride in mission accomplishment. The success of this organization depends on the dedicated effort of each of you. You can make a difference.

(6) **Pride:** Take pride in your work, for it bears your name. When you do a job, do it right the first time. “Excellence in all you do” should be one of your mottoes. However, be humble in spirit – let your work do the speaking.

(7) **Sense of humor:** A must! Take your work seriously, but not yourself. Try to have fun. If we don’t enjoy what we are doing, then we most likely are not doing it right. Keep a positive attitude – it just might be contagious.

**TEAMWORK.** Communicate, cooperate, and coordinate throughout the chain of command. This is the one thing that will truly make or break any relationship, including a command. The only unsolvable problem is the one we don’t know about. The only unanswered question is the one not asked. Let’s keep the communication lines open and work as a team.

**EQUAL OPPORTUNITY.** Regardless of gender, race, color, or creed, everyone deserves the highest measures of dignity and respect, and will receive such from me, and from everyone in this command.

**THANK YOU** for the opportunity to share with you my expectations. It is truly my honor to serve you as Commanding Officer. I expect every member of this team to be 100% accountable for the job they have been assigned. Making goal is not an option - it’s our charter and our responsibility to the fleet and ourselves. If you feel that you don’t have the tools necessary to accomplish your task/goal, then please let your immediate supervisor know and we will do everything possible to help you. If you have what it takes to excel beyond every expectation, then share your methods with those around you. We are forever connected by the fact that we are all part of the greatest “team” in Navy recruiting.


Proud to serve,

CDR, U.S. Navy
ST-8 TWO Troop Commander's Philosophy

LOYALTY:
- Take pride in the Community, Team, Troop, Platoon, and yourself
- Always be a swim buddy, but be aware of misguided loyalty
- Family: You must ensure you take time to care for and prepare your family
- Honesty: Need to tell the whole story
- Trust goes up and Down the chain
  - Trust leadership is looking out for your best interests
  - Trust things are getting done
- Always have a plan on and off the battlefield

PROFESSIONALISM:
- Tireless pursuit of knowledge: never satisfied, never settle, always improve
- Strive to become a Jack of All Trades and know where your skills can best be employed
- Challenge yourself everyday
- Make the mature decision
- Tactical and Operational Thinkers
- Silent Professional
  - Only need to prove yourself to 4 groups
    - Your Teammates
    - Your Family
    - The enemy
    - Yourself
- Military Professionalism
- Accept and Provide Constructive Criticism
- On time and prepared

"In matters of style, swim with the current.
In matters of principle, stand like a rock"

**Choose your battles and defend your principles**
Be a good follower when required – Take charge when needed.

In the absence of leadership, lead:
- Shoot your 40mm
- Use your Comms
- Use GRG
- Know your CAs
- Use your day/night optics/VS
- Throw your smoke
- +

Exploit all technical and tactical advantages:
- Keep them in the know - Communicate!
- Head shot info from your side dogs
- Increase your scope of vision - Help your leadership - Shoot & Communicate!
- Shed dogs get away from your tunnel vision down range
- Push situational awareness up and down the chain of command
- +

Battlefield Expectations WRT IADs and real-world contacts

Always seek to improve your fighting position

Tactical Mobility

Training Detachment (TRADDET)

Naval Special Warfare Group TWO
From: Commanding Officer, Surface Combat Systems Center
To: All Hands

Subj: Command Philosophy

1. One of my favorite sayings is from the ancient Roman poet Horace who wrote back around 23 BC the following words: “Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori”. Translated from the Latin: “It is sweet and fitting to die for one’s country.” This saying is chiseled above the west entrance of the Memorial Amphitheater at Arlington National Cemetery.

2. Captain Nathan Hale before being hung by the British as an American spy during the American Revolution expressed similar sentiment, saying, “I only regret that I have but one life to lose for my country.” I am fascinated by the terseness of such a statement.

3. Personally, two very important points I take from Horace and Hale have greatly impacted my life, and I think have relevance to all of us at the Surface Combat Systems Center.

   a) Character is determined by action.
   b) There are choices in life and wisdom.

4. We are all products of our choices, and our actions. Our choices drive our actions; in turn, our actions—everyday—create our characters and our legacies, the legacies of our lives.

5. Being in the Navy is hard work. Fundamentally, operations, there are simple: properly maintained equipment operated by properly trained personnel in accordance with properly established procedures will produce safe, reliable, professional combat capability. That is what our Nation expects, that is what our Nation deserves. In reality, ship operations are incredibly complex, requiring detailed planning and the coordinated actions of every one or hundreds of shipmates.

6. To maximize our personal potential and our collective combat capability, we all must be daily committed to making the right choice: for our Nation, for our Navy, for our shipmates, and for ourselves. For it is our choices that will determine our character, and it is our character that will determine our course.

7. In summary, please you with the following three rules that I’ve used to use to navigate through my Navy life:

   a) Protect your character.
   b) Think through your choices.
   c) Let freedom ring.

J. J. Keegan
VFA-86 Command Philosophy

The SIDEWINDERS of VFA-86 are America’s premier Strike Fighter Squadron!!!

We will remain so by focusing on three primary tenets that serve as guideposts for our success:

* MISSION – Be prepared to conduct prompt and sustained combat operations at sea.
* SAFETY – We cannot accomplish the mission without healthy people, jets and equipment.
* FUN! – We are in a war for our people; fun (job satisfaction + quality of life + morale) is the key. We must put the fun back into our profession.

I ask that you keep the following thoughts foremost in your mind during the coming months. I firmly believe they are the keys to success:

‘S’ – Stewardship of our nation’s treasures—aircraft and equipment. The citizens of this great country have entrusted us with crucial, expensive and irreplaceable aircraft and the tools needed to keep them flying. Do not violate that trust.

‘N’ – Need for honesty up and down the chain of command. Do not tolerate dishonesty in our command.

‘A’ – America needs us—be proud of that! An uncertain world and unclear threats make combat-ready Strike Fighter squadrons necessary today, more than ever.

‘K’ – Keep trust and faith in one another. Practice the Golden Rule: do unto others, as you would have them do unto you.

‘E’ – Excel in combat—as America’s finest Strike fighter squadron, we will! Training as we will fight and observing the keys to success above will ensure we prevail.

In this uncertain and ever-changing world, the United States of America demands combat-ready Strike Fighter squadrons on the decks of aircraft carriers to keep the peace—we are “the tip of the sword.” As Captain John Paul Jones said when our fledgling Navy exemplified the spirit that gave rise to our nation, “Give me a fast ship, for I intend to go in harm’s way.”

The Sidewinders of VFA-86 are my fast ship... better stay out of our way!!!
COMMAND PHILOSOPHY

We are warriors. We defend freedom and democracy around the world. This assignment is an honor and privilege. If called upon, our Nation expects us to take GEORGIA into harm's way, execute our mission swiftly, and return safely home to a hero’s welcome. We are guided by the following principles:

**SAFETY.** Be formal and execute verbatim compliance of procedures. If a procedure does not exist for an evolution or the existing procedure does not work, then don’t do it! Before setting out to perform a task, know the requirements - be prepared. There are no shortcuts!

**TRAINING.** We train so that we can effectively and successfully employ GEORGIA in the unforgiving environment of the sea. Training is crucial to Combat Readiness. Focus on Combat Readiness. Learn something new every day; make yourselves better.

**INTEGRITY.** Do the right thing because it is the right thing to do and keep on doing it until the job is finished - this is integrity! Never be afraid to admit a mistake. Our lives may depend upon it.

**MAINTENANCE.** Keep GEORGIA clean and ready to fight! Cleanliness and Preventive Maintenance are the homework that leads to Combat Readiness.

**TEAMWORK.** GEORGIA is a team! Always do your best. Constantly provide forceful backup. Treat each other with respect and dignity. It’s the code of the submarine warrior!

Serve proudly on GEORGIA, knowing that you are improving yourself and your shipmates. Your dedication and selfless devotion to our country are the legacy you leave behind for others to follow. Believe in what you do!
COMMAND PHILOSOPHY

NCTS Puget Sound is the premier provider of telecommunications, information technology, and data support. We enable the success of the warfighter. Our role in supporting our National Interests can never be understated.

Here are our guiding principles:

1. Think Fleet and Ashore.

MISSION – First, we provide communications and data support to the fleet and its shore infrastructure. We are a customer service team of military, civilians and contractors who provide a quality service to the great nation we serve.

COMMUNICATIONS – Communications is our business. Be open and forthright in our communications up, down, and across the chain of command. Share information to provide the best customer service possible. Frequent communications are the heartbeats of success.

2. Workplace excellence.

PEOPLE – People count! Our relationships with one another and those around us set the tone for our success. Respect, protect, develop, train, mentor and take care of our shipmates and families.

SAFETY – Accept no unnecessary risks. Integrate safety into everything we do. Always ask what can go wrong and what we can do to prevent it. Think WIN: What’s Important Now!?

CORE VALUES – Honor, Courage and Commitment are our way of life. Have the courage to do the right thing, the commitment to demonstrate ethical behavior and lead by example. Never tolerate personal violence, Internet abuse, drugs, or any form of discrimination or harassment.

3. Continuous self-improvement – “Sharpen the saw.”

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT – Technology is constantly changing. Continually strive to improve our knowledge, skills and abilities and those of the people around us. Train and mentor at every opportunity. Look for better ways to accomplish our tasks and share them with others.

PERSONAL GROWTH – Enthusiasm and a positive attitude are huge! Strive for a healthy balance between our physical, mental and spiritual health. Our relationships at work are key to our teamwork. Our teamwork is key to our success. And our success enables the success of the warfighter. Believe in what you do!
What is now known as the Fleet and Industrial Supply

Fleet and Industrial Supply Center Norfolk

Command Philosophy

Center was first commissioned in 1919 as a Naval Supply Station. Redesignated in 1927 a Naval Supply Depot, in 1948 as a Naval Supply Center and in 1993 as a Fleet and Industrial Supply Center, the mission has remained essentially the same: to provide logistics and support services to fleet units and shore commands, as assigned, and perform other functions as may be directed by the Commander, Naval Supply Systems Command.

Our Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral Clark, has talked often of the concept of covenant leadership which is rooted in the commitments we make to one another. Each and every one of you as a member of this proud FISC Norfolk team has committed to serve... to contribute to the readiness of our fighting forces with the very best logistics and support services in the world... to be the one organization our customers think of and turn to when those needs arise.

My commitment to each of you is respect, clear communication and direction, meaningful work and the tools to do that work, recognition for a job well done and the opportunity for personal and professional growth and to make a difference.

My focus will be:

1) Mission Accomplishment - for us this means providing world class service to our customers - both internal and external. This is how we support freedom and democracy and our nation’s interests around the world... by ensuring the highest possible readiness of our fighting forces. We are all here to serve - to serve our Country, our Navy, our command and each other. Our every action, regardless of our position in the command, should reflect the principle of service. We must always remember that we have a higher purpose, one larger than ourselves — and that is to defend our country and its ideals.

2) Professionalism and the Good of the Institution - be proud of who we are. Avoid rumors and speak favorably of your command and teammates. Personal fulfillment comes from the knowledge that you have done your best for a good cause and made a difference. Be

Onward and Upward!
positive, be enthusiastic, be winners. Our professional and personal conduct must be above reproach. Do the right thing and perform every task to the very best of your ability. We set and achieve high standards in all we do and we place the highest value on integrity. If we make an honest mistake, admit it quickly, learn from it and move on. Bad news does not get better with age. Communicate problems early so that appropriate actions and resources can be brought to bear to solve the problem. Likewise, communicate good news so that appropriate recognition can be provided. I expect ethical and honest behavior in dealing with our customers, with each other, and within our communities. I expect professional, helpful and courteous behavior in your interactions with all our customers... whether in person, on the telephone or in email. I expect each of you to respect and honor the human dignity and worth of every individual in every interaction. You can expect the same from me. We are a service organization... our existence and livelihood depends on it; our customers expect and deserve it.

3) Growth, development and well-being of our shipmates - every member of the FISC Norfolk team has a critical role to play in the command and every individual is important to me and to the command. Respect earns trust and trust strengthens the team. Together, everyone accomplishes more. I am committed to supporting each individual's efforts and aspirations to better themselves through personal and professional growth and development. Seek opportunities for continual self-improvement. Safety is important to the well-being of every member of this command. Nothing we do is as important as the safety of our people. We will not knowingly hazard life or limb of a single member of this command nor will we take unnecessary risks. Additionally, our families are a key part of our team. Always keep in mind the contributions and sacrifices they make for our success. Recognize the importance of setting aside quality time for friends and family. Involve them in command and other Navy events to enhance their Navy experience. Take leave to refresh and relax so you can be at your best when on the job.
Command Philosophy

**PIONEER IS A WARSHIP.** Our mission is “to conduct prompt and sustained combat operations at sea.” Every PIONEER crewmember is a warrior first. To maximize our combat power, we will rely on:

**Combat Readiness.** Every crewmember must be trained in their job, and that of the shipmate next to them. Master the basics. Capitalize on every opportunity to improve our depth on the bench, day-in and day-out. We go to sea to fight and win. When equipment or systems are not operating to design specifications – communicate! Endeavor to repair casualties, but take no short cuts. Always keep an eye on combat readiness.

**Teamwork.** PIONEER is one team. While there are many different positions on the team, each one is vitally important. Treat each other with dignity and respect.

**Families.** Sailors perform best when they know their families are being taken care of. It is every leader’s responsibility to know when a problem exists and provide help.

**Core Values.** Honor, Courage and Commitment are our way of life. We honor the lessons learned in blood that shaped our force. We formally execute procedures, we enforce high standards, and we demand the best from our shipmates and ourselves. Operate with honor. Have the courage to do the right thing. “Have the commitment to demonstrate ethical behavior and lead by example.”

**Excellence.** Personal fulfillment comes from knowing you have done your best for a good cause. Do your best every time. Your performance here is the legacy you leave for others to follow. Believe in what you do!

**Pioneer for Freedom!**
USS IWO JIMA (LHD 7)
Command Philosophy

I consider commanding IWO JIMA to be the pinnacle of my career as a professional naval officer. It's an honor for me to serve in this ship. IWO JIMA has a great waterfront reputation; a reputation forged by the Sailors who have served in this ship from it's commissioning until today. Let's build on this reputation. I will lead by example and give my best effort every day. Below are my thoughts on priorities, command policy, and standards in IWO JIMA:

➢ Mission: Accomplishing the mission safely for our country will be our singular and unified focus. We are warriors. Knowing how to fight and protect this ship, as well as conducting missions we are tasked with will be our core competency. We will be ready and we will answer every call. The following four pillars will support our accomplishing the mission:
  o Training is critical to our success. Robust training will take place at all levels. Not just tactical and damage control training, but focused training on qualifications and advancements. With training at all levels, we will become more knowledgeable about IWO JIMA as a combat system.
  o Know our equipment, know how to maintain it. Become the expert on your system, and know how its operation impacts the ship as a combat system. If you are unsure, read the technical manual, applicable sequencing systems or instructions. If you don't know, ask. If you know, teach. Strictly follow the preventative maintenance system; document systems and equipment that are not operating as designed or within parameters. The Navy is depending on this ship to serve in the fleet until 2040 and beyond.
  o We will treat our shipmates with respect at all times. We will have zero tolerance for sexual harassment, hazing, or discrimination of any kind. These behaviors tear at the very fabric of what makes IWO JIMA and the U.S. Navy great. The old adage Ship, Shipmate, Self are words to live by.
  o Safety and Risk Management (unsafe vs. dangerous): A shipboard environment is inherently dangerous. That makes it all the more important that we not turn dangerous work into unsafe work. If it doesn't look right, it probably isn't. Ask (and answer) three questions when assessing risk to people and equipment:
    What can go wrong? What will we do if it goes wrong? How can we prevent it from going wrong?

Some standards and policy that directly impact combat readiness:

➢ This is a military organization. Uniform regulations, personal appearance and behavior are bedrocks to the maintenance of good order and discipline. You should demand only excellent military bearing, respect and courtesy from yourself and others. I will accept nothing less. Remember, common courtesy between shipmates is contagious.
➢ Know your people. Take the time to know the Sailors entrusted to your care. IWO JIMA is nothing without well-trained and dedicated Sailors who feel part of the team. Know their strengths; understand their weaknesses. Everyone has both, including me. Empower your people, but set them on a course for success. Remember, even auto-pilot requires supervision and occasional course corrections.
➢ Communication is the common component in every successful organization. We must communicate clearly with each other and ensure we understand and are understood. Garbled and misunderstood communication can lead to disasters small and large. Understand the message, know the impact. Not all good ideas emanate from the wardroom or CPO mess; if you have a better idea, let it be heard. If your boss is wrong, if I'm wrong, tell us...factfully, I want to know.
➢ Bad news never gets better with age. Never be the senior person with a secret. When presenting a problem, have at least an idea of how we should solve it.
➢ Relationships between IWO JIMA shipmates will be professional at all times. Relationships will respect rank, both the formal (Department, Division, Work center) and informal (Duty Section, DIET) chains of command and will not be prejudicial to good order and discipline. If you can not abide by these rules let your chain of command know immediately.
➢ Don't let a problem, personal or otherwise, fester because you think it can't be solved. Leaders on this ship have hundreds, if not thousands, of years of life experience and we have seen nearly every problem you can imagine. If you need help, seek it.
➢ Have fun. Enjoy and grow in your work. If you find that you consistently dread getting up in the morning and coming to work, I want to know about it.
➢ Cleanliness: Last but not least, look at this fantastic warship each day as someone coming aboard for the first time sees her. A clean ship has a direct and positive impact on mission effectiveness, safety, morale, and increased material self-awareness. No one likes to live in a dirty house. This ship is our home and it will be clean.

J.E. McGOVERN
CAPT USN
Commanding Officer
USS ROSS (DDG 71)
Command Vision and Philosophy

Our Heritage

ROSS is named for a Sailor who put ship and shipmate before self. Warrant Officer (Machinist) Ross was awarded the Medal of Honor for his heroic actions after his ship, USS NEVADA, was attacked by the Japanese in Pearl Harbor. Realizing the ship would need power to get underway and fight back, Ross took station in the forward dynamo room – one of two centers that provided power on the ship. When the space became unbearable due to heat, steam and smoke, he ordered his men to leave and performed all duties himself, transferring control to the aft dynamo room before he was blinded and became unconscious. After being rescued and resuscitated, he returned to the forward space, secured it, and headed to the aft space where he first rescued another Sailor and then worked to keep power up until he was again rendered unconscious. In large part due to his efforts, NEVADA was the only battleship to get underway that day and, after a brief repair period, she returned to the fight . . . at Attu . . . at Normandy . . . and finally at Iwo Jima and Okinawa.

USS NEVADA underway in the channel after the attack

Our heritage is one of valor, courage, and selflessness. Warrant Officer Ross had these traits long before December 7th, 1941. They were part of his daily life. When crisis came, he acted on instinct. You will too. One man made a difference. You will too. Be ready. Ross was shaving when the attack began at 0800, 7 December, thinking about his plans to celebrate his 31st birthday with his girlfriend on 8 December. Be ready. Anytime, anywhere.
MEMORANDUM

From: Commanding Officer, Naval Hospital Oak Harbor

To: Naval Hospital Oak Harbor Staff

Subj: MY EXPECTATIONS AND PHILOSOPHY

1. **Purpose.** To share my expectations and philosophy relative to my job and yours while working at Naval Hospital Oak Harbor. This memorandum contains what I expect from you, what you can expect from me and some important guidelines that will allow us to confidently perform our mission as assigned.

2. **Mission.** The primary mission of Naval Hospital Oak Harbor is operational readiness. The secondary mission is to provide quality medical care for active duty Sailors and their families in the Naval Air Station Whidbey Island area. To successfully perform these missions, we must work as a totally committed team with a single focus – One Team dedicated to optimal medical care. To do this, I ask you to focus on the following:

   a. People. We cannot successfully complete our mission without a well respected, well led, motivated staff. Our team is diverse. We need to capitalize on this diversity to make our command stronger. I am here to support you, mentor you, and guide you in your career. Respect each other, whether military, civilian or contractor and our patients. Support each other. Maintain your personal integrity at all times, just as I will.

   b. Communication. Communication is vital to any organization. I can take the bad news and would prefer to hear about adverse events sooner rather than later so that we can determine a mitigation strategy before it gets out of hand. While I maintain an open door policy, I expect all staff to fully understand and use their chain of command.

   c. Pride and Professionalism. We are the Naval Hospital Oak Harbor. If we degrade the command or our mission, we degrade ourselves. Our core values – Honor, Courage, and Commitment provide a baseline for us to follow.

   d. Job Accomplishment. In performing our job exceptionally, we accomplish a secondary role as Navy Medicine Ambassadors. If our patients are happy with the care we provide, they are less likely to go elsewhere for their medical care needs. This will keep our enrollment up, patient visits up and the bottom line where it should be. While interacting with our patients, go the extra mile, treat them respectfully, and the result will be positive for all involved in their care.

3. My standard is to seek EXCELLENCE in all that we do. Please keep this in mind on a daily basis. I fully intend to carry out the orders of Navy Medicine West and I need each of you as an essential part of that attainment. Our success depends on our people, pride and professionalism. Our mission accomplishment depends upon you and I will support you in meeting this mission.

S. E. LICHTENSTEIN
Commander, Military Sealift Command, Atlantic
CAPT M. J. Sweeney, USN
COMMAND PHILOSOPHY
24 September 1999

How do I do business? This is no doubt a topic for speculation after a change in top leadership. Let me start the dialogue.

It is inevitable I will do some things differently than my predecessors. Differently, not necessarily better or worse, and we'll find out which as we pursue improvements in command performance. At the start of my tour, I will listen a lot. As many wise leaders have said, "you can't listen when you're transmitting."

There are TWO THINGS you need to know about me from the get-go.

The first:

I CAN TAKE BAD NEWS.
I'm sure I'll be tested on this, but you have my word I can take the bad news. Done it before, will do it again. Even if we are the ones who've royally bungled the situation, let that info flow upward fast. Then, I will work with you to bring our solution into play. Come to me with a plan. It becomes OUR problem. I EXPECT this clear-headed, businesslike approach to flaps, flails and foul-ups to be the standard for our command. Constructive criticism to subordinates or peers, firmly delivered, focused on performance, is always acceptable. NEVER personally abusive delivery – fastest way I know of to shut off two-way communications.

The second:

I AM HERE TO SERVE YOU BY MAKING MSCLANT A PLACE WHERE YOU CAN DO YOUR BEST WORK FOR THE COMMAND.
We could spend hours listing all the programs and operations that fall under me. But YOU are the ones who execute them. So, when I enforce standards, demand accountability, insist on top performance, expect accuracy and timeliness, fight for resources, improve our workspace, force paperwork through, empower you to make decisions, trust your judgment – I work to put you in a position to excel, both for the command and yourself.

Finally, I must set the tone for our time together. CLASS, QUALITY AND PROFESSIONALISM should be the hallmark of MSCLANT. Seagoing folks know what a classy ship looks like and how she operates. We all know what quality is when our customers or we don't receive it. Professionalism should permeate EVERYTHING we do, say or produce, inside or outside our lifelines. We deliver sealift – proudly. I am honored to serve as your commander. If you will, remember those "two things."